

Foreign Training of Government  
Officers and Public Service  
Capacity in Pakistan

Faheem Jehkani

PIDE Working Papers  
No. 2020:19

# Foreign Training of Government Officers and Public Sector Capacity in Pakistan

Faheem Jehangir Khan  
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad

PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS  
ISLAMABAD  
2020

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Pakistan Institute of Development Economics  
Islamabad, Pakistan

E-mail: [publications@pide.org.pk](mailto:publications@pide.org.pk)

Website: <http://www.pide.org.pk>

Fax: +92-51-9248065

Designed, composed, and finished at the Publications Division, PIDE.

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## ABSTRACT

Shortage of qualified human resource is a major impediment to improve the overall organisational performance. Training is considered as a key several initiatives to improve the public sector performance in Pakistan, benefits of foreign trainings of government officers are largely contested. This paper explores how the Pakistan government responds to capacity constraints and to what extent donor-funded foreign trainings benefit the Pakistan government in improving its public sector capacity. A qualitative method, semi-structured interviews, was used to collect primary data from 102 government officers mostly civil servants who received foreign training in the past and non-government officials.

The evidence suggests a passive approach of the Pakistan government towards overcoming capacity constraints in the public sector. Mandatory management training courses for promotion into higher service grades were largely ineffective. To fill capacity gaps, the government frequently hires consultants from the private sector on management positions and/or relies on through enacting technical assistance in Pakistan, in pursuit, donors sometimes undermine the process of capacity building and weaken the process of indigenous policymaking. Examining the benefits of donor-funded foreign training, the analysis suggest that the benefits were short-term. The trainings are donor-driven, lack long-term sustainable effect, and later the efforts are undermined by placing trained officers on specialised assignments. Higher benefits of medium to long-term training were found, but it may increase the government in pursuit of lucrative incentives and career-oriented ambitions.

Keywords: Technical Assistance, Training and Development, Public Sector Capacity

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Shortage of qualified human resource is a major impediment to manage public policy processes. To improve the overall organisational performance, training is considered as a key instrument to enhance employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Policymakers in developing countries often face the problem to modernise and professionalise the public sector through professional development in a way to create a well-trained civil service for effective service delivery. In the field of international development cooperation, training programmes have been widely employed to enhance the capacity of workforces in developing countries (Mikami & Furukawa, 2018).

Technical Assistance (TA)—the provision of technical skills, knowledge, know-how and advice through consultants, training and research—continues to be an important component of international development assistance towards developing countries (Cox & Norrington-Davies; DFID, 2013; Greenhill, 2006; Ismail, 2019; Timmis, 2018; Tew, 2013). As part of TA, or capacity building programmes, donor agencies provide training opportunities to developing countries to fill technical and human resource gaps within the recipient government that would eventually improve their public sector capacity. Studies indicate that every year a quarter of total official aid—roughly US\$ 15-20 billion—is spent on capacity development of aid recipient nations (Denney *et al.*, 2017). Greenhill (2006) estimated that spending on TA is US\$ 20 billion per year while (Cox & Norrington-Davies, 2019) state that it could be as much as US\$ 40 billion annually. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) statistics indicate that US\$ 18.4 billion was spent on TA programmes in 2017; of that around 7.3 percent was spent on training in donor countries.<sup>1</sup> This however does not include spending on TA bundled with other development initiatives. In the case of Pakistan, the OECD (2020) data show that around US\$ 1.37 billion was spent on TA during 2010 and 2017; of that around 33.4 percent was spent on scholarships and training in donor countries.

