

The Bulletin is prepared by the Human Resources Development Section of UNCTAD's Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency (SITE). SITE aims to help developing countries and countries in transition to strengthen all services that support their foreign trade.

Terms employed in this Bulletin do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country or territory.

INTRODUCTION

Coming soon after Bulletin no. 22, this issue mixes news with views that we hope will give you food for thought and perhaps lead you to question some widely accepted assumptions on training in organizations. We hope that there will be useful items here for members and potential members of the TRAINMAR network, and for their clients and potential partners

PORT MARKETING COURSE

For several years, the port of Ghent, in Belgium, has hosted an UNCTAD course on port marketing. Each year, managers from interested ports have been invited to Ghent to follow this three-week course, which includes talks from specialists, wide-ranging discussions and opportunities to visit neighbouring ports. Now the port of Ghent has joined with Ma Shuo, professor at the World Maritime University, to produce, under the supervision of UNCTAD, training materials which allow the essential elements of the course to be reproduced at any qualified training centre with TRAINMAR skills and a marketing specialist available to assist.

The new five-day course has been held during December, in Johor, Malaysia, with the enthusiastic participation of marketing managers from all over Malaysia. The intention was that the course should be

validated according to TRAINMAR criteria. The course was led by the principal author of the materials, Ma Shuo, assisted by two marketing specialists from Ghent, while the regional TRAINMAR adviser, Teresa Yeo, monitored the course and collected data to determine whether the materials and the course delivery met the required standards. Port marketing is a topic of great importance to many countries today, and the course should be in great demand once it is approved for general use.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Staff from the central support team (CST) at UNCTAD headquarters maintain contact with member centres in each region. Sven Callebaut of the CST is just completing a report on activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1998. Although running courses is only one of the activities analysed, it gets the most attention. Over the year, 69 approved TRAINMAR courses and 166 provisional courses were held, for a total of 3,233 participants. This is consistent with UNCTAD's target for TRAINMAR to provide sufficient capacity around the world to train 10,000 managers a year. However, the figures show that only 30 per cent of the courses were standard approved courses. The CST would like to see the rate of approval increased, to help maintain the quality of training delivered and enhance exchangeability so that the full benefits of cooperation can be achieved.

TRAINMAR is:

- a **system** for locally managed training in the field of services for maritime trade
- a **network** of training centres that use the system and are ready to share their efforts
- an UNCTAD **programme** to help the network contribute to trade growth, diversification and profitability through professional training of managers and decision makers.

For detailed information about TRAINMAR, see the Web page:

www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/1862/

Of course, it cannot be expected that all courses will reach approval standards. Although the courses are prepared with TRAINMAR methodology as a background, sometimes neither the timescale nor the size of the audience warrant the extra effort to gain formal approval. However, work on new courses should generally be aimed at obtaining approval and making them fully exchangeable.

Meanwhile Kathy Everlet of the CST is busy preparing project plans to help support the activities of the Asian network. The regional meeting held in Johor, Malaysia, from 10 to 13 December took a hard look at current performance and decided on a range of measures to improve results. These include: advanced training for course developers; a stronger regional quality control system; an integrated information technology (IT) system with an IT centre in Bangkok; and the preparation of a first course in CD-rom format to expand independent learning as a complement to traditional courses.

Technology-based training must play a greater role in the services provided by TRAINMAR, and the CST is pleased to acknowledge the access it has to special experience in this field through TRAINMAR Alexandria.

THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

We often talk in training of solving problems, but the situations for which training is most needed are often those that have not yet caused problems - and with suitable preparation they need never do so. Issues that are very important in the trading world today are globalization, technology and economic turmoil. All bring challenges that managers are trying to anticipate and meet. Training needs to be a part of their strategy.

Globalization offers opportunities for new trade that may greatly enhance the prospects of any country. But

positive action will be required across a broad spectrum of activities, and the public and private sectors will need to act in unison if advantage is to be taken of those opportunities. While a port has a crucial role to play in generating new trade, it cannot succeed alone: a whole range of administrators and business partners also have to contribute to the necessary generation and efficient movement of traffic. The port may provide an excellent focus for the organization of training, but this should be adapted to the needs of the whole port community. Preparing for technology change and taking advantage of it will both give rise to training needs that should be recognized and promoted by the training centre. But how can training help in the face of economic turmoil?

Enterprises need to innovate and change rapidly so as to reduce the adverse effects of economic crises by reallocating under-utilized resources and finding new outlets. To do this calls for a dynamic reaction by trainers, and the training manager should be seen as a crucial source of support in problem-solving at all times. Unfortunately, trainers are often prevented from acting in this way by authorities who see training as an unproductive activity that can be cut to save costs, with no short-term penalties. The best protection against this situation is for trainers regularly to produce demonstrable results.

IN EASTERN EUROPE

With financial assistance from the European Union, UNCTAD has conducted preliminary activities in Romania to raise management awareness of the importance and potential of training for the port community. Taking this a stage further, Germany's aid-administering agency, GTZ, has initiated new activities in the port of Constanza so that training

according to TRAINMAR principles will be organized in the context of a wider project to improve operations at the port. A similar approach is being adopted in Georgia, and from these two initiatives it is hoped to create a new TRAINMAR network for Black Sea countries. At the beginning of November, a first workshop on course development (CD) was held in Constanza for selected participants from these two countries.

Of course, a network of two has less potential than a network of four or more, and more opportunities for partnership are being sought. In this respect, attempts were made to enable trainers from Albania to attend the same CD workshop; in the end this was not possible, but the contacts made will be a source of cooperation for the future.

The activities conducted so far have opened up opportunities for cooperation among regions, and several instructors from Latin America have been able to contribute to the conduct of courses in Constanza. This work was done in English, but the possibility is being looked into of following it up with the training of trainers who could work in Russian and use materials from other regions translated into Russian.

A Latin American connection has also been established with Albania. In the context of a World Bank loan for port restructuring, a specialist in training and port management from Argentina, Martin Sgut, went to Albania to give preliminary advice on port training. Following the interest sparked off by this visit, a more detailed study was conducted by a TRAINMAR specialist from South-East Asia, Teresa Yeo. She defined a training strategy and was able to arrange a number of study tours for Albanian trainers to see technical developments in ports in Malaysia and to experience training conducted there through TRAINMAR. Three newly

appointed trainers participated in an instructors' workshop, and were able to join in deliveries of the IPP1 course on the management of general cargo berths and the new course on preparing for privatization. They could not fail to be impressed, but what the future holds for TRAINMAR in Albania is far from clear – the country faces many difficulties, and institutionalizing training may not receive priority attention for some time to come.

The adjacent picture shows Teresa Yeo while reporting in Geneva after her trip to Albania.

manual on management of training needs to be revised to better match the real problems faced today. The Central American network has started on this; the CST is also working on the subject and would welcome comments and contributions from readers.



WHAT MAKES TRAINING?

UNCTAD urges countries to benefit from TRAINMAR but does not pretend that it provides all the answers. Life is not simple, and a country in the throes of restructuring its economy faces great difficulties establishing effective training institutions, even with the valuable methodology and external support that TRAINMAR offers. Even under more stable conditions, TRAINMAR can only make its full impact if certain conditions are met: adequate resources, a cooperative management, an environment ready and able to change, stability and a sound human resource development policy are all important. All too often, training fails to make an impact because one or more of these conditions is not met, and this failure can make it all the more difficult to meet these conditions in future.

The training manager must devote as much effort to obtaining the right conditions for training as he or she does to ensuring that trainers are competent and offer high-quality products. The TRAINMAR methodology is best known for its emphasis on course development and instruction skills, but more attention needs to be given to the management of training – including how the manager must focus attention on the conditions needed for good training. The TRAINMAR

PORTWORKER TRAINING

Most managers of container terminals, and the training centres that serve them, are aware of the Portworker Development Programme (PDP) run by the ILO. The materials prepared through this programme provide for a wide range of training adapted to the needs of safe and efficient work in heavily mechanized and often automated terminals. However, even with these comprehensive materials, organizing effective training remains a major challenge. As for any effective training, both management commitment and training competence are necessary if good results are to be achieved

In Latin America, the ILO has made these materials available to the regional TRAINMAR association for Southern Cone countries (ATAS), which is translating them into Spanish from their original English and preparing an implementation programme in consultation with interested container terminals. Their use will not be exclusive to ATAS, and further information is available from ILO as well as from ATAS.

Some of the most prestigious terminals in the world use these materials, but many terminals with ambitious expansion plans have not yet recognized the contribution to

performance and growth that can be derived from effective training with PDP. ILO has, of course, facilitated the use of the materials in a number of countries, but their wider use can only be beneficial.

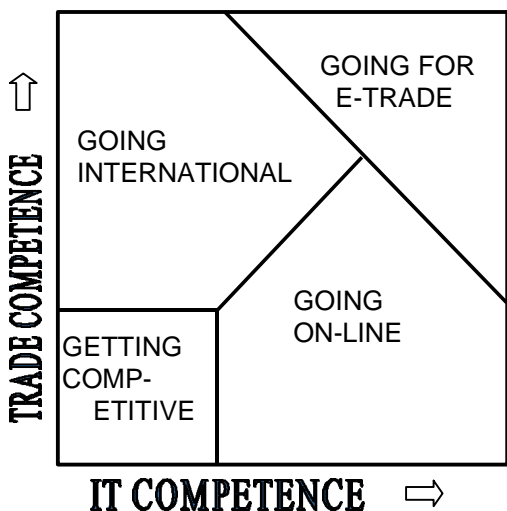
UNCTAD and ILO recently prepared a project proposal for expanding training capacity in the main port of Mauritius, Port Louis. It is not yet clear whether the proposal will be taken up by the authorities, but they have already started to use the PDP materials with the help of foreign instructors, notably from India. Specialists in India have experience both of PDP and of TRAINMAR and so have been able to combine sound technical experience and training skills in the service of development. TRAINMAR is intended to promote such cooperation, and another sign of the potential of that cooperation emerged at the Asian network meeting in December, when an ILO staff member was present to discuss how PDP could best be used to serve the region's interests.

THE LYON SUMMIT

The "Partners for Development" meeting, organised by UNCTAD, was held in Lyon, France, from 9 to 13 November 1998. Specialists from all over the world discussed selected development issues on which technology will have a major influence in the coming years. The meeting covered such matters as electronic commerce and the legal, technical and commercial structures that need to be developed, as well as the need for developing countries to have a say in the definition of these structures; it also touched on training. The faster things change, the more important it is to have information services and training programmes that enable people to keep abreast of developments and make the best use of them. Furthermore, technology is opening up new perspectives in training, particularly in the area of distance learning.

A presentation in this domain that

may be of interest to long-standing TRAINMAR members was made at Lyon by Michel Couroux, who was Coordinator of the TRAINMAR Programme from 1980 to 1988. He has recently been working on training materials for small businesses engaged in electronic commerce. In a project called the "eTrade initiative", a group of specialists has put together a comprehensive package of training materials that help a company move from a very conventional way of doing business to successful international trading over the Internet. This simple diagram from his presentation explains far better than words, how he sees this move taking place.



Not only does the product bring the user into the electronic age, but it was itself created using the same technology. Much of the course materials come from public sources all over the world; none needs to be reproduced – rather each source is addressed over the Internet as and

when it is needed. In addition, to develop the materials, course developers in different parts of the world have shared information over the Internet and have pooled their ideas by setting them down on a shared web page accessible to all contributors by means of a password. The effective use of new technology is a real challenge to be taken up by TRAINMAR members in the future.

THE INTERNET

The Internet has two very important roles for TRAINMAR. One is to open up remarkable possibilities for direct communication. Not only does it cut the cost and reduce the delay in making contact, but it also enables partners anywhere in the world to share ideas with a new spontaneity that is bound to enhance creativity. The CST is encouraging all network members to become connected to the Internet quickly and to start sharing formal and informal information in a new era of cooperation.

Apart from e-mail and discussion groups, a commanding feature of the Internet that will be useful to all training centres is the web page, through which information – such

as training programmes – can be made available for open reference and advertising.

Bismark Sitorus, who produces the CST's TRAINMAR web page in Geneva, has recently put together a training package on web-page development. This is being tried out within the UNCTAD secretariat and may eventually be made available for members of the TRAINMAR network.

FROM THE PRESS

Training and human resource development (HRD) do not attract a lot of press coverage. An article in *l'Express*, a popular French-language weekly magazine, recently pointed out how the French region of Brittany had been transformed over a period of 30 years from one of the most backward regions in France, with the highest level of emigration, to one of the most dynamic – with extremely low unemployment levels. The reason? To quote: “.. this region has invested massively in human resource development, that is to say in training”. A notable feature is the long period of time considered, which emphasises that HRD is a foundation of development and not a “quick fix”. The results of training may not be felt immediately, but a sound policy of HRD, including good training, will steadily build a society or company that can react to the challenges in global markets and establish a secure position in world trade.

SDTE NEWS

UNCTAD/SDTE/SDB/Misc.4

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