



USAID | DELIVER PROJECT

Regional Training Institutes Evolve into Educational Leaders



Students at ESAMI training course, Arusha Tanzania.

The RTIs were successful in training staff, developing and adhering to business plans, and delivering high-quality training courses.

MARCH 2015

This publication was produced for review by the U.S. Agency for International Development. It was prepared by the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, Task Order 4.

Beginning in 2007, the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT (the project) worked with four Regional Training Institutes (RTIs) to enable them to offer high-quality supply chain management (SCM) courses to an international audience in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. These institutes are private training organizations composed of all local staff, who were selected to receive targeted technical assistance from the project that would expand their training portfolio to include public health supply chain management (SCM). The institutes can now provide SCM training to countries using a cost effective, sustainable, and locally driven model.

Previously, SCM trainings were offered by external consultants to country clients through expensive technical assistance (TA) trips. By building the capacity of local institutions, the new RTI model reduced the need for TA, over time, and trained a larger number of local supply chain management practitioners. The institutional development of RTIs established a more cost effective long-term training model, which also built local capacity that nurtures local ownership and promotes regional sustainability.

The project hand-selected each of the four RTIs; they received TA to strengthen their organizational and training capacity, eventually enabling them to offer high-quality SCM training to local audiences.

After the staff at the RTIs were trained and working, their training performance was periodically assessed to ensure they continued to meet the same high-quality standards upheld by the project. Over time, the RTIs have evolved as leaders in training for SCM and logistics; they

have, in turn, trained hundreds of SCM professionals around the world. Currently, the RTIs are working either on their own or with diminishing TA from the project. The four RTIs are based in Peru, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and South Africa; covering a client

RTIs received training and TA in the following areas:

- training and facilitation skills
- offering consulting services
- supply chain management concepts
- business savvy; marketing of the course
- training materials development
- curriculum development; making updates.

base that is Anglophone, Francophone, and Spanish-speaking (see figure 1). In 2014, a new RTI was established in Ghana with the University of Public Health, for a new total of five RTIs.

Figure 1. Location of Regional Training Institutes (RTIs)



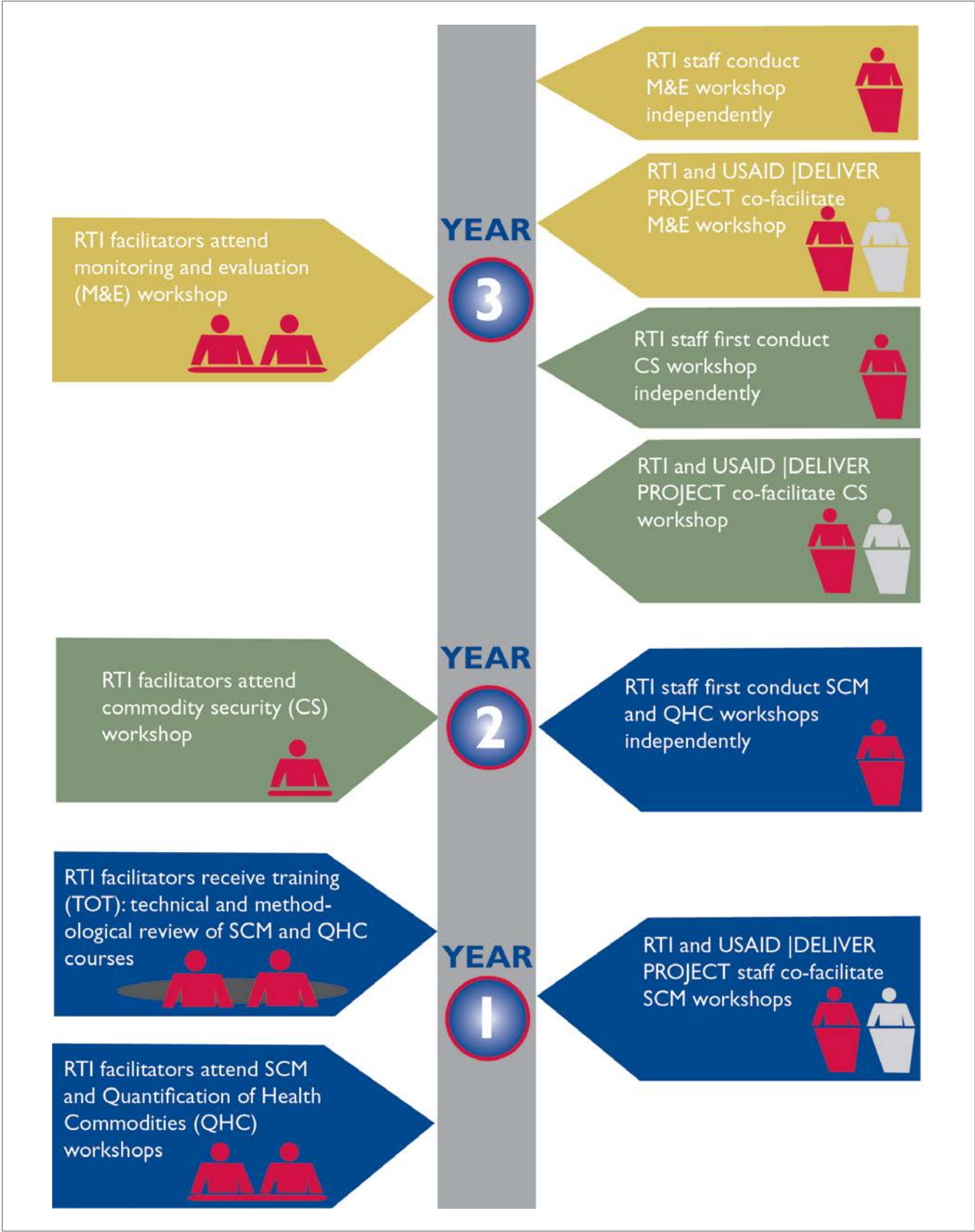
The four RTIs each developed within their own unique implementation context whereby each RTI faced different strengths and challenges. Therefore, the RTI implementation schedules are not identical, but all RTIs followed the same general steps toward successful organizational development. The steps taken over a period of approximately three years, by each RTI, are presented chronologically in figure 2 (see the following page).