Public sector capacity refers to the policy capacity, implementation authority and operational efficiency of a government (Khan, 2017). It is common for public servants worldwide to be criticised for lack of appropriate skills, expertise, or knowledge relevant to the art of governing (Hood & Lodge, 2006). Despite several capacity-building initiatives to improve the public sector performance in Pakistan, studies indicate deficiencies in the quality of governance and public sector management (Husain, 2018). This is primarily due to limited technical capacity, shortages of specialists and professionals, and underutilisation of existing trained and experienced staff in the public sector (Khan, 2017). Considering capacity issues in the Pakistan government, all long-term policy documents<sup>2</sup> give emphasis on training of civil servants to improve

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<sup>1</sup>This includes expenditure on experts and other TA; other TA; scholarships and student in donor countries; scholarships and training; and imputed student cost (OECD QWIDS, 2020).

<sup>2</sup>Such as Medium Term Development Framework (2005-2010), the Vision 2030, and Vision 2025 of the Planning Commission of Pakistan.

governance and public service delivery. The Planning Commission of Pakistan (GOP, 2011) highlighted that there is no Human Resource Development Unit that exists in the federal ministry, provincial or attached departments in Pakistan to determine the size, right skill-mix, compensation and capacity building of its employees.

In Pakistan, civil servants are entrusted with the implementation of government policies. Their skills and capabilities to transform policy into action is critical for effective development outcomes. Inadequate skills accompanied by deficient incentives would badly influence the performance of the development interventions and result in ineffective delivery of public services in the country. Keeping in view the importance of training and development, thousands of government officers availed foreign trainings so far. However, public sector capacity for improved governance and effective public service delivery remains a challenge at large in Pakistan. Khan (2015) indicates considerable shortages of technical skills in the public sector in Pakistan including severe shortage of research and project management skills, considerable shortage of planning expertise, negotiation and administrative skills, and shortages in budgeting skills and IT expertise. A shortage of technical skills was also acknowledged by the Planning Commission of Pakistan (GOP, 2011) which stated that most government employees have no formal training for their technical assignments.

Although training is often recognised as an essential driver to enhance individual efficiency and improve organisational effectiveness, little is known about the benefits of foreign technical assistance – particularly the short-term foreign training of government officers - to improve recipient countries' public sector capacity such as that of Pakistan. Keeping this in view, this paper explores how the Pakistan government responds to these constraints and to what extent donor-funded foreign trainings benefit the Pakistan government in improving its public sector capacity.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technical Assistance (TA) remains a key instrument in most capacity building interventions, however, the benefits of TA to improve public sector capacity of developing countries are largely contested. Timmis (2018) presents a detailed review of effectiveness and impact of donor funded TA programmes. She finds that there is a dearth of rigorous evaluations of capacity building interventions globally. For effective capacity building, she finds strong consensus in the literature on ensuring country ownership; recognising and responding to complexity; improving delivery of technical assistance; involving different levels of government, as well as non-state actors; and focusing on results. Similarly, Ismail (2019) presents a comprehensive review of donors' TA activities in North Africa and explores key lessons and trends. She suggests that evaluations of capacity building interventions are limited primarily due to methodological difficulties and time lags are the challenges that undermine TA programme evaluations.

Cox & Norrington-Davies (2019) indicate that even if overall results on TA effectiveness are doubtful, there is some evidence of encouraging capacity-development outcomes in specific institutional settings such as in case of technical advisers working delicately over a prolonged period. Exploring processes of state-building and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected countries, including Pakistan, Denney *et al.*, (2017) found some improvements in individuals' or organisations' ability to deliver public financial

management, healthcare and other services. Exploring the effectiveness of TA in Middle Income Countries that do not receive financial aid, Megersa (2019) finds some encouraging results in international development agencies' evaluations. For instance, (i) DFID's TA interventions indicate that long-term TA has been broadly successful while short-term support was effective only when employed as part of broader package; (ii) the World Bank's TA programme evaluations suggests greater TA effectiveness due to government's absorptive capacity, receptivity and buy-in as well as strong collaboration with clients, and continued follow-up; (iii) the IMF evaluation shows that TA effectiveness can be undermined by donor experts due to lack of awareness of distinctive institutional features and requirements of recipient countries. It also suggested that a fragile civil service can become a key impediment to sustainable TA outcomes; and similarly, (iv) evidence from the African Development Bank shows that lack of clear strategic focus and unrealistic execution timelines of TA projects would adversely affect the effectiveness of TA.

