

# Principles for Learning

Conducting impactful, inclusive, scalable, and sustainable learning programs in emerging markets

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*Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities*

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# PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING

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## PURPOSE

### INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL THROUGH CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Across the world, rapid change is generating enormous opportunities—and challenges—for those countries, companies, and individuals equipped to meet the demands of the future. For emerging economies to compete, building human capital is key. Investing in training and continuous learning achieves this by providing people with the skills and knowledge to realize their potential. This investment is also vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of ending extreme poverty and creating more inclusive societies. But to keep pace with the fast-moving skills frontier, the training and learning sector in these markets needs to adapt too.

### MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW SKILLS FRONTIER

Countries provide billions every year in development assistance for capacity building. Yet the impact is often underwhelming or unmeasurable. Many current training programs aren't scalable or cost-effective, and trainers often have limited access to tools and resources to meet the challenge. To address this need, IFC has partnered with industry leaders to create a set of **Principles for Learning** for training and advisory service providers working in emerging markets. An accompanying **Guide to Training** puts the principles into action. The guide provides a competency-based framework that practitioners can use to design and implement successful learning and training programs, strengthen client companies, and build the skilled workforce of the future.

Special focus is placed on programs targeting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that provide the majority of jobs and income in emerging economies, to unleashing the potential of women entrepreneurs, and to developing human capital where it is needed most, in situations of fragility, conflict and violence.

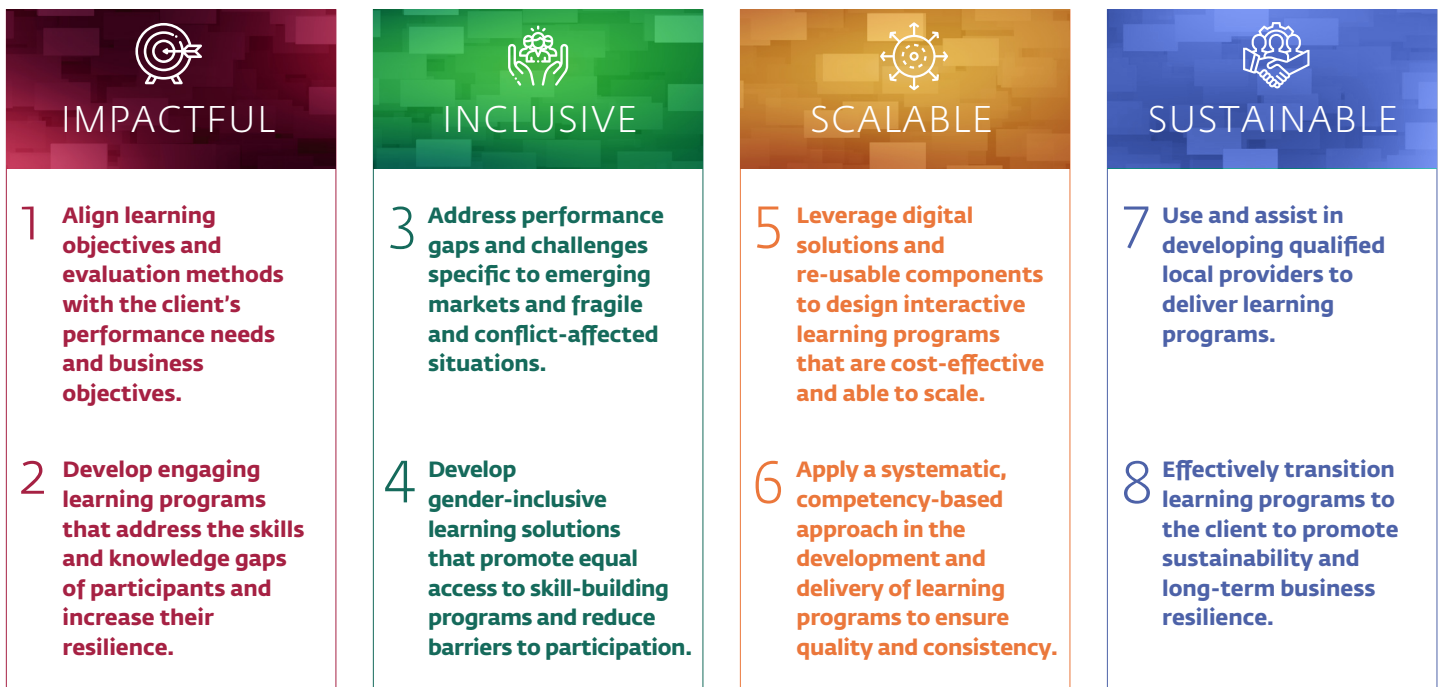
### IFC'S LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDE TO TRAINING