Regional Training Institute Assessment Survey

In 2014, the RTI initiative reached its seventh year. During that time, each RTI changed and developed in different ways and at different rates. To document those changes, an online survey-based assessment collected both qualitative and quantitative information from each of the four original RTIs to determine how each RTI had changed since becoming involved with the RTI initiative. The project developed a survey tool and sent it to staff who oversee the SCM training activities at each of the RTIs to complete. All surveys from the four regional training institutions—ESAMI, PRISMA, S Buys, and BIOFORCE—were included for analysis; the response rate was 100 percent. At the time of the survey, the University of Ghana had only recently joined as an RTI; they were not included in the survey. The results offered rich insights into the unique organizational growth that each RTI had because of their involvement with the RTI initiative. Supply chain management courses offered by RTIs include Overview of Supply Chain Management, Quantification of Health Commodities, Strengthening Supply Chains through Monitoring and Evaluation, and Commodity Security: Principals and Practice.

The results presented below are divided into five key RTI program areas: (1) program quality, (2) quality of staff, (3) management of services, (4) quality of TA, and (5) human resources.

Figure 2. Timeline of RTI Development Activities



Program Quality

A key objective of the RTI effort was to equip select regional institutions with the skills to deliver high-quality capacity building programs for local supply chain professionals. To accomplish this, RTI facilitators were trained to use performance improvement methodology that consistently evaluated and improved the programs offered. The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT provided each RTI with the initial curriculum for them to implement in their program, including the adult learning methodology for teaching the technical material. Technical assistance was also provided to track the quality of the program and to make improvements that would meet the needs of the RTI clients.