Exploring the impact of training and development on leader and organisational outcomes, (Seidle *et al.*, 2016) find that a combination of coaching, classroom instruction, feedback, and experiential training has a significant impact on leader performance that eventually improved organisational effectiveness. Similarly, Saidu *et al.*, (2019) examines the effect of training on employee's performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency and find that training has strong effect on employee's performance. Using the Kirkpatrick training model, Yaqoot *et al.*, (2017) explore challenges in training programmes implemented at the public sector in Bahrain. Their study revealed that training environment and trainee motivation have positive impact on the programmes conducted in the public sector.

In contrast to the above, large literature on TA suggest that donor-funded TA programmes are costly, largely ineffective, and donor-driven. TA programmes both in terms of outcomes and impact have fallen short of expectations (Megersa, 2019). According to Greenhill (2006); Scott (2009), TA spending were mostly expensive, ineffective in building capacity and reducing poverty, and was used to push inappropriate northern solutions for developing countries. Similar observation was made by Tarp & Rosén (2012) who find that traditional short-term TA is expensive and unsustainable in the long run. Highlighting patterns of repetitive failures and indicating five decades of ineffective capacity building support, Andrews *et al.*, (2012) suggest that TA's generic *theory of change* is deeply problematic. Synthesising findings of 14 research studies on the effectiveness of capacity building conducted in eight countries, Denney *et al.*, (2017) note that despite the continued dominance of capacity development, results from eight countries, including Pakistan,<sup>3</sup> are frequently disappointing. It is primarily due to the reasons that training remains a default tool of capacity building and that capacity development often focuses on technical aspects and ignores power and political aspects which are central to how public services are delivered. Cox & Norrington-Davies (2019) argue that overall TA has contributed to 'islands of capacity' rather than enhanced capacity across the public sector. Simister &

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<sup>3</sup> These countries include Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Uganda.



Smith's (2010, p. 20) review finds that evidence of impact is absent: "we simply do not know... whether or not the improved capacity of Southern-based organisations leads to improved lives, and how." Measure training effectiveness in Pakistan, Rehman *et al.*, (2011) argue that there is a poor mechanism of evaluation and use of training programme results to improve its usefulness.

TA is also widely criticised for its supply-driven nature. It was largely donor-driven and not adapted to the local context (Wilson, 2007). Ideally, according to (OECD, 2012), TA should be responsive to recipient country's demand rather than directional, understand the local context and demonstrate value for money. However, in practice, Ismail (2019) finds that TA is used to promote Western agendas. Recipient governments have little say over how TA is designed and implemented. In some cases, even the terms of reference are prepared without consulting recipient governments. Greenhill (2006) suggests that TA often fails because it is donor-driven and outdated. To make TA work well, she suggests more demand-driven TA, a shift from donor-led conditionality to mutual commitments, and recognition that development is an indigenous, locally driven process. Similarly, Easterly & Pfitze (2008) argued that TA is often tied and criticised as reflecting donors' rather than recipients' priorities.

Examining the failures of development programmes in Pakistan, Altaf (2011, p. 6) finds that capacity building through donor-funded training was not always relevant to local needs. She notes that TA is one of the donors' favourite activities "because it quickly utilises impressive sums of money and produces 'results' in the shape of skilled manpower... [which] remain unused and are largely unusable." Malik (2009) notes that there has been little attention given to a well-designed, need-based and demand-led training programme in Pakistan. Citing cases of the 'National Highway and Motorway Police' and 'Strategy and Policy Unit, Faisalabad', he shows that clarity about the technical needs, performance objectives, demand-driven local and foreign training, and close monitoring of key performance indicators were the key factors behind effectiveness.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

A single-method approach, namely, semi-structured interview, was used to collect primary data in this research. Adopting a purposive-snowball sampling technique, 102 interviews were conducted with a range of participants representing various government, non-government, and donor organisations. These include 82 serving government officers, 12 officials from donor community, and eight respondents who were either consultants, researcher or retired government officers. The share of government officers—mostly civil servants who received foreign training in the past—is the highest in the sample since it was anticipated that interaction with them would allow to record detailed information based on their own experiences.