The principles represent foundational qualities that make a performance improvement project effective and impactful, while the guide provides detailed steps and advice for each phase of a project. The guide can be used by trainers, coaches, and advisory service providers, as well as professionals who design and develop learning experiences in a variety of mediums, administrators and project managers who oversee large training efforts, relationship managers, learning consultants, and anyone seeking to transfer knowledge and skills. These principles and the guide can also be used by companies and organizations as screening criteria when identifying solutions, work plans, or vendors for their training, learning, and capacity-building projects.

Both the Principles for Learning and the Guide to Training draw on best practices from a range of learning institutions and specialists, experts on gender-inclusive initiatives, and IFC and World Bank staff working in emerging markets, including fragile and conflict-affected situations. The principles and the guide will be updated to stay abreast of best practices and industry needs.

# THE PRINCIPLES

There are eight Principles for Learning. The principles reflect the four key elements of successful training and skills development programs—they should be Impactful, Inclusive, Scalable, and Sustainable. These are the same outcomes that IFC and the World Bank Group strive to achieve in all projects in emerging markets.



## IMPACTFUL

### PRINCIPLE 1

Align learning objectives and evaluation methods with the client's performance needs and business objectives

A training or skills development practitioner should always collaborate closely with the client, for example, the entrepreneur, company, or organization, to gain a clear understanding of their desired performance outcomes, targets, and business objectives. All content and activities in the program should align with these outcomes. Evaluation methods should be developed to measure success. Agreements should be established with clients to ensure learning goals match the business objectives.



## PRINCIPLE 2

Develop engaging learning programs that address the skills and knowledge gaps of participants and increase their resilience.

When developing a learning program, practitioners should consult with the client and relevant stakeholders including participants to gain a clear understanding of the baseline needs, knowledge, and skills of participants. Skill-building programs should also validate and measure the new skills and knowledge acquired by participants. Finally, learning experiences should be interactive and managed in a way that enables both facilitators and participants to succeed.



## INCLUSIVE

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### PRINCIPLE 3

Address performance gaps and challenges specific to emerging markets and fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Performance and learning practitioners face additional challenges when working in emerging markets and fragile and conflict-affected situations. These can be at the macro level and related, for example, to the economic or legal environment, safety and security, local cultural, religious and political sensitivities, or reliability of infrastructure and technology. These challenges can also be at the individual level, and reflect a participant's confidence and resilience levels, budget constraints, and access to networks. In either case, learning programs should adapt to the unique needs of the program location and participants.



### PRINCIPLE 4

Develop gender-inclusive learning solutions that promote equal access to skill-building programs and reduce barriers to participation.

Women in emerging markets often face significant barriers in doing business, accessing finance, or career advancement. Gender-inclusive programs take into account specific issues that may disproportionately limit the participation of women. For example, they factor in mobility and safety constraints by providing secure transportation, accommodate family responsibilities by scheduling training around school hours, address different education levels by tailoring course content, and help women believe in their own abilities by offering activities that build their self-confidence. These programs also focus on skills development by offering access to mentoring, coaching, and peer networks.

## SCALABLE

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### PRINCIPLE 5

Leverage digital solutions and re-usable components to design interactive learning programs that are cost-effective and scalable.

Learning programs should be participant-focused, with learning methods and digital solutions that increase engagement and interactivity. Programs should be designed with components that can, whenever possible, be easily replicated and modified to ensure they are cost-effective and scalable.

### PRINCIPLE 6

Apply a systematic, competency-based approach in the development and delivery of learning programs to ensure quality and consistency.

Following a systematic process helps to improve value, impact, and quality of performance improvement initiatives, demonstrates accountability, and allows for cross-project and cross-organizational comparisons. IFC's Guide to Training provides a rigorous set of competencies for trainers, advisory service providers, instructors, and other skills development professionals tailored specifically to the needs of emerging markets.

## SUSTAINABLE

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### PRINCIPLE 7

Use and assist in developing qualified local providers to deliver learning programs.

