

Book Review: Training in Developing Nations: A Handbook for Expatriates

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John L. Daly, ed. *Training in Developing Nations: A Handbook for Expatriates*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharp, 2005. 218 pp. \$29.95 (paper).

Apparently many expatriates returning home from their training experiences in Third World countries have felt deficient in their abilities as trainers. Contributing to this lack is the fact that there is a dearth in pertinent information and methodologies to assist trainers in their preparation for service in developing countries. *Training in Developing Nations: A Handbook for Expatriate (TIDN)* attempts to meet this need. It is “designed to provide useful insights and helpful tips for international trainers and technical consultants” (p. vii) preparing to carry out professional training in developing nations.

The idea for this type of book was formed shortly after the editor was selected as a Fulbright Senior Scholar to the African country of Swaziland where he spent ten months as a technical advisor and trainer. In preparing for the stint in Swaziland, he was unable to find “relevant preparatory materials” (p. viii) to help him prepare for his mission.

In the “Introduction,” Daly provides the reader with an overview of the text after stating that people with no Third World training experience will find in this text “helpful tips” while preparing for “training and travel” (p. xi). He also mentions that this text could serve as a valuable resource for assessing one’s previous training in developing countries “with training provided by others” (p. xi). He affirms that the material in the text reflects the insights of experienced trainers who are highly educated academics, who have had considerable training and field experience. This text, he believes, will serve both those beginning training and those who are experienced.

The text consists of three main sections. Part I is titled “Practical Strategies for Training in Developing Settings.” Chapter 1 by William Marjenhoff deals with issues of safety, security and being comfortable in developing nations. The author lists some essentials necessary to one’s preparation prior to one’s departure. And on arrival at one’s destination, one should be alert to criminal activity at airports, alert to being taken advantage of by taxi drivers, the police and even the government officials. Some of these fundamentals may seem unnecessary to the nonchalant person who is trusting of everybody; but to ensure one’s protection and well-being, these are indeed necessary, and commonsense is key.

Stories on the infringement of the personal safety of travelers abound.

In Chapter 2 Daly offers seven tips to enhance expatriate trainers’ effectiveness when operating in underdeveloped managerial contexts. For example, one should not assume that communication will be smooth just because English is the official language of a government. In Swaziland, while English is the official language, it is not the dominant vernacular; siSwati is. Also, the variety of English one speaks may be somewhat challenging to the trainees of the host country. Moreover, when one is communicating with a Swazi, the word “yes” does not always mean an affirmative nod. Since this response is prevalent in many African contexts, non-Africans can misinterpret this response. One should be careful and learn to read between the lines to ensure that adequate communication is taking place. Knowing something about basic communication patterns of the host country is important. Daly does a good job of apprising prospective technical consultants or trainers of the possibility of facing culture shock relevant to a breakdown in communication when they relocate to a Third World country. Therefore focussing on the suggestions he offers may serve you well.

Being a female trainer in many international settings presents many challenges because the place of women does not equal that of men. In Chapter 3, Barbara Liggett discusses such challenges based on her wide experiences working with international students. Her advice is invaluable, not only to expatriates women trainers but also to men as well. She concludes the chapter by emphasizing that the “struggle—the challenge of gender—is present for educators and for students. The struggle, itself, however, can be a catalyst for creating a circle of learners, worldwide” (p. 47). Perhaps if women like Barbara Liggett made a point of connecting with some women from developing countries who are in key positions, to get their perspectives on gender issues, they would gain added insights into how to handle gender issues.

Marketing strategies for training initiatives in developing nations is the topic of Chapter 4. Since there is very little information at our disposal relevant to marketing strategies in the training area, Daly’s discussion is of utmost importance. He has made an excellent point in putting the onus of “getting the word out” to the host nation sponsors on the trainers themselves. This is an effective way of en-

hancing participation and improving attendance on the part of host participants.

Part II deals with training in specific fields. In Chapter 5, Ambe Njoh, draws attention to three historical perspectives designed to improve administrative effectiveness in developing countries: classical administrative reforms (1950-mid-1960s), institution building (mid-1960-early-1970s) institution development (mid-1970-present), and elaborates on their strengths and weaknesses. Information about these initiatives should be of interest to trainers because an awareness of the how administrative reforms in developing countries work can help prepare trainers for what to expect in the host country. According to Njoh, the institution development model has potential for effecting changes consistent with administrative objectives. A person interested in this area would need to explore this field. Someone going to a specific country would need to have some background on the country's administrative structure in order to prepare to offer adequate training.

