MANUAL FOR TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ORGANIZATIONS

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS

"Many training efforts are begun without any reason, continued with no purpose, and end in no results"
McGehee and Thayer

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FOREWORD

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has long promoted innovative approaches to training suitable for the needs of operational agencies. It has insisted that, to be effective, training must be accompanied by the careful and continuous assessment of human performance throughout an organization. Systematic assessments show what performance problems exist, which can be remedied by training, and which must be resolved in some other way. Without them, training will never be taken seriously by management as crucial to the attainment of organizational purposes.

In recent years, governments and bilateral and multilateral agencies have become aware of the need for well-targeted and appropriate training. The field of human settlements is no exception. Governments and local authorities now realize the importance of properly managing their physical assets and financial resources. As settlements grow, policies and procedures must keep pace with rising demands for infrastructure and services. However, manpower policies based on formal education are no longer adequate, and something more is needed. Today, there is growing recognition of training's true potential not merely as job preparation but rather as a powerful development tool capable of returning benefits to an organization that far exceed the cost of the training.

Most human settlements organizations do not possess adequate resources for the growing service demands placed upon them. To most of these organizations it is clear that expenditures for training are necessary to maintain adequate levels of employee performance. Rather than develop internal training capabilities, however, these organizations have followed the practice of relying on outside training institutions to advise them regarding appropriate training for their employees.

Institutions offering training and assessment services for human settlements organizations vary in capability. Unfortunately, many of these institutions are not able to vary their programme content to meet the changing needs of human settlements organizations. On occasion, these institutions are charged by the organizations they serve with lacking real-world perspective and offering programmes that are without sufficient job relevance for the needs of specialized personnel.

The determination of training needs requires careful and continuing research throughout an organization. Few outside training institutions have the resources to devote to such rigorous activity. Consequently, the assessments that are conducted by these institutions tend to focus on general areas for improving work competency rather than the development of specific job-related skills.

These observations are not meant to discredit training institutions. On the contrary, these institutions suffer from the lack of relevant performance data as much as the human settlements organizations they wish to serve. Without active and continuous data collection as a basis for programme design, training will never have the impact on an organization that it should.

The underlying premise of this manual is a simple one. To be effective, training must be based on a constant flow of Information that an organization generates about itself. Access to this information gives managers a reliable way to determine when an investment in training can have the most benefit on performance anywhere in the organization.

In 1985, UNCHS (Habitat), in collaboration with the Housing Corporation of Jordan, and with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized and delivered a regional training course on urban projects for Arab states. Recognizing the success of that course, several Arab states requested UNCHS (Habitat) to organize and UNDP to fund other courses to meet their short-term training needs. Among the courses requested were settlement management, municipal finance, shelter project operation and maintenance and computer applications in human settlements planning. A fundamental concern of UNCHS (Habitat) in the preparation of these training courses was the development of a curriculum that would match precisely the performance requirements of participating agencies.

The present methodology for identifying training needs was initiated at the request of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries in the interest of Arab states. The funding for carrying out the initial research and field-testing came from UNDP under project RAB/83/013. The Executing Agency for the project was UNCHS (Habitat). The current manual is an output of Sub-programme 8.2 of the 1986-87 UNCHS Work Programme.

UNCHS (Habitat) decided to focus project attention, first, on a set of tools which could be used by national human settlements agencies and training institutions to identify training needs and, second, on an investigation of the adequacy of training institutions to meet the identified needs. The present manual is designed to supply managers of human

settlements organizations with materials suitable for carrying out systematic training needs assessments at various organizational levels.

Part I of the manual, called "The Manager's Guide," is intended for use by managers of human settlements organizations who are prepared to take advantage of these advanced methods. Part II is "The Assessor's Handbook." Here, the process for carrying out a systematic training needs assessment is explained in detail for the benefit of employees with direct implementing responsibility. In Part III, "Resources," detailed information is provided on specific data collection techniques and other assessment methods to aid the assessor in carrying out various phases of the needs assessment process. Frequent references are provided in Part II to the materials contained in Part III for the convenience of the assessor in locating exactly what is needed for any assessment situation. Part IV, "Case Study," describes the result of field-testing the needs assessment process: 1) during a workshop conducted by UNCHS for officials from the GCC countries of Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates during the summer of 1987 in Amman, Jordan, and 2) during the actual conduct of a training needs assessment in Dubai Municipality, U.A.E. in September 1987.

In taking on this project, UNCHS (Habitat) did not intend to address all the issues involved in human settlements training. In this sense, the project is partial and incomplete, and we look forward to obtaining your comments and suggestions for improvement. The project does. However, offer many assessment tools and perspectives that have value for managers and training assessors inhuman settlements organizations.

PART I - THE MANAGER'S GUIDE

Overview
Training is one of management's most important strategies for reaching organizational goals. When used to produce or upgrade organizational skills needed to overcome gaps in performance, training can bring back savings to an organization that are many times more valuable than the cost of the training itself. To be effective, training decisions must be based on a consistent flow of reliable information about the quality of performance in various parts of an organization. Providing management with information of this kind is the reason why organizations undertake the assessment of training needs.

The purpose of this guide is to give managers of human settlements organizations a perspective on what is involved in the assessment of training needs. Particular attention is given in the guide to the nature of the needs assessment process and the manager's role in activating and perpetuating the process.

"The Manager's Guide" is written from the insider's point of view. The focus is on the manager of a human settlements organization who is concerned about making effective use of training resources for maintaining and improving the quality of organizational performance. The guide is not concerned with needs assessment from the perspective of the training consultant who is seeking to find the most useful or marketable courses to offer an organization.

The role of needs assessment
Effective training must be reinforced by reliable and continuous self-examination. For human settlements organizations, this self-examination is nothing more than the collection and analysis of existing organizational data to extract meaningful conclusions about the need for training. When a manager collects data about an organization and studies it with training in mind, he or she is engaging in "needs assessment."

More than two decades ago, two respected authorities on training, McGehee and Thayer, observed:
"An adequate training program depends upon securing reliable data as a basis for answering the following persistent questions:
- Who is to be trained?
- In what are they to be trained?
- By whom are they to be trained?
- How are they to be trained?
- How are the results of training to be evaluated?" **(1)**

Needs assessment is often considered to be the process used by outside training institutions to obtain information useful in planning training courses for the employees of human settlements organizations. It is a common practice for these institutions to send out periodic course announcements requesting both interest in specific courses and additional information on new training requirements. Sometimes these institutions endeavor to contact representatives of national ministries or of local municipal offices for additional information and commitments.

This approach to needs assessment places emphasis on courses to be delivered rather than on the unique performance requirements of the organization. Data gathering is designed to assess the interest of employees in available topics rather than to analyse what employees need to know to improve the quality of their performance. Assessments tend to be an irregular and infrequent activity rather than an integral part of an on-going process within the organization. Since this method for the conduct of a needs assessment is so common in human settlements and other organizations, it will be referred to in this guide as the "conventional method."

The obvious shortcoming of this approach to training needs assessment is that outside institutions are in control of the training process. These institutions must serve the training needs of many organizations, public and private. Rarely do they have the time or capability to undertake a rigorous examination of training needs in a single organization. As a result, the programmes they offer may be of high quality but of uncertain value to a human settlements organization that may be counting on training to help achieve organizational goals.

There is some evidence of a growing reluctance among human settlements organizations in developing countries to participate in training without greater assurance that course offerings are relevant to the needs of the organization. This was demonstrated a year or so ago when a training institute in Jordan, after investing considerable resources in a comprehensive needs assessment, reported that less than 25 percent of the client's employees who expressed an initial interest in receiving training had registered for one of its programmes.

A speaker at an administrative reform conference held recently in Amman, Jordan, described the inadequacies of training programmes in Arab countries which are not designed to address the real needs of those to be trained.

"The Arab area has witnessed during the lost two decades a considerable new growth in administrative training programs, directed towards leaders and practitioners in governmental organizations at oil levels. Those training programs were presented without sufficient analysis to the organizations and individuals' real need of training, and without fitting in to the needs and contents of the programs" **(2)**

The systematic method
Most managers will concede quite readily that needs assessment is a necessary component of the training process in a human settlements organization. These managers often confess that reliance on the conventional assessment practices of external training institutions is not sufficient. In order to obtain the training data they need, human settlements managers must follow a different course. They must take responsibility for doing their own needs assessments. They con engage in an alternative training needs assessment process called the "systematic method."

Training needs assessment, when done systematically by an agency for itself, can be defined as:
"An ongoing management process for generating and analyzing information about performance in an organization in order to make better informed decisions about where and when to use training."

Table 1 compares systematic needs assessment with the conventional method to help the reader understand the differences.

A rationale for systematic training needs assessment
Managers of human settlements organizations should be concerned about incorporating systematic needs assessment in their employee training programmes for several important reasons:
- Systematic needs assessment places control over the training process in the hands of the manager and removes it from control by training institutions that may or may not have the interest of the organization in mind.
- Systematic needs assessment provides managers with an early warning system for performance problems that could jeopardize the effectiveness and/or efficiency of their organizations.
- Systematic needs assessment helps managers to prepare organizational units and individual employees for the introduction of planned changes in the management, structure and operations of an organization.
- Systematic needs assessment produces data to let managers know which of their current training efforts are having intended payoffs and which are not.
- Systematic needs assessment helps managers make choices about where and in what order to begin new training programmes.

A five-step process
The conduct of a training needs assessment in a human settlements organization should be planned according to the five-step process outlined below. Faithful adherence to this process will produce a substantial amount of information about organizational performance. It also will furnish the manager with a guidance system for identifying needs that call for training solutions and for choosing the most suitable training remedy.

Step 1 - Management sanction and preparation
The training needs assessment process begins when a decision is mode by management to sanction the use of systematic needs assessment in locating appropriate targets for training. If training needs assessment is new to the organization, it may be necessary to appoint and train staff or to engage competent outside assistance. Strong management support is required to give credibility to assessment activities in the eyes of organizational units affected.

Table 1	
COMPARISON OF METHODS FOR ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS	
Conventional	**Systematic**
Is carried out for the agency by training institutions using standardized methods	Is carried out by the agency to identify its own solutions for gaps in performance
Focuses on a single source of data, the person who responds to a survey request	Focuses on multiple data sources to verify training solutions for performance problems
Targets levels of the agency where there are needs that correspond to the capabilities of the training institution	Targets various levels of the agency depending on where problems or changing situations are found
Centers on subject matter for training and the agency's reaction to a list of topics	Centers on concrete problems and the consequences of planned changes for performance in the organization
Depends on the skill of outside training institutions to carry out the assessment	Depends on management commitment and personnel who are able to carry out needs assessment on a regular basis
Does not distinguish between training related needs and needs for organizational improvement	Distinguishes between training needs and non-training needs and provides linkages between the two types of needs

Step 2 - Scanning the work situation
Performance discrepancies exist at every organizational level. Some discrepancies exist or develop when employees do not know how to perform their duties correctly or do not wish to do so. Other discrepancies come into existence as the consequence of starting new programmes, hiring new people or installing new facilities and equipment. The nature and extent of discrepancies in performance within a human settlements organization can be identified by continuous scanning - studying records and reports produced by or about the organization, observing job performance directly and asking questions to verify facts and opinions obtained through other means.

Step 3 - Focusing on discrepancies and needs
Performance discrepancies vary in nature and can affect an organization in different ways. Some are serious and can be damaging if not corrected. Others are less serious but can, nevertheless, affect the work of many employees. Still others may not be serious enough to require corrective action. Focusing is an analytical activity that helps to direct management attention to the most important discrepancies. In addition, through focusing, discrepancies that exist because employees do not have the knowledge or skill to perform correctly (training needs) can be separated from discrepancies that exist for other reasons (non-training needs).

Step 4 - Planning for implementation
Identifying and formulating proposals for meeting an organization's training needs requires careful planning. There are many resources available to the organization to train its employees, both from within the organization and from outside. A strategy for using the resources available must be developed to meet each identified training need. Priorities must be assigned to the various strategies based on criteria of potential impact, cost, feasibility and timing for consistency with the organization's requirements.

Step 5 - Reporting to management
The final step in a training needs assessment is to prepare a written report to management. The report must contain enough detail to support a decision by management on each training proposal. Report contents should include background information on each training need and a description of desired performance levels. In addition, report content should include strategies for using training to achieve or restore performance to the desired level, priority rankings and an assortment of facts about each strategy. A worksheet for management use in reporting action on each strategy may be provided in the report.

The needs assessment process ends when a decision is made by management to implement suggested training strategies. This decision, in turn, sets into motion the mobilization of resources to perform the training and evaluate the training results.

A detailed explanation of the five-step training needs assessment cycle described above can be found in Part II of this manual. "The Assessor's Handbook."

Implementing the process

In every human settlements organization, top management decides if and when new programmes and procedures are to be implemented. It is also top management that creates the conditions necessary for new programmes and procedures to succeed. In other words, if changes are to be made, top management must make them, or at least, endorse the changes to be made by others.

There are several broad actions that top management can take to insure the certain success of a training needs assessment program within a human settlements organization.

- Demonstrate a strong, personal commitment to needs assessment as an essential component of the training function.
- Assign day-to-day responsibility for conducting needs assessments to an organizational unit with the scope and authority to accomplish its purpose.
- Staff unit responsible for conducting needs assessments with trained employees capable of conducting training needs assessment activities with a minimum of outside assistance.
- Provide an adequate flow of information about training needs assessment activities to employees who are asked to participate in the process.
- Follow-up regularly while training needs assessments are being conducted and act decisively on forthcoming recommendations.

Personal commitment

First and foremost in the successful implementation of a new process for assessing training needs is a top manager who is committed to it. Commitment is a visible and continuous personal effort by a manager to do what has to be done to implement a new process and keep it operating the way it was intended to operate. The human settlements manager who is committed to the implementation of systematic training needs assessment in his organization demonstrates his commitment by giving his time and energy to the project. Further, he must do whatever he can to mobilize resources of the organization for the project's success.

Managers who are most likely to make a commitment of sponsorship and active support for the implementation of systematic training needs assessment in their organizations:

- Are committed to the full development of each employee's potential in relation to the needs of the organization.
- Believe that employees with ordinary capabilities are able to perform at extraordinary levels.
- Are convinced that training is the principal means by which the potential of each employee to perform is translated into actual performance.

Authority and organization

Training needs assessment is a training-related activity. Therefore, the function should be assigned to the unit or units in the organization that have primary responsibility for planning and conducting training.

Training units in many human settlements organizations are found in the personnel department. With the trend toward training officers acting as human-performance problem solvers, the rationale diminishes for placing training and personnel together in the same operating unit.

Moreover, training units may be assigned more than one function, i.e., recruitment as well as training. This "watering down" of the training function results in too little staff attention being given to training activities. In addition, operating departments are reluctant to furnish time and information to units that operate from so low a place in the organization.

Ideally, the training unit should be established as a separate department or section with a head that reports directly to the chief executive officer of the organization. In this capacity, the training unit is able to:

- Make a more forceful case for its training strategy recommendations and to obtain the necessary funds and other resources needed to implement of them.
- Gain access to facts and information from other organizational units on which to develop more precise, output-oriented training strategies.
- Provide management with timely suggestions for Preventive action by having quicker access to information about imminent crises or planned changes in programmes or services.

Finally, the quality of decisions made by the training unit is likely to increase when the person in charge of the unit is under the direct scrutiny of the chief executive officer of the organization.

Staffing

The most certain way to be sure that systematic training needs assessment is carried out properly is to entrust day-to-day responsibility for the process to skilled and responsible personnel. **(3)** Most human settlements organizations have

employees who can be trained to perform as training needs assessors. If not, consideration should be given to the employment of men or women who already possess the needed abilities.

To the greatest possible extent, human settlements organizations should develop systematic needs assessment capabilities in-house. When this is not possible, because of financial constraints or extraordinary manpower deficiencies. the use of outside consultants may be considered.

1. Using in-house staff

Employees who are familiar with training or who have been trainers are good candidates for appointment as needs assessors. It is useful to remember, however, that employees who are looking for performance discrepancies need different skills from employees who conduct training programmes. There are seven basic abilities that the manager should look for in employees being considered for the assessment role. These are the ability to:
- Listen for understanding
- Communicate effectively
- Ask useful questions
- Analyse data accurately
- Think creatively
- Promote good will
- Write correctly

The manager responsible for selecting the needs assessment staff should look for these skills in prospective candidates for assessor positions, whether they already are employed by the organization or must be recruited.

2. Using consultants

If consultants are employed, their involvement should be viewed as temporary. They should be selected carefully to be sure they are willing and able to use the systematic methods described in this guide. They should be used to train the organization's own employees so that continuing reliance on outside consultants will not be necessary.

Should it be necessary to engage the services of an outside consultant to implement a systematic training needs assessment, the manager with responsibility for the selection decision should seek personnel who:
- Are familiar with the organization or similar organizations.
- Understand and are willing to apply the systematic approach to training needs assessment.
- Can demonstrate the ability to communicate easily with supervisors and employees.
- Can demonstrate a record of satisfactory services to other human settlements organizations.
- Will permit selected employees of the organization to participate in performing assessment functions under close consultant supervision.

A common practice is to engage outside consultants using Terms of Reference (TOR). This procedure is intended to clarify and specify what the organization has in mind for the consultancy and what it is willing to spend for the service. Normally, the TOR contains an over-all statement of purpose, details on the scope of work, a timetable for completing various tasks, a budget or fee schedule and information about project administration and reporting.

A sample TOR document can be found on page 50, Annex A. Part III, "Resources" **(4)**

Information on where to look for a consultant can be obtained from a number of sources. Training organizations, such as Institutes of Public Administration or Institutes of Management can make useful suggestions. Regional organizations, such as the Arab Towns Organization (ATO), the Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences (AOAS), and the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) are good information sources on consultants.

Information on consultants also can be obtained by contacting UNCHS (Habitat).

Keeping employees informed

Equally important to the successful implementation of a new process is communication. Management must explain the process to employees, letting them know who is to be involved with the process, how it will be implemented, what effect it will have on them, and why they should give it their cooperation and support. It is important to inform employees about management's plans to implement a new training needs assessment process for several reasons. Keeping employees informed is a simple courtesy, showing respect for them as valued members of the organization. One of the best possible ways to cultivate employee goodwill is for their managers to take the time to visit them where they work. Efforts by management to anticipate questions that employees might have about a new process and to answer them thoroughly can help to promote employee support and acceptance.

Keeping employees informed can help to over-come employee resistance to new programmes. Employees may perceive the training needs assessment process as an invasion of privacy, a threat to the continuation of expected work incentives, or simply more work. Negative attitudes toward the new process may be aggravated should employees feel that the system is being forced on them. Attempts to impose the new process by flat or force are almost certain to fail in the long run. Reactions from employees may vary from apathy and indifference to protest and sabotage of the process.

The most important consideration in handling resistance to the needs assessment process is to know who in the organization has to be convinced that it is a good idea. It may be, for example, a key superior, colleagues, certain subordinates, or everybody. According to one authority on managing organizational change, several actions can be taken by management to anticipate resistance entirely or prevent it from disrupting the successful implementation of a new programme.

- Provide the facts about why needs assessment for training is good for the organization.
- Find out the issues or questions that are likely to arise and offer answers for them.
- Invite suggestions from employees in order to gain their interest and support.
- Avoid sudden decisions which could result in employee opposition.
- Don't oversimplify the time and work involved but explain how the new process will cause the least disruption possible.
- Explain when the process will begin and how it will affect employees concerned.
- Acknowledge the efforts made by employees who are assigned assessment responsibilities.
- Confirm that employees understand the process by using examples and illustrations which they are certain to understand. **(5)**

Follow-up action
There are two ways that top management can exercise effective follow-up on training needs assessments. The first method of follow-up, called "reinforcement" takes place while the assessment is in progress. The second method of follow-up occurs after the assessment is completed and a report has been presented for management review and action.

1. Reinforcement
Reinforcement means that management monitors the progress of a needs assessment project in order to keep activity levels high and to sustain the diligence and enthusiasm of personnel with assessment responsibilities. Reinforcement means being aware of the status of work in progress and being willing to intervene personally when obstacles threaten the project. Reinforcement requires persistent and continuous management emphasis. When managers are patient and persistent in the use of reinforcement, their employees have no difficulty understanding what is required of them. Persistence by management in supporting training needs assessment project encourages personnel in operating departments affected by the project to accept it as legitimate and to give it their support.

2. Implementation action
When a needs assessment project is finished and a report is submitted for management review, the initiative for action shifts from the assessor to management. Prompt action by management in acting upon the proposals is important for two reasons. An obvious reason is that the assessment has been requested by management to produce information for use in deciding when and where training is to be conducted in the organization. Now, it is up to management to accept, reject, or modify the action proposals resulting from the assessment.

A second reason for prompt management action is to satisfy the expectations of employees throughout the organization who have participated in the project. In offering facts or opinions about performance discrepancies or in responding to problem statements on questionnaires, employees expect that management will do something to correct the reported problems. Disinterest or delay by management in acting could cause feelings of disappointment that might translate into a deterioration in job performance. Conversely, prompt action by management to act upon the results of a training needs assessment could produce positive feelings about management and result in more committed job performance.

