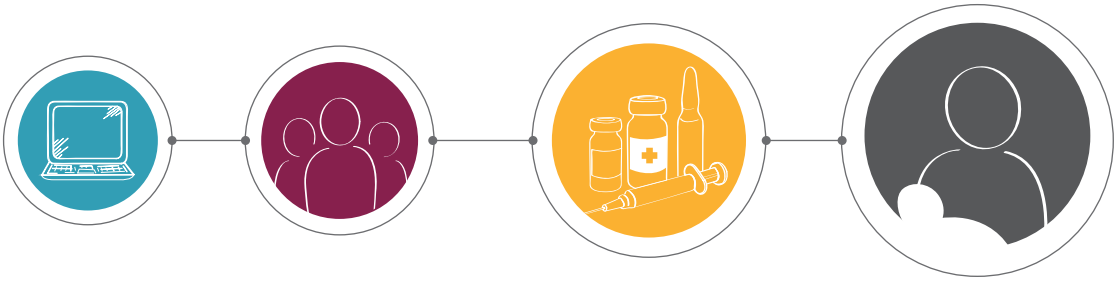
Framework for Immunization Training and Learning



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Introduction

The global community allocates considerable human and financial resources to immunization training. The delivery of this training, however, has not kept pace with the increasing cost and complexity of vaccination programs. Funders, implementing partners, and national program managers have the opportunity to support and improve the training and performance of immunization professionals by taking advantage of developments in learning science and instructional design, and by adapting, where appropriate, new tools and technologies to facilitate learning.

The Framework for Immunization Training and Learning (FITL) is a shared conceptual framework that can be used by a wide range of stakeholders to support improved performance of managers and healthcare workers who deliver vaccination services, by creating a better environment for training and learning. The framework is not intended to specify or prescribe the types of training or support to be implemented, but is intended to provide guidance on areas that may be addressed at different levels throughout the system.

FITL offers an initial structure while leaving space for individual organizations and countries to develop their own specific strategies and implementation plans. The hope is that organizations and countries will use this framework as a shared resource to collaborate on and improve their immunization training programs.

Aims

Incorporating input from the global immunization community, this framework is designed to support better training and learning programs with the goal of improving the performance of those who deliver immunization services.

The aims of this framework are as follows:

- Communicate a shared set of key intervention areas that may lead to improved training and learning programs as well as better performance outcomes
- Outline key principles to be considered within each intervention area
- Share suggested activities that may be undertaken, at varying levels of the system, to support each area of intervention

Use of the Framework

This framework can be used in a variety of ways, by different individuals:

- Funding partners can use the framework to:
  - » Strengthen their ability to measure and evaluate the impact of investments in training and learning
  - » Align on incentives with learning and performance outcomes
- Implementing partners can use the framework to:
  - » Design effective training programs, based on sound instructional design and leveraging novel delivery strategies
  - » Integrate training as a continuous process into ongoing work, rather than a one-time event
  - » Measure and evaluate the impact of trainings
- Program Managers can use the framework to:
  - » Ensure coordination of partners involved in training activities within the country
  - » Guide the development of country-level training plans
  - » Develop training strategies that are engaging, adaptive, and provide more continuous, ongoing support to mid-level managers and health care workers
  - » Identify individual learning plans for themselves or the healthcare workers they supervise

The Framework

The framework comprises six intervention areas that may lead to a better environment for training and learning.

1. **Global Coordination** is the overall coordination among global and national stakeholders intended to share, support, and scale better approaches to training, learning, and performance.

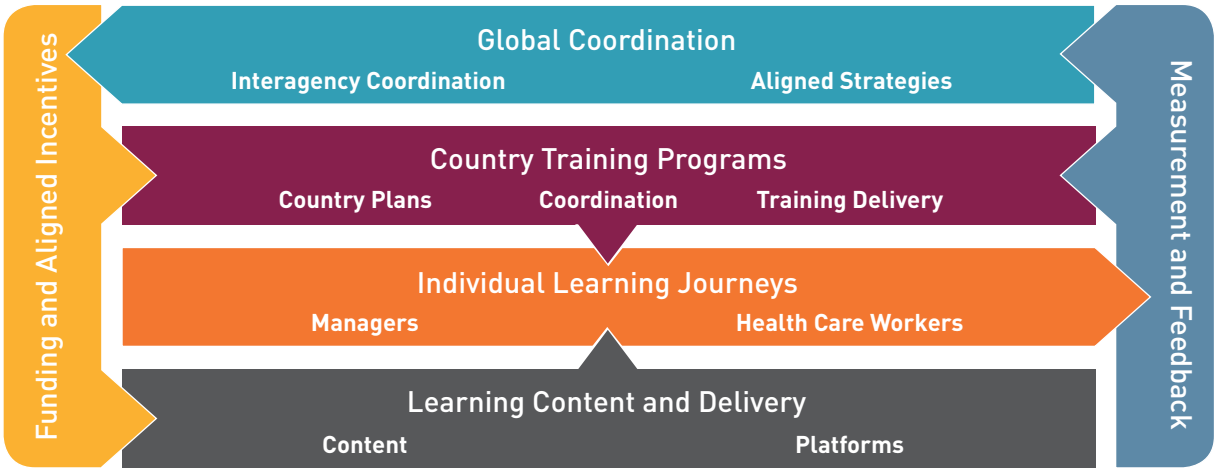
2. **Funding and the Alignment of Incentives** is reinforced by successful global coordination and may lead to better resource allocation and stronger programming with more effective delivery. The coordination of resources allows for longer-term planning and investment in training centers and other structures that may support the system over time. Aligning incentives encourages learning behaviors that result in demonstrable improvement of performance, rather than providing rewards for simply attending workshops and courses that may be based on ineffective teaching methodologies.

3. Strong **Country Training Programs** are at the heart of successful, sustainable performance improvement initiatives. Each training program should be a part of a country-specific plan that is based on a robust needs assessment and which uses effective instructional design methodologies.

4. **Learning Content and Delivery** refers to high-quality instructional content, and the design, platforms, and tools through which that content is delivered. Training delivery methods should vary with the learning objectives of a specific training, and may range from one-on-one on-the-job supervision to adaptive, scalable distance learning that uses new tools and technologies.

5. Emphasizing **Individual Learning Journeys** is key to supporting the unique needs of mid-level managers and the health care workers (HCWs) doing the day-to-day work of immunization delivery. Strengthening individual learning involves fostering, recognizing, and rewarding self-directed learning in the workplace, as well as offering post-training, on-the-job support to encourage and reward retention and program improvement.

6. **Measurement and Feedback** of both formal and on-the-job learning are necessary for accurate assessment, and to allow for continued improvement and the creation of a strong learning culture. Measuring and learning at each level will improve global coordination and alignment, strengthen country programs, improve content delivery and learning outcomes, and help create a positive cycle of feedback, coordination, and implementation.



This document provides an overview of these six areas, outlining for each the goal, the challenge, potential areas for action, and guidance for implementation.

1

Global Coordination

GOAL

Leverage the knowledge, efforts, and resources of the global community to support improved learning and performance through more effective training and on-the-job learning and support.

The Challenge:

Coordination at the global level can facilitate the development and sharing of best practices, new content and delivery methods, and the funding and alignment of incentives that reinforce learning and improved performance. Too often, trainings are planned and resourced on an ad hoc basis and fail to leverage both knowledge and the overall pool of resources that would allow for longer-term investments in training assessments, country plans, and the development of new delivery approaches or platforms. Fostering a stronger learning culture will yield more successful immunization practice outcomes, and immunization training systems will be more resilient than in the past.

Guidance for effective global coordination:

- Use and strengthen, when possible, existing channels, committees, and processes for global coordination, rather than creating new ones
- Contribute based on comparative strengths, while taking stock of global resources available (technical and financial) to advocate for increased resources where there are significant gaps in support
- Recognize the significance of leaders who advocate and support effective learning
- Be transparent and share best practices about what works and what doesn't work

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

- Develop and align global strategy, including global initiatives to support the development of leadership for learning
- Develop guidelines and accountability mechanisms for interagency coordination
- Create a forum for global discussion and accountability
- Foster a community of learning and practice

2 Funding and the Alignment of Incentives

GOAL

Ensure that development partners and governments are coordinated in their funding and alignment of incentives to facilitate sustainable improvements in the way training and on-the-job support for learning is developed, delivered, and evaluated.

The Challenge:

Although millions of dollars are spent on training, the degree to which financial training incentives align with the development of improved training, vaccine delivery, and on-the-job support is not well understood. Furthermore, despite the importance of on-the-job learning, it is unclear how it should be resourced, supported, or rewarded. Understanding the role of incentives and financial support will help encourage the development of better in-country training structures. To achieve strong alignment of financial systems, we need a realistic analysis of training costs, current incentive structures, and the effects of supportive supervision, as well as practical ways to support on-the-job (informal and incidental) forms of learning. Global-level changes to incentive structures will greatly improve training, immunization staff learning, and on-the-job performance.

Guidance for effective funding and incentive alignment:

- Consider the full spectrum of training and learning support when developing, costing, and funding training plans, including post-training support and evaluation costs
- Emphasize incentives (including non-financial incentives) focused on learning and the translation of training to on-the-job performance
- Prioritize scalable (high-volume, low-cost) forms of learning that can be embedded into work and do not take staff out of their work environment
- Pay staff a timely and competitive salary and reward self-directed learning, problem-solving, and other behaviors that strengthen learning culture
- Align funding and incentives with strong measurement – collect good information on the cost and effectiveness of training beyond number of attendees
- When per diems are used, encourage uniformity in standards independent of funder (whether government or partner)
  - » For example, when partner rates for training are different (normally higher) from government rates, this can lead to lowered motivation or non-attendance at government-funded trainings

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

- Ensure that incentives align at all levels; examine existing incentive structures and identify areas for improvement
- Create incentives that promote and strengthen learning culture and demonstration of improved skills and performance
- Link funding decisions to the design of training programs that employ strong instructional design and appropriate incentives for learning

3 Country Training Programs

GOAL

Support national governments to improve immunization staff performance through improved planning, coordination, and training delivery. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and sustained learning embedded into work to improve program outcomes.

The Challenge:

While global coordination can help align goals, standards, and incentives, country-specific programs should address the specific priorities, resources, and challenges within the country context. Individual country plans must address the unique needs, operational context, and learning culture of their respective countries, leading to more successful and sustained learning and performance outcomes.

Guidance for effective country training programs:

- Ensure the development of costed, country-based training plans, based on robust needs assessments and clearly defined learning objectives
- Make certain that these plans are resourced with reliable financing and sufficient human resources to succeed
- Ensure functioning working groups in-country to ensure broad participation and coordination of all stakeholders, including development partners and relevant Ministries including Health, Human Resources, and Education
- Create and nurture a strong learning culture through the development of local immunization leaders and a strong cadre of trainers who advocate for effective learning linked to performance outcomes
- Establish clear and evolving systems for trainers' career development and learning/career pathways linked to a valuable credential that is recognized by relevant actors
- Foster, recognize, reward, and support the positive learning practices that are embedded into the work and deliver tangible results
- Consistently improve training through intentional measurement (e.g., measure learning design, clarify job-level competencies, and so on)
- Invest in evidence-based, implementable learning practices and experiment with new approaches
- Consider how to use technology most effectively; do not limit the use of technology to information transmission (widely sharing training documents, resources, and so on) but recognize its relevance in empowering country actors to generate their own, locally relevant knowledge aligned to global guidelines

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

- Create individual country plans that take into consideration:
  - » Capability needs and learning journeys at all levels of the immunization program
  - » Building and institutionalizing training platforms for the long term
  - » Leveraging coordination and support amongst partners and donors
  - » Routine monitoring and robust measurement of training outcomes
- Coordinate actors within countries for an integrated approach to training, ensuring action before and after training events

4 Learning Content and Delivery

GOAL

Ensure that high-quality content is developed for manager and immunization staff training that is supported by aligned incentives, appropriate technologies, and strong delivery and collaboration platforms. Promote continuous learning and improvement through both formal and on-the-job channels to strengthen learning culture that will drive change and performance.

The Challenge:

Advances in learning science and technology have created new opportunities for more effective immunization training. Previous advances have been largely theoretical and have yet to be fully translated into practice. By using new teaching and learning strategies and tools, immunization trainings can be measurably improved in both formal and informal (on-the-job) settings, improving immunization staff's on-the-job performance.

Guidance for effective learning content and delivery:

- Articulate learning and performance objectives clearly in order to create training and delivery methods to meet those objectives
- Develop, refine, and share best practices at all levels
- Ensure that channels allow for continuous feedback that allows immunization workers to both benefit from improvements in training and have a voice in those improvements
- Incorporate proven, effective instructional design methods for training delivery, recognizing the technical competencies required for effective teaching
- Use appropriate technology for the context in which you are operating
- Find and use existing content; share existing and new content on a platform that makes it accessible to others
- Use existing needs data and evidence to devise plans; where needs have not been identified, conduct a training needs and competency assessment
- Shift from needs- and gaps-based programming to competency-based programming

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

- Invest in and create high-quality content that is grounded in local context
- Create or use already available platforms for sharing information

5

Individual Learning Journeys

GOAL

Ensure that managers and immunization staff have the skills, knowledge, competencies, and support they need to deliver immunizations in the context of a much-changed and rapidly-changing immunization landscape.

The Challenge:

There are many more (and more complex) vaccines and antigens today than ever—and they are costlier and have more complex service delivery requirements than in the past. Traditional training methods have tended to view immunization staff trainings as isolated events, not taking into account external factors related to performance and the accumulation of knowledge and skills over time. The creation and support of structures and processes that emphasize immunization professionals' individual learning journeys will empower managers and healthcare workers to develop their own continuous learning plans, motivating staff to continue providing high-quality services that result in greater impact.

Guidance for effective individual learning journeys:

- Ensure inclusion of immunization managers and workers in the design of new training strategies that meet learning needs across their whole journey
- Incorporate on-the-job performance support strategies that can be embedded into daily work, such as on-the-job mentoring through supportive supervision, digital tools, and job aids
- Emphasize learning and the translation of training to on-the-job performance
- Recognize the value of peer learning, mentoring and coaching, and leadership development
- Create and foster a culture of learning—one that looks beyond training events to performance improvement and wrap-around support for immunization professionals, strong pre-service training, and a focus on long-term development and growth
- Learn from (and implement) best practices from other adult learning and education efforts; training does not have to mean formal classroom instruction
- Provide training and performance support and leadership development opportunities for managers and trainers to provide more effective supervision

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

- Establish effective support for managers responsible for immunization training
- Create continuous learning journey pathways for immunization staff, including mentoring programs, for all levels within immunization programs

6 Measurement and Feedback

GOAL

Develop better means for measuring the effectiveness of training, on-the-job learning, and performance support, and provide feedback at all levels: individual, team, and organizational learning, programmatic impact, and so on.

The Challenge:

Current measurement practices are often limited to counting the number of trainings held and people in attendance. This practice fails to capture how immunization staff translate formal training into on-the-job performance. The value of measurement is lost if we don't measure appropriately, and don't know how or where to do so. A culture of measurement works when it is part of an intentional philosophy and approach, done in ways that are timely, efficient, relevant, and easy to understand.

Guidance for effective measurement and feedback:

- Provide timely, efficient, and evaluative learning and performance measurement, not just an occasional review of programs
- Ensure that the rationale for measurement and its relevance to quality improvement is clearly communicated by strong leadership for learning
- Establish strong guidance on both objective and subjective measures at all levels
- Measure not just the formal training processes, but also measure (and communicate) the value generated from the institutional knowledge and on-the-job (informal and incidental) learning practices of health care workers
- Link learning and performance evaluation to credentialing
- Explore and establish mechanisms for integrating feedback at global, agency, country, and program levels
- Create manageable, relevant indicators that are useful to staff at all levels
- Ensure constructive feedback loops to and from country programs
- Provide clear guidance, simple tools, and easy-to-understand methodologies for measurement and evaluation
- Provide unified tools to minimize workload and ensure that these tools are broadly and adequately disseminated
- Ensure local populations have what they need to lead and implement these efforts
- Focus on performance-based evaluations (what one can do, not what training one has attended)
- Develop and promulgate a culture for data and a bias for action
- Encourage continuous performance improvement at every level

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION

Globally:

- Ensure that performance evaluations are performance-based (as opposed to being based on number of trainings or attendees) and appropriately aligned with incentives
- Provide proven, effective tools for measurement of outcomes
- Reduce or eliminate unnecessary measurement tools, replacing them with straightforward, easy-to-use processes

Country Level:

- Measure inputs (how resources are being used, flow of funds, number and scope of training efforts), processes (efficiency, staff, budget, and time resources required), and performance outcomes (persons trained, personal improvement plans, and so on)
- Build systems to support learning; logistics, tools, supervision, motivation and performance support systems will facilitate effective training
- Look to and monitor desired outcomes: e.g., knowledge gained, skills acquired, competencies demonstrated, behaviors changed, quality-of-care improvements, coverage increases, and increased demand for services
- Coordinate and streamline tools for data collection
- Establish a core team with evaluation expertise to provide technical support on training evaluations

Health Facility Level:

- Facilitate and ensure peer learning, evaluation, and feedback
- Use measurement and feedback to inform program decisions, and to develop and foster a culture of learning