- The specific areas of the survey rated with the highest satisfaction included, but was not limited to, those about the project's supply chain training staff and the usefulness of the training curricula that the project gave each RTI.
- All four respondents strongly agreed that they now have the necessary skills to deliver quality supply management courses and that they use a performance improvement methodology to consistently evaluate and make improvements to the courses. For example, RTIs were encouraged to utilize Course Evaluations to solicit feedback from participants about their satisfaction with a particular course and the relevant facilitators. For each training, RTIs subsequently wrote reports to process and reflect on the evaluation results, and made appropriate adjustments to improve their course delivery based on the Course Evaluation results. The performance improvement methodology is an essential organizational development activity to sustain program quality; the project is encouraged to see that all RTIs continue to use this methodology.
- RTIs reported significant improvements to their “team teaching and participant involvement” as a result of their RTI experience. They all indicated that their supply chain training is now more practical because it encourages shared experiences. The comments of the RTIs are summarized by two survey responses (see box 1).
- Regional training institutes communicated that additional training in the *procurement of health commodities* would be helpful to them at this point, because the project did not cover procurement in depth. RTIs were also interested in learning more about commodity security, because it is becoming increasingly relevant to the RTIs' target audience, which includes nurses, warehouse managers, university lecturers, program managers, USAID mission staff, and other supply chain management professionals.
- To answer the question—How often are the supply chain courses evaluated?—three of four regional training institutes stated that they evaluate their supply chain courses “twice during each course” and the other indicated “once during each course.” Course evaluations were completed by participants at all four RTIs, trainers at two RTIs, and administrators at one RTI. Monitoring and evaluation was an important element of the performance improvement strategy used by the project. As such, the project conducted an in depth midterm evaluation of both PRISMA and ESAMI that focused on the following key areas: training skills, knowledge of technical areas, marketing, course planning and organization, and return on investment (ROI). The evaluation yielded many useful recommendations, whose implementation were facilitated jointly between the project and the RTIs.
- Overall, regional training institutes' responses about participant satisfaction with the quality of supply chain courses offered are positive. Three out of four regional training institutes relayed that training

Box 1. Positive Reactions from RTIs

One regional training institute commented:

“Course content and exercises have been adapted to the context of the Latin American region and the Facilitator's Guide have been adjusted”

Another stated:

“I have improved certain sessions of other logistics training courses with the wide overview USAID|DELIVER PROJECT has on the supply chain, i.e., Logistics Cycle: Organizing Logistics System Activities or Logistics Management Information Systems. I also give clear indications to trainees on web links, such as: <http://www.jsi.com/Independent/Deliver/LogisticsCD/htdocs/>.”

participants from the most recently evaluated course were “strongly satisfied” with the quality of supply chain course they received. One RTI did not address the question. Two out of the four RTIs indicated that they made improvements to their courses based on results from these evaluations, including—

- Developed more exercises for the quantification course.
- Changed the orientation of certain courses from theory to practice.
- Delivered two sessions on the case study instead of one.
- Spent more time on Excel exercises in level 2 (quantification course) to meet the skill level of training participants.

Quality of Staff

The second key objective of the RTI effort was to staff capacity building programs with people who have done *hands-on* logistics and supply chain management work and who have had training in designing and delivering training programs based on adult learning methods.

- Instructors’ supply chain management experience reported by regional training institutes varied across institutions, with two RTIs having the most years of experience (eight years or more).
- Each of the regional training institutes employs between 1–7 supply chain instructors, indicating that this may be the common capacity for supply chain training at these institutions. One RTI reported having to secure a training team by recruiting and training more trainers to offer more supply chain management training courses; this indicates that the demand for courses increased. Additionally, to meet the demand, staff capacity increased accordingly.
- All four RTIs strongly agreed that the quality of their instructors has improved. RTIs reported that they are able to fulfill adult learners’ needs and interests. They also noted instructor improvements in group sessions, sessions to assess participant’s skill levels, and instructor relationships.
- All the regional training institutes (n=4) either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their staff instructors have completed “hands on” logistics and supply chain management work. Three out of four of the regional training institutes strongly agreed that their staff instructors have learned to design and deliver training programs based on adult learning methods, while one RTI disagreed. This tells us that, overall, RTI instructors have relevant working experience in SCM and are also knowledgeable about training adult learners. This can be partially attributed to the fact that the project put a heavy emphasis on the adult learning theory, while mentoring RTIs on content delivery methods.
- When asked for suggestions on how to improve the quality of instructors and, subsequently, improve the supply chain management courses, RTIs suggested the following:
 - Establish continuing professional development.

Box 2. The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT (the project) used the following process to train RTI staff in logistics technical content and adult learning methods:

1. RTI staff first attended, as participants, a workshop presented by project facilitators.
2. The RTI staff then met with a project facilitator for training-of-trainers; the technical content and adult learning methods were discussed and practiced.
3. RTI staff and a project facilitator co-facilitated the workshop.
4. RTI staff conducted the workshop on their own and report the results to the project.

- Teach supply chain management courses in other African countries to train the trainers with new competences and additional supply chain management curricula.
- Offer refresher courses on emerging issues in supply chain management.