Footnotes
1.	W. McGehee and P.W. Thayer, *Training in Business and Industry* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1961), p. 22.
2.	Ahmad Saqer Ashour, "Administrative Reform in the Arab Countries, a Search for Strategy," in *Administrative Reform in the Arab World: Readings,* ed. Nassir M. Al-Saigh (Amman, Jordan: Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences, 1986), p. 48.
3.	See Case study, which is included in this manual as Part IV (p.123). The orientation training for inexperienced training officers is estimated at three days.
4.	Caution should be used when writing a TOR for a training needs assessment consultancy. The sample TOR is not recommended for verbatim use. Rather, the sample is suggested for use by the preparer of a TOR as a guide for formatting text and as a reminder not to leave out something important.

5.	John S. Morgan, *Managing Change: The Strategies of Making Change Work for You* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972).

Summary

Training needs assessment, as described in this manual, is a process carried out by a human settlements organization for itself to provide a basis for making more informed judgments about where and when to use training. The process consists of five steps that begin with management sanction for the use of training needs assessment and end with reporting to management on the results of a completed needs assessment.

The critical role of management in the training needs assessment process is described in the guide as consisting of five essential activities: giving strong personal commitment to training needs assessment, assigning the training needs assessment function to a place in the organization where it can perform effectively, staffing the function with an efficient mix of trained staff and consultants, keeping concerned employees informed about results of the assessment process, and following up to reinforce the process and act promptly on forthcoming training suggestions.

The manual continues in Part II, "The Assessor's Handbook," with a detailed description of each step in the training needs assessment process. The handbook is written as an aid for the assessor in the conduct of needs assessment activities in a human settlements organization.

Diagram of the Training needs Assessment Process
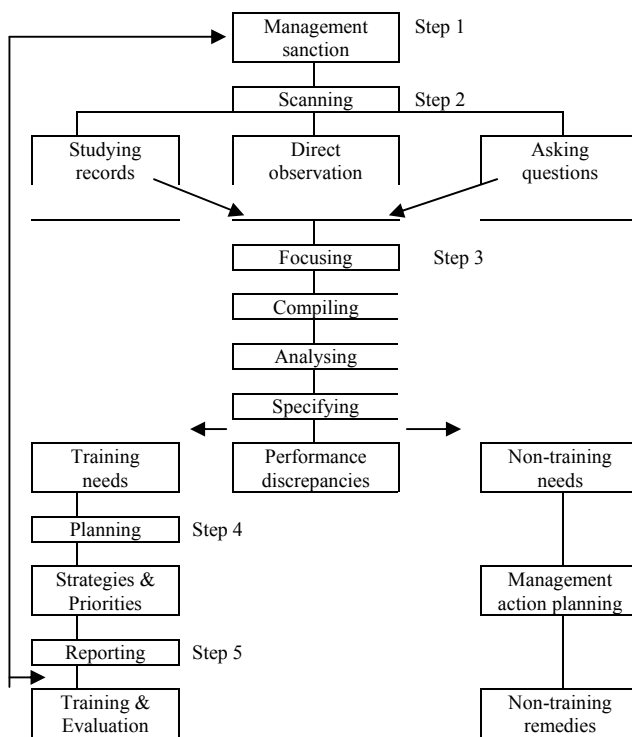
PART II - THE ASSESSOR'S HANDBOOK

Overview

Part I of this manual, "The Manager's Guide," describes the systematic needs assessment process in detail from the manager's point of view. In Part II, "The Assessor's Handbook," the emphasis shifts from merely understanding the process to using it. The intended reader of Part II is the employee who has been assigned responsibility by management to conduct training needs assessments on a regular basis throughout the organization.

"The Assessor's Handbook" is meant to be a valued companion for the assessor as he or she sets out to observe people at work, focus on discrepancies in work performance and offer suggestions to management about priority areas for the conduct of training. The handbook provides a detailed treatment of the five steps in the systematic training needs assessment process as introduced in the guide. Each step includes examples and illustrations of work situations certain to be familiar to anyone who has worked for or in a human settlements organization in a developing country. **(1)** Many worksheets and diagrams are provided in the handbook to facilitate understanding and simplify application of the needs assessment process.

A diagram of the training needs assessment process as presented in this manual is shown.

STEP 1 - MANAGEMENT SANCTION AND PREPARATION
FOR TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The training needs assessment process begins when a decision is made by management to authorize the use of systematic needs assessment in locating appropriate targets for training. It is customary for this to be done by the issuance of a written directive signed by the chief executive officer of the organization. The initiation of assessment activity must be preceded by detailed planning and scheduling. Efforts to maintain the interest of management and concerned employees include regular reporting of results and focusing on areas of the organization that are likely to produce an early success.

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Management          Step 1      Where we are in the process
sanction

Scanning        Step 2

Studying        Direct          Asking
records         observation     questions

Focusing        Step 3

Compiling

Analysing

Specifying

Training        Performance     Non-training
needs           discrepancies   needs

Planning    Step 4

Strategies &                    Management
Priorities                      action planning

Reporting   Step 5

Training &                      Non-training
Evaluation                      remedies
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The vital role of management

The preceding section of this manual was written for managers of human settlements organizations. It was written to convince managers that the systematic use of training needs assessment con make a dramatic difference in quality of performance within the organizations they manage. It was also written to explain what managers must do in order for the training needs assessment process to succeed.

The chief executive of a human settlements organization is a busy person. There are many competing demands for his/her time. It is up to the employee assigned responsibility for the training needs assessment function -the assessor- to obtain what is needed from top management at the proper time so that the process can proceed smoothly.

This step in the training needs assessment process is to provide the assessor with guidance in securing management sanction for under taking an assessment project.

Authorization to begin

Most human settlements organizations have little experience with training needs assessment. The typical ministry official or section chief in a municipality, for example, might describe needs assessment as a survey conducted by an outside training institution to identify training topics of interest to the organization's employees. To these officials, the idea of an organization engaging in self-examination and analysis may seem strange and unfamiliar. Without top management authorization and a reasonable explanation, these officials may see little reason to take such a process seriously.

The initiation of a work procedure that is new and different, like the conduct of training needs assessment by an organization, must be handled with care to gain the acceptance and support of the employees concerned. A simple first

step is for the assessor to prepare a formal written directive on training needs assessment for review and circulation by the Chief executive. The directive should contain the following types of information about the assessment process:

- What systematic training needs assessment is
- Why a decision has been made to engage in it
- Which departments, sections and units will be taking part in the process
- When the process will begin
- Who is in charge of the process and who is to be seconded from other units to assist
- How the results will benefit the units asked to take part.

Advanced planning

In order to prepare a directive for the chief executive's signature, the assessor must know who is going to do what and when to carry out the assessment process. In other words, the assessor must have a plan. Planning a training needs assessment should be undertaken in two steps. First is selecting the overall approach to be followed. Second is the preparation of a work plan and schedule.

1. Selecting an overall approach

This handbook describes several methods for gathering information about performance in an organization as a basis for finding training needs. These methods comprise a method called "scanning." **(2)** One method of scanning is concerned with studying records about an area of performance that is under investigation. Another concentrates on asking questions of people who are knowledgeable about an area of performance. The last is based on direct observation of the performance itself. Which approach the assessor should use depends on the objectives of the assessment.

For example, the objective of a needs assessment might be to verify and locate the cause of reported delay by a municipal garage in returning vehicles to service that are brought in for repair. The assessor might wish to approach the assessment task by comparing job tickets on vehicle maintenance for different mechanics and at different periods of time in order to find out where and why delay exists. In other words, the assessor begins by studying records.

Having isolated the apparent source of trouble, the assessor might observe actual maintenance activity in the garage on several occasions to identify specific work practices that appear to account for the delay. At this point, the assessor is engaging in direct observation to complete what was begun by studying records.

2. Developing a work plan

Once the general approach for conducting the training needs assessment is determined, the assessor is ready to prepare a work plan.

A work plan is a written description of the events to take place during the conduct of a training needs assessment. A useful plan will contain a schedule of events in sequence with a separate sheet for each day of planned activity. The work plan also indicates opposite each event the block of time assigned to it and the resources needed to carry it out. If the assessment is being conducted by two or more employees, space may be needed in the work plan to indicate who is responsible for carrying out each task.

Preparation of a work plan should begin several weeks before a training needs assessment is scheduled to begin. This is necessary so that employees who are assigned to an assessment team, who are to be interviewed or who are to complete survey forms have sufficient notice to include the activity in their work schedules. It is also necessary in the event that space for assessment activities must be re.: served and supplies or equipment are to be procured.

Table 2 is an extract from a work plan used to carry out a training needs assessment for several departments of a municipality.

Maintaining interest

In planning a training needs assessment, the assessor should keep two important and related management principles in mind. The first principle is that people will support what they help to create. This means that employees who furnish facts and opinions about performance improvement needs will be likely to support actions that are taken by management in response to those facts and opinions. Keeping management and participating employees informed about the progress of a training needs assessment can help maintain their interest in assessment activities. Keeping them informed will also help to promote support for any training programs subsequently approved by management.

The second principle is to begin new programs with activities that are certain to succeed. This principle is significant since training needs assessment is a new activity in most human settlements organizations. Should it fall on the "maiden voyage," a second try may encounter resistance by management. Therefore, the assessor should avoid projects that attempt too much in the scheduled time or that focus on work units which are unlikely to be cooperative.

Table 2 - Daily Schedule (Extract)		
Date	**Activity**	**Resources**
Sunday 20 Sept. 8 am - 1:30 pm	1. Conduct of interviews in six departments by four two-member teams	Review Annex. C in the TNA Manual.
	2. After each interview, members return to the assessment office for de-briefing	Team Leader
	3. Schedule employees from Finance and Personnel departments to convene at scheduled times on Tuesday 22 Sept., to complete survey questionnaires (10:00 am - 1:30 pm)	Team Leader
	4. Schedule employees (three) from departments to be surveyed to participate in a pilot test at 8:00 am.	
Monday 21 Sept. 8 am - 11 am	1. Team members report to the interview official to be interviewed at the scheduled times.	Interview notes prepared
	2. After each interview, team members return to assessment office for debriefing.	

Summary

A written directive prepared by the assessor and signed by the chief executive officer of a human settlements organization initiates the training needs assessment process. Careful advanced planning by the assessor is carried out to provide a blueprint for day-to-day activities and to avoid scheduling problems. Written reports on results of the assessment are prepared for management and participating employees to encourage their support and continued participation. The assessor should endeavor to focus assessment activities on areas of the organization where chances of an initial success are high.

STEP 2 - SCANNING THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Training is an essential remedy for many performance discrepancies. This is true whether the discrepancies occur at the job, project team, department, or organization levels. It applies equally well to restoring the performance of existing jobs or anticipating new performance requirements that will accompany the introduction of organizational changes. Finding performance discrepancies is the assessor's job. He does it by scanning the work environment. Three common forms of scanning may be used by the assessor: studying the written records of the organization for clues, asking employees questions about performance, and observing performance as it takes place.

Introduction to scanning

Scanning is a form of "reconnaissance." For the assessor, scanning means getting out of the office to observe the performance of individual employees and work units. The objective is to discover if what they are doing is consistent with what management wants them to be doing. If it is not, there is a performance discrepancy.

Performance discrepancies

Stated in the simplest possible way, a performance discrepancy is ...

the difference between what management expects and what is actually occurring

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│   Planning   │  Step 4
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│ Strategies & │        │   Management     │
│  Priorities  │        │ action planning  │
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│  Reporting   │  Step 5
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│  Evaluation  │        │    remedies      │
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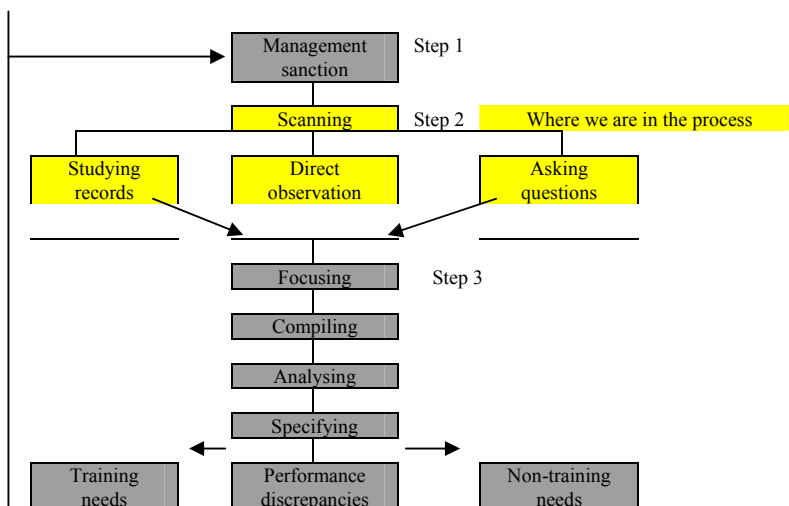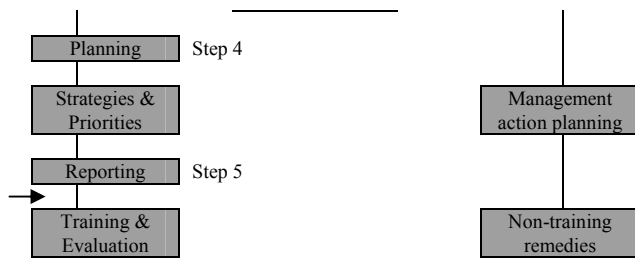
Performance discrepancies are of two types: 1) existing discrepancies and 2) potential discrepancies.

Existing discrepancies

This type of discrepancy can be described as a loss of efficiency in the way work is performed that can be explained by one of the following reasons. Either the employees concerned do not know what to do, have developed poor work habits, or just don't want to do what is expected. Allowed to persist, discrepancies can be costly to an organization in loss of efficiency, wasted time, and poor results. Some existing discrepancies can be corrected by training. Others require a different type of corrective action.

Potential discrepancies

There is another kind of performance discrepancy, a kind that cannot be observed because *it has yet to happen.* Potential discrepancies are gaps in knowledge or skill that result from changes in policy or actions instituted by management. For example, new skills may be required to operate new equipment or to administer new programs. If the employees who need these skills do not have them when the equipment is placed in service or the new programs are implemented, a discrepancy may arise.

Finding performance discrepancies

Performance discrepancies can be found by anyone who is curious, interested, and paying attention to what is occurring in the day-to-day functioning of a human settlements organization. Performance discrepancies, for instance, may be evident in the way employees carry out their duties or in the output of project teams. They maybe observed in the way departmental units communicate with each other or even in the progress of the organization itself in meeting its goals.

The following examples illustrate the nature of performance discrepancies and suggest how they may come to the attention of the interested needs assessor.

At the job level

During an interview, the supervisor of a planning unit in a housing corporation tells the assessor that several of the professional staff have been submitting inaccurate estimates of cost on their projects. If, after further analysis, the assessor determines that the employees do not know how to do a proper cost analysis, he has identified a performance discrepancy.

At the project team level

A special committee organized by a municipal rector is long overdue in making a requested recommendation. Meetings have turned into social gatherings and attendance has been dropping steadily in recent months. From conversations with some members of the committee, it appears to the assessor that committee members have the technical knowledge. However, the committee leader admits to having little experience in organizing and managing a group of this kind.

At the department level

Work stations in several offices of the finance department have been equipped by the computer section with powerful new hardware and software. After more than six months, the equipment is under utilized. From conversations with section chiefs and many employees concerned, the assessor learns that an orientation course for departmental employees on computer fundamentals has not provided them with the skills they need to use the equipment in their work.

At the organization level

A new policy for housing finance is being promoted in country "A" requiring that housing finance institutions provide credit to low income groups. Through discussions with officials of the housing finance institutions, the assessor is able to point out areas in which training will be needed - skills in how to determine affordability and to process and administer a large number of small loans.

Scanning techniques

Three basic techniques are available to the assessor to "scan" the working environment for evidence of performance discrepancies. These three techniques can be used at any operational level. They can produce a surprising amount of information about current performance levels. They can help to anticipate new performance demands likely to accompany planned changes in what the organization does and how it does it.

These three scanning techniques are known as:
1. Studying records and reports
2. Direct observation
3. Asking questions

Before discussing these scanning techniques one at a time, it is important to realize that one technique rarely is used to the exclusion of the other two. On the contrary, data gathered through studying records may lead an assessor to verify his/her findings through direct observation of performance or by asking employees for their ideas and opinions. Earlier in the handbook, for instance, scanning techniques to identify the nature and source of maintenance delays in a municipal garage were described.

Other examples of the complimentary use of two or more scanning techniques can be mentioned as well. *An assessor in a housing agency, for example, might discover through studying reports that operating costs have been rising steadily in a stable (non-inflationary) economy. Through selected interviews (asking questions) the assessor might seek to find out where the cost increases are occurring and why. A similar procedure might be followed by another assessor to determine why per capita tax collections to date for a municipality are down significantly from the preceding year.*

In other words, the assessor should not rely on a single method of scanning to gather information about performance. The type of performance discrepancy to be investigated will suggest which method or combination of methods to use.

The scanning process continues below with details on how to use the three scanning techniques.

STEP 2A - Studying records and reports
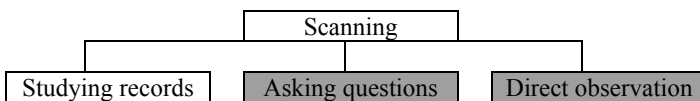
A good place for assessors to begin scanning for clues about performance discrepancies is in the written records and documents complied by or about an organization. Instead of observing employee performance or asking questions directly, the assessor takes the written material that employees and their superiors have produced and asks questions about the material. By selecting the right documents and asking the right questions, the assessor will gain knowledge about what the organization is doing, why, and how well.

Document searches have several advantages over other methods of scanning.
- They can be done by a single individual who has merely to sit down, read the material, and take notes on apparent discrepancies or prospects for change.
- Little advance planning is required and expense is minimized since special forms are not needed and employees are not asked to take their time to participate in data gathering activities.
- Since information is collected from documents rather than people, the usual problems associated with collecting data from people are avoided.

This is not to say that the assessor who chooses to do document searches does not have to use other scanning methods. Quite the contrary. As explained earlier, the information obtained from documents is only a starting point for more extensive verification by observing performance and/or direct questioning of employees concerned.

There are many sources of documented information at the assessor's fingertips. For the convenience of the assessor these sources have been classified into four groupings:
- Purposes
- Efficiency
- Human resources
- Employee satisfaction

A description of each source and how it might be used by the assessor to extract information useful in discovering evidence of performance discrepancies is covered below.

Table 3 at the end of this section is a checklist that contains eighteen questions about organizational performance which could be answered by regular study of records and reports, The checklist is intended as a guide for the assessor in concentrating his attention on the most fruitful indicators of performance difficulty in a human settlements organization.

Purposes

A good starting point for finding out what and how an organization is doing is to investigate its purposes. An organization's purposes are what it hopes to achieve sometime in the future. Purposes, sometimes called goals, may vary in scope and nature. The management goals of an organization might indicate what services an organization intends to perform and the quality or quantity results these services are meant to achieve.

A housing bank, for example, might declare as one of its purposes: *"To provide and improve community facilities and services for citizens who are disadvantaged or who have limited incomes."*

Functional goals, on the other hand, might define the desired outputs of a single municipal department, such as better cost recovery for a utilities department or improved maintenance of public buildings and sites for an urban development department.

Purposes provide standards by which employees and outsiders can judge how well an organization is doing. They help to separate activities and programmes that have been successful from those that have been unsuccessful. Purposes may not be stated openly in so many words. They may have to be derived from what an organization does and from the statements made by its leaders.

The assessor might look for statements of purpose in:
- Policy statements
- Budget documents
- Public laws and regulations
- Programme descriptions
- Quotes from speeches, position papers, etc.

Human resources

An important area of investigation for the assessor is the adequacy of the organization's human resources. Examining an organization's human resource capabilities regularly is important for an obvious reason. Organizations are not static. Human settlements organizations open new facilities, purchase equipment, offer new services or improve the way their services are delivered. The faster these changes occur the more dramatic the effect on the employees who are expected to meet the organizations' performance goals. The assessor can be of service in bringing to management's attention the effect of planned change on the organization's human resources.

In many human settlements. organizations it is customary to promote technical employees to management posts without training them for their new responsibilities. The assessor who is aware of employees who are being considered for promotion can make suggestions to management for getting them trained before they are promoted to avoid loss of efficiency.

Organization charts are a good source of human resource information, assuming they are up to date. Computer records of manpower strength by occupation, function, or organizational component are sometimes available to the assessor in a human settlements organization. Data from these sources can be synchronized with an organization's expansion plans to identify human resource deficiencies.

The following types of information should be obtained regularly by an assessor as an aid in analyzing human resources within various components of a human settlements organization.
- Employee strength
- Employee turnover rates
- Vacancy rates
- New job openings
- Internal capacity to fill vacancies
- Requirements for outside recruitment

Efficiency

Efficiency is an expression of how well organizations, departments, project teams, and individual employees perform their intended functions. It is a relationship between inputs (human, financial, and physical resources) and outputs (services, products, and facilities).

It stands to reason that any organization wants to function efficiently, which means the greatest possible output for the least amount of input. Because of this, every organization maintains records and controls containing data about how well the organization as a whole and its various departments and work units are meeting, falling short of or exceeding their goals. Careful review of these records can provide the assessor with evidence of performance discrepancies.

To illustrate the point, an assessor might discover from a review of recent tax revenue reports that receipts are down at the very time the municipality is experiencing a surge of commercial activity. From the facts, the assessor might conclude that there is a problem in the tax collection function.

