A Country Retrospective Study:  
The Impact of WBI Activities, FY01-02, on Participants from Brazil in FY03

The Challenge
The World Bank assists its client countries in achieving their development goals by focusing on their specific needs. The foundation of its strategy at the individual country level is a document such as a Country Assistance Strategy, which is prepared for each country in consultation with the government, civil society organizations, and other development agencies. Learning from the lessons of development assistance in the past, the Bank places particular importance on building local capacity with "strains of knowledge to produce seeds that will flourish in the varied soils of our planet."  

World Bank Institute Intervention
The World Bank Institute (WBI) supports the World Bank's overall agenda by providing learning programs and other related services to assist and enhance development. In order to achieve greater impact at the country level, WBI redirected its primary strategy for organizing and delivering its products from a thematic program-focused approach to a country-focused approach be more closely integrated with other Bank-wide operations.

Underlying Assumptions
The underlying assumptions of WBI's country-focused approach are the following:

- WBI provides its clients with tools, products, and services that are developed and refined to meet the specific needs of each country.
- Clients who receive these WBI tools, products, and services will improve the country's capacity at multiple levels (individual, institution, and country).

Evaluation Methods and Instruments
In light of the WBI's new country-focus approach, the Institute Evaluation Group (IEG) initiated retrospective studies of FY01-02 programs in five priority countries, Brazil, Egypt, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The primary objective of the studies was to assess the impact of WBI's interventions on participants from these countries and document the findings as baseline data against which future comparisons can be made. The present Briefs reports on the results in FY03 of WBI's programs in FY01-02 for participants from Brazil.

The Brazil retrospective study comprised the following instruments: participant questionnaires administered to former participants in WBI-sponsored activities during FY01-02; in-depth focus group discussions with selected former participants in Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza; and a review of the Brazil Country Assistance Strategy, 2000-2002. Key research questions of the study concerned the

relevance of WBI learning activities to Brazil’s needs; WBI’s effectiveness in building participants’ capacity; the degree to which the learning activities had an impact in the country; and the sustainability of WBI’s learning events in the country. The study used a series of multivariate regression models to examine the factors associated with these dimensions of WBI’s intervention.

Participants and Response Rates

The WBI Client Registration System indicated that a total of 300 participants from Brazil attended 31 learning events from 15 WBI programs in FY01-02. The participants primarily attended courses under the following four programs: Finance and Banking (36 percent); Decentralization and Governance (15 percent); Education (14 percent); and Clean Air Initiative (10 percent). Given the small population size, the entire population was chosen for the study. Excluding invalid entries, the number of total eligible participants was reduced to 231, of which 119 were successfully interviewed, yielding an adjusted response rate of 52 percent.3

Forty-two percent of the respondents were women. Respondents’ age ranged between 24 and 71, with an average age of 41 years. Most respondents represented the federal, regional, or local governments (79 percent), followed by universities or research institutions (7 percent), the private sector (6 percent), non-profit organizations (1 percent), or other areas (7 percent). About half of the respondents were involved in administration or management (49 percent), while the remaining half were in research or teaching (19 percent), policy-making or legislation (8 percent), services (7 percent), and other areas (17 percent). Most respondents reported that they were very knowledgeable or highly proficient in the language of instruction (79 percent) and in the terminology of instruction (83 percent).

Evaluation Results

1. Most Brazilian participants reported that WBI learning activities in FY01-02 were highly relevant to them.

   - Seventy-four percent of the respondents reported the WBI activity’s relevance to Brazil’s needs as highly relevant, while only nine percent reported that the relevance to the specific needs of Brazil was average or below (Figure 1). The average rating was 6.3 on a 7-point scale, where 7 was “extremely relevant” and 1 was “extremely irrelevant.”
   - More than half (55 percent) of the respondents felt that the activity they attended was designed specifically for participants from Brazil.

3. Invalid entries comprised repetitions, and participants whose contact information was not available.
2. Participants reported that WBI learning activities in FY01-02 were effective with respect to networking, raising awareness, building skills and knowledge, and providing strategies for improving the country and their own organizations.

- All respondents reported that the activities were either moderately or highly effective (Figure 2). The average rating was 5.7 on a 7-point scale, where 7 was “extremely effective” and 1 was “not effective at all.”

- There were some differences across demographic groups. For example, women tended to rate activity effectiveness higher than men (68 percent and 46 percent, respectively), and participants from the government offices tended to rate effectiveness higher than those from other organizations (61 percent and 41 percent).

- Statistical analyses suggested that participants who reported that the activity was relevant to Brazil’s needs viewed the learning event as effective.

- The effectiveness of WBI activities was also enhanced by tailoring the activities to the country’s needs and designing the content specifically for Brazilian participants.