Management of Services

The third objective of the RTI effort was to ensure the RTIs have the skills to manage their capacity building programs as business units. An emphasis was placed on employing a “Consulting for Results” model that will consistently meet or exceed client expectations. The Leadership, Management and Sustainability Program (LMS) provided TA in developing a business plan in two RTIs to encourage program sustainability.

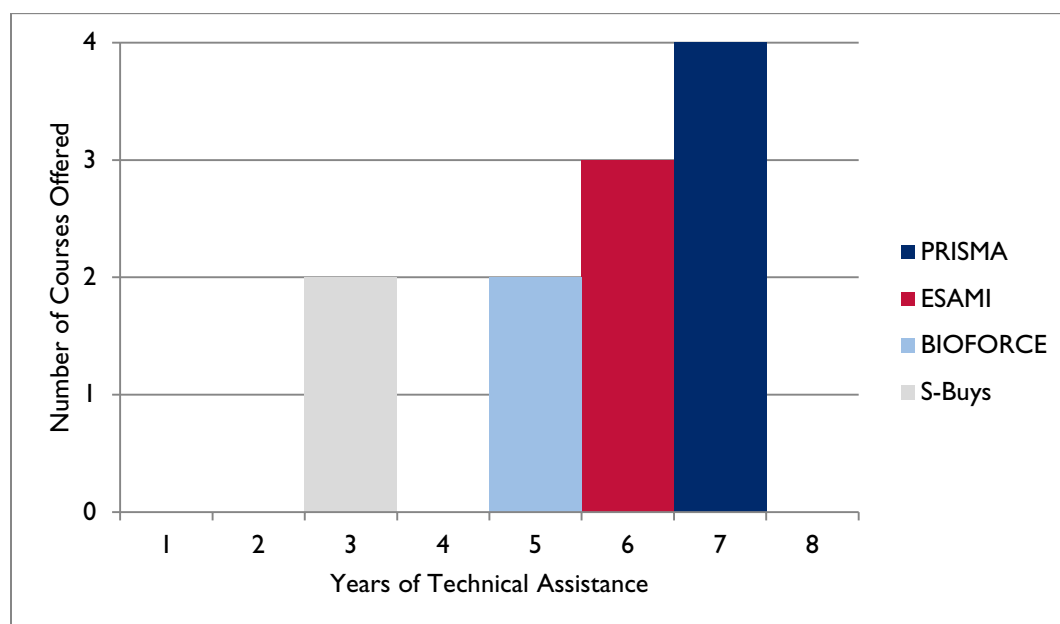
- All regional training institutes either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their organization has the capacity to manage their TA services and capacity building courses as business units.¹
- One of the RTIs reports offering more than 15 scholarships to enable selected students to attend their workshop free of charge. This highlights the RTI’s dedication to the advancement of SCM and commitment to ensuring that relevant local personnel are trained.
- All respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the offered courses are “demand driven, market tested and adjusted, priced appropriately, and represent a reasonable risk for investors and third party payers.”
- Course offerings varied by RTI, with one offering all four supply chain management courses, while others offer either two or three (see figure 3). The RTI’s capacity to offer more courses may correlate to the length of time they have received assistance from the project.



Participants pose during a supply chain management training at PRISMA in Lima, Peru (2009).

USAID | DELIVER PROJECT 2009

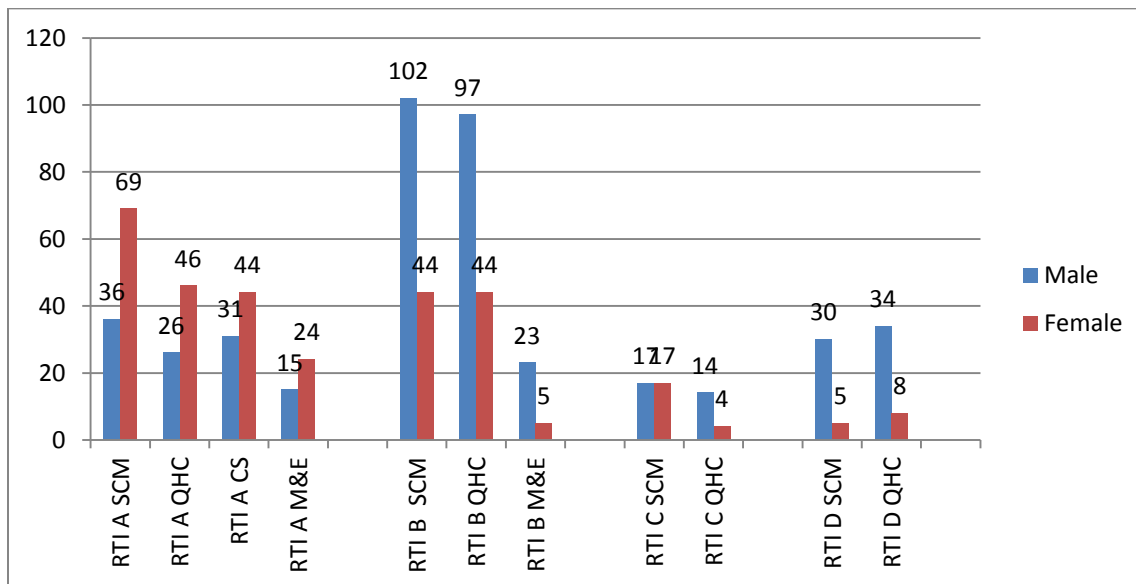
Figure 3. Number of Courses Offered Per Years of Assistance Received