There are several sources to which an assessor might turn for answers to the questions about organizational efficiency. Some of the more common sources are:
- Budget status reports
- Service complaints
- Accident/injury reports
- Employment records
- Equipment repair records
- Payroll records
- Equipment purchase orders
- Project monitoring reports
- Project termination reports

Employee satisfaction

Employee attitudes toward work are a result of their experiences both inside and outside the working environment. It is generally believed that the more congruent an organization's goals and aspirations are with those of its employees, the more likely it is that a climate of trust and cooperation will prevail. Studies of employee attitudes have established a strong link between productivity and attitude.**(3)** To the extent that negative attitudes breed high turnover, absenteeism, poor performance, and similar conditions, one can point to the adverse effects of attitude on the attainment of an organization's purposes.

By examining data contained in accident, medical, grievance, and project status reports, and from personnel records, an assessor can begin to form an impression of employee attitudes about the organization. *For example, c7 report indicating that the performance of a project team is declining might lead the assessor to verify the existence of a performance discrepancy by observing the team in action.*

Indicators within a human settlements organization which might suggest that a performance discrepancy exists are:
- Disciplinary problems
- Accidents/mistakes
- Employee grievances
- Short-term illness
- Employee turnover
- Slowdowns
- Absenteeism
- Service complaints

A word of caution is necessary at this point. An assessor should not assume that if there are no overt signs of employee dissatisfaction that employees' attitudes about their work are positive. Unless an unusual degree of openness and trust already exists, there could be underlying discontent that has not yet come to the surface. On the other hand, signs of dissatisfaction among employees may be related to factors other than attitudes toward the organization. *For example, an economic recession throughout the nation might produce anxieties that could lead to loss of performance, conditions over which the organization has no control.*

The point is, satisfaction indicators discovered through data sources should be viewed by the assessor as possible symptoms of weakening attitudes and morale. They are a starting point for finding out whether or not the problem lies within the control of the organization. This may require scanning through direct observation or by asking questions of employees concerned.

Table 3 - Checklist for collecting assessment data from written records		
Yes	**No**	**Purposes**
		1. Written records of governing body meetings provide information on recent changes in policy, procedure or requirements
		2. The most recent budget approved by the organization contains statements of purpose
		3. Changes have been made in scope or purpose of key departmental programs or other work in progress
		4. Public statements or other published information about the organization and its services are available
		Human Resources
		5. Current information on employee strength is published by department and job category
		6. Current statistics on absenteeism, turnover, and position openings have been developed overall and by department
		7. Information on anticipated job openings and the capacity of the organization to fill openings from within has been compiled
		8. Areas can be identified in which the requirements of jobs do not match the skills of assigned employees
		Efficiency
		9. Quality standards are maintained within work units
		10. Evidence of waste and misuse or under use of equipment
		11. Budget appropriations are inadequate to meet existing service demands
		12. There are more employees on the payroll than authorized or there is too much overtime for existing personnel
		13. There is evidence of excessive reliance on consultant services
		14. Projects or other planned activities are behind schedule
		Employee Satisfaction
		15. There is evidence of disciplinary problems and an excessive number of employee grievances
		16. There are areas in which job accidents or performance errors are too high or are above average
		17. There is evidence of work slowdowns or deliberate efforts to cut productivity
		18. Complaints about service are too high or on the rise

STEP 2B - Direct observation

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                    Scanning
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  Studying records   Direct observation   Asking questions
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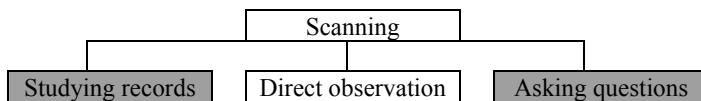
Direct observation is an attempt by the assessor to obtain first-hand knowledge about performance in the organization. This means being present to observe actual performance and recording the results so that comparisons can be made with planned performance.

The main advantage of direct observation over other methods of scanning is its "directness." The assessor does not have to ask people about their behavior or the behavior of others. He or she can simply watch what is happening. First-hand knowledge avoids the problem of distortion that may occur when people are asked to report from memory on what has happened in the past. In addition, observation is a useful way to validate and compare information on organizational performance collected through other means.

When to observe
Scanning the work environment by direct observation may be undertaken for several reasons: 1) it has been scheduled, 2) someone has requested it or 3) an event occurs that calls for it.

1. Scheduled observations
Scheduled observations are prearranged to enable the assessor to gather data systematically about some aspect of organizational performance. They help to familiarize the assessor with the way work is done and what conditions are like when the work is being done correctly. Scheduled observations enable the assessor to find out if discrepancies in performance are isolated events or part of a continuing process.

For example, an assessor notices during a visit to several sections of a finance department that there is an obvious difference in the performance of employees who do the same kind of work. Scheduling of visits to each section on a

periodic basis will help the assessor to identify the reason for the variation in performance and the possible need for training.

Familiarity with common work practices and outcomes helps the assessor to identify discrepancies, should they occur, and to bring them to the attention of management sooner than might otherwise be the case.

2. Triggered observations
Sometimes observations are made after the assessor learns of a possible discrepancy and takes the initiative to look into it. The term "triggered" is used because the assessor's action often is in response to the request of management. The intent of the observation is to confirm the existence of a problem and to look for evidence to help define its nature and lead to possible causes.

A director of public works, for example, might approach an assessor to arrange for several engineers to be trained abroad. The request gives the assessor an opportunity to investigate the reason for the request. If training is needed, the assessor may be able to suggest a less costly and more suitable alternative. If training is not needed, the assessor may be able to suggest an alternative for the minister's consideration.

3. Chance observations
Chance observations take place unexpectedly when an assessor is present to witness a performance discrepancy and has the presence of mind to recognize it and to make a record of it.

On his way to a meeting with an official in the finance department of a housing agency, an assessor sees computers standing idle while the employees to whom they are assigned are performing tasks manually, tasks that could be done tar more quickly on a computer. The situation is likely to raise a question in the mind of the assessor. Why are the computers not being used? The answer may be lack of appropriate software, a problem that cannot be corrected by training. However, the answer might be that the employees concerned don't know how to use the computers, a real training need.

While waiting to see an official in a division of a municipal authority, the assessor watches a clerk attempt to locate a file for the head of the division. Giving up the task in frustration after a few minutes, the clerk confesses to the assessor that the files are in disarray and that she can never find anything without a long search. Why are flies never in their proper place? It could be that employees have not been trained in files management or it could be that employees know how to file but don't care to do it properly.

In both of these situations the assessor should record his observations and make a note to follow-up with the appropriate manager, describing the situation and offering to investigate further.

What to observe
Direct observation is a useful scanning method for finding clues to performance discrepancies in those aspects of organizational life that are visible to the eye of the observer. The negative behaviors and conditions that might be seen by an observant assessor are likely to fall into one of the following categories:
- Unsatisfactory employee behavior
- Poor supervisory practices
- Unproductive project team meetings
- Undesirable working conditions

As a practical matter, the assessor who is observing the working environment does not operate in silence. Quite the contrary. Talking with employees who have considerable experience can help the assessor to clarify and verify his assumptions.

Before deciding what to observe, the assessor must have some point of reference for classifying observed work conditions as either good or bad for the organization.

Table 4 is a short list of work conditions that generally are regarded as detrimental to the health, welfare and performance of an organization. For the convenience of the assessor, items on the list are grouped under the four categories identified above.

How to observe

An assessor who wants to locate and explain performance discrepancies must look for them where people work. But observing a discrepancy is not enough. It is just the beginning; a starting point for asking other questions. How often does it happen? Who is there when it happens? Where else in the organization does it happen?

Answers to questions about performance can be found using a data gathering method called "work sampling."

Definition: *Work sampling – a planned system of observation of relatively short duration, conducted systematically over a period of hours, days, or weeks, in order to draw conclusions about the nature and extent of any performance discrepancies found.*

Work sampling is a way for an assessor to predict with reasonable accuracy how serious or extensive a performance discrepancy is within an organization. Since there is never enough time to observe performance everywhere, sampling provides the assessor with a short cut for getting the answers he or she needs.

An assessor, for example, during a visit with an official who is responsible for processing and approving building permits, notices that the official is constantly interrupted by clients to the degree that he is never able to complete one task before starting another. Curious to discover if this official is an exception or if a pattern of work interruption exists throughout the organization, the assessor decides to sample the daily work routines of similar officials in several sections of the organization.

After a discrepancy is discovered or suspected, sampling is used by the assessor to find out where it is happening, how often, when it occurs, and who is involved.

Work sampling should be planned so that the employees' activities or work areas being observed are representative; that is, they are typical of the individuals or groups being observed. If the assessor chooses a sample that is representative, and if the discrepancy is found to exist in a significant number of the cases observed, then the assessor may conclude that the discrepancy is a problem for all employees or activities of the type being observed.

The assessor may find, for example, that officials with similar jobs in several parts of the same organization are having difficulty in handling interruptions, On the basis of this finding the assessor may conclude, with reasonable confidence, that she has found a common discrepancy and not an isolated one.

Table 4 - Assessor's List of Potential Performance Discrepancies
The following conditions may signal existing or potential discrepancies in performance at any organizational level.

Unsatisfactory employee behavior • complaining • a "that's not my job" response when asked to help others • too much time spent wasted in non-work related conversation • repeated mistakes • misuse or abuse of equipment • carelessness that could result in accidents or injuries
Poor supervisory practices • rarely associate with their employees unless mistakes are made • don't give clear instructions to employees • don't provide feedback to employees about work quality • don't discuss future plans with employees • don't notify employees officially about changes in policies and work rules • show preference for certain employees over others
Unproductive project team meetings • too many or overly long meetings • meetings that seem unplanned and out of control • meetings that are poorly attended • meetings that are interrupted by members who come in late • meetings that are interrupted by members who leave early • meetings that are dominated by one or two strong members • meetings that arrive at decisions which have not been thought out adequately
Undesirable working conditions • offices are uncomfortable and unattractive for their occupants • offices are not grouped for the convenience of employees who need to work together • poor directional signs make it difficult for visitors to find the offices they seek • equipment is out of date or in a poor state of repair • office supplies are frequently out of stock • vehicle parking for employees is inadequate

STEP 2C - Asking questions
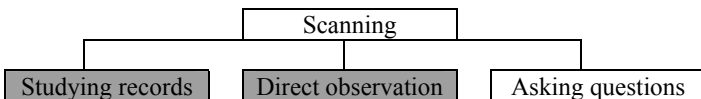
It is not possible for an assessor to find out everything about performance in an organization by studying records and observing performance. Much of what the assessor needs to know about performance in a human settlements organization can be learned only by asking questions.

Knowing when to ask questions

The assessor may decide to ask employees for information about performance for three reasons: 1) because a discrepancy is found, 2) because changes in the organization are being planned that would necessitate new kinds of work procedures or 3) because information collected previously on performance is out of date.

1.   A performance discrepancy is found by the assessor or is reported to him.

An assessor may wish to verify the existence of a suspected performance problem by interviewing or surveying concerned employees. Occasionally, a manager or other employee may bring a performance problem to the assessor's attention. This may result in a data gathering mission for verification or to find out where else the problem might exist in the organization.

For example, a review of records in a sanitation department might reveal that unit costs for garbage collection have been rising steadily for more than a year. To learn more about the problem, the assessor might wish to obtain information directly from employees responsible for garbage collection services.

2.   Management is planning to make changes in policies, programs, or functions that could require new jobs or new ways of performing existing jobs.

Some performance discrepancies must be anticipated instead of discovered. These come about as a result of decisions by management to change the way things are done in the organization. Sometimes the effect of these changes on the organization is obvious, like training employees to use a new computer system or a new cost analysis system.

At other times, the consequence of a change on the performance of employees concerned is obscure. For example, a new method for reporting expenditures might require substantial retraining of finance personnel who will be expected to compile the financial data. Under these circumstances, the insights of employees who are knowledgeable about the planned change con help to identify the missing skills ahead of time. The assessor becomes the catalyst for generating the needed information.

3.   Previous data on performance need to be updated.
As pointed out earlier, repetition in the collection of information on performance has many benefits to the organization. Information that is out-of-date is worse than none at all, since it is misleading. The task of the assessor is to collect data often enough to provide an accurate account of how things are, but not so often as to unreasonably burden those asked to provide the data.

Knowing who to ask
Choosing the right people to ask questions is an important aspect of any information collection activity. If employees who have important facts or viewpoints about the area of performance under investigation are excluded from Information gathering, a key training need could be overlooked.

In order not to overlook anyone, the assessor might come to the conclusion that everyone must be interviewed. However, this is usually impractical, if not impossible, due to limitations of time or money. The alternative is to ask a few people who are representative of those in the organization who have the experience, expertise, and perceptions needed by the assessor.

A reasonable "sample" of employee viewpoints con be obtained by following these simple steps.
- Identify some characteristics that will influence how employees will answer the questions, such as employee level and department of assignment. For example, the assessor might decide to question section chiefs and professional staff from the accounting and computer divisions of a finance department.
- Choose a random sample of employees from each category so that everyone has an equal chance to be selected. This could be each second or fourth person depending on the size of the category and number of people needed. *For example, the assessor might decide to interview all section chiefs and every third professional staff member from each division.*

Asking questions to get general information
A useful way to approach the task of asking questions is for the assessor to collect information from employees concerning their general feelings and attitudes about an area of performance. The collection work would precede the preparation of survey questionnaires or other specific data collection instruments. Why? Because by proceeding this way the assessor can: 1) find out how employees feel about the performance area without influencing them and 2) use their own words to develop follow-up instruments.

1. Interviewing
Interviews generally involve meeting with employees, one employee at a time. Before beginning each interview, the assessor should:
- Show interest in the employee and his/her work responsibilities by asking a few questions, such as: How long have you been in this position? You must have seen many changes?
- Express appreciation for the employee's time and willingness to be interviewed.
- Explain *briefly* why the interview is being held and how long it will take.
- Inform the employee that his/her answers will be held in strict confidence.
- Indicate that the employee can expect to receive information on the interview in general after all interviews have been completed.

An introduction of this kind will let employees being interviewed know the purpose of the interview and feel as free as possible in expressing their views. It will also give them something in return - information on the results.

Questions to ask
If the interview is concerned with discrepancies in performance at the job level, the assessor should ask the employee to answer the following questions and record the answers:
- What are employees in these positions doing that they should not be doing?
- What are employees in these positions not doing that they should be doing?

If, on the other hand, the interview is concerned with discrepancies in performance at the team, section, division, department, or organization level, the assessor should ask the employee to answer the following questions and record the answers:

• What do you like most about working for your (the organizational unit?)
• What do you like least about working for your (the organizational unit?)
• If you could change anything about the performance of you (the organizational unit) with the wave of your hand, what would you change?

These two sets of questions have the advantage of simplicity. They encourage the employee to answer in any way he or she may wish. The questions promote both positive and negative types of responses.

If the interview is being used to verify an apparent discrepancy in performance identified through another phase of scanning, the assessor might wish to prepare his or her own interview questions. For example, an assessor might, while studying the output records of an organizational component, discover a breakdown in the customary flow of work.

In a situation described earlier in the handbook, an assessor found an apparent loss of efficiency in a municipal garage by comparing job tickets on vehicle maintenance over a period of time. The assessor in this situation decided to follow-up by observing performance and drawing conclusions about the cause of trouble. The assessor, in addition, might have arranged to interview the head of the garage using a set of specific, output-related questions, Had the assessor moved in this direction, the interview might have proceeded as follows:

Question: From your records it appears that there are delays in maintenance of vehicles. What, in your opinion, is the cause of these delays?

Answer: We have too many different vehicles. My employees can't keep track of all the spare parts.

From the answer given by the head of garage to his question, the assessor might identify two issues.
1. There are too many types of vehicles.
2. Employees don't know how to build and maintain a parts inventory.

The first issue, should it be confirmed by staff, suggests that management consider greater uniformity in building the vehicle fleet. This issue has little to do with training but a great deal to do with organizational efficiency. The second issue, should it be confirmed by staff, may reveal a lack of skill in inventory management. If lack of skills is confirmed by staff, a training need has been discovered.

Answers to the types of interview questions described above will not be sufficient to provide the assessor with an accurate and complete picture of performance within the respondent's unit or section. To end an interview after a couple of questions, without asking follow-up questions is likely to produce information that is too general to be of much use to the assessor.

The following example illustrates the importance of an assessor not being satisfied with a few perfunctory answers to an initial set of interview questions.
Assessor: What do you like least about your organization?
Respondent: I think my staff is not performing well
Assessor: Why do they not perform well?
Respondent: They are not appropriately trained?

The assessor might conclude the interview at this point and return to his/her office to review the interview notes. From these notes the assessor might derive the following performance discrepancy statement:

"Employees perform poorly due to lack of training."

What has the assessor over-looked? By not asking enough questions about the discrepancy, the assessor has obtained information that is sufficient only to construct the statement shown above. Clearly, this statement is too general. It does not specify what is wrong. Without more detail, the statement is useless as a basis for taking action to restore performance to the level desired by the respondent.

In order to obtain complete and specific answers to each interview question, follow-up questions called "probes" must be used. Probe questions can be structured using the "five w's" formula. The five w's are:

• Who?
• What?
• When?
• Why?

- Where?

Probe questions to the answer, "I think my staff is not performing well" might include:
Question: What do you want them to do that they are not doing?
Question: Where in the organization have you noticed your employees are not performing well?
Question: Who do you mean, all employees or just some of them?
Question: When don't they perform well, all of the time or at certain times?
Question: Why do you suppose this is happening?

Answers to these questions are likely to be specific and performance related. They can help to illuminate important organizational issues related to lack of motivation, inaccuracy or unnecessary delay. Specific answers enable the assessor to write specific performance discrepancy statements related to the issues identified by the interview. Some examples are shown below.

Issue No. 1: (Motivation)
a.   Staff are underpaid and, therefore, not motivated to do their work properly.
b.   Staff are not given clear and precise instructions to fulfill their tasks.

Issue No. 2: (Accuracy)
a.   Figures from sector reports prepared by other sections are not aggregated according to the need s of our section and, therefore, are difficult to compile.
b.   Staff do not know how to compile data from sector reports.

Issue No. 3: (Timeliness)
a.   Staff get no feedback on reports and, therefore, do not feel that reports are important.
b.   Staff do not know how to use existing computers for statistical analysis.

Statements like the ones in the example are useful. They are specific and performance related. The statements labeled (a), should they later be confirmed as important and correct, would lead to non-training remedies since they concern discrepancies that are non-skill related.

On the other hand, the statements labeled (b), should they later be confirmed as important and correct, would suggest the need for training solutions since they concern discrepancies in performance that are skill related.

The point is, specific performance-related answers to interview questions are necessary for the assessor in preparing specific statements about discrepancies in job performance. Such answers can be obtained by persistent probing or follow-up on answers given to an initial set of interview questions. Nothing can be less productive or more discouraging in the needs assessment process than ending several days of interviews with a long list of generalities from which nothing concrete can be inferred about performance.

See pages 52, Annex B, Part III, "Resources," for detailed information on the conduct of a face-to-face interview.

Conducting a group meeting
There are occasions when an assessor may wish to collect information from employees in a group rather than individually. For example, the assessor might save considerable time and get a wealth of creative ideas by using a group meeting to ask questions of supervisors about the performance of their employees.

Group meetings serve to stimulate thinking and participation. They are used to classify information about problems in organization performance. They differ from other forms of information gathering in three ways:
- Employees are asked to furnish answers to a question or set of questions in a group setting rather than in the privacy of an interview.
- Data is collected publicly, i.e., reported orally or furnished in written form and rewritten by the assessor on a flip chart or other writing surface visible to all members of the group.
- The anonymity of what the individual says or thinks is not preserved as the emphasis is placed, instead, on a free and open exchange of information and viewpoints.

Group methods should be avoided when group participants might feel embarrassed to share their views openly. For example, an employee who would be willing to criticize his superiors in a confidential interview might not be willing to do so in the presence of other employees, particularly if the employees work closely together.

See pages 61, Annex E, in Part III, "Resources," for information on a popular technique for group data gathering, the Nominal Group Technique.

Asking questions to get specific information

Face-to-face interviewing methods, conducted individually or in groups, are useful for collecting information of a general nature. However, to gather more specific information about performance discrepancies or to broaden the range of people to be questioned, other methods must be used. Two methods are presented below: 1) the traditional survey and 2) the Q sort survey.

1. The traditional survey

The survey is an impersonal method for collecting information in which the assessor develops a questionnaire for employees to complete and return. Questionnaires are developed by an assessor from answers to questions obtained from employees during face-to-face interviews or group meetings as described earlier.

Why is it not sufficient to use information obtained from interviews as a basis for assessing training needs? Because it is usually not possible for the assessor to interview enough employees to get an accurate understanding of the performance area under investigation. Moreover, the survey method permits employees to react to performance problems presented by other employees. This enables the assessor to obtain a broader perspective on performance discrepancies and to pinpoint where discrepancies exist and where they do not exist. Last, but not least, the questionnaire results should be anonymous.

For example, the assessor in a municipal department might use the results of interviews with section chiefs about the performance of their professional employees to develop a questionnaire. Responses to questions are formulated by the assessor as "statements" about performance, using the original wording to the greatest extent possible. The statements are complied in questionnaire form to be completed by employees. In preparing each statement, the assessor would strive to use words that:
- Are simple, concise and jargon-free
- Will be understood readily by employees being asked to respond
- Draw attention to specific facts or situations related to job performance.