After the collection of data from the fieldwork, field notes were transcribed, coded and analysed to elicit findings. Ritchie and Lewis's Framework (or thematic framework) method was used to analyse the data. The preliminary findings of this study were shared with the participants to seek respondent validation. To maintain the reliability and validity, an evaluation of the quality of this research was based largely on the criterion of trustworthiness (Bryman, 2016).

#### 4. RESPONDING TO CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Recognising the need to train and equip government officers with latest tools to enhance their capability, mandatory management training courses are organised at the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) and its constituent units in Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> Every year, around one thousand government officers from different service cadres and grades receive training from NSPP. However, the problem with these trainings is that nominations of participants for courses at NSPP are made considering officers' seniority for promotion into higher service grades; means the purpose is not entirely to enhance a particular skill or fill the capacity gap. Further, these are non-specialised courses designed for government officers (generalists) without taking much into consideration the technical needs and specialised skills requirements to enhance individuals' capability and/or improve organisational performance. So, the effort to improve the public sector capacity through the provision of training remains largely ineffective and unsuccessful.

Apart from these mandatory trainings, government officers also receive foreign trainings from time to time. Numerous short, medium and long-term foreign trainings are provided to government officers every year by multilateral and bilateral donors in Pakistan. Secondary data collected from Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan suggest that 1450 short-term trainings were provided to government officers during 2015 and 2019.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, data collected from the Establishment Division, Government of Pakistan indicate that 215 medium to long-term trainings, including post-graduate and doctoral degrees, were provided to civil service officers from police service, public administration service, and office management groups.<sup>6</sup>

Evidence suggest that instead of filling the capacity gap, every successive government in Pakistan concentrates more on other priorities than getting clarity about the technical needs and spending time, energies and finances on building public sector capacity. Instead, the government frequently opt short-term solutions such as hiring of consultants from the private sector on lucrative management positions and reliance on donors' advice or TA. Despite that government officers receive trainings, technical skills shortages and capacity constraints remain a challenge at large. Some of the reasons that undermine training efforts in the government are discussed in the following section.

In Pakistan, donors are viewed as responding to public sector technical capacity shortages and filling human resource gaps through enacting TA. Multilateral and bilateral donors work in collaboration with the Pakistan government and relevant organisations. In pursuit, donors sometimes undermine the process of capacity building. It happens through frequent visits of donors' missions influencing policy decision, bringing in multiple ready-

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<sup>4</sup>Initial training at the Civil Services Academy, Lahore before posting in service grade 17; mandatory courses, *Mid Career Management Course* and *Senior Management Course*, at all 'National Institute of Management' for promotion into service grade 19 and 20 respectively; and *National Management Course* at the 'National Management College', National School of Public Policy, Lahore for promotion in grade 21. No mandatory training required for service grades 18 and 22.

<sup>5</sup>Data indicate trainings conducted in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Egypt, Qatar only.

<sup>6</sup>These numbers do not include foreign visits and trainings sponsored by many development partners as part of their projects or programmes.