¹ To clarify, although all four RTIs do not currently offer technical assistance services, that they all feel they have the capacity to do so.

- The number of participants required to offer a course also varied by RTI. One RTI indicated that they need “at least 8 participants,” the second indicated 15, and the third indicated “5–26 participants,” while the fourth indicated “18–20 participants.” This shows a wide variety of participants required for each RTI for a course to be financially viable to offer. On some occasions, RTIs did not receive the required interest for a course, resulting in the course being postponed until the requisite number of students had signed up.
- Newspaper advertisements, distribution of flyers and brochures, and word of mouth (peers) are powerful marketing tools for the RTI supply chain courses.
- Men received comparatively more supply chain management training than women at three of the regional institutes, but one RTI consistently trained more women than men (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Number of Participants Trained by RTIs, by Gender



- Three out of four regional training institutes “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the general management of services at their RTI has positively changed after they received assistance. One RTI summarized the benefits that their organization saw as a result of their improved management abilities.

“It is very good and facilities have been improved.... four new conference rooms have been constructed, broadband Internet and automatic generator has been installed and accommodation rooms on our premises have been upgraded.”

Additional comments that attest to the RTIs improving their approach to training management are shown in box 3. Notably, however, one RTI was neutral when answering this question. This response may be explained by the fact that this regional training institute already had a well-established management system prior to these interventions.

Box 3. RTI’s Discuss Improved Training Approaches

“We have increased the ability to manage courses and technical assistance.” -RTI staff member

“We now offer a new training program and a more specific approach.” -RTI staff member

“At first there was resistance to allocate three facilitators in one workshop, because this was not our agency’s way of doing things, but now things have improved three or more facilitators are deployed to conduct such a workshop.” -RTI staff member

- Email, followed by telephone, is the most

frequently used form of communication for three of four RTIs and their course alumni. Two RTIs reported having no system in place to track alumni professional movements, while one RTI reported tracking and recording alumni professional movements via email outreach.

Quality of TA

A fourth objective of the RTI effort was to equip the RTI with the skills to provide quality TA. As such, they were trained to ensure that consulting services and training products are demand-driven and market-tested, priced appropriately, properly delivered, and represent a reasonable risk for investors and third party payers.

- All four regional training institutes either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their organization has the capacity to manage their TA services. All reported being “strongly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way the quality of their TA has positively changed after being exposed to the project’s approach.
- From the beginning of the RTI effort, providing outside TA to other organizations or governments has become more common for most of the RTIs. For example, one regional training institute reported providing TA to many other countries, including Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, and Equatorial Guinea.
- Three out of four RTIs reported being “satisfied” or “strongly satisfied” with their performance in providing TA and their clients were equally satisfied or strongly satisfied with the quality of TA they received. The quality of TA is evaluated by customer satisfaction, and through pre- and post-TA assessments. It should be noted that one RTI has not provided outside TA.

Human Resources

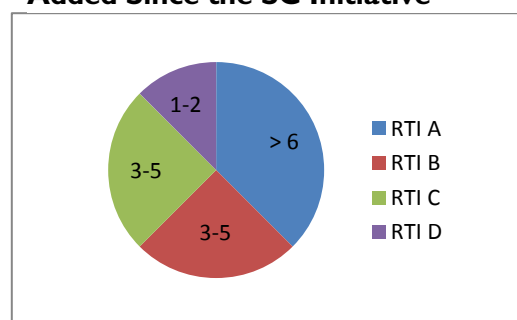
The final objective of the RTI effort was to establish strong human resource practices within each RTI. This included creating a process for motivating staff to use their consulting and training expertise to advance the institution. Staff turnover was also identified as a potential human resources issue for RTIs; it was addressed in the business plans they developed.

- All four regional training institutes “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement: “the regional training institute has institutionalized a process for motivating staff to use their consulting and training expertise for the advancement of the institution and to mitigate staff turnover.”
- Among the four surveyed RTIs, three reported that from the beginning of the RTIs, none of their supply chain instructors had voluntarily left. Insufficient salary and benefits were the reasons given by the RTI when one to two supply chain instructors left their positions voluntarily.
- All four surveyed RTIs reported adding one to six new instructors to their supply chain management roster as a result of the Regional Training Initiative. (see figure 5).
- All four survey RTIs “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement that the performance of human resources at the RTI has positively changed after being exposed to the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT approach.

Positive changes included—

- Instructors have a positive attitude at work.
- The actions taken are relevant.

Figure 5. No. of Instructors RTI Added Since the SC Initiative

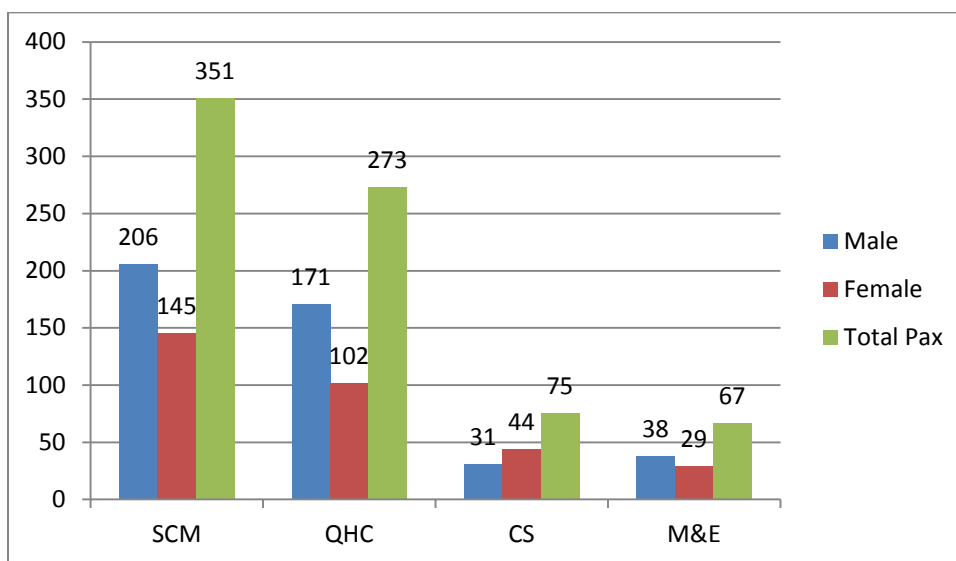


- Able to tackle all kinds of problems in inventory management because of enhanced knowledge and the instructor's ability.
- Instructors are more dedicated.

Conclusions

Since their initiation in 2007, the RTIs have demonstrated that they can deliver international training workshops that are well organized and are presented by competent facilitators with technical accuracy. Courses are reaching a wide global audience and a client base is continually being built. The regional institutes developed tools to effectively evaluate their work after each workshop and to improve the content to meet the clients' requirements. The combined efforts of the RTIs have resulted in a total of 766 health professionals being trained in supply chain management (see figure 6).

Figure 6. Total Participants Trained per Module



The RTIs were successful in training staff, developing and adhering to business plans, and delivering high-quality training courses. Opportunities for TA have opened the door for the RTIs to engage in future local consulting projects in their respective regions. As a result, Latin America and Africa now have institutions they can turn to for workshops and expertise on various supply chain management topics: PRISMA, Peru; ESAMI, Tanzania; S Buys, South Africa; Bioforce, Burkina Faso. Each organization continues to demonstrate strong capabilities and a bright promise for the future of local, sustainable training and for TA in supply chain management.

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

USAID | DELIVER PROJECT

John Snow, Inc.

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor

Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Phone: 703-528-7474

Fax: 703-528-7480

Email: askdeliver@jsi.com

Internet: deliver.jsi.com