When statements used in a questionnaire do not meet the test set forth by these criteria, the probability of respondent error is quite high. Time spent in collecting data and on the development of questionnaires is wasted.

The following statements were obtained from an actual training needs assessment questionnaire. Each is certain to produce disappointing results. After reading each statement, notice which of the criteria has been violated.
1. Lack of training prevents satisfactory job performance
2. There is a lack of cooperation between sections
3. Senior management does not listen to problems that come from the lower levels and tries to solve them
4. Some employees benefit from training opportunities that do not compare to the needs of their personal responsibilities/tasks.

What is wrong with these statements? The first two are vague generalizations. Each suffers from a lack of focus. Because of this, the answers they produce will have little practical use for an assessor. The last two statements, on the other hand, are ambiguous. There is more than one possible interpretation for each of them. Since their meaning would not be understood the same way by different employees, the resulting answers to either of them would be unreliable.

Rewording each of these statements to give them a more specific focus and to clear up the ambiguous wording might produce the following result:
1. Training is a worth-while solution for performance problems that exist because our employees lack the skill to perform correctly.
2. When employees in our section are over-worked, we can count on the assistance of employees from other sections to get the job done.
3. Senior managers in our organization do not pay attention to the ideas of their subordinates and prefer to rely on their own judgement.
4. Employees in my section often receive training that has little value in improving their performance on the job.

After compiling a list of about thirty (30) statements , the assessor would select a rating scale. To permit respondents to indicate relative agreement with each statement, the following five-factor scale would be used:
1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. No option

4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

To permit respondents to indicate the degree of importance they would assign to each statement, an additional scale would be used:
A. Important
B. No opinion
C. Unimportant

Finally, the assessor would write instructions to respondents for completing the questionnaire and returning it for tabulation and analysis.

The development of a survey questionnaire is described in detail on pages 55, Annex C, Part III, "Resources"

2. The Q sort survey
An alternative to the traditional survey is the Q sort method. This technique is a survey conducted in private or in a small group setting. Participating employees, working individually, are asked by the assessor to sort and prioritize a set of 3x5 inch cards containing statements about a specific area of performance. The statements may be developed from the results of previous interviewing as described earlier or may be developed by the assessor based on his or her own knowledge of the problem area.

The Q sort has certain advantages when compared with other survey methods. The sorting of cards and selection of priorities is often preferred by employees to the anonymous survey form. They enjoy it more. Confidentiality is maintained with the Q sort, and follow-up questions - *the five w's formula* - can be asked to solicit additional reactions. This is an advantage of the Q sort over the traditional survey method when it is administered one employee at a time.

However, the technique has some drawbacks. The Q sort has the disadvantage of being more time consuming than conventional surveying. This limitation can be lessened to some extent by administering the Q sort in a group setting.

The assessor should consider making use of the Q sort method when the number of people to be surveyed is small (six employees or less), for example, limited to section chiefs and division heads of a small department in a human settlements organization.

For a detailed explanation of the Q sort method of information gathering, see pages 59, Annex D, Part III, "Resources"

3. Pilot testing
Whether an assessor chooses the traditional survey method or uses the Q sort, a pilot test is strongly recommended. A pilot test is a way of trying out a questionnaire on a small group of participants to identify and eliminate errors in content or form and to change wording for improved clarity. The pilot test always precedes full-scale survey administration. A small group of employees representative of those who will be participating in the survey are convened and asked to complete questionnaires.

The pilot test allows the assessor to determine the average amount of time required for participants to complete questionnaires. The results can be discussed with participants to identify possible improvements in questionnaire content and administration.

Experienced assessors never conduct a survey without pilot testing. They know how important it is to minimize the risk of error. Nothing could be more embarrassing than for an assessor to discover, after the fact, that participants asked to respond to an organization-wide survey did not understand how to fill out the questionnaire.

Summary
There are three general approaches for the assessor to take in scanning the work environment for evidence of discrepancies in performance: *studying, observing, and asking*. These approaches can be used whether the target of investigation is at the job level, the project team level, the department level, or the organization level. Scanning is concerned as much with the impact of planned changes on future performance as on current performance.

By studying the records and documents prepared by or about the organization the assessor may obtain important clues about existing or potential discrepancies. By observing work being performed, the assessor is in a position to provide early warning to management about weaknesses or gaps in performance. Asking question of employees can help the assessor to understand more about the nature and extent of a discrepancy.

STEP 3 - FOCUSING ON DISCREPANCIES AND NEEDS

Performance in some areas of the organization is found by the assessor to be less than desired by management. Before jumping ahead to find a remedy, it is important to take a closer look at each discrepancy. Classifying discrepancies by general types con help to understand them better. Finding out what might happen should a discrepancy be ignored can help later in selecting priorities. Also important is finding out which discrepancies are deficiencies of skill and which are deficiencies of execution. Skill deficiencies can be remedied with appropriate training. Deficiencies of execution are not skill related and must be remedied through some other form of management action.

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          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Management   │  Step 1
          │ sanction     │
          └──────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Scanning     │  Step 2
          └──────────────┘
 ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
 │ Studying │ │ Direct   │ │ Asking   │
 │ records  │ │ observation│ │ questions│
 └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘

          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Focusing     │  Step 3    Where we are in the process
          └──────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Compiling    │
          └──────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Analysing    │
          └──────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┐
          │ Specifying   │
          └──────────────┘

 ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
 │ Training │ │ Performance  │   │ Non-training │
 │ needs    │ │ discrepancies│   │ needs        │
 └──────────┘ └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
 ┌──────────┐                          │
 │ Planning │  Step 4                  │
 └──────────┘                   ┌──────────────┐
 ┌──────────┐                   │ Management   │
 │ Strategies &│                │ action planning│
 │ Priorities │                 └──────────────┘
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 ┌──────────┐  Step 5
 │ Reporting│
 └──────────┘
 ┌──────────┐                   ┌──────────────┐
 │ Training &│                  │ Non-training │
 │ Evaluation│                  │ remedies     │
 └──────────┘                   └──────────────┘
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Introduction

In the preceding section of the handbook, scanning was defined as a form of reconnaissance. A different analogy may be helpful to describe focusing. It is customary for a scientist to test his or her hypotheses through a series of experiments before drawing conclusions. One might say that the assessor does the same thing in focusing. When engaged in focusing, the assessor is taking a closer look at the information obtained from scanning. Each identified performance discrepancy is analysed to find out two things:

1. How widespread the discrepancy is within the organization and the potential harm it could do to the organization if not corrected.

2. If the discrepancy exists because the employees concerned lack the knowledge or skill to perform correctly or if the discrepancy is caused by non-skill related factors or conditions.

Focusing techniques

When focusing, the assessor is engaging in three distinct types of activity.
1.   Information management
2.   information analysis
3.   The specification of training needs

Each of these focusing activities will be described in the following section of the handbook.

Step 3A - Information management (compiling)

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┌─────────────────┐
│    Focusing     │
└─────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐
│    Compiling    │
└─────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐
│    Analysing    │
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│   Specifying    │
└─────────────────┘
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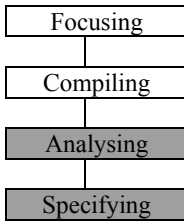
Information generated by scanning may exist in many forms: written information extracted from reports and documents, a comment on an observed discrepancy scribbled down on the back of an envelope, or a bundle of questionnaires resulting from a recent departmental survey. The task of the assessor at this stage of the process is to organize the information so that its meaning can be interpreted.

Two methods of organizing information on performance discrepancies will be discussed below. The first method involves the use of a simple tabulation sheet for entering the answers provided by employees to a traditional or Q sort survey. The second method is designed to assist the assessor in classifying discrepancies by type or source in order to compare them.

1. The tabulation sheet

An essential task in the conduct of a survey is the consolidation of answers to the questions onto a single form. This form is called a "tabulation sheet." Efficient methods of data tabulation become increasingly important as the number of employees and work units participating in the survey increases in size.

For example, if an assessor in a municipality is asked to conduct a survey on employee attitudes in six sections of a public works department and is asked to differentiate the responses of supervisory personnel from other employee groups within each section, the need for on efficient method of tabulating responses becomes apparent.

Table 5 illustrates the format for a tabulation sheet that an assessor might use to organize data from a questionnaire containing thirty statements.

Space is provided on the sheet for entering the number of employees who agreed with each statement and with the ranking factor. In addition, there is space to enter the total number of participating employees. Space is provided opposite each statement for remarks. This space is sometimes used to indicate which three or possibly five statements drew the highest positive or negative responses from participating employees. Space at the top of the sheet can be used to indicate the unit from which the responses were obtained. Space is provided at the bottom for comments.

Table 5 - Tabulation sheet									
Survey team									
Organization				Number Surveyed				Date	
Statement number	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Important	No opinion	Unimportant	Remarks
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							

If several survey teams are involved in carrying out an assessment. each team will pre pare its own tabulation sheets for Its assigned employees or sections. At some point in the focusing process, however, it may be useful to compare each team's results. This procedure will show the extent to which the two groups agree or disagree in their reactions to a particular performance discrepancy.

For example, if the statement "section files are frequently lost or misplaced" receives a high number of "strongly agree" responses in one section of the organization, the assessor might wish to find out if the same problem is of concern to other sections as well.

2. Classifying discrepancies

Classifying discrepancies is crucial inasmuch as the data supplied by various sources can be varied and complex. For example, reported discrepancies could range from poor skills in writing reports to interference by senior management with decisions made by lower managers to inadequacies in long-term security for employees who work on a contract basis. Under these conditions, some way must be found by the assessor to classify items of information according to what they have in common.

One method, called the Crawford Slip Technique, will help any assessor classify an array of facts and opinions about performance. Before proceeding , the reader is asked to read *pages 63, Annex F, Part III, "Resources", for a thorough description of the Crawford Slip Technique.*

To make efficient use of the Crawford Slip Technique, it is first necessary to prepare a set of cards on which are written general statements that can be used to group or classify individual performance discrepancy statements. For purposes of illustration, a crude list of general statements has been prepared. The list is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 - List of general statements for classifying performance discrepancies
A. Discrepancies due to lack of skill
• Basic job skills
• Technical skills
• Professional skills
• Administrative skills
• Management skills
B. Discrepancies of execution
• Lack of purpose/goal
• Inappropriate organizational environment
• Inadequate rewards
• Lack of resources
• Poor work relationships
• Insufficient leadership
C. Externally caused discrepancies
• Clients
• Other organizations
• Consultants
• Economic conditions

Step 3B - Information analysis (analysing)

Focusing
Compiling
Analysing
Specifying
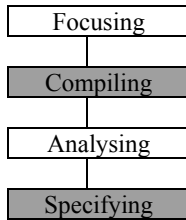
Performance discrepancies may be serious or they may be trivial in nature. They may affect a few people or they maybe causing major disruption to operations in many parts of an organization. Information analysis is intended to learn more about a reported discrepancy,. that is, to determine for whom it is a problem and how serious or urgent the need for action to correct it.

An assessor might discover from survey results, for example, that the professional staff in several sections of a municipal finance department are concerned about the filing system serving their offices. At first, it appears that the problem is related to the inability or failure of the support staff to properly maintain the system. On closer examination, however, it is learned that the design of the system allows unrestricted access to documents, the disclosure of which could compromise the interests of the municipality. It is a1so found that employees are not trained sufficiently in electronic data management. As a result, there is a continuing loss of data due to accidental erasure of records and the occasional entry of erroneous information into data files.

The point is, rather than assume that an important discrepancy exists because of data obtained during the scanning phase, the assessor should ask the following critical questions about the discrepancy. **(4)**

1. How urgent is the discrepancy?
By asking this question, the assessor is trying to find out how soon something must be done or a decision made to prevent problems from arising. *Example: inspection of fire equipment on municipal vehicles is long overdue.*

2. How serious is the discrepancy?
By asking this question, the assessor is trying to identify the potential impact and consequences for employees, for equipment, for clients, etc. Example: lack of training in the management of municipal tax records could result in lost revenue for the municipality.

3. What is the trend of the discrepancy and its potential for getting worse?
By asking this question, the assessor is trying to determine if the discrepancy will disappear on its own or is likely to spread and even affect other parts of the organization. *Example: A municipality that has recently expanded its boundaries is threatened with reduction in national government subsidies as a result of its staffs inability to calculate operation and maintenance costs for the enlarged service area.*

Answers to questions like these should bring out into the open the reasons why employees who are knowledgeable about a discrepancy believe it is important. With this information the assessor is better prepared to decide which discrepancies are in greatest need of management attention.

Table 7 is a worksheet for rating the importance of performance discrepancies.

Those with the highest ratings might be moved to the top of their respective columns as a reminder that they are most in need of corrective action.

No.	Discrepancy	Urgency	Seriousness	Future implications	Total
Table 7 - Worksheet for rating the importance of performance discrepancies					
Instructions					

Table 7 - Worksheet for rating the importance of performance discrepancies

Instructions

Make a list of performance discrepancies in the column at the far left side of the worksheet.
From your own knowledge or information obtained from others, rate each discrepancy on each of three criteria:
1. **Urgency:** the need for swift action to avoid a negative effect on organizational performance.
2. **Seriousness:** the degree or the extent of harm that could result from the discrepancy.
3. **Future implications:** the likelihood that the discrepancy will spread to other parts of the organization if not corrected.
To rate each discrepancy, place a number from one to five under each criterion. The number five (5) would be used to indicate **high** compliance with the criterion and the number one (1) to indicate **low** compliance. Numbers between one and five would be used to indicate the degrees of compliance with the three criteria. When all discrepancies have been rated, total the numerical ratings for each discrepancy across the worksheet and enter the result in the column on the right side of the worksheet.

No.	Discrepancy	Urgency	Seriousness	Future implications	Total
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Step 3C - Specifying training needs (specifying)

Focusing

Compiling

Analysing

Specifying
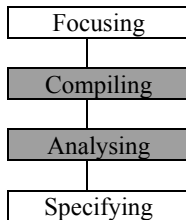
When confronted with a performance discrepancy, the automatic response from most managers is, "we have a training problem." In other words, they have concluded that, with proper training, the problem will disappear.

This is an erroneous conclusion for the following reason. A performance discrepancy can be called a training problem only when the people involved don't know how to perform. If the people do know how to perform, but they don't perform, training is not the answer. The discrepancy will have to be corrected in some other way. In other words, only those discrepancies which are caused by inadequate knowledge or skill can be corrected by training.

A situation familiar to most managers of human settlements organizations will help to explain the point.

The director of a division in a housing corporation tells the assessor, "we have a training problem."

When asked, "why," by the assessor, the director says: "My employees are always late completing a report that is due to the ministry of finance at the end of each quarter."

In an attempt to find out more, the assessor asks, "Do your employees do well with in their other reports?"

"Yes", says the director. "They are experienced report writers."

"So", says the assessor, "they could do the report on time if they wanted to?" to which the director replies, "Of course; but they don't." Probing further, the assessor asks, "do you have any idea why they have trouble with that particular report?"

"Well," the assessor replies, "maybe because the report contains information that is meaningless, and they know it. But they should do it anyway, because it's required."

What started out to be a training problem has become something quite different. It is not a matter of the employees not knowing how. There is nothing more they need to learn about writing the report. They don't need training. Something else is needed to correct the performance discrepancy.

The point is this. Much as we might like it to be otherwise, training cannot be relied upon to solve every problem that arises in a human settlements organization. As stated earlier, training is an effective remedy only for discrepancies in performance that can be traced to the absence of adequate knowledge or skill.

Discrepancies in performance that can be traced to other causes are sometimes called "deficiencies of execution." One authority estimates that over half the deficiencies exhibited by employees in business and government are deficiencies of execution, not deficiencies of knowledge. **(5)**

If this is true, then the assessor must divide his list of performance discrepancies into two lists as follows:
1. Discrepancies of knowledge or skill that can be remedied by training, better known as "training needs."
2. Discrepancies of execution that must be remedied in some other way.

In order to create two lists, the assessor reviews the original list to distinguish one type of discrepancy from another. How does the assessor know if a discrepancy is caused by a lack of skill or by something else? Bob Mager, an authority on goal setting and problem solving, suggests a simple question to ask:

"Could they (employees) do it if their lives (jobs) depended on it?"

Mager explains that if there is a deficiency of execution, the reply will be "yes." If there is a deficiency of knowledge, the reply will be **"no." (6)**

The assessor may wish to consult managers and supervisors of work units where such discrepancies occur for assistance in answering this question. The material presented earlier about asking simple questions of employees may be helpful to the assessor in carrying out this task.

Training remedies
When an assessor has concluded that a performance discrepancy exists because employees concerned lack the knowledge or skill to perform correctly, he/she must then find or design an appropriate training remedy. The next step in the training needs assessment process, as described in this handbook, offers guidance to the assessor for carrying out this important task. Before continuing the discussion of how to remedy training needs, however, it is necessary to explain what the assessor can do about discrepancies that cannot be corrected by training.

Non-training remedies
When the assessor, after thorough investigation, has concluded that the employees could perform if they really had to, then it is plain that something other than training is needed. A deficiency of execution exists.

Bob Mager offers a list of typical statements that an assessor is likely to hear from managers about skilled employees who are not performing correctly. Statements of this sort are valuable clues that the discrepancy is a deficiency of execution. **(7)**

"They aren't motivated."
"They just don't want to do it."
"They simply don't care."
"They are too lazy to do it."
"They don't have the right attitude."
"They oughta wanna do it."

Mager offers a second list of statements that are likely to be heard from non-performing employees themselves. **(8)**

"We're too busy to do it."
"That isn't our job."
"They'll fire us if we do it."
"They'll laugh at us if we do it."
"Not now, my friend …. later."

If any of these statements, or similar ones, is overheard by an assessor, it is likely the deficiency is one of execution, not of knowledge or skill. The employees probably could perform as intended, but they don't.

So, if the employees concerned already know how to perform, but they are not performing, there must be obstacles to correct performance in the work environment. It is the assessor's job to find these obstacles and to report them to management with suggestions for corrective action.

In human settlements organizations, as with other organizations everywhere in the world, there is an almost endless array of possible obstacles to correct performance. These obstacles can be found at the individual job level, at the organization level, and at all levels in between. In order to make the task of locating these obstacles a bit easier, a rough classification system has been developed.

If a performance discrepancy is not due to lack of knowledge or skill, then it is almost certainly due to one of the following organizational problems:
- Lack of Purpose
- Lack of Resources
- Lack of Structure
- Lack of Rewards
- Lack of Teamwork
- Lack of Leadership

Table 8 provides the assessor with a short list of typical deficiencies of execution and the organizational problems stated above to which each of them is most closely related.

Combined remedies
Many performance problems in a human settlements organization can be classified as **both** training needs and deficiencies of execution. In such instances, the assessor may conclude that more than one remedy is required to bring about the level of performance desired by management. A problem with lost or misplaced files in an office, for example, may call for multiple remedies that could include the implementation of a new files management system (non-training) and training for the staff in how to use the new system.

Summary
Focusing is the careful examination of information about discrepant performance. The intent is to facilitate analysis so that the relative urgency and seriousness of each discrepancy can be determined. Care must be taken to develop a good system of organization, particularly when the amount of information is large or when the information is highly diversified.

In addition, through focusing, the assessor can determine if a known discrepancy is a deficiency of knowledge or skill that can be remedied by training, a deficiency in execution that cannot be remedied by training, or a deficiency in performance that has both training and non training implications. These distinctions about performance discrepancies are of utmost importance to the assessor in proposing appropriate remedies for management consideration.

STEP 4 - PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Finding and implementing remedies for an organization's training needs requires careful planning. There are many resources available to the organization to train its employees, both from within the organization itself and from outside. An adequate strategy for using the resources available must be developed to meet each identified training need. Priorities must be assigned to the various strategies based on criteria of potential impact, cost, feasibility and timing for consistency with the organization's requirements.

Introduction
At this point in the training needs assessment process, the assessor has removed from the original list of performance discrepancies those which cannot be remedied by training. These discrepancies, called "deficiencies of execution," have been compiled into a separate list for reporting to management. The discrepancies remaining on the original list are believed to exist because the employees concerned do not have the knowledge or skill to perform as desired. Because of this, they have been specified as "training needs" by the assessor.

The task confronting the assessor at this stage in the process is to present management with an effective and realistic course of action for dealing with each of the training needs on the list. This is a planning task which can be carried out by the assessor in two stages:

1. Finding the most effective strategy for the use of training to correct performance discrepancies and achieve training goals.
2. Assigning each strategy a priority rating to guide management in making implementation decisions.

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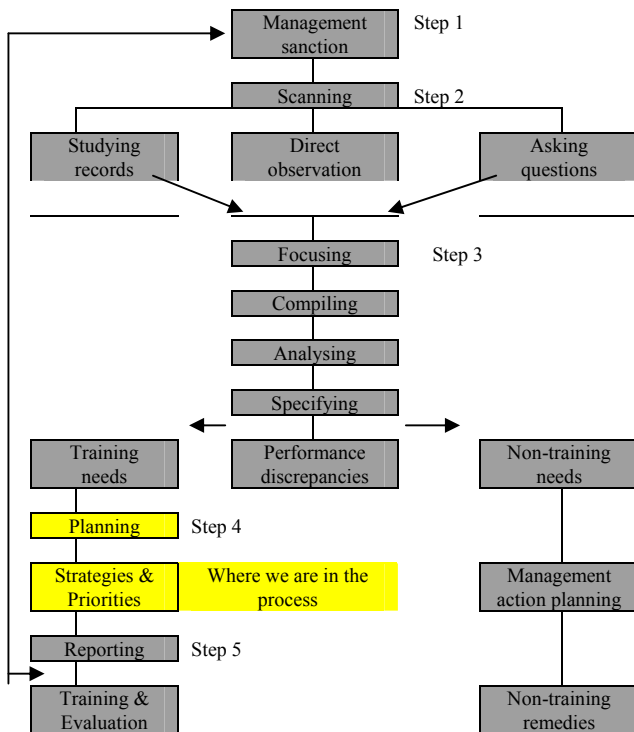
Step 4A - Preparing Strategies

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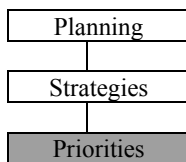
Strategies and objectives

Strategies are "actions or patterns of action for achieving goals." **(9)** For purposes of assessing training needs, strategies can be defined as general statements about how training will be used to bring about planned changes (goals or objectives) in specific areas of job performance.

