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United States Agency for International Development
Human Resources Development Assistance (HRDA) Project

USAID/NIGER PARTICIPANT EVALUATION SURVEY
FINAL REPORT

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Acronyms

HRDA	Human Resources Development Assistance Project
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PTMS	Participant Training Management System
TC	Third Country
US	United States

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1. Introduction

The 1993 USAID Participant Evaluation Survey was implemented over a two and one-half month period (January - April 1993). Whereas the HRDA Contractor was responsible for survey design, questionnaire/database development and data analysis, the Niger Mission had primary responsibility for data collection and entry.

2. Survey methodology

2.1 Sampling procedure

Based upon consultation with Mission staff, a decision was made to survey two types of participants: 1) those who received academic long-term training and 2) private sector individuals who received short-term training. After reviewing PTMS records, participants were stratified by training location and the actual number to be surveyed were randomly selected according to their proportion in the returned participant population. A questionnaire was also sent to the supervisor of each survey participant.

In anticipation of a possible response rate of 80% and the desire for a minimum sample size of 100 returned participants plus their supervisors, participants were over sampled. Nevertheless, the questionnaire return rate for 156 distributed questionnaires was 44%. It was found that the return rate was higher for long-term training participants than those in the private sector short-term training programs and for participants compared to their supervisors. Whereas long-term, third-country participants had the highest return rate (83%), their supervisors had the lowest (45%).

2.2 Questionnaire and Database Development

Two questionnaires were developed using a combined format of forced choice, open and close-ended questions. The participant questionnaire contains 40 questions as compared to the supervisor questionnaire with 25 questions. Secondly, DBASE 3+ computer software was used to develop data entry and management programs.

2.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data of the survey. Unfortunately, due to the small sample size, statistical testing was not possible. Thus, findings are presented in the form of frequency distributions and percentages as a means explaining different trends.

USAID-financed training in this sample can be characterized as follows:

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS BY TRAINING TYPE AND TIME

Training Type	No. (#)	%	Ave. Duration
Academic	53	78	26 mos.
Technical	8	12	10
Study visits	0	-	-
Workshops/Seminars	7	10	2 weeks

The majority of sample participants received training in one of three fields: a) Management/Administration /Marketing, b) Agriculture, and c) Health. Among long-term training participants, the majority of degrees were attained at the master's level.

3.2.2 Supervisors

Out of the 44 supervisors who responded to the survey questionnaire, 30% were women. Among the private sector, all but one respondent are employed by the local Chamber of Commerce. As expected, supervisors of long-term participants came from the public sector. For the most part, their immediate relationship with the former USAID participant can be classified as follows:

TABLE 3: RELATIONSHIP OF SUPERVISOR TO PARTICIPANT

Organizational Relationship	No. (#)	Percent (%)
Director	24	57
Supervisor	7	17
Other	12	28

The "Other" category includes such positions as owners, under secretary, section and department heads.

4. Findings

4.1 Participant Selection Criteria

The majority of supervisors (67%) reported that former USAID participants had been employed with their organization prior to their training. Ninety-three percent (93%) felt that the selection process was reliable. Among supervisors of long-term participants, the most commonly cited selection criteria were:

TABLE 4: PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection	No. (#)		Percent (%)	
	TC	USA	TC	USA
Competitive exam	11	4	42	50
Merit	4	4	15	50
Professional experience	8	1	31	11
Other	5	1	10	11

Responses in the "other" category included seniority, job title, and decision by national scholarship board. In comparison to their counterparts, private sector supervisors tended to mention either "professional experience" or "other" (not explained) as criteria.

4.2 Training Program Involvement

4.2.1 Participants

Participants reported involvement in the development of their individual training plans as follows:

TABLE 5: PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING PLAN

Participant involvement	No. (#)	Percent (%)
Institution selection	29	44
Diploma/degree choice	36	54
Training Duration	14	21
Other	15	22

Only seven (7) respondents reported changing their field of training during the course of their program. All but one had participated in third-country, long-term training. The primary reasons given for the change were employer interests and/or development needs of the country.

4.2.2. Employers

Employing organizations also were involved during the participant's training program, but their role was financial, in nature. As reflected in Chart 1, the major employer contribution was either salary payments (87% of supervisors) and/or family allowances (52%).

4.3 Perception of Participant Training

4.3.1 Relevance

Nearly all of the participants (97%) indicated that they were able to adapt their training to Nigerien realities. They were able to accomplish this through a variety of mechanisms: practical experiences, choice of courses; and in some cases, the program was already adapted to African milieu and context.