According to Willy Holleweg dit Wegman, "economic development is key to human development (HD) and poverty alleviation" (p. 85). Chapter 6 is a reflection of Holleweg dit Wegman's long experience as a trainer and represents much of the thinking about economic development theory from a European perspective. He insists that training based on the local setting's needs and solutions and aid funds should be allocated accordingly. "Developing countries, and African countries in particular, will never reach an acceptable overall development if the people are not trained in an appropriate manner" (p. 110). And an adequate number of local trainers should be trained. Holleweg dit Wegman gives examples of case studies on the successes and failures of job creation through small and mid-level enterprises. This is an important chapter to read for those interested in economic development.

In Chapter 7, Joyce Barrett gives a frank presentation of the need for effective and efficient media training in developing countries. Her essay is easy, quick reading, humorous and full of insights on the media training, based on her approaches to teaching as well as her experiences with students in Third World countries. She does emphasize ethics as an important element in journalism. This chapter should be required reading for persons planning to be media trainers overseas. There are apparently moral issues needing to be addressed in this field.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the preparation of expatriate trainers who will give instruction in group-counseling skills and knowledge to mental health workers in developing countries. The authors stress the pre-training of expatriate trainers prior to their posting in overseas training contexts. Also, the host country and community need to be committed to the undertaking, so they need to make available information on local traditions and customs, etc., that will assist the trainer who is going to have to develop a rapport with trainees. The reader is informed of the current state of group leader training overseas and then presented with a best practices model for group leader training and how this

model can be applied to developing countries. The authors recommend an extended period of service and encourage some flexibility on the part of the trainer. The mental health area needs attention, more so with the devastation of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter provides helpful information to those planning to work in mental health.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in the provision of assistance to the citizens of Third World countries. In Chapter 9, Willy Holleweg dit Wegman offers an elaborate model showing the operation of NGOs. He stresses the training of experts based on needs assessment. The information in this chapter is invaluable to trainers interested in NGOs. The information sheds light on how crucial proper training is on account of the short duration of funding from donors. Training has to be quick but thorough. The example of a fictitious developing nation, the author uses, can provide insights to trainers.

Cherie Onkst and Eknath Naik's contribution to this text (Chapter 10) is of great importance in view of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has ravaged much of the developing world. In this chapter, Onkst and Naik suggest strategies relevant to the training of local health care professionals. First, characteristics of health care professionals are mentioned. Since they are considered the cream of society, the role of health professionals is vital; so in working with them, the expatriate should give them due respect and treat them as equals in the sharing of knowledge and ideas. Next, communication styles of the host country are explored since they are crucial to a positive working relationship with the local professionals. American communication is generally two-way, whereas the communication style of many developing world contexts is one-way, or top-down. Also, since learning styles vary from culture to culture, the trainers need to take these factors into consideration when training local experts. Other issues such as the implementation, content, length, and the evaluation of the training programs are presented. Emphasis is placed on the people being served and trained, so training methodologies should be tailored to the needs of the target audience and should be flexible so as to be adapted to different situations and different cultural settings. It should be noted that expatriates themselves vary their styles or approaches according to their personalities. Part III is a chapter on observations and conclusions. In this concluding chapter, Daly not only reviews the findings from previous chapters in the book, but he also explores future trends and challenges germane to training in Third World countries. Key factors in improving training include, sufficient institutional support, cultural awareness, adaptability of the trainer, patience on the part of the trainer, and future training trends and challenges.

To conclude, it is necessary to suggest that this book will not provide all the answers that an expatriate trainer needs in preparing to work abroad. A trainer needs to try to find as much information as possible on the country of his/her future sojourn. Embassies may provide some information on their respective countries, but much of this is sketchy

and prepared for tourists. Texts on culture and intercultural communication can be valuable resources. Many of these texts are used in colleges and universities, but, unfortunately, books specific to the cultures of many developing countries still need to be written. Publishers nonetheless may be reluctant to publish books for which there is no large market. We need to remember that books alone do not give a person deep insights into a culture. Culture is like an iceberg: what you see is not all a culture is. Therefore, when you are living in another culture, you have to constantly try to learn as much as possible about the culture and strive to be an effec-

tive intercultural communicator, especially when dealing with people face to face.

Training in Developing Nations is indeed an engaging text, and I have to agree with the editor that it “will help the reader gain firmer grasps on training in developing nations” (p. 198) although I refer the term “should” to “will.” The reader should always bear in mind that in whatever field training is conducted, the training should be tailored to the needs of the culture receiving the training and not to the needs of the industrialized world.