Objectives precede and are the basis for preparing strategies. They are statements that describe what will exist when strategies are implemented successfully. A training objective, for example, is a complete description of what an employee being trained will be able to do after the training is completed.

To put it another way, training objectives define **what** is to be accomplished while training strategies indicate **how** it is to be accomplished. The following example illustrates the relationship between training objectives and strategies in the process of planning the remedy for a training need.

The assessor in a department of public works and planning has been told by senior staff members that reports prepared by the professional staff for other government agencies are so badly written that the senior staff frequently has to rewrite them to avoid embarrassment for the department. Working with the assessor, the senior staff develops a training objective related to the identified need as follows:

Objective

Professional staff who participate in the training will be able to write reports that meet acceptable standards of presentation and that require only minor editing and signature of the senior staff.

Having agreed on the objective of the training, the assessor assembles a group of employees with training backgrounds to discuss optional training strategies for meeting the objective of the senior staff. The result of their discussion is the following strategy:

Strategy

A training consultant specializes in how to communicate in writing about technical subjects should be invited to conduct a professional report writing workshop in the department. Participants will be expected to apply principles and techniques provided y the consultant in the preparation of written reports on topics directly related to their professional duties. The consultant will be expected to critique the work of each participant in detail with suggestions for improvement. Participants. Will include ten to fifteen engineers and planners for ten days of classroom instruction beginning on 1 September.

Generating strategies

One of the best ways to create strategies is to call together a relatively small number of employees who are familiar with a specific training need. The employees called will not always be the same people. One group of employees, for example, might be called together to review several training needs from the same section or division. Another group might be convened because participants share an understanding of a specific technical problem. Still another might be called because of each participant's familiarity with changes being planned by the organization, changes that might require training for certain employees.

A useful aid to members of planning group is shown in Table 8. Called a "Strategy Planning Worksheet," this form can be used to compile relevant facts about each training need on the assessor's list.

Parts A and B on the work-sheet are completed by the assessor before the first meeting of the planning group. The training needs, of course, come from the assessor's list. Statements of objectives are derived by the assessor from conversations with employees who are experienced in the area of performance from which the training need was identified.

A copy of the worksheet is given to each member of the planning group by the assessor before or at the group's first meeting. In addition, the assessor might provide each member of the planning group with a copy of the 'Guide for Selecting Training Resources' which con be found on 65, Annex G, Part III, "Resources". This material describes methods and sources of training that should be considered in planning a strategy for resolving a particular training need.

As described above, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) is a useful method for generating strategy options for each training need on the assessor's list.

A thorough description of the NGT con be found on page 61, Annex E, Part III, "Resources".

When the planning group has complied a list of training strategies for each need, the assessor can provide guidance to the group for choosing the best strategy in each case. The assessor might suggest that each member of the group, in considering which strategy to choose, give greatest weight to strategies that would:
1.   Provide the highest quality training possible for meeting the objective.
2.   Provide training at a cost that would not be viewed as unrealistic by management.
3.   Obtain a favourable response from employees to be trained and from their supervisors.
4.   Take advantage of training capabilities available within the organization or from professional training groups within the country.
5.   Would not disrupt operations during the absence of employees relieved from duty to be trained.

Table 8 - Strategy Planning Worksheet
A.   Training need - Spare parts management and inventory control for the garbage collection vehicles
B. Training objective - Foreman and mechanics will have up-to-date spare-parts inventories and will make advance orders for spare parts to reduce maintenance delays in half, from ten days to five days.
C. Training Strategy - Twelve mechanics and three foremen will attend two 3-day workshops organized by DADA Motor Works at two week intervals starting 1 September.
D. Suggested priority, High = H; Medium = M; Low = L - High priority as current delays are disrupting collection schedules and causing odor problems and possible health hazards.

Example
A strategy that calls for sending fifteen engineers and planners from the Department of Public Works to one of the prestige schools in Europe for three months might satisfy the criterion of high quality and, perhaps, favourable response. However, it would have little chance of satisfying the other three criteria.

On the other hand, a second strategy that calls for the some fifteen engineers and planners to attend a series of professional courses prepared by a local university in cooperation with department staff members would be more likely than the first strategy to satisfy the cost related criteria. By including in the strategy a provision for designing the training around problems identified, the strategy might rank high on the criteria of quality and to favourability as well.

Preferred strategies should be selected by the planning group through a group ranking process. In other words, each member of the group would be asked by the assessor to make a list of the strategies suggested for each training need on a sheet of paper. Each member would select the strategy that conforms most closely to the criteria provided by the assessor and would report it to the assessor. The sum of the individual selections would be calculated by the assessor and reported back to the group. The group task is completed when the strategy suggested for each training need is entered in Part C of the "Strategy Planning Worksheet."

The assessor might wish to provide members of a strategy planning group with a checklist, like the one shown in Table 9, to assist them in applying the five criteria to the most promising strategies selected by the group.

Instructions for completing the remainder of the "Strategy Planning Worksheet" are discussed in step 4B below.

Table 9			
Checklist for choosing the best training strategy			
Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3	Criteria
			1. Provide the highest quality of training possible for meeting the objective
			2. Provide training at a cost that would not be viewed as unrealistic by management
			3. Obtain a favourable response from employees to be trained and from their supervisors
			4. Take advantage of training capabilities available within the organization or from professional training groups within the country.
			5. Would not disrupt operations during the absence of employees relieved from duty to be trained.

STEP 4B - Setting priorities

Planning
Strategies
Priorities
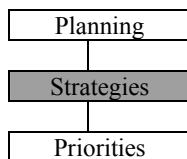
As discussed earlier in this handbook, training needs vary in seriousness, urgency, and potential consequences for the organization. Although the implementation of every training strategy may be desirable from the assessor's point of view, managers who are asked to make implementation decisions may not share that view. It is necessary, therefore, to provide management with the means for choosing among strategies should it be necessary to make choices. The process for making choices among otherwise desirable strategies is called "setting priorities."

There are three aspects to priority setting about which the assessor should be familiar. These are:
1. Collecting background information
2. Developing criteria
3. Ranking priorities

Collecting background information
After strategies have been selected for all training needs, the assessor should gather some background information about each strategy to help in priority setting. Among the questions to which the assessor should seek answers are these:
1. Has this training strategy been tried before, and with what result?
Through investigations within and outside the organization, the assessor may discover evidence that a strategy being proposed has been highly successful elsewhere or, on the other hand, has proven to be a dismal failure.

2. What would it cost the organization to do nothing to remedy the performance discrepancy or to plan ahead for the expected change?

Knowledge of this kind can be extracted from the results of information gathered during the "focusing" step in the needs assessment process. Management should be aware of the consequences to the organization, if any, of not providing training for employees who are unable to perform their tasks correctly.

3. **What will it cost the organization to implement the training called for by the strategy?**
Cost-conscious ministers and managers are always seeking the most value for the least expense. A method for estimating the cost of a proposed training program is described in Table 10.

4. **Are there any apparent obstacles to prevent successful implementation?**
Any obstacles to the successful implementation of a training strategy must be brought to management's attention. Otherwise, management might approve a strategy on other criteria only to find later that the strategy is impossible to implement.

5. **Are there any legal requirements or policy dictates that mandate use of this strategy?**
Some organizations require the use of specified programs or institutions to carry out certain types of training. Under these circumstances, only one strategy is possible, and a discussion of alternatives is of little importance.

6. **Could this strategy be used to meet more than one training need at the same time?**
A training strategy that can be wed to meet more than one need is of greater value than a strategy that can meet only one.

7. **How quickly can results be expected after the training is carried out?**
The more quickly a training need can be remedied as a result of implementing a training strategy the more justified a decision to give a high priority to the strategy.

Employees who are experienced in these areas may be asked by the assessor to furnish the needed information. The assessor should give special attention to the collection of information needed to establish an approximate cost for implementing each strategy.

Background information obtained by the assessor about each training strategy should be summarized in writing and appended to the "Strategy Selection Worksheet." (*See Table 8 presented earlier*)

Developing criteria
Criteria provide an objective basis for evaluating the importance of implementing a specific training strategy. Three criteria are suggested in this handbook to evaluate training strategies. They are:
- Impact
- Feasibility
- Timing

Table 10 - Estimating the cost of training	
Participant Costs	**Total**
Number of participants (by pay grades) x average salary x training hours	
Number of participants x hourly fringe benefit charges x hours	
Travel costs: average costs x number of participants	
Per diem: average allowance x number of participants x number of days	
Participant materials: unit costs x number of participants	
Participant replacement costs: number of hours x average salary	
Lost production: value-per-unit x the number of lost units	
Instruction Costs	
Number of trainers x number of hours x average salaries or fees	
Travel costs: total tickets, or average x number of trainers	
Per diem: average allowance x number of trainers x number of days	
Material Costs	
Manuals or printed handouts: print shop quotation	
Announcements: unit costs x number of units	
Visual aids: rental cost or purchase prices as required	
Space rental: if required, actual quotation	
Total Cost Estimate	

A high ranking for a strategy on these criteria can help management personnel with approval authority to justify the cost of a training proposal.

1. Impact
An important consideration in evaluating the value of a training strategy is the potential it has for achieving the training objective. This is called the potential **impact** of the strategy. There is a good test for impact. The test is to gather information in advance on who will be conducting the training and to use this information to answer this question:

Will the training give our employees the skills they need to perform as their superiors intend for them to perform?

If the answer is **"yes",** the impact is high. If the answer is **"no",** the impact is low.

2. Feasibility
It would be unrealistic to select a strategy that has high impact when obstacles exist that will prevent carrying it out. Such a strategy would fail the test of feasibility.

Obstacles that might prevent implementing an otherwise desirable training strategy could include:

lack of replacement personnel to fill in for employees who would be released from duty to attend training.

Language differences between trainers and employees to be trained.

Un-reconcilable scheduling conflicts.

It is often possible to prevent conditions that are likely to cause a training strategy to fail the test of feasibility. The effort might be worthwhile if the strategy ranks very high on other criteria.

3. Timing
Timing has to do with the interval between the time a decision is made to conduct the training and the time that the organization can expect to benefit from improvements in performance on the job. The importance of timing will vary from one training need to another.

For example, if a performance discrepancy is urgent in nature, is also of serious proportions, and the consequences grow with each passing day, timing is certain to be a crucial consideration. The strategy capable of meeting the need with the least delay would have an advantage over other options. The importance of the timing criterion would be less, on the other hand, if a delay in action to remedy a known discrepancy would make little difference.

Ranking priorities
Each training strategy to be submitted to management can be ranked by the assessor on the three criteria described above. A ranking work sheet, similar to the one shown in Table 11 can be used for this purpose.

Factors other than impact, feasibility and timing may have an influence on the selection of training priorities. One of these factors is political reality. Strategies that are politically controversial may not be acceptable to management regardless of the potential benefit to the organization.

Another factor is the tendency of management to use training to accomplish purposes that have nothing to do with improved job performance. For example, training maybe used as a reward for employees who have demonstrated their loyalty to the organization.

Still another factor is management's desire to demonstrate its benevolence and concern for the wellbeing of the employees. Rather than using training strategically to restore performance to a desired level, management may choose to make a gift of training, giving a little to every employee whether it is needed or not.

The assessor must be aware of all of the factors that are likely to influence management in deciding how much of an investment to make in training and where to place the emphasis. To ignore these factors could risk the loss of management interest in and support for training. In other words, the final list of priorities may be a mix of strategies, some arrived at through scientific analysis and some by making trade-offs that recognize political and administrative reality.

Based on the point score derived from the application of criteria in Table 11 and in consideration of other factors as described above, the assessor assigns a rating of "high," "moderate" or "low", for each strategy and enters the result in Part D of the "Strategy Planning Worksheet," *see Table 8 in the preceding section*.

| Table 11 - Worksheet for ranking training strategies |
|---|
| A training strategy is a course of action for the use of training to bring about a planned change in a specific performance area. The value of a training strategy con be determined by measuring it against the criteria of "impact", "feasibility" and "timing." |
| **Instructions**
In the space below, describe one of the training strategies. Then measure the strategy against the criterion of "impact" and enter a number value below criterion statement. A score of five (5) indicates high impact; a score of (3) indicates moderate impact; and a score of one (1) indicates little or no impact. Continue measuring the strategy against other criteria and entering point scores. Finally, sum the point scores for the three criteria to obtain a total point score for the strategy and enter that figure in the space provided at the end of the form. |
| **Description of strategy** |
| |
| **Criteria**
Impact: What is the potential for eliminating or reducing the performance discrepancy?
High _____ 5 pts.
Moderate _____ 3 pts.
Low _____ 1 pt.
Total points for impact: _____ |
| **Feasibility:** How likely it is that the proposed training will encounter few if any obstacles to successful implementation?
Very Likely _____ 5 pts.
Uncertain _____ 3 pts.
Very Unlikely _____ 1 pt.
Total Points for Feasibility: _____ |
| **Timing:** How long it will take to measure the impact of this strategy?
Short Term (one year or less) _____ 5 pts.
Medium Term _____ 3 pts.
Long Term _____ 1 pt.
Total Points for Timing: _____ |
| **Total points for this strategy:** |

Summary

Identifying and formulating proposals for meeting an organization's training needs requires careful planning. There are many resources available to the organization to train its employees, both from within the organization and from outside. A strategy for using the resources available must be developed to meet each identified training need. Priorities must be assigned to the various strategies based on criteria of potential impact, cost, feasibility and timing for consistency with the organization's requirements.

STEP 5 - REPORTING TO MANAGEMENT

The final step in a training needs assessment is to prepare a written report to management. The report must contain enough detail to support a decision by management on each training proposal. Report contents should include background on each training need, the desired level of performance in each case, a strategy for using training to achieve or restore performance to the desired level, priority rankings and an assortment of facts about each strategy. A worksheet for management use in reporting action on each strategy may be provided in the report.

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         │  Evaluation  │                    │   remedies   │
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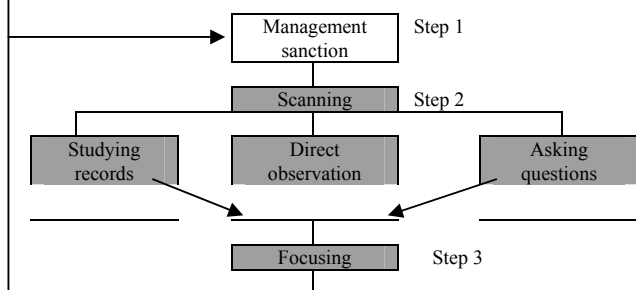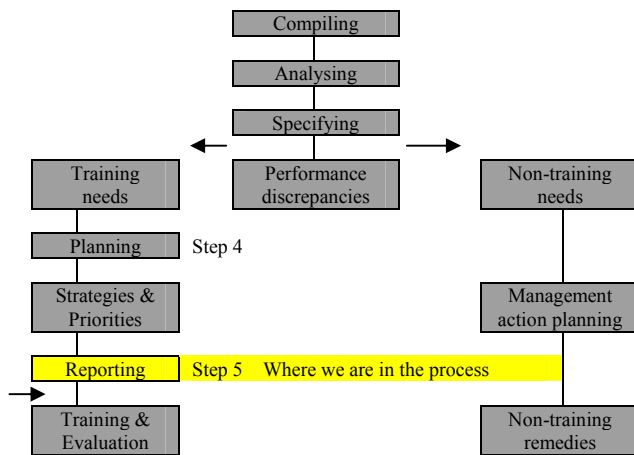
Introduction

When training strategies have been written and priorities assigned for each training need on the assessor's list, the results should be compiled into a report and submitted by the assessor for management review. Reporting is an important responsibility of the assessor for two reasons. First, the report of a training needs assessment is a written record of an important activity in which employees of a human settlements organization have taken part; it becomes a part of the history of the organization. Second, and of more immediate concern to the assessor, a training needs assessment report brings the results of the assessment to management attention. The intent is to obtain management approval for the strategies proposed by the assessment.

This step focuses on how the assessor can prepare and submit a report on a training needs assessment that is of benefit to management in making training decisions.

Planning the report

A useful report on the results of a training needs assessment in a human settlements organization must be carefully planned. The assessor should be prepared to answer the following questions before starting the report.

1.   Who in the organization is responsible for implementing the training strategies described in the report?
        As a rule, the manager who authorizes the initiation of a training needs assessment would be the recipient of any reports resulting from the assessment. On the other hand, the training strategies resulting from an assessment could affect several departments, divisions, or sections of an organization. Many managers could be involved. The assessor must determine which managers are to be informed about assessment results and in what manner decisions are to be made.

2.   What do the officials who will be reading the report need to know in order to take the actions called for by the assessment?
        As in the preparation of any report, the careful assessor should determine exactly what management wants to know about the needs assessment before writing the report. If this is done, busy managers will be given just the amount of information they need and no more. Moreover, the assessor will spend no more time on the writing task than is necessary for the purpose.

3.   What format and method of distribution is required by the organization for reports of this kind?
        This question will be answered differently in each human settlements organization. Some organizations prescribe the format to be used in all internally produced reports. Others specify size of type, methods of binding, or standard document covers. The "executive summary" is a popular choice of many organizations for reducing the reading demands on busy managers by providing a summary of key points and recommendations. An effort by an assessor to conform with the reporting requirements of his organization can have a major influence on how an assessment report is received by management.

Organization

The report of a training needs assessment is sometimes called an "action planning report", so-called because it is intended to move the manager who receives it to act upon the suggestions it contains. The action planning report has three components: 1) a transmittal memorandum; 2) the report containing a purpose statement, a description of the assessment process, and recommended training strategies; 3) appended material.

1. Transmittal memorandum

An action report submitted for management review normally is accompanied by a covering memorandum. Such a memorandum is particularly useful when the report is likely to be read by more than one manager.

The transmittal memorandum provides a convenient way for the assessor to introduce the report to the manager or managers, state what the report is about and explain why it has been written. The transmittal memorandum also may serve as a reminder to the manager receiving it that the report has been prepared at his/her request.

The assessor may wish to include information in the memorandum that would not be appropriate to include in the report. For example, the assessor might want to explain why he has given a higher priority to one strategy and a lower priority to another. Further, the assessor might offer to provide additional information should it be requested. The memorandum is also useful to the assessor in suggesting when and how management might wish to proceed with the implementation of any approved training strategies.

A typical transmittal memorandum is shown below:
Date: _____
To: Director, _____, Municipality
From: Hassan El-Ayubi
Subject: Report on training needs assessment

Enclosed is my report on assessment of training needs conducted at your request at the professional staff level in six municipal departments. The assessment was completed on 1 September 1987, The report recommends the implementation of five training strategies affecting approximately 85 professional employees at an estimated cost to the municipality of (local currency). Each strategy has been carefully analyzed and is believed to be the most effective and least costly remedy of those considered by the assessment task force.

It is my belief that the information contained in this report will enable you to make a satisfactory implementation decision. Should additional information be needed, however, I am prepared to provide it on request. I am also prepared to brief you and members of your staff about the assessment process and to write informational memoranda to employees of the municipality who took part in assessment activities.

I shall be grateful for your early reaction to the proposed strategies so that my staff and I can begin work on detailed plans for implementing the strategies you have selected.

2. The report body
The body of a needs assessment report, as a general rule, should not exceed three single-spaced, typewritten pages in length. The report body begins with a purpose statement that explains why a training needs assessment has been done, what it was intended to accomplish, and at whose instruction the project was undertaken.

A purpose statement for a training needs assessment in an urban development department might read as follows:

Early in June Mr. Mohamed Al-Azour, training director for the department of urban development was asked by the department director to assess the training needs of professional staff members in all divisions of the department and to report the results. The project was undertaken at the director's request to identify any performance gaps that may have resulted from recent changes in the role and scope of the department.

Information obtained from the assessment was expected to provide management with an improved understanding of discrepancies in performance at the professional level as a basis for planning appropriate training remedies. The scheduled completion date for the assessment was 30 August.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the training needs assessment.

Following the statement of purpose is a description of the process used to carry out the assessment. Since most managers are less concerned with how the assessment was done than what is being recommended, this section of the report should be brief. In fact, a detailed outline of what was done, where, when, and by whom, should be sufficient.

An outline of the procedure for carrying out a training needs assessment in an urban development department is shown below.

A description of the three step procedure followed in completing the assessment of training needs of the department's professional staff is as follows:

Scanning

General information about professional staff performance was obtained through interviews with the heads of each division of the department and a representative group of professional employees from each division. The purpose of the interviews was to identify and extract performance statements which could be incorporated into a survey instrument for more general information. Six division heads and twelve professional employees participated in the survey.