The use of qualified, certified local providers offers benefits at multiple levels. Local providers often have nuanced insight into the considerations and challenges involved in developing or implementing skill-building programs in emerging markets. At the same time, using local providers can help strengthen that region's advisory services market and deepen its network of resources to drive broader private sector capacity building.

### PRINCIPLE 8

Effectively transition learning programs to the client to promote sustainability and long-term business resilience.

Effective skill-building programs support participants as they apply newly-acquired skills and knowledge in their real-life environments during and after the program. Programs should include transition plans that leverage the client's internal resources to sustain participant performance over the long term.

# GLOSSARY

## ***Client***

The client is the primary contact in the company or organization requesting the learning or performance solution.

## ***Competencies***

Competencies refer to interrelated knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed for performing effectively in a particular area. For a performance and learning professional, there are seven key interrelated competencies: Partnering with Clients, Assessing Performance Needs, Designing Curricula, Designing Learning Experiences, Facilitating Learning, Supporting the Transfer of Learning, and Evaluating Learning. These competencies are also referred to as project lifecycle phases. This is because they align with the tasks a professional undertakes to develop, deliver, and manage a performance improvement product or service.

## ***Curricula***

Curricula can be used interchangeably with ‘program’. Curricula refers to the framework for a set of interrelated learning experiences and accompanying materials designed to build capacity over the medium to long term, among a variety of participants.

## ***Fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS)***

Fragile and conflict-affected situations suffer from ongoing conflict or the legacy of past violence, and face serious economic challenges, including damaged infrastructure, small private sectors, and weak regulatory environments and institutions. Entrepreneurs in fragile and conflict-affected situations often struggle to access capital and training.

## ***Gender-inclusive***

The term ‘gender-inclusive’ refers to programs that are open to both men and women, but are designed to overcome any barriers to women’s full participation. Implementing gender-inclusive skill-building programs is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.

Gender equality is not only social and moral imperative, but also an economic necessity. A World Bank study found that, across the world, countries are losing \$160 trillion in wealth because of differences in lifetime earnings between women and men. Companies, however, are realizing that closing gaps between women’s and men’s economic participation drives the growth of businesses and economies and improves the lives of families and communities.

## ***Learning experiences***

Learning experiences are self-contained lessons that are intended to help a well-defined audience achieve a particular learning objective over a brief period of time (for example, minutes, hours, or days). These may use: e-learning, m-learning, instructor-led training, videos, games, simulations, audio podcasts, social media, discussion forums, chat rooms, infographics, job aids, checklists, blog posts, readings, quizzes and flashcards.

## ***MSMEs***

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), range from sole entrepreneurs through to companies with 100 employees. MSMEs are particularly important in emerging markets, where they generate much-needed income and create between 70 and 95 percent of new employment opportunities.

The term MSME may also encompass farmers and is sometimes interpreted more broadly to include potential entrepreneurs for example, unemployed youth and refugees. In the context of performance improvement initiatives, MSMEs may also represent learners, recipients, or beneficiaries.

## ***Performance***

Performance refers to behaviors that produce measurable results and that indicate progress towards—or achievement of—an outcome.

## ***Performance and learning professional (training professional)***

In this document, a performance and learning professional is referred to as a training professional who provides performance improvement services to clients. Professionals in this field may serve in a variety of roles: administrators who oversee learning and development teams, trainers, coaches, instructional designers who design and develop learning experiences in a variety of media, project managers who oversee large training efforts, managers, relationship managers or learning consultants who assess a situation and suggest whether or not learning can address it and serve as a bridge between business leaders and the learning function within an organization, and evaluators who assess the effectiveness of learning experiences.

## ***Performance improvement***

A strategic process that produces business results by maximizing the performance/behavior of people and organizations. This process usually includes training in requisite skills and knowledge, and may also include other factors which influence performance. They include coaching and reinforcement, creating incentives, streamlining work systems and processes, giving access to information, and enhancing workplace culture.

## ***Performance improvement solutions***

At their core, performance improvement solutions help individuals to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to accomplish certain goals. These solutions ensure participants have the resources required to perform these skills. When many individuals strengthen their individual performance, the organization that sponsored the learning or other performance solution realizes a broader goal of its own and achieving that ideal has an impact on its overall results.

IFC  
2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20433 U.S.A.  
ifc.org