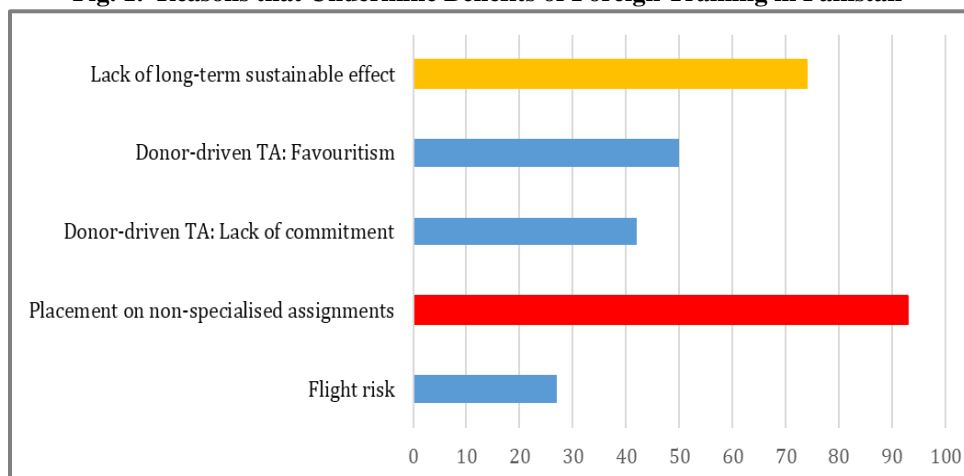
made projects which are sometimes incompatible with local context, and involving international consultants in planning and designing of projects/programmes for the government. It means that donors keep bombarding government officials with new development proposals, policy initiatives, project evaluation models, policy analysis and research reports, engagement (partnership) strategies, and insist on hiring services of consultants to complete tasks and achieve targets for the government in line with agreed donors' agenda. Such actions undermine the process of indigenous policymaking and ownership.

In Pakistan, with few exceptions, most donors do not involve the government in planning and designing of training programmes. They never share how much funds are available for TA in advance. This does not allow the government to plan and fulfil its skills requirements accordingly. Instead, funds allocated for TA were not always used to assist the government to improve its capacity. Allocations under TA are used to finance visits of donor missions, employ private contractors and research groups, and facilitate hiring of international consultants in Pakistan. These consultants, be they expatriates or of foreign origin, hired usually on special pay packages, may have international experience and expertise, but mostly lack local knowledge about public policy processes and are alien to local economic, social and political dimensions. In their somewhat enforced presence, government officers prefer to sit back and watch instead of contributing to the policy interventions. This is consistent with the findings of Greenhill (2006) who notes that TA has not contributed enough to give poor countries the ability to stand on their own feet, since the presence of so many experts undermines the recipient government's confidence and abilities.

## 5. BENEFITS OF DONOR-FUNDED FOREIGN TRAINING

This research identifies four broad reasons that undermine benefits of foreign training in Pakistan (see Figure 1). The biggest concern of respondents from the government and donor community, alike, was the placement of trained officers on non-specialised assignments after receiving foreign training. Followed by lack of long-term sustainable effect, donor-driven TA (that generates favouritism in the nomination process and commitment problems), and increase in flight risk.

**Fig. 1. Reasons that Undermine Benefits of Foreign Training in Pakistan**



### **Lack of Long-term Sustainable Effect**

Donor-funded training does not have a long-term sustainable effect on building public sector capacity in Pakistan. It is primarily due to reasons that short-term training programmes are either not always relevant to skills required at the recipient end and/or sometimes task-oriented that is required for a specific period of time only. Evidence suggests that both, donors and the government take more interest in short-term task-oriented training, such as project-related training, due to which the job is considered 'done' once the task is completed. Investment in short-term training is often preferred by donors since they can accommodate and oblige more government officers by allocating less amount of funds per head as compared to sponsoring a long-duration doctorate degree for an individual. Similarly, senior government officers cannot always take longer leave from their official duties, so they prefer short-term trainings too.

In contrast, findings suggest higher benefits of medium to long-term training, both masters and doctoral degree programmes. Although such trainings are offered quite less in numbers and competitive as compared to short-term trainings, government officers who received these trainings expressed gaining greater benefits both for their personal and professional utility. Again, benefits of such trainings are sometimes undermined either by nominating an officer for a degree programme without keeping in view the relevance and service requirements, or later placing that officer to an assignment where specialised skills and knowledge learnt are inapplicable.