Detailed information about professional staff performance was obtained through use of a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of thirty statements to which participants were to respond using two scales, one related to "agreement" and the other related to "importance". Survey results were expected to indicate the extent to which professional employees agree with the performance discrepancies identified during the interview phase and the degree of importance they assign to these discrepancies. Forty-five professional employees completed survey questionnaires.

Focusing
The results of the survey were systematically tabulated and consolidated. Performance statements were classified by order of importance and by the number of responses not falling in the "no opinion" category. The ten statements which received the most reactions were identified.

Preliminary survey results were presented to division heads who were asked to respond by providing further information on the causes for each of the discrepancies. The underlying assumption was that, inasmuch as the discrepancies were identified by management and confirmed by the professional staff, causes should be readily apparent.

Further analysis of information gathered to date was carried out to separate discrepancies resulting from efficiencies of skill from discrepancies that were not skill related. Non-skill related discrepancies were classified into five categories for reporting to management. Discrepancies identified as skill related were labeled as "training needs".

Implementation planning
Further analysis of the list of training needs was under taken by a group of training specialists assembled by the assessor. The Nominal Group Technique was used to generate a list of strategy options for remedying each training need. A preferred strategy was selected for each need by the group using a simple ranking procedure by the assessor.

A profile was prepared for each training strategy and a priority of "high", "moderate" or "low" was assigned to each strategy by the assessor based on criteria of impact, feasibility and timing.

The final component making up the body of a training needs assessment report is the assessor's recommendation. A convenient way to present the training strategies being suggested for implementation is to develop a profile sheet on each of them containing all of the information needed by management to make a decision. An illustrative profile sheet for presenting training strategies is shown in Table 12.

3. Appended material
The final component of a report to management on a training needs assessment project is appended material. The assessor may wish to provide examples of questionnaires, interview schedules, tabulation sheets, or other materials that might be of interest to management. These should be marked or assigned an annex number and may be included by name and location in a table of contents.

Footnotes
1.   The examples used in this guide are taken from the experience of Arab countries.
2.   Alternative methods for using "scanning" to collect information about performance are explained in detail in the next step of the training needs assessment process.
3.   Soul Gellerman, *Motivation and Productivity* (New York: American Management Association, inc., 1963), p.248.
4.   Charles H. Kepner and Benjamin B. Tregoe, The Rational Manager. *A Systematic Approach to Problem Solving and Decision Making* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), pp. 66-67.
5.   Thomas F. Gilbert, "Proxeonomy: A Systematic Approach To identifying Training Needs", *Management of Personnel Quarterly,* Fall, 1967, p. 24.
6.   Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe, *Analyzing Performance Problems* (Belmont, Ca: Fearon Publishers, inc., 1970), p. 21.
7.   *Ibid*, p. 48.
8.   *Ibid*.
9.   Leonard Nadler, "Support Systems for Training", *Training and Development Journal*, October, 1971. p.3.86

Table 12 - Training Strategy Profile	
Strategy	
Objective	Cost
Participants	Source of Funds
Source of Training	Priority
Schedule	Comments

Summary

Reporting to management completes the five-step cycle that began when the assessor came across a discrepancy some place in the organization during regular scanning. The next steps involve detailed action planning for each training strategy approved by management, obtaining the resources required to conduct the training, and carrying out the training together with an appropriate form of evaluation.

It must be repeated once again that training is the lifeblood of every human settlements organization. Employees come and go. Goals, structures, and procedures for doing work change. New requirements are imposed. Because of these things, training is now and will always be essential to the, maintenance of an efficient and responsive employee work force.

At the heart of the training process is systematic needs assessment. As pointed out earlier in this manual, the unique feature of systematic needs assessment is its ongoing character. It is anticipated that the assessor will be engaged in assessment activities year-round and not merely at six-month or twelve-month intervals. This approach spreads out the work to be done. It permits decisions about training to be made throughout the year and not just at budget time.

The systematic needs assessment process is management's assurance that money allocated for training will be wisely spent, whether to remedy observed deficiencies in present skills or to build new skills for the future.

The assessor is the key to making the process work. His training and diligence will enable the organization to profit to the maximum extent from its investment in the training of its human resources.

This handbook has been written to aid assessors in human settlements organizations everywhere to master the process of systematic training needs assessment. It is hoped that this handbook will enable training to contribute even more to the effectiveness of human settlements organizations in the future than it has in the past.

PART III - RESOURCES

Overview

Part III of the manual contains materials designed to supplement and expand the capabilities of managers and assessors who are engaging in needs assessment activities as described in Part II, "The Assessor's Handbook." Since all of the resources included in Part III were mentioned by reference in Parts I or II of the manual, readers who have been reading the manual consecutively may be familiar with them already. If not, readers are encouraged to read each annex in the order presented and to think about how the technique being discussed could be used to conduct a needs assessment in their own organizations.

ANNEX A - TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) DOCUMENT

The situation wed to prepare this TOR, although fictitious, is characteristic of situations in which consultant assistance might be solicited by a human settlements organization to perform a training needs assessment. In preparing the situation, it is assumed that the organization is an urban development department in a municipality. It is assumed further that the department director intends to draw on the consultant's expertise to build a capacity within the organization to do its own needs assessments in the future.

The TOR document prepared for this annex has been written only to illustrate appropriate format and language. It is not intended for verbatim use. Assessors who have need of a consultant to assist in carrying out a training needs assessment are advised to consult with appropriate officials to prepare the TOR.

Department of Urban Development
Municipality of (name) _____
Terms of Reference
Title
Consultant for the conduct of a training needs assessment at the professional staff level and for training assigned department staff members to conduct subsequent needs assessments in other occupational and functional areas of this department.

Duration
One month lump sum contract to begin within ten working days after the execution of a mutually acceptable consultancy agreement.

Purpose & Scope
The purpose of this project is to identify the training needs of up to xxx number xxx professional employees of the Urban Development Department based on the collection and analysis of performance-based data obtained on-site. A further purpose is to train certain employees designated by the department director to conduct subsequent needs assessments in the department.

The consultant will be acquainted with and use the needs assessment procedures specified in a manual published in 1987 by *UNCHS (Habitat) and named Manual for Training Needs Assessment in Human Settlements Organizations*. The project's output are to be:
1. A report with specific assessment results including performance improvement needs at the professional level, a description of those needs which call for training, a listing of recommended training priorities, and a plan for implementing the training.
2. Appropriate evidence that designated departmental personnel have been trained and are prepared to assess the training needs of other departmental employees as directed.

Tasks
The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:
1. Develop and submit for review by department director a detailed work plan for conducting the needs assessment and for training designated departmental personnel. Include in the plan an active role for these personnel in carrying out the needs assessment.
2. After departmental review and with approval, conduct a reconnaissance onsite to determine the most appropriate data collection approach in collaboration with designated department personnel.
3. Provide draft material suitable for circulation by the department director to notify concerned employees about the needs assessment being undertaken.
4. In collaboration with departmental personnel, prepare appropriate data collection instruments and procedures and make arrangements for administering them.
5. Implement data collection procedures, using departmental personnel to the greatest extent possible.
6. Analyse results of data collection for evidence of performance discrepancies that exist because of apparent knowledge or skill deficiencies.
7. Generate strategies for remedying the performance discrepancies identified as training needs.
8. Assign priorities to the training strategies for the benefit of management in making implementation decisions.
9. Prepare a report to management that describes the purpose of the assessment, outlines the procedure followed and presents the training strategies selected in priority order.

Payment

The lump sum fee for these services is (specify amount in local currency) which will be paid to the consultant in three equal payments as follows:

1. One-third upon submission of a detailed work plan.
2. One-third upon completion of on-site data collection and analysis.
3. One-third upon submission of the assessment report and evidence supporting the completion of training for assessment personnel.

The consultant is expected to pay his/her own travel and subsistence while engaged in project related activities.

ANNEX B - GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Description
The personal interview, for purposes of this manual, is a face-to-face meeting between an assessor and an employee in which the assessor asks the employee questions designed to obtain information about a specific job, project team, department, or organization-wide performance discrepancy.

Case Study
An assessor in the Ministry of Electricity and Water learns, during a visit to one of its reverse plants, that there has been a rise in complaints from technical employees about work schedules and other working conditions. After consulting with the plant manager and other officials, the assessor decides to interview a representative group of plant employees to find out what is troubling them.

With the help of the plant manager and his staff, the assessor selects the employees to be interviewed (see Part II, "The Assessor's Handbook"), and drafts a memo for the manager's signature to notify the employees selected. To conduct the interviews, the assessor decides to use three simple questions:

1. What do you like most about working for the Ministry of Electricity and Water?
2. What do you like least?
3. What would you like to see changed about working conditions here in the plant?

The interview procedure
There are several ways the assessor in our example might proceed in conducting these interviews. The approach being suggested in this handbook calls for

- The use of a fixed set of questions, and
- Considerable latitude for an employee being interviewed to express his point of view about each of the questions.

By obtaining answers to the same questions, the assessor learns how different employees see the situation under discussion. An array of answers shows up inconsistencies admissions that may suggest the need for more data.

By allowing employees considerable freedom to elaborate on their answers, to supplement their answers with personal reactions and feelings, the assessor is able to find our how strongly employees feel. This may be important to the assessor in selecting performance discrepancies that should be given highest priority by management.

There are three separate phases in the conduct of personal interview:

1. Preparation: Motivating the employee to cooperate
2. Questioning: Asking questions and recording the answers
3. Probing: Seeking clarification or additional information

Preparation
An employee can be expected to cooperate in answering interview questions if he

- Feels comfortable with the assessor
- Accepts the purposes of the interview as valid and important, and
- Has no reluctance to say what he believes

The Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan provides some useful advice on how the assessor should introduce himself to the employee (respondent):

1. Tell the respondent who you are and whom you represent.
2. Tell the respondent what you are doing in a way that will stimulate his or her interest.
3. Tell the respondent how he or she was chosen.
4. Give brief but complete instructions
5. Adapt your approach to the situation
6. Try to create a relationship of confidence and understanding (rapport) between you and the respondent. **(1)**

Questioning

When the introduction is over the assessor is ready to begin the interview. There are some specific techniques the assessor can use to get the greatest benefit possible from the interview.

1.	The interview should be conducted in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. The interviewer should avoid creating the impression that what is taking place is a cross-examination or a quiz.
2.	The questions should be asked in the same order as that appear and exactly as worded in the questionnaire.
3.	Questions that possibly could be misunderstood should be repeated and clarified **(2)**

Probing

The assessor is likely to find that many of the answers given by employees to interview questions are vague and incomplete. When this is the case, probing is called for. The assessor is probing when he or she asks clarifying questions or seeks additional facts from an employee being interviewed. Probing has two purposes:

- To motivate and employee t explain his or her answers more fully.
- To re-focus the interview when an employee's answers are not responsive to the questions.

The following is an illustration of probing used by an interviewer to obtain additional information from an employee. The interviewer has just begun the interview, asking the respondent what her employees **do not** do that she would like for them to do. Notice that the interviewer repeats the employee's statements without asking a new question.

Respondent:	*Let me see. The main thing my employees don't do that I would like for them to do is write acceptable reports.*
Interviewer:	You would like you employees to write acceptable reports?
Respondent:	*That's right.*
Interviewer:	Could you tell me exactly how you would like for your employees to write their reports?
Respondent:	*Yes. My job would be much easier if I didn't have to rewrite reports that are overlong and badly worded.*
Interviewer:	You don't like to rewrite employees reports that are overlong and poorly worded?
Respondent:	*I certainly don't. It's a waste of my time. They should be able to do their reports correctly the first time.*
Interviewer:	Why do you suppose you employees don't do their reports correctly the first time?
Respondent:	*I'm not sure. I don't think they can. They try. But the results are just not acceptable. It may be that learning how to write reports was overlooked in their formal education.*
Interviewer:	Let me see if I understand what you are telling me – you want your employees to write reports that are concise and properly worded. You don't want to spend your time correcting their reports. Yo0u feel you employees would write better if they could, but that they lack the ability.
Respondent:	*That's exactly what I mean.*

Benefits

There is nothing with more potential usefulness to an assessor than a few minutes spent in private interviewing knowledgeable and willing employees. The personal interview is of particular value to the assessor who is working in an unfamiliar area of the organization. Accurate information and honest perceptions can improve the assessor's understanding of the situation. The answers received to her questions can even provide language for use in the design of follow-up surveys.

Limitations

Since interviews take time to arrange and conduct, their value diminishes to the extent that quick action is necessary. Their value also is lessened to the extent that employees being interviewed feel intimidated by the subject or by the interviewer. Moreover, the openness that is characteristic of the interview can be a disadvantage if the assessor lets his own point of view influence the way he asks questions or his interpretation of the answers.

Time requirements

The author's experience in conducting a similar exercise in the Urban Development Department of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Finance Department of the Municipality of Greater Amman in Jordan required approximately 45 minutes per chief of section/head of division.

ANNEX C - GUIDE FOR PREPARING A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Description
The survey questionnaire is a written instrument using questions about a specific issue and a rating scale to collect information anonymously from a relatively large and select group of respondents.

Case Study
A municipality has just appointed a new director for its Urban Development Department. After a few weeks, the director calls in the assessor. She wants to develop for training her professionals who vary widely in experience. She asks the assessor to tell her what training is needed. The assessor suggests a survey of all professional employees and asks the director to appoint a steering committee of professional staff members to help him design a survey instrument. The director agrees.

In his early meetings with the steering committee, the assessor is able to identify most of the critical performance areas. With this information he compiles a list of questions and, with the committee's help, organizes them into a survey questionnaire.

Soon after this, briefings are held with the professional employees who will be participating in the survey. The employees are told why the survey is being done, the schedule, and that they may complete their questionnaire in their offices or at home and return them anonymously to the assessor.

The briefings go smoothly. There is considerable discussion but no negativism to the survey or its purpose. More than seventy percent of the questionnaires are returned to the assessor, a fact that he attributes to the decision to hold briefings that are led by a member of the steering committee rather than himself.

The data is tabulated and the results reported to the director. The result: the director, send a memo to all surveyed employees thanking them for being part of the process and outlining the training plan that is being prepared as a result of survey findings.

Survey procedure
There are several aspects of surveying that the assessor should know.
- Selecting questions to ask
- Constructing the questionnaire
- Administering the survey
- Obtaining a satisfactory response

Selecting questions to ask
The question is the heart of the questionnaire. Questions to be asked must be relevant to the issue under study and be of sufficient importance or interest to motivate a response. Employees may be asked to give factual information or they may be asked for their ideas and opinions.

The assessor can look to several sources for useful questions to include in a questionnaire. As mentioned earlier in this handbook, the assessor might use the data from interviews or meetings conducted previously to formulate questions for inclusion in the survey instrument. This approach has the advantage of using language that will sound familiar to the employees being asked to complete the questionnaire.

Another source of questions is to borrow from similar surveys completed at an earlier date. This approach can permit valuable comparisons with earlier results and save considerable time in questionnaire design. Finally, the assessor may wish to take advantage of standardized survey questionnaires, of the type found elsewhere in this section. Some of these can be used without modification.

Survey questions can be either closed-ended or open-ended. Close-ended questions give the employee a set of answers to choose from. Here is an example of a close-ended question.

Professional employees are being asked by management to work on too many projects are the same time.
_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly disagree

An open-ended question, on the other hand, does not force the employee to select a given response but to offer a response spontaneously in his own words.

Do you feel that employees in positions like yours are able to handle several projects at the same time? (Please explain your answer)

Close-ended questions are easy to answer and quick to analyse. They are subject to assessor bias, however, and can omit important aspects of an issue. Open-ended questions avoid these problems but take time to answer and are harder to analyse.

Constructing the questionnaire
One of the common formats for questions in surveys about job performance is the rating scale. This issued when employees are being asked to make a judgement about a question. There are several variations of the rating scale.
1.   Making three options available. YES, MAYBE, NO. The choices are place below each question.

2.   The options available are: STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, NO OPINION, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE. The choices are placed below each question.

3.   Four options are available: EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT, IMPORTANT, UNIMPORTANT, EXCEEDINGLY UNIMPORTANT. Choices are placed beside (to the right of each question).

4.   Two different responses are requested for each question: First, do they AGREE, are they UNDECIDED, or do they DISAGREE. Them, do they feel the question is IMPORTANT, or do they feel the question is UNIMPORTANT.

Example
1. Strongly agree	A. Important
2. Agree	B. No opinion
3. No opinion	C. Unimportant
4. Disagree	
5. Strongly disagree	
<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	<u>A B C</u>

After the scale is selected, the assessor should review the questions to be sure no more are included than necessary. A cardinal rule of questionnaire design is:

KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE!

Make it a point to restrict the length of questionnaires to fifteen or twenty questions at the most. Review the list of employees to whom the questionnaire will be sent. How to do this was covered in Part II, "The Assessor's Handbook". Finally, prepare instructions needed to aid employees in completing questionnaires and returning them. Note the following example.

Example
As you know we are asking employees in positions like yours to tell us what knowledge and skills are needed to perform their jobs more effectively. To make known what you think, please answer the following questions. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE. The intent is not to find out who thinks what, but instead, to learn about your views in general. When you complete the form, put it in the envelope and return it to the training office. Thank you.

Administering the survey
Employees who are being asked to complete survey questionnaires should be given information on time and place at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting. The notification should explain the reason for the survey and how the results will benefit participating employees. Employees should be given positive assurance that their responses will be held in strict confidence.

At the scheduled time for questionnaire administration, the survey administrator should insure that all those who are to complete the questionnaires have arrived and are seated comfortably. The assessor should have the staff or consultants responsible for questionnaire construction present to answer questions. After distributing the questionnaires should:
1.   Offer greetings. Give his/her name and work section. Thank participants for taking the tine to take part in the survey. Tell participants on whose authority the survey is being conducted. Explain that the survey is expected to produce information that management can use to provide better training for the organization's employees.

2. Read the introduction printed at the top of the questionnaire out loud and ask participants to read along silently. After reading the introduction, emphasize that participants should not write their names on their questionnaires. Emphasize that the intent of the survey is not to find out what any particular employee thinks but what employees think in general.

3. Review any examples that have been included in questionnaire instructions or read a few statements out loud and ask participants at random what the selected statements mean to them. This is an important way to prevent misunderstandings. Emphasize the importance of participants responding to all statements on their questionnaires. Stress the importance of choosing a "no opinion" option only when absolutely necessary. If the questionnaire has two scales i.e., agreement and importance, make it clear that participants are to circle responses on both scales for each statement.

4. Ask participants to read all instructions carefully before beginning their questionnaires. Tell them the average time it takes to complete a questionnaire. If space is provided on the questionnaire for "comments" urge participants to use the space.

5. Encourage participants who do not understand a statement to raise their hands so that the administrator can offer assistance. (Note: If a problem mentioned by one participant could be a problem for others as well, the administrator may wish to explain the correct way to proceed for the befit of all participants).

6. Tell participants to take their time completing their questionnaires. Explain that, on completing questionnaires, participants are to return them to the administrator and, after that, return to work.

7. Ask participants to begin. Circulate among them as they work to answer questions and to be sure questionnaires are being completed according to the instructions given.

Obtaining a satisfactory response
There are several steps the assessor can take to be sure of a questionnaire return rate of seventy-five percent or better.

1. Circulate a memo signed by the official who has authorized the survey. The memo should describe the purpose of the survey, explain why it is important, and assure respondents that their replies will be held in strictest confidence.

2. Use staff meetings to inform staff of the importance and purpose of the survey.

3. Follow-up with a written reminder just prior to the date the questionnaire is due. Send the reminder to everyone who received a questionnaire. Include an apology for those who have already responded. This technique should increase the rate of questionnaire return and provide respondents with further evidence that they can rely on the assessor to preserve the anonymity of their responses.

Benefits
The principal advantage of the survey questionnaire is that it permits the assessor to reach the largest possible number of employees at the least cost. Moreover, survey questionnaires are anonymous. This is of particular importance when the issues are sensitive. Strong feelings that might not be expressed in an interview might be expressed on a survey form, feelings which could have a significant effect on what an employee might do or so.

Limitations
A major limitation in using survey questionnaires is that the answers must be accepted as final. There is no opportunity to probe for clarification or additional facts as there is during an interview. In addition, there is always room for misunderstanding when the respondent must rely on written instructions alone. Finally, questionnaires may not obtain an adequate response rate despite the assessor's best efforts. With a low response rate, the assessor is left wondering what effect the non-respondents would have had on the final results had they returned their questionnaires.

Time requirements
The author's experience in two organizations in Jordan revealed that a team of four assessors required one day to prepare a survey questionnaire comprising thirty (30) statements.

ANNEX D - GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING A Q SORT SURVEY

Description
The Q sort is a survey method that can be used to gather and organize data on viewpoints and feelings in relation to a specific problem facing a workgroup in an organization. The Q sort is administered one-on-one using a set of 3x5 cards, each containing a statement about performance. Respondents sort the cards and then prioritize the important cards in rank order sequence. The date is then recorded for consolidation, analysis and reporting.

Case study
An assessor is called in by the leader of a project team appointed by the director of personnel to plan a major reorganization of the department. The assessor is told by the leader that after three months of solid progress, teamwork has ground to a halt. Although still meeting, the creative flow of ideas and enthusiasm characteristic of recent team

member performance has all but disappeared. The leader is convinced that team members are putting self-interest ahead of the task and do not realize how their behaviours are jeopardizing team progress.

With general team agreement, the assessor, uses three simple questions (see Part II, "The Assessor's handbook") to gather some preliminary information about team performance and then supplements this with more data obtained while observing one of the team meetings. These data are translated by the assessor into performance discrepancy statements. Each statement is recorded on a 3x5 index card. Duplicate card decks are prepared, one for each team member.

At its next meeting, team members are given card decks and instructions for sorting and rank ordering them and for recording the results on data sheets. A consolidated list of priority discrepancies is then prepared by the assessor for presentation to the team.

Confronted with their own data a few days later, the astonished team members acknowledge what has been happening at team meetings and resolve to take steps to correct the discrepancies.

Survey procedure
The organizational Q sort instrument described here was developed originally to furnish systematic data for face-to-face workgroups engaged in making planned organizational changes **(3)**

Q sort statements cover a majority of the behaviours that occur in a an ordinary workgroup. The approach we are suggesting for use by assessors who use this manual is to generate statements about a specific organization or group problem by asking the three simple questions described in Part II, "The assessor's Handbook".
1.   What do you like most about working for your organization?
2.   What do you like least about working for your organization?
3.   If you could change anything about the performance of your organization with the wave of your hand, what would you change?

In developing the statements to be recorded on each 3x5 index card, the assessor should use the wording of the persons from whom the comments were obtained to the greatest extent possible. It may be necessary to arrange the cards into general categories, like team focus, team resources, or team leadership, based on the purpose of the survey. There should be at least five cards for each category and not more than about fifty cards overall. Each card should be numbered for ease in tabulating results. A pilot test of the survey is advisable to eliminate any problems in advance.

The following steps might be followed by an assessor using the Q sort to gather data from a group.
1.   Give each participant a deck of cards. Explain what is written on the cards and the specific organizational problem to which the written statements are related.
2.   Ask participants to sort through the cards and to pull out five cards that they feel are the most important with respect to the stated problem. For example the problem stated by the assessor might be, "why is our team not making progress in solving the assigned problem?" The five cards selected by one of the participants might have these statements written on them:
    * We don't have a clear picture of the problem to be solved.
    * A few members of the team do all the talking.
    * We are expected to do too much in too little time.
    * Methods for discussion and decision making have not been explained.
    * The team leader does not keep us on track.
3.   When participants have selected the five cards, ask them to rank order the five cards from **most important** to **least important**. For example, a participant might rank order the five cards shown above this way: Card A on top, followed by D, C, B, and Card E on the bottom.
4.   After the cards are sorted, ask participants to turn over each of the five cards and to record its number on a data sheet like the one below.
5.   If there are two or more problems, ask participants to shuffle all the cards and to re-sort them, this time in relation to the new problem.

Example
Problem 1: Why is our team not making progress in solving the assigned problem?

Questions sorted and ranked:
High   A   D   C   B   E   Low

Problem 2: _____

High   __   __   __   __   __   Low

Background Information:
Work Unit: Job Title:

6.   Develop and distribute a summary of the results and rankings for each category.
7.   Report the results to the authorizing official and arrange feedback to the organization or group as appropriate.

Benefits

A principal advantage of the Q survey is that it is capable of yielding information that is exceptionally clear and specific. Unlike a traditional survey, it permits the assessor to follow-up with respondents who seem to enjoy the game-like character of the sorting procedure. If on of the objectives of data gathering is to preserve anonymity, this can be accomplished through one-on-one administration of the instrument. Finally, the Q sort, when used as we have suggested, is relatively easy to administer and interpret.

Limitations

The Q sort, as described in this manual, is dependent on a pre-existing database for the problem statements printed on each card. Moreover, the larger the participation group the longer the time required to prepare the individual card decks. The Q sort can be a time consuming method if used on a one-to-one basis to preserve the anonymity of respondents. Like other survey techniques, the Q sort forces respondents to react to a set of questions and permits little spontaneous expression.

ANNEX E - GUIDE FOR USING THE NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

Description

The nominal Group Technique (NGT) **(4)** is a structured group meeting aimed at gathering information useful for resolving problems faced by an organization. NGT features the silent generation of ideas, round-robin feedback and public recording of ideas, individual prioritizing, and group decision making on collective priority ratings.

Case Study

A housing corporation is under pressure from the ministry of planning to make major changes in its policies for siting housing projects. During a particularly hectic meeting of corporation managers, virtually no progress is made. The director of operations, who is in charge of the meeting, decides to try something different. Trained in NGT the director asks the managers if they are willing to try the NGT as a way to get the meeting moving. He hopes NGT will help to break the ice and produce dome useful ideas about the changes that will have to be made in work practices and procedures if the corporation moves to adopt the new policies.

The director, gives instructions to the managers about NGT in some detail since none of them has been involved with it before. The managers are skeptical at first, but their skepticism turns to enthusiasm as results begin to appear. Within minutes the round-robin phase produces fifty-five change possibilities to which the director later responds.

Procedure for using NGT

NGT was developed by Andre L. Delbecq and Andrew H. Van de Ven in 1968. Since that time, NGT has gained extensive recognition throughout the world and has been widely applied in health, social service, education, industry, and government organizations. **(5)**

NGT meetings normally consist of from one to five groups of from five to nine people each seated around tables open on one end. The open end is used for a flip chart pad on an easel to be used by the leader for the collection and public display of ideas furnished by members of the group.

The leader has markers for writing on the chart pad and masking tape for taping sheets containing ideas on the wall of the room.

Members of the each group are provided with pencils and one dozen 3x5 index cards each.

The group leader opens the meeting with a cordial welcome, a statement about the purpose of the meeting, clarification of the importance of each member's contribution, and clear indication of how the meeting's output will be used.

Although a meeting might involve several groups at separate tables, for purposes of illustration, we will explain the process as if there was one table consisting of between five and nine participants. The process consists of six steps.

Step 1: Silent generation of ideas in writing

The leader reads the nominal question to the group out loud while writing it in plain sight at the top of the pad. Care must be taken by the assessor to choose clear and unambiguous wording for the question so as to generate the most specific responses possible. An appropriate question, "*How can we make better use of our time at meetings*", for example, should produce many useful ideas. This question is far superior to the more general question: *"How can our meetings be more productive."*

The leader then asks group members to write down as many ideas s they can think of in answer to the question. Group members are cautioned by the leader to work silently and independently.

Step 2: Round-robin recording of ideas on chart pad

Starting at one end of the table, the leader asks a group member to read one of her answers out loud. The answer is recorded by the leader on the pad. The next group member is asked for one of his answers. This process is continued until every answer of every member has been recorded. As sheets on the pad are filled, the leader tears them off and tapes them to the wall. Members are encouraged by the leader to "pass" if they have nothing further to offer with the understanding that they may re-enter later with any new ideas that may occur to them. Discussion of ideas and side conversations at the table are strongly discouraged by the leader.

Step 3: Discussion for clarification

The leader explains that the purpose of this step is to insure that everyone understands what is meant by each idea on the pad. The ideas are taken one at a time as written. Discussion of an item is to focus an understanding not agreement ort disagreement. Members are told that everyone is responsible for clarifying an idea and not just the person who offered it.

Step 4: Preliminary vote on ideas of importance

The leader ask group members to select five ideas from the list of ideas displayed on the sheets taped to the wall and to write each item down on a separate 3x5 index card. The leader collects the cards and shuffles them to retain anonymity. The leader then tallies the vote and records the results on the flip chart in front of the group.

Step 5: Discussion of the preliminary vote

Members are told by the leader to examine the voting pattern on the chart and to comment on anything about the pattern that seems unusual, surprising, or inconsistent. The leader stresses that the discussion may persuade some members to change their votes, but that no one is being or should feel pressured to do so.

Step 6: Final vote

The final vote is simply a repeat of Step 4. It combines individual judgements into a group decision. When it is over, the leader thanks group members for their efforts, repeats what will be done with the meeting output, and closes the meeting.

Benefits

Since the advent of brainstorming in the early 1950s, group problem solving methods have been a popular target for research study. These methods have been found consistently to produce superior results to the idea production efforts of individuals working alone. NGT is such a method. Unlike brainstorming, in which members of a group interact with one another from the start, NGT is designed to let people work in the presence of one another in a structured manner but to write down their ideas independently rather than talk about them. Because of this characteristic, NGT groups have been found to out perform interactive groups consistently in the number and quality of ideas produced. This seems to be because members of NGT groups are less subject to being inhibited by one another and are less prone to make premature judgements.

Limitations

Considerable preparation for NGT meetings is necessary. For this reason, it is less useful as a spontaneous meeting technique than other group methods. Because of its structure, NGT is inflexible. This makes it difficult to adjust the procedure or to change topics in the middle of a meeting.

Time requirement

The NGT was used by the authors in Jordan for two teams of nine assessors to formulate training responses and strategies. The process required approximately one day.

ANNEX F - GUIDE FOR USING CRAWFORD SLIP TECHNIQUE

Description
More than thirty years ago, before the invention of the desktop computer, a researcher named Crawford developed a technique for organizing data that bears his name, the Crawford Slip Technique (CST). Crawford's technique involves the manual arrangement of data on the same subject into common categories for the purpose of improved analysis and decision making.

Case study
Lets pick up where we left off in Annex B where the assessor in the Ministry of Electricity and Water has collected data from a group of water plant technicians who were complaining about unsatisfactory working conditions. You may remember from that case that the assessor used three simple questions to collect facts and opinions about working conditions at the plant in face-to-face interviews. Answers to the simple questions, "what do you like least?" and "what would you like to see changed about working conditions here in the plant?" have provided the assessor with a lot of information.

Familiar with the CST, the assessor gathers up the information, finds a quiet room, and using 3x5 index cards and a felt-tip marker, beings work.

After reading the various answers to these simple questions, the assessor draws out of each on of them one or more statements that describe what is wrong with working conditions at the plant. The assessor writes them down on separate cards and places them randomly on a large table. Next, the assessor rearranges the cards so that related ones are grouped together in columns on the table.

After eliminating duplication and some rewriting for clarification, the assessor asks a secretary to copy down the information for record purposes. The assessor now has an organized list of performance discrepancies to use in continuing the analysis.

Using the Crawford Slip Technique
Developed originally to be done by an individual working alone, the CST can be carried out by two or more people working as a group.

To use the technique, the assessor should locate several hundred 3x5 index cards. The assessor will also need writing instruments and a large table on which to place the cards.

The first step is to review the data in order to identify specific instances where existing performance is different from desired performance. Each of the discrepancies identified are printed in large, bold letters on one of the cards. If several people are working together, the interview data can be divided up to save time.

As discrepancy statements are written, they are placed on the table. No attempt is made at this point to organize the statements. After the interview data have been exhausted, and all the identified discrepancies are lying face up on the table, grouping begins.

One way to group discrepancy statements is to determine what they have in common. These common features can then be described with a few generalizations. The generalizations are printed in bold letters on separate cards which are arranged in a horizontal line along the top edge of the table. Discrepancy statements are rearranged so those related to the same generalization are placed in a column below it on the table. This process will resort in as many columns of discrepancy statements as there are generalizations.

A further refinement in grouping discrepancy statement is to reorder them within each column by importance. One way to do this is to place discrepancies that are mentioned the most often nearest the top of their columns. Another way to rearrange discrepancies by importance, is to ask this question about each of them:

What would happen if nothing is done to correct this discrepancy?

The urgency of the answer in each case would suggest the placement of the discrepancy in the column. Having completed the grouping of discrepancy statements by common features and in rough order or importance, the work should be transcribed by a secretary for later use.

Advantages

The CST is useful to an assessor in converting a mass of data into a form that simplifies analysis. Similar discrepancies are grouped together to show relationships and to highlight those which are most in need of corrective action. The technique is simple and inexpensive. It can be done by an individual working alone.

Limitations
The technique is subject to assessor bias at several points in the process, particularly if the assessor is working alone. This limitation can be overcome by several people working together, and if collective decisions are substituted for individual judgements wherever possible.

Time requirements
The authors used the CST in Amman, Jordan to formulate a questionnaire on the basis of "statements" collected during the interviews with chiefs of sections. Having interviewed ten chiefs of sections, it took a group of six assessors approximately one-half day to analyse and classify the results of the interviews and to formulate thirty questions.

ANNEX G - GUIDE FOR SELECTING TRAINING RESOURCES

Having determined how best to correct a training need, the assessor must concentrate on finding an effective way to conduct the training itself. The wise assessor will include some of the employees to be trained and their supervisors in these discussions. The focus of the discussion will be on which of three possible ways to carry out the training:
1.   Use house resources to conduct the training.
2.   Invite consultants to conduct the training inside the organization.
3.   Send employees to outside training programmes.

Which source is best depends on many factors. Among the factors to be considered are the availability of in-house expertise, the number of people to be trained, the uniqueness or complexity of the problem to be solved, employee availability to attend training, and outside resource capabilities.

Three sources of training will be discussed in this annex with an explanation of the most appropriate use for each source.

1. Inside programmes or trainers
The assessor should first look inside the organization for training capabilities that match training needs. There are five possible sources.

Existing programmes
This is the first thing to look for. The objectives of the training may match a programme that is being conducted in the organization already. It may be that an existing programme, offered to meet a different need, can be modified or adapted to satisfy the new training need. Without doubt this would be the quickest, least expensive way to respond.

Special assignments
Sometimes employees in one department need to develop closer work relations or better technical understanding of how things are done in another department. When this is the case, direct assignment for a period of one to six months may be the most effective and least expensive way to develop the needed skills. Special assignments can be useful in the development of employees who are being prepared for promotion.

Field visits
An opportunity to see first hand how an operation of method is handled elsewhere can be the necessary stimulus for change. Care must be taken to avoid superficial visits. This can be done by using a pre-visit discussion, a planned agenda of activity, and a host manager to keep the visit on track.

Self-study
Correspondence courses and other types of self-study are useful in preparing employees for future assignments. Where possible these courses should be tied to the promise of promotion or salary increase as an incentive. Close monitoring and encouragement is necessary to keep participant interest from lagging.

Training trainers
Opportunities exist in every organization to train managers or professional employees to be trainers. Logic suggests that teaching employees who have knowledge of a specialized field is more efficient than training trainers to be subject-matter experts. Besides, managers who serve as trainers are likely to be more sympathetic to training and development.

2. Invited training consultants

A cost effective method of providing training is to hire a training consultant to visit the organization and conduct one or more programmes before departing. This approach to training is most appropriate when many employees need the same training. It is cheaper to pay the travel expenses of one consultant than a dozen or more employees. With the consultant's consent it may be possible to obtain copies of the training materials for future use by trainers inside the organization.

The most reliable way to determine whether or not a training consultant is a good instructor is to watch him or her in action. The most important qualities to look for are her expertise, real-world experience, and an understanding of the learning process. In addition, credible consultants must be willing to work toward the achievement of the organization's objectives, not their own.

There are several disadvantages in using training consultants. Most of them are busy people. As a result, they prefer to use ready made presentations that may or may not satisfy the needs of the employees to be trained. Most consultants will not take the time to become entirely familiar with a client organization, its needs and its objectives. Finally, training consultants are available to help the employees that have been trained to apply what they have learned.

3. Outside seminars and workshops

Programmes offered by professional or academic institutions are one of the most frequent answers to the assessor's search for remedies to training needs. The length of these programmes may range from a single day to several weeks or months. Their quality covers an even broader area.

As a rule, the most dependable institutions have programmes which have been available for at lest two years and are conducted by a stable faculty. These institutions specialize in certain subjects and have a good reputation among organizations similar to the one seeking assistance.

Former participants inside the organization or elsewhere are a good source of information about programme quality. An important question to ask them is how they are actually using what they learned rather than, *"did you like it?"*

There is one major drawback to the use of outside training institutions. The courses they offer may be competent enough. However, presentations may be prepackaged to suit the needs of a general participant population and lacking relevance for the skill requirements of employees sent to be trained. Moreover, as with consultants, the faculty of training institutions will not be on a day-to-day basis to monitor the application of what has been taught.

Footnotes

1. Institute for Social research, Survey Research Center, *Interviewer's Manual* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1969), p.3-1.
2. *Ibid*., p. 4-1
3. R. Stephen Jenks, "An Action-Research Approach to Organizational Change" in The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1970, pp. 131-150.
4. The term "nominal group" means a group in name only and refers to individuals working as a problem-solving group who are allowed to communicate orally.
5. Andre L. Delbecq, Andrew H. Van de Ven and David H. Gustafson, *Group Techniques for Program Planning* (Glenview Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975).

PART IV
CASE STUDY ON FIELD TEST AND APPLICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THREE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ORGANIZATIONS

Overview

In 1987, UNCHS (Habitat) successfully developed, field tested and applied the training needs assessment (TNA) methodology. The present case study, prepared by Nicholas You and Svend Erik Sorensen, provides an overview of a field-testing exercise which was part of a workshop held in Amman, Jordan, and an assessment exercise carried out upon the request of Dubai Municipality (DM) of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.).

Background information and objectives
The field test

A workshop on Training Needs Assessment in Human Settlements Organizations was organized and conducted by Nicholas You, UNCHS team leader, David Tees, UNCHS consultant, and Svend Erik Sorensen, UNCHS training officer, in Amman, Jordan, 18-30 July 1987. The workshop was sponsored by the United Nations Centre for Human

Settlements, funded by the United Nations Development Programme and hosted by the Regional Training Centre for Human Settlements in Arab States. **(1)**

The objectives of the TNA workshop were as follows:
1.   To field test a series of tools and instruments for assessing training needs in human settlements organizations.
2.   To familiarize officials from selected human settlements organizations in Arab States with the assessment instruments and tools for further application in their respective countries.

A total of 15 officials from Arab States attended the workshop.

The assessment exercise
As a follow-up to the workshop, UNCHS (Habitat) received a request from DM to undertake a TNA exercise. A local training team comprised of nine U.A.E. nationals With professional credentials, assisted by a UNCHS training officer and consultant, engaged in a training needs assessment exercise of nine days duration from 19-28 September 1987. The needs assessment concentrated on six organizational units of the municipality. The exercise included a variety of data collection and analysis techniques and the formulation of recommendations for action to improve performance of the municipality.

The objectives of the TNA exercise were as follows:
1.   To familiarize staff from Dubai Municipality with the application of various assessment instruments and procedures.
2.   To provide Dubai Municipality with an in-house training needs assessment capability.
3.   To identify and prioritize training needs and strategies at the professional level in selected departments and sections in order to improve productivity and performance within the municipality.

Focus of the workshop and the exercise
Guidelines for carrying out the TNA were presented in the draft version of the present manual, and followed the needs assessment process as described in the Part II, *"The Assessment Handbook"*

The field-testing component of the workshop concentrated on the scanning and focusing steps of the cycle while the Dubai exercise included the formulation of training responses and strategies. Three techniques for scanning the environment were introduced, as follows:
• Studying records and documents
• Observing performance on the spot
• Interviewing staff at different levels in an organization.

Observation was considered inappropriate for the field test, as participants in the workshop were too numerous and unfamiliar with the organizations concerned. Likewise, studying records was considered inappropriate, owing to time constraints and lack of access to documents. In the Dubai exercise, studying records was implemented superficially owing to time constraints.

Characteristics of the organizations
Two human settlements organizations (HSOs) were selected for the field testing, -the Urban Development Department (UDD) of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Finance Department of the Municipality of Greater Amman (MOGA) in Jordan. The TNA exercise was carried out in Dubai upon the request of the Director of the Municipality. The characteristics of the three organizations are as follows:
1.   UDD, MOGA and DM are all HSOs, however, their mandates and scope of work are quite different. The UDD is essentially product/output oriented (sites and services and upgrading projects), whereas the MOGA is essentially service/client oriented. DM is responsible for both products/ outputs and the provision of services.
2.   The three organizations are undergoing rapid change. UDD has recently experienced a change of status from that of a municipal development agency to a national agency. MOGA has recently expanded its jurisdiction to include 13 local authorities and 12 village councils previously administered by the central government. DM is currently undergoing organizational changes which include the dismantling of a centralized structure, the streamlining of sections/operations and the organization of a manpower and training policy. The recruitment of young nationals is also being pursued. It should be noted that nationals constitute a minority of the professional staff of DM, the remainder being expatriates.
3.   Senior management in the three organizations expressed commitment to training, although neither UDD nor MOGA has established a training unit or section. The Recruitment and Training Section of DM primarily dealt with recruitment and very little with training.

Scope of assessment

The TNA was applied, in the case of UDD, to the entire organization, in the case of MOGA to the Department of Finance, and in the case of DM, to six units (Health, Personnel, Administration, Licensing, Public Counter and Garage). Figures 1 and 2 provide a view of the organizational structures for UDD and MOGA. As Dubai Municipality is undergoing significant re-organization, no chart is presently available.

Methods and techniques used

The TNA was limited to professional staff and their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. The workshop and the exercise concentrated on performance discrepancies, as this was assumed to be the most common concern of HSOs.

Time frame

In order to ascertain the true cost of a TNA exercise, the workshop simulated the following situation:

Participants played the role of a commercial consulting firm cabs upon by UDD and MOGA to undertake a TNA. The firm had successfully bid for the contract by specifying that the TNA would be completed in six working days and not interrupt the work of any single supervisor in the organization for more than two hours and any single professional employee for more than 30 minutes.

A report containing preliminary findings would be submitted to management at the end of the 10 days. Pending the results and findings of the preliminary report, a second contract would be offered for a comprehensive assessment. The workshop and exercise agenda were organized in such a way as to permit careful monitoring of the following:

- The training component, in order to ascertain the amount of time required to train assessors;

FINANCE DEPARTMENT MUNICIPALITY OF GREATER AMMAN

Technical Assistant ── Admin. Assistant ── Lawyer

Supervision & Execution Directorate	Population Affairs Directorate	Design & Planning Directorate	Finance Directorate	Estate Mgt. & Marketing Directorate	Administrative Directorate
Building Permit Division	Studies Division	Architecture & Planning Division	Accounting Division	Beneficiary Selection Division	Personnel Division
Supervision Division	Beneficiaries Affairs Division	Civil Engineering Design Division	Financial Analysis & Auditing Division	Loans Division	Registrar Division
Monitoring Division	Community Development Division	Tendering Division		Sales Division	Maintenance Services Division
Surveying Division				Land Acquisition Division	Procurement & Office Goods Division

- The assessment component, in order to ascertain the cost of assessment for both the assessors and the assessed organization.

Training component

The training component of the workshop and the DM exercise entailed the following:

	Amman workshop (days)	DM exercise (days)
Presentations in the form of lectures	3.0	1.0
Exercises, skill practice and discussions	2.5	0.9
Preparation of Action Plans for the implementation of TNA in the participants' respective agencies	1.0	-
Evaluation of the workshop/exercise	0.5	0.1
Total:	**7.0**	**2.0**

Assessment component

The assessment component of the workshop and the DM exercise involved the following:

	Amman workshop (days)	DM exercise (days)
Phase I: Personal interviews with heads of each section/division/department, in order to identify performance discrepancies.	1.0	1.5
Phase II: Development and application of a survey instrument. The survey was applied to selected professional staff based on "issues" (performance indicators/statements) identified by section/division/department heads.	1.5	1.5
Phase III: Group discussions with all heads of sections/divisions/departments, in order to gain additional information and focus on the causes of performance discrepancies identified in Phase II.	1.5	-
Phase IV: Analysis of the data gathered during Phase I - III in order to distinguish between training-related and non-training-related discrepancies.	1.0	2.0
Phase V: Formulation of suggestions for training activities/strategies, where appropriate, and preparation of report.	1.0	2.0
Total	**6.0**	**7.0**

The workshop ran for 13 working days, while the exercise ran for nine working days. The training components constituted 54 percent of the Amman workshop and 22 percent of the DM exercise.

Implementation
The following paragraphs provide a step-by-step description of the implementation process and the experiences gained:

Phase 1: Scanning the work environment
The scanning technique used during the workshop consisted of interviews with heads of sections of the Finance Department of MOGA and all department heads of UDD. One of the lessons learned from the workshop was that interviews should be conducted not only with supervisors but also with selected employees to benefit from their views about performance deficiencies in the organization.

This recommendation was incorporated in the DM exercise where heads of sections of the six units of the DIM and selected employees were interviewed.

The purpose of the interviews was to identify and extract performance statements on the basis of simple question techniques.

Two series of questions were asked, one pertaining to the organization and the other to the staff.
1.   Questions asked about the **organization**
   - "What do you like most about your organization?"
   - "What do you like least about your organization?"
   - "What one thing would you want to change?"

2.   Questions asked about the **staff**
   - "What are your professional staff doing that they should not be doing?"
   - "What are your professional staff not doing that they should be doing?"

This simple interviewing technique was used to obtain an overall view of the organization and its professional staff (out-scoping). In order to gather detailed information about staff performance and related issues, "probing" was used - Who? *When? What? Where? Why?* - as a supplemental interview technique. The average time spent per interview was 45 minutes.

The lessons learned form the Dubai exercise are the following:
1.   The importance of studying records
   It is important for the interviews to include broadly phrased questions as indicated above, as well as specific output-related questions based on information gleaned from studying records. Studying records is important to avoid the identification of needs related to processes only and to include the identification of discrepancies related to the production or delivery of outputs.

2.   Probing techniques
   Systematic probing (5Ws) is required in order to extract useful information from the interviewing phase as answers are often general and may include several "issues." Systematic probing allows the assessor not only to extract useful information, but also to separate issues and formulate pertinent statements that can be used during the survey phase.

Phase II: Survey
The second phase of the scanning process was to compile the information gathered and to present it in the form of a survey sheet. The purpose of the survey was to have staff confirm and prioritize the performance statements extracted from the interviews.

Information gathered during Phase I was compiled in the form of "statements." A survey "questionnaire" *(see Figure 3)* containing 30 "statements" and using two rating scales was developed for each organization. In the case of DM three survey questionnaires were developed and targeted at three different organizational units.

The survey was applied to approximately 25 percent of the professional staff available at headquarters of the UDD, 30 percent of the staff of the Department of Finance of MOGA, and 10 percent of the staff of the six units of the DM. Surveyed employees represented each department/section and were briefed on the objectives, methods and confidential and anonymous nature of the information. Both the Amman workshop and the DM exercise, revealed that the confidentiality and the anonymous nature of the exercise should be strongly emphasized, particularly in situations where the assessor is facing staff who are only familiar with a strong hierarchy and, in general, are not asked their opinion. The level of education among the respondents should also be taken into consideration when formulating the statements.

Figure 3 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT/MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AND RURAL AFFAIRS	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. No opinion 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree	A. Important B. No opinion C. Unimportant
1. There is lack of co-operation between different departments	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
2. Report-writing skills are nonexistent	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
3. Motivation is high among employees in the performance of their duties	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
4. Staff do not perform their duties when superiors are absent	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
5. Suggestions made by employees are taken into consideration and implemented	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
6. Some employees do not observe full working hours	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
7. Employees follow instructions given by their managers	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
8. Decision-making is delayed because too many managers are involved	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
9. Poor knowledge of the English language leads to communication problems with consultants	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
10. Employees who are not familiar with computers prevent efficiency	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
11. Trainees appointed for a short time at low salaries perform poorly	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
12. Senior management does not follow the rules of the organization	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
13. There is a lack of qualified staff in some specialized jobs/positions	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
14. Employees are assigned to jobs that do not fully use their skills	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
15. The organization does not provide long-term security for its employees	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
16. Work relations are harmonious among employees	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
17. Employees follow orders and execute their tasks efficiently.	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
18. Visiting projects in other countries helps employees in the implementation of national projects	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
19. There is not enough staff to do the amount of work to be done	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
20. Job descriptions do not always exist and duties are not well-defined	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
21. Decision-making power is only given to top management	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
22. Senior management interferes with decisions made by lower level managers	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
23. Decisions are mostly based on personal preference	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
24. Lack of training prevents satisfactory job performance	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
25. Employees provide more service to clients that are known to them	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
26. Training is given to employees without considering their job requirements	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
27. Employees are not familiar with the rules and regulations of their respective departments	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
28. Top managers encourage employees to discuss their work-related problems	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
Statements taken from municipality of Amman questionnaire		
29. The rewards given to employees are not sufficient as incentives for better performance	1 2 3 4 5	A B C
30. Many tasks which could benefit from computerization are done manually	1 2 3 4 5	A B C

In the Dubai exercise the survey instruments were pilot-tested on a few employees in order to make sure that the formulation of "statements" was understandable and to verify the design of the instrument. Similarly, it is necessary for the assessor to ensure that all employees involved are briefed by senior management in advance. The assessor, therefore, has to insist that at least a memorandum be circulated to all concerned staff.

The Amman workshop revealed that provision should be made for survey sheets to be filled in "at leisure" by those employees that work behind counters or deal with clients in such a way that it is difficult for them to interrupt work at a predetermined time. It is not advisable, however, to adopt such a system for all employees given the high risk of low returns.

In addition, staff members were told to avoid the "no opinion option" and staff members were assembled in small groups in order to avoid interrupting the work of the whole organization/department.

In the workshop only five "statements" that solicited the most reactions were selected for Phase III. In the case of the Dubai exercise, 10 "statements" were selected.

Phase III: Focusing

In the focusing process, performance discrepancies stated In the survey were systematically tabulated and consolidated, wing tabulation sheets and the Crawford Slip Technique. Figure 4 contains a sample tabulation sheet in which performance-deficiency "statements" were classified by order of importance and by number of responses not failing in the "no-opinion" category.

The subsequent step in the focusing process, the analysis of information, can take different forms.

The workshop in Amman presented results of the survey to section/department heads of the two organizations in order to seek further information on the causes of performance discrepancies. This was necessary as assessors were external to the organizations concerned.

Figure 4										
Tabulation sheet										
Survey team: Mohamed Assan										
Organization: Health					**Number surveyed:** 28				**Date:** 23/9/87	
Statement number	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Important	No opinion	Unimportant	TOTAL	Remarks
1	14	9	0	4	1	26	1	1		23 - 8
2	2	9	3	8	6	22	4	2		11 - 14
3	9	14	0	6	1	24	1	3		23 - 7
4	3	3	2	17	3	16	5	7		6 - 20
5	15	8	0	1	4	24	3	1		23 - 5
6	5	12	1	8	2	19	4	5		17 - 10
7	18	7	3	0	0	20	6	2		25 - 0
8	5	6	2	11	3	14	9	5		11 - 14
9	9	5	4	9	1	17	5	6		14 - 10
10	12	11	2	2	1	18	10	0		23 - 3
11	4	5	9	5	2	12	10	6		9 - 7
12	7	14	2	3	2	20	7	1		27 - 5
13	5	8	1	10	4	19	4	5		13 - 14
14	6	8	4	9	1	9	9	0		14 - 10
15	4	7	5	10	1	13	13	2		11 -11
16	7	13	2	4	2	18	7	3		20 - 6
17	14	6	3	6	0	20	5	3		20 - 6
18	7	7	2	7	5	17	7	4		14 - 17
19	4	4	5	9	2	11	7	6		8 - 11
20	12	6	1	4	4	19	5	4		18 - 8
21	14	11	1	1	1	23	4	1		25 - 2
22	8	9	4	7	1	20	5	3		17 - 8
23	3	17	2	4	1	22	5	1		20 - 5
24	7	8	1	8	3	18	5	5		15 - 11
25	6	8	3	7	2	22	3	3		14 - 4
26	8	13	0	6	1	24	3	2		21 - 7
27	2	1	0	16	9	13	8	7		3 - 25
28	10	10	2	5	2	22	2	4		20 - 7
29	11	8	1	5	0	22	2	4		19 - 5
30	5	9	1	10	3	21	1	6		14-13

Detailed information on the most important discrepancies identified was obtained by using the following questions:

1. *"If nothing is done to correct the discrepancy, what effect will it have on the organization?"*
   Probing was used to extract further information, for example:
   a. How serious is the discrepancy?
   b. Has it a long-term impact?
   c. How quickly is action needed?
   d. Is the discrepancy likely to cause trouble elsewhere?
2. *"Has the discrepancy existed for a long time or is it new?"*
3. *"Has something changed (recently) that can explain the existence of the discrepancy?"*
4. *"If the discrepancy were corrected, how would employees be performing?"*
5. *"Does the discrepancy exist because employees do not know how to perform correctly?"*

6.   *"Have employees performed correctly in the past?"*

In the DM exercise, the assessors were employees of the organization and therefore in a position to determine the causes of discrepancies. Brainstorming and group discussions were used to classify the issues and determine the need for corrective action. It should be stressed, however, that the group interviews conducted in the Amman workshop had the following advantages.

- The identification of causes and nature of performance discrepancies was considered more reliable as more people were involved.
- The group-interviewing process created general awareness among heads of units on the problems involved. This was considered particularly useful as in both UDD and MOGA no previous meetings on performance discrepancies and training needs had been held prior to the exercise.

Phase IV: Identification of training needs

The information gathered through the three previous phases was carefully analyzed in order to identify discrepancies that are training-related and discrepancies that are related to other causes, such as lack of resources, organizational structure and leadership. The techniques used in this phase can be divided into two steps, each step covering a systematic series of questions. The first step states the nature of the performance discrepancy, the duration of the discrepancy, where in the organization it occurs and, finally, what is being done about it, if anything. The second step is aimed at identifying whether the performance discrepancy is training-related, an organizational improvement need or a combination of both. *Figures 5 and 6* provide a description of the questions used and the answers obtained by the assessors. This series of questions was considered as a very useful guideline for identifying training needs and organizational needs.

Non-training-related discrepancies were further classified according to the following categories:
1.   There is a lack of purpose or misunderstanding of the goals of the organization;
2.   Structure of the organization does not correspond with the goals/objectives/working methods of the organization;
3.   Reward system does not encourage employees to perform well;
4.   Resources are inadequate to carry out the tasks and responsibilities involved;
5.   Conflicting relationships prevent work efficiency;
6.   Leadership is poor.

Assessors were thus able to obtain detailed description of the nature and causes of performance discrepancies. Management options were then presented in three categories:
1.   Training needs only: *for example, training in computer applications.*
2.   Organizational improvement needs: *for example, lack of clear directives and precise guidelines.*
3.   Combination of both needs: *for example, lack of spare parts and lack of know-how in the management of stocks and spare parts.*

Phase V: Strategies and priorities

In the Amman field test, reports were prepared to present a summary of findings and suggestions for priority areas of training to the chief executive officers. The nominal group technique and report-writing skills were introduced and used by the participants.

Figure 5	
Question	**Findings**
What is the discrepancy?	Inability to find documents in the filing system
What performance is considered to be satisfactory?	To find all documents easily and quickly without losing any. To guarantee security of sensitive documents and computerized data bases.
Has the discrepancy existed for some time or is it the result of something new?	The discrepancy has existed for eight years. Administration was changed in 1979 and 1981 due to misuse of sensitive information. The system has not yet recovered. Files are still being lost.
Where in the organization is the discrepancy found?	Everywhere in the Finance Department
Is corrective action important to the organization? Why/Why not?	Action is important as it will: a. Save time and frustration; b. Improve the image of MOGA; c. Improve client relations; d. Increase trust between sections.
Is the discrepancy related to the performance of the professional staff?	Yes and No

If no, which of the following categories does the discrepancy fall under:	
Purpose	
Structure	Files are not centralized.
Rewards	No punishment for mismanagement of files
Resources	Filing system not adapted.
Relationships	
Leadership	
If yes, what lack of knowledge or skill is implied by the discrepancy? Please state.	Basic filing system needs to be changed and staff trained in how to manage files. Security measures need to be implemented and staff trained on how to access computerized data properly.
Date:

Assessors: | COMMENTS: Impact of training would be greatly enhanced if accompanied by improvements in the filing system, relocate file and controlled access to sensitive information. |

Figure 6	
Question	**Findings**
What is the discrepancy?	Most employees are not familiar with computers, tasks are still done manually. Lack of full-time programmer prevents efficient use of computers. Computers are under-utilized.
What performance is considered to be satisfactory?	To use computers optimally.
To automate manual tasks.
To be able to use computers to respond to new tasks.
Has the discrepancy existed for some time or is the result of something new?	The discrepancy is new, computers were introduced 8 months ago.
Where in the organization is the discrepancy found?	The whole department.
Is corrective action important to the organization?

Why/Why not? | Better use of computers and automation of manual tasks would improve performance and liberate staff for other important work. |
Is the discrepancy related to the performance of the professional staff?	Yes and No.
If no, which of the following categories does the discrepancy fall under:	
Purpose	
Structure	
Rewards	Access to computers according to work
Resources	Lack of programmer
Relationships	
Leadership	
If yes, what lack of knowledge or skill is implied by the discrepancy? Please state	All staff need basic training on computers and how to use appropriate software
Date:

Assessors: | COMMENTS: Full time programmer would greatly enhance performance; however basic orientation training should be implemented immediately. Consultant could also be used to help choose and select appropriate software. |

Working in small groups, members of the assessment team in DM engaged in "brainstorming sessions" to generate a list of preliminary strategies for resolving discrepancies identified as "training needs". A preferred strategy was selected for each training need using a simple ranking procedure. A profile sheet was then prepared on each training strategy after consultation with selected members of the DM staff. Background information was obtained on cost, expected participation and appropriate resources for conducting training programmes. Each strategy was assigned a priority of "high", "moderate" or "low" based on criteria provided by the team. The last step involved the preparation of a final report containing recommendations for strategy implementation and specific organizational changes believed desirable for strengthening training functions in Dubai Municipality. Samples of strategy profiles are presented in *Figures 7 and 8*.

Tentative conclusions

Cost effectiveness

The implementation of the TNA proved to be easy and cost effective, requiring modest resources for the organizations concerned. No single supervisor of the organizations concerned was required to interrupt work for more than two hours; no single employee of the organizations concerned was required to be absent from work station for more than 30 minutes. In the case of DM, however, field staff required transportation to headquarters. When TNA becomes an on-going activity, assessors should approach field staff in their work environments and thus reduce the staff time required for transport.

Usability of various tools and tenements

The various tools and instruments introduced all proved to be easy to use. They did not, as initially expected, give rise to any problems regarding applicability to different cultural behaviour patterns, styles of management, leadership or organizational structures. The level of education among respondents, however, should be taken into consideration when adapting various techniques to the assessment process.

Guidelines for conducting face-to-face and group interviews during the workshop were largely respected and produced the desired results. This was particularly the case with "control of meetings" during the phase for identifying training needs, where all section/department heads were assembled to discuss the causes of performance discrepancies. It should be noted that external trainers were not present during any of the interviews or meetings in order not to influence the "behaviour" of any of the parties involved.

Figure 7
WRITING STATISTICAL REPORTS

Reason for training

Statistical reports prepared in various sections often contain incorrect, badly organized or incomplete information, making it difficult to compare results from one month to another.

Goals of training

Staff can prepare statistical reports that are useful to the organization, help to state current conditions, compare and evaluate information correctly, and recommend appropriate courses of action.

Cost and work load summary (1987-88)

Number of employees to be trained:	10
Units and sections affected: *	Licensing and Commercial Registration Section Personnel Section and Health Department
Approximate hours of training:	12 hours
Estimated Cost: **	Dhs 1,800
Priority:	Moderate

Strategy

Participants should receive training in technical report preparation and analytical methods normally required for data comparison and analysis in municipal departments. Participants should be provided the opportunity to prepare reports of the type normally used in the performance of their duties and to be critiqued on the content and organization of their work.

One employee from each section will be selected to participate, except the Health Department which should be permitted to have two participants.

A local consultant from one of the following institutions or a similar institution, should be invited to conduct the training: U.A.E. University; the Development Institute; U.A.E. General Council.

Approved in principle; proceed with action plan preparation	
Rejected. Comment:	
Returned to the Recruitment and Training Unit for revision	
Suggestion	
	_____

* Some other sections may be able to benefit by sending employees to this training, These sections are: Statistics,

Building, Horticulture, Roads, Planning and Public Houses.

** Training can be conducted by senior staff from Dubai Municipality. Also, if the training is conducted by a qualified consultant coming for other reasons, the cost will be absorbed in the contract. The cost indicated is for overtime payment of participants.

Figure 8
TIME MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Reason for training

Time is lost and the quality of work suffers from the inability of many supervisors and project managers to plan and schedule their own work and the work of their subordinates.

Goal of training

Systematic and timesaving methods are used by supervisors and professional staff in carrying out their daily responsibilities.

Cost and work load summary (1987-88)

Number of employees to be trained:	32
Units and Sections affected:	Health Department, Personnel Section, Administrative Affairs, Licensing & Commercial Registration Section, Garage
Approximate hours of Training:	48-50
Estimated Cost:	Dhs 29,480
Priority:	Moderate

Strategy

The training would give participants specific guidance on work planning and scheduling, including how to keep records of time use, develop daily and weekly schedules, identify and avoid time wasting activities and choose tasks for delegation to subordinates. Training must be designed so that participants have the opportunity to practice using time management techniques in relation to their own duties.

Participants at this training course will include at most four professional and key staff from each of the surveyed sections: Health Department*, Administrative Affairs, Personnel Section, Licensing and Commercial Registration Section and Garage. Employees who will be selected to attend this training course will be those who are assigned to supervise and delegate work to their subordinates. The training course will be conducted by a professional training consultant or agency from a nearby Arab country, if possible, such as the Jordan Institute of Public Administration. The training course will be scheduled for Spring 1988.

* Health Department should have approximately 16 people to attend this training course, all this due to the large size of the department within the Dubai Municipality.

Management review	
Approved in principle; proceed with action plan preparation	
Rejected. Comment:	
Returned to the Recruitment and Training Unit for revision.	
Suggestion	
Signed	Date

Insights gained on the TNA

The experience from the Amman workshop and the Dubai exercise can be summarized as follows:
- The TNA manual developed by UNCHS provides a useful tool for assessing training needs and for identifying organizational and management problems affecting performance in day-to-day operations.
- The TNA is cost effective, requiring only modest resources in terms of assessors' time and of inputs required from the client organizations.

- The training component of the TNA also requires only modest resources. Non-training staff of HSOs can acquire the skills in one week. Professional trainers or management auditors only require two to three days of orientation training.
- The instruments contained in the TNA methodology are easy to adapt, easy to we and do not present cultural adaptation problems.
- The TNA cycle is able to effectively distinguish between performance discrepancies that can be remedied through training, discrepancies that require organizational improvements and discrepancies requiring a mix of both types of solutions.
- The TNA cycle allows for the prioritization of training needs and thus for the optimal use of training resources.

As the TNA cycle is sufficiently cost-effective to be applied on a continuous basis by any human settlements organization, it should promote human resources development polices and strategies more in line with the specific nature of work in these organizations.

Footnotes
1. UNDP: Project RAB/831013: Training in the Design and Execution of Urban Projects for Arab States.