

Core Course:
Budgeting Processes and the Analysis and Management of Public Expenditures

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(Notation: The World Bank Institute was formerly called the Economic Development Institute (EDI), as reflected in some text)

A Core Course on budgeting processes was presented by the Economic Development Institute (EDI), in Washington, D.C., from June 15th to the 23rd, 1998. A total of 39 participants from 25 countries attended the course. Usable end of course assessment forms were returned by 28 respondents, 72 percent of all participants. The objective of the course was to provide a forum in which to discuss the issue of public expenditure management system reform. The methods of instruction included lectures, group exercises, and case studies.

The EDI Evaluation Unit (EDIES) conducted an evaluation using an end-of-course questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first was a survey of participants' opinions of the course objectives and delivery. The second section attempted to gauge the increase of knowledge gained from the course, using a set of self-assessment questions. This evaluation pioneered a new self assessment device: the introduction of a control question to increase the validity of the questionnaire. Both sections of the evaluation used a 5-point Likert type scale that ranged from 1=minimum to 5=maximum.

Respondents had varied educational levels and professional backgrounds. Twenty-one of 31 had a Masters or equivalent. There were 4 respondents with a Bachelors or equivalent and 3 with a Doctorate or equivalent. Twenty-six of 31 worked in the public sector, although the number of years experience in the field of budgeting, finance and/or development varied. Nineteen of all the respondents had less than 10 years experience and 12 had over 10 years relevant work experience. No information on gender was collected. Results from the evaluation are summarized below.

- The questions asking the respondents for their opinion of the course fell into 2 major categories. The first category addressed the objectives of the course, and asked questions about whether the respondents had learned new information, concepts and policies. There were three such questions asked, and the mean scores ranged from 3.77 - 3.94 out of 5. The second category addressed the design and delivery of the course. Questions asked were related to course materials, faculty communication, and level of interest, among other topics. There were 7 questions asked under this category, and the mean scores ranged from 3.81 to 4.45.
- An overall question asking respondents if the course was a worthwhile use of their time received a mean score of 4.52, which was the highest mean score of the evaluation.
- Due to small numbers of private sector respondents as well as respondents with either a Bachelors or a Doctorate degree, analysis by sector or academic group was

problematic. However, comparisons were made between those respondents with less than 10 years experience and those with greater than 10 years experience. No significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of satisfaction with the course or knowledge gained.

- The highest and lowest scores for each item of this course were favorable. No item in this evaluation received a rating of 1, the lowest possible score. Moreover, every item received at least one 5, the highest possible score.
- For the first time in EDIRP, a control question was used in the self-assessment portion of the evaluation. This was done to eliminate influencing factors other than the teaching of the course. To control for these non-teaching influences, a question was asked which had not been taught in the course. The pre-course mean score for this control question was 3.03, and the post-course mean score was 3.70, which is a perceived change in knowledge of .67. This number, which represents the (perceived) knowledge gain from non-teaching influences, was then subtracted from the pre/post change values of the non-control questions. The result was a *net pre/post change* score which relates more precisely to the teaching of the course. The range of net pre/post change scores was .10 to .70.
- The range of the pre/post change scores may point out areas of relative strength and weakness of the course. The lowest net change score was .10. This was given for the item covering "general principles that govern the choice of public or private delivery of services". The highest net change score was .70. This was for "the role of performance measurement in encouraging accountability of public servants".
- One limitation of this evaluation is that the pre/post data are based on self-evaluation and therefore measure only perceived knowledge gains. A cognitive-based test done before and after the course would better measure actual learning gains. In addition, this evaluation may not accurately portray the opinions of all participants as some did not complete a questionnaire. Therefore, it is important to encourage all participants to provide feedback.

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