### **Donor-driven Technical Assistance**

Donor-funded short-term foreign training opportunities are mostly donor-driven in Pakistan; meaning they are mostly supply-driven and not planned and designed as per the requirements of the government to fill capacity gaps. Officers confirmed that donors never ask the government about skills required for improving public sector capacity. Instead, they share a list and/or calendar of wide-ranging foreign trainings which they can fund if the government identifies and nominates officers. In contrast, donor officials indicated that senior government officers and political leadership hardly take any interest in designing an effective training programme for their government officers based on technical need assessment exercise.

The supply-driven nature of TA generates two broader issues in Pakistan: (a) favouritism in the selection process; and (b) lack of commitment or casual attitude towards learning. In the former case, the nominating authority sometimes ignores the merit and relevance of training for future requirements and nominates non-qualified fellow civil servants or officers for extraneous training. In the selection process, civil servants are being actively nominated for a limited number of donor-funded training opportunities without carefully taking into consideration their age (remaining service period with the government), qualifications, and skills requirements for organisational effectiveness. The data collected from the government show that civil servants availed most of the foreign training opportunities as compared to non-civil servants. Officials of sponsoring agency (donors) are sometimes aware of such preferential treatment in the public sector, but they do not (and most of the time, cannot) interfere in the government's nomination process due to institutional interests and/or organisational limits.

Nevertheless, a few donor agencies do ask the Pakistan government only to nominate candidates while they would make the final selection from the list based on the selection criteria.

Another consequence of donor-driven TA is that some officers take donor-led short training casually since they consider it an opportunity for foreign travel more than a learning experience. Findings confirm that while applying for a foreign training course, most officers give importance to location (foreign country/city) and shorter course duration rather than the relevance and learning outcomes of a course. Perhaps, that is why the nominating authority receives maximum number of applications for foreign training courses offered at popular international destinations. In this process, there are many senior government officers who availed multiple foreign trainings while at the same time many relevant and deserving officers were neglected. There are numerous examples where senior government officers, even some in their last year of retirement, were sent abroad for extraneous trainings, where they did not even bother to attend the training sessions and spent time on shopping or sightseeing. This gravely undermines the value and effectiveness of TA, both individually and at the institutional level. Again, donors are not always unaware of such realities and hence may use overseas travel opportunities as incentives to influence public policy decisions.

### **Placement on Non-specialised Assignments**

Evidence suggests that the Pakistan government did not completely harness the potential of officers who have received foreign training. The benefits were undermined by placing trained officers on non-specialised assignments. This is a usual business in the government that negates the notion of placing the ‘right people in the right job’. In such a scenario, the money, time, talent, and efforts to build public sector capacity are largely wasted due to placement of trained officers on assignments different from their expertise and professional qualification.

In addition to the under-utilisation of trained officers in the public sector, political interference and a lobbyist culture in government offices also demoralise the motivation of trained individuals to perform and deliver. Findings indicate that decisions about promotions, transfers and postings, and nominations for foreign training are overshadowed by in-house politics between civil service groups and the interests of politicians.

### **‘Flight Risk’**

Donor-funded foreign training helps to build individual capacity, more than institutional capacity, that sometimes increases the ‘flight risk’ in the public sector. It is predominantly relevant to medium and long-term foreign training programmes. Highly skilled individuals sometimes do not stay with the government for long and leave the public sector for better opportunities elsewhere, mostly in pursuit of lucrative incentives and career-oriented ambitions. This further reduces the capacity of the government.

### **Benefits of Donor-funded Foreign Training**

Despite several limitations, some evidence indicate that donor-funded foreign short-term trainings were not completely useless after all. It benefits the officers to learn

and improve soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, use of technology, use of research evidence and modern managerial practices in decision-making. Further, some government officers also got opportunities to learn and enhance their management skills through intense donor-government engagements while managing projects or programmes in Pakistan. Despite many known issues associated with the provision and utility of foreign trainings, donors continue to offer assistance because there is a continuous demand from the government and because donors believe that capacity of the government would have been much poorer without their technical cooperation.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Exploring how the government responds to the constraints on public sector capacity in Pakistan, evidence suggest a passive approach of the government. Despite that numerous trainings have been provided to government officers, technical skills shortages and capacity constraints remain a challenge at large. Mandatory management training courses for promotion into higher service grades were also largely ineffective. This is primarily due to lack of clarity about skills gaps and technical needs in the government. To fill capacity gaps, as short-term solutions, government frequently hires consultants from the private sector on management positions and/or relies on donors' TA. Although donors seek to address capacity shortages and fill human resource gaps through enacting TA, in pursuit, they sometimes undermine the process of capacity building and weaken the process of indigenous policymaking. Further, donors do not always involve Pakistan government in planning and designing of training programmes that makes it less relevant and ineffective to improve public sector capacity.

Examining to what extent donor-funded foreign training benefit the Pakistan government in improving public sector capacity, the analysis suggest that benefits were modest. The research identifies four broad reasons for that. *First*, donor-funded short-term training does not have a long-term sustainable effect since these interventions are either not always relevant to skills required or they are required for a specific period of time only. In contrast, higher benefits of medium to long-term training were found both for personal and professional utility. *Second*, donor-funded TA is supply-driven that generates two issues: favouritism in the selection process and lack of commitment. In the former case, the authority sometimes nominates non-qualified fellow civil servants or officers for extraneous training. In the latter case, officers seek nomination for foreign training as an opportunity for foreign travel more than a learning experience, hence they take it casually. This gravely undermines the effective value of TA both in individual and institutional context. *Third*, the Pakistan government has not been successful in harnessing the potential of existing trained officers so far. The talent and training efforts to build public sector capacity were largely wasted by placing trained officers on assignments different from their expertise and professional qualification. And *finally*, donor-funded medium to long-term training may eventually increase the 'flight risk' since some highly skilled individuals may leave the government in pursuit of lucrative incentives and career-oriented ambitions outside public sector. Nevertheless, despite some limitations, donor-funded foreign trainings were not completely useless since it did benefit officers to learn and improve soft skills, if not necessarily the technical skills.

## Recommendations

To make foreign training more effective for public sector capacity building, this research suggests the following:

Technical assistance—donor-funded training of government officers—should be demand-driven. The provision of training should be planned, designed and implemented in close collaboration with the Pakistan government. Donors must avoid imposing the terms and should involve the government to identify skill requirements and capacity gaps in the public sector. Government should only approve training courses which are beneficial to build the public sector capacity. Any extraneous training opportunity, offered by donors, must be declined. This will make training efforts more meaningful and effective.

In the selection process, merit and relevance of training should be given the highest priority by both the nominating authority and sponsoring agency. Only the most deserving officers must be considered and nominated keeping in view their skill needs, age (remaining service with the government), qualifications, career path and training relevance for institutional development. To discourage foreign travel motives, instead of offering short courses at foreign destinations, the government should encourage, and donors should prefer, organising short-term training courses in major urban centres by bringing the training teams to Pakistan. This will have much greater impact since instead of spending large amount of funds on a few officers, several officers would benefit from the training organised locally.

Meanwhile, the Government of Pakistan must utilise the existing potential of trained officers by placing them to the positions most relevant to their specialisation and skill needs in relevant organisations. To reduce the ‘flight risk’ in the public sector, appropriate monetary and non-monetary incentives should be offered to highly skilled officers to retain them in the government and make best use of their potential. Further, a database of trained officers should be maintained to watch their performance and to assess their profile for future assignments.

With these steps, donor-funded foreign training may have a long-term sustainable effect in strengthening the public sector capacity in Pakistan. However, to make it happen, strong political will would be required due to likely resistance to such reform from the civil bureaucracy.

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