3. Participants’ use of their acquired skills and knowledge was relatively modest.

- Only 39 percent of the respondents reported using their newly acquired skills and knowledge very often, and 49 percent reported a moderate use (Figure 3). The average rating was 4.8 on a 7-point scale, where 7 was “used very often” and 1 was “did not use at all.”

- Participants used the knowledge and skills from WBI activities most often for raising other’s awareness of development issues (62 percent) and implementing new practices within the work organization (54 percent).

- Participants used the knowledge and skill least often in organizing community initiatives, developing and implementing development strategies, conducting research, or influencing legislation or regulations.

- The utilization was somewhat different across groups. Women reported making slightly more use of the materials than did men, and participants from the government utilized the materials more than did non-government participants.

- Statistical analyses suggested that the overall usage of knowledge and skills is increased when participants perceive the activity is effective.

- Participants who have higher level positions are also more likely to use their newly acquired knowledge and skills than do participants who have lower level positions.

4. Respondents perceived effectiveness by level represents the following: low (scale points 1 and 2); moderate (scale points 3, 4, and 5); and high (scale points 6 and 7).
4. The impact on Brazil of WBI activities, FY01-02, as perceived by Brazilian participants, was high.
   - A majority of the respondents (80 percent) reported that WBI's activities had a positive influence on themselves or their country, while eight percent reported negative influence.
   - For those reporting change, the most positive changes were in the areas of work practices (71 percent), consensus building (65 percent), teaching material (61 percent) and community-based initiatives (61 percent) (Figure 4).
   - Activities perceived as effective were reported to have higher impact on Brazil.
   - Country-level factors (e.g. the country's readiness for reform, policies, and social and political groups) were also important in improving the overall impact.

5. Sustainability of WBI activities, FY01-02, as perceived by the participants, was low.
   - Less than one fifth (17 percent) of the respondents reported that they were aware of follow-up activities (e.g. e-mail discussion groups, workshops, and meetings) that took place immediately following the learning events.
   - Very few respondents (6 percent) reported having participated in follow-up activities.

6. WBI activities for FY01-02 were generally aligned with the Country Strategy Assistance (CAS).
   - The 31 WBI activities reviewed fit under the priority areas for Brazil as outlined in the CAS, 2000-2002, including poverty and inequality, fiscal adjustment and administrative reform, renewed growth per capita income, effectiveness of public institutions, and environmental management.
   - The CAS called for WBI's intervention particularly in the area of public sector management. WBI, however, offered only two activities on the subject during FY01-02.

Conclusions and Implications
The study concludes that WBI is in a strong position to have a significant impact in Brazil through its new country-focused strategy. Results showed a generally high level of satisfaction with past learning events among Brazilian participants across the domains of relevance, effectiveness, utilization and influence. On the basis of the analysis of the survey data and interviews with participants, recommendations for improving WBI activities for Brazil are made, including:
   - Delivery of activities tailored to country needs, particularly through coordinating activities with other Latin American countries that have similar problems;
   - Provision of an organized literature on course subjects and database with case studies on the Web-site; and
   - Greater diversity in participants from the public sector to reach different bureaucratic realities.

The WBI Brazil country team is working to formulate a comprehensive strategy, a Country Program Brief for Brazil, which will set forth WBI's role for the country over the next five years.

Acknowledgement
The evaluation summarized in this brief was conducted with the financial support of the World Bank Institute. The study was peer reviewed by Tim Campbell, WBI Finance and Private Sector Development Division (WBI/FP) and Cristina Ling Chard (IEG).

About WBI
The World Bank Institute (WBI) helps people, institutions, and countries to diagnose problems that keep communities poor; to make informed choices to solve those problems, and to share what they learn with others. Through traditional and distance learning methods, WBI and its partners in many countries deliver knowledge-based options to policy makers, technical experts, business and community leaders, and civil society stakeholders; fostering analytical and networking skills to help them make sound decisions, design effective socioeconomic policies and programs, and unleash the productive potential of their societies.

The Institute Evaluation Group (IEG) works with WBIs Leadership Team and with the World Bank's Learning Board to design, implement, and report evaluation results for staff, client, and joint learning events. IEG also offers distance learning and face-to-face training in program evaluation. WBI Evaluation Briefs report on these evaluation results.

Contacts
WBI Evaluation Briefs
Fumiko Ouchi, Evaluation Analyst
202.458.1437 or Fouchi@worldbank.org

The Impact of WBI Activities, FY01-02, on Participants from Brazil: A Baseline Assessment
William Eckert, Senior Evaluation Officer
202.458.1584 or weckert@worldbank.org

Visit our Web-site for more information on the Institute Evaluation Group and for electronic copies of all Evaluation Briefs:

Page 4
WBI Evaluation Briefs—April 2004