Both participants (87%) and supervisors (89%) were in agreement that the degrees and diplomas received for training were recognized by Nigerien authorities. Additionally, the majority of supervisors (93%) felt that the USAID-financed training agreed with the development needs and realities in Niger.

4.3.2 Training Location

A comparison between participants and supervisors revealed that when given an option of country training location, there was a decided preference for US-based training. For example, Table 6 reflects overall participant preferences when they were asked to identify a preferred country in terms of their own professional interests:

TABLE 6 - COUNTRY TRAINING PREFERENCES BY INTERESTS

Location	Participant	
	#	%
Niger	17	26
USA	34	52
Other Countries	17	26

A similar pattern is found when respondents were asked to choose a country in light of the development needs and priorities of Niger. As reflected in Table 7, both participants and supervisors were consistent in their preferences.

TABLE 7 - COUNTRY TRAINING PREFERENCES BY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Location	Participant		Supervisor,	
	#	%	#	%
Niger	8	13	6	15
USA	39	64	21	54
Other Countries	22	36	21	54

Further analysis reveals, as shown in Charts 2 and 3, that differences in country preference also vary according to the type of training participants received. First, among participants who had been in long-term training programs, those trained in the United States almost exclusively selected US-based training. Conversely, those trained in other countries were most likely to mention either Niger or other African countries.

A slightly different picture emerges among private sector participants (refer to Chart 3). In terms of professional interests, all respondents chose either Niger and other countries (excluding USA). When development needs were considered, US-trained participants tended to select the United States; but those who attended third-country programs were less likely to select this country.

Supervisors were only asked to choose countries according to the development needs and realities of Niger. Not surprisingly, those (refer to Chart 4) who had supervisees (whether long-term or private sector) in US-based programs tended to select the United States. Similarly, supervisors of former TC participants had a majority preference for other countries. As a matter of fact, only supervisors of TC long-term training participants even mentioned Niger as a preferred country.

In most instances, respondents explained their selection choices. Analysis reveals that supervisors gave similar reasons as former participants for their choices. When considering either professional interests or development needs, the reasons most often given for selecting the United States were: training quality, educational approach and methods, emphasis on practical training, and English mastery. The most often mentioned location in the "other" category was Africa. However, Asia and other countries such as Canada were also cited. In cases where Africa or Niger was mentioned, the common reason was similar or same realities faced in country and easy adaptation of tools/techniques. In general, training outside of Africa, whether US, Europe or Asia, was perceived as having the advantage of exposing participants to new ideas, new ways of thinking and exposing them to modern, competitive approaches. In some instances, participants acknowledged that their advanced or additional study in their field of choice is not available in Niger (N=2).

4.4 Training Impact on Participant

4.4.1 Employment Opportunities

Using a Likert scale of 1 (difficult) to 5 (easy), participants were asked to rate the ease of their reintegration into the Nigerien work force after training. They had a favorable assessment -- an overall average of 4.4. Only four (4) participants indicated difficulty in finding work, and they indicated an average

delay of 12 months. However, no data is available on the perceived cause for this delay.

4.4.2 Personal benefits

In a related finding, participants felt that their superiors were strongly interested in using their technical skills received from training (average 4.3 on 5-point Likert scale). Most participants (67%) in the survey reported that they had received increased work responsibilities after returning from their training programs. This seemed consistent with their perception that their professional knowledge was consistent with real job responsibilities (average 3.9 on 5-point Likert scale). Both participants (100%) and supervisors (95%) felt strongly that former participants benefitted personally from the training received. A comparison of ways in which they benefitted are presented below:

TABLE 8 - PERCEIVED PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

	Participant		Supervisor	
	#	%	#	%
Internal promotion	43	64	33	77
Work changes	27	40	21	49
Better communication skills	36	54	17	40
Improved performance	55	82	35	81
High productivity	26	39	5	12
Taking initiatives	44	66		
Improved working relationships	39	58	5	15
Other	11	16	0	

As evidenced in Table 8, "internal promotion" and "improved performance" were the most mentioned participant benefits by all respondents. However, participants more than their supervisors perceived a benefit of improved working relationships. Nevertheless, one individual indicated that he had not realized any benefits after his training and attributed this situation to lack of opportunity and under-employment.

When participant responses are analyzed according to their type of training program (long-term vis-a-vis short-term and country location), additional insight on perceived benefits is found. In Chart 5, one notes that long-term training participants, regardless of the country in which they trained, tended to report "better performance" and "promotion" as primary benefits. Among private sector, short-term training participants, "taking the initiative" was identified by the majority. Their second ranked response was "better communication" for private sector individuals who completed

third-country programs and "improved collegial relations" for those in US-based programs.

Chart 6 summarizes the supervisor findings which are slightly different than participant responses. "Promotion" is a key benefit identified by all supervisors of long-term training participants. However, the second most mentioned participant benefit is "better communication" for supervisors whose staff went to the United States and "better performance" for supervisors of third-country training participants. Among private sector supervisors, "better performance" is the key benefit. Whereas supervisors of US-based training also identify "taking initiatives" and "improved collegial relations" as benefits, their counterparts (TC-based training) chose "promotion" and "high productivity".

4.5 Organizational Impact

4.5.1 Participants

4.5.1.1 Positive Perceptions

TABLE 9 - ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES MADE BY PARTICIPANTS

	Participant	
	#	%
Behavior patterns	30	47
Policies	22	34
Procedures in effect	27	42
Work habits	41	64
Work environment	40	62
Self-confidence	38	59
Technical work	40	62
Other	2	7

All of the supervisors and 84% of the participants felt that the employing organization had benefitted from the participant's training. From the general participant viewpoint, key changes introduced in their respective organizations were in the areas of: 1) work habits, 2) work environment and 3) technical work. They also reported a heightened level of self-confidence. A detailed breakdown of participant responses is summarized in Chart 7. One notes that US-based training participants most often identified "work environment" as a change area; and their counterparts in TC-based training most often cited "technical work". Among private sector participants, the US-trained respondents chose "work habits" and TC-trained respondents tended to select "self-confidence".

In spite of the participant perspective that they have made positive impacts on their respective organizations, 55% also stated that they had encountered problems and/or obstacles in trying to apply their knowledge. The three major impediments to their contributions were identified as lack of: 1) equipment (81%), 2) financial resources (62%), and 3) work-related travel (51%). Chart 8 presents a synopsis of all responses related to this question.

4.5.1.2 Negative Perceptions

Among participants who indicated that their organization had not benefitted from their training (N=9), the most common reason cited was "lack of support" (67%) and "lack of equipment" (44%) and inappropriate training (44%). As noted in Chart 9, the major problem of the training was it was "too advanced".

4.5.2 Supervisors

TABLE 10 - PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

	Supervisor	
	#	%
Policy changes	12	29
Change of priorities	16	38
Training others	30	71
Information Dissemination	24	57
Administrative plan change	17	40
New program development	23	55
Other	4	10

As indicated in the Table 10, supervisors identified the most common organizational changes introduced by returned participants as: 1) training others, 2) information dissemination, 3) new program development, and 4) administrative planning. A review of Chart 10 also shows that "training" was a much stronger perception among supervisors of former participants of long-term training programs, regardless of the country and that "administrative planning" was only viewed by these same supervisors. Among private sector supervisors, the primary perceived change was "new program development". In a relative sense, "information dissemination" was equally weighted among all supervisors.

With respect to personnel training, 81% of the supervisors reported that the former participants are engaged in this activity in their organization. However, only supervisors of long-term training participants indicated the nature of this training. According to them, it most often occurs in the form of informal meetings (71%) and courses (41%). A breakdown of their responses

based on the country training program attended is found in Chart 11. It is evident that with the exception of "formal conferences" which are more associated with US-trained participants, supervisors had very similar views.

As noted in Chart 12, in organizations where former participants are not involved in training (N=8), "lack of opportunity" (62% of supervisors) and "lack of means" (38%) are the most often cited reasons.

4.6 Impact on Niger Development

When asked, 89% of the participant respondents indicated that they had an idea of contributing to their country's development prior to attending their respective programs. Analysis of their statements can be classified into four major preoccupations: 1) improved understanding, 2) problem-solving, 3) developing structures/ programs, and 4) self-improvement.

Using a 5-point Likert scale, former participants rated the degree to which their training helps meet development goals as 3.8. This particular viewpoint was strongest among TC long-term participants (mean score of 4.1); A review of individual comments provide insight in these specific feelings: Some participants suggest that they have had an impact by "helping political policy makers and social workers have a dynamic social vision," "making more effective and rational procedures," and using modern technology for detecting and solving problems." As clearly seen in Chart 13, participants feel that their contributions to development have been in the areas of: personnel training, new program development and information dissemination.

The reader will note that these areas are consistent with supervisors' views regarding the type of changes participants introduced in their organizations (Section 4.5). Supervisors also indicated that former participants have helped their respective organizations attain the development goals and objectives in Niger (average 3.8 on a 5-point Likert scale). This particular perception was the strongest among supervisors of private sector individuals trained in the United States (mean of 4.5) and secondly among supervisors of TC-long-term training participants (mean of 4.0).

4.7 Future Training Needs and Implications

4.7.1 Supplementary Training

Both supervisors (90%) and participants (97%) agree that additional training would benefit their organizations. The type of training most commonly identified was short-term in scope (seminars, workshops etc.) and focused on refresher/retraining. Among all respondents, the topics most requested for additional

training were: a) planning and management, b) human resources management/development and c) different technical subject areas (i.e. computer, health, educational psychology etc.).

4.7.2 USAID Call for Action

Although one participant stated no additional assistance was necessary because "USAID has already financed its part, the rest remains for me to do," the majority opinion indicated an additional need. Most respondents felt that USAID could be of additional help in four key areas:

a. provide/sponsor ongoing training

As one respondent stated "training should be followed-up by field studies or short-term training in countries with a range of experience in the domain of activity of the employer". Another also pointed out that "...country can develop with trained, competent staff to conduct development policy".

b. provide resource support

Comments in this domain ranged from requests for financial aid and additional scholarships to equipment needs. One individual commented: "...help me acquire necessary infrastructure to set up a business and market services in auditing, training and other areas". Another specific request was "providing educational material support to local training schools".

c. provide technical support

This was discussed as aiding former participants in acquiring technical journal subscriptions and recognizing their technical expertise. With respect to the latter point, several respondents bluntly stated they were interested in consultant opportunities and one indicated that he "would like to be invited to conduct seminars". At least one private sector respondent requested that USAID provide technical assistance in the development of small and medium-sized businesses.

d. initiate and conduct participant follow-up

A number of ideas were expressed in this area. First, there was definite interest in USAID sponsoring an association or club for former participants or creating a "welcome" center. Emphasis was placed on forming a "network exchange of experiences" between former participants and other professionals. Secondly, several individuals identified a need for support with government authorities, in general, and in one case "sensitizing MO officials to assigning former participants to corresponding jobs. Thirdly, involving former participants in research projects was also seen as an important follow-up activity.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Study Limitations

Despite the use of random sampling methods to ensure representativeness of the study sample and data collection procedures to ensure confidentiality of responses, the return rate was only 68%. This return rate is respectable but smaller than anticipated given the data collection procedures used. It may be due, in large part, to the fact that data collection occurred during a period of presidential elections and political transition.

The small sample size requires a conservative approach to generalizing study findings to the general return participant population. It also meant that the sample was too small to use analytical methods to test for significant differences in the findings. Consequently, different frequency patterns and trends between participants groups and between participants and their supervisors are found and discussed; but the extent to which they are statistically significant is not available.

Finally, there is a potential response bias in that there are virtually no responses from returned participants who do not live or work in the Niamey area. It is possible that postal delays combined with participant inaccessibility due to government posting made their input difficult. Although the questionnaire was designed to minimize "leading questions" and responses that "stated what respondents thought USAID wanted to hear," it is possible that some respondents may have been inhibited in their comments given that in some cases, completed forms were given to supervisors before submission.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

In spite of the study's limitations which are discussed earlier, findings should be viewed in terms of their "practical significance": information that could be useful in Mission planning and decision-making with respect to US-based versus third-country programs. A review of key findings indicate that:

a. **General Training Perceptions** - Both returned participants and supervisors have a positive opinion of their training, regardless of the country or type of training received. With the exception of a small minority, respondents feel that the training received was appropriate and has enabled participants to make positive contributions to their organizations and the development of Niger.

Observation/Recommendation: The present USAID/Niger policy of selecting a variety of country training programs appears to be supported by the respondents. This suggests that the present matching of participant to program should be continued.

b. Country Training Preferences - In terms of innovation, new/different approaches and modern technology, US-based training is preferred. In fact, former participants see US training as means of being more competitive. Third-country training is most often suggested to be held in Africa, specifically named were Senegal, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Gabon. The major advantage of these countries which surfaces throughout the study is that it addresses "similar realities" and "the African context". When other countries are mentioned as possible training locations (i.e. Canada, Asia and France), the perceived advantage is exposure to different ideas.

Observation/Recommendation: This finding leads one to believe that African third-country training programs are probably most useful in technical training; but exposure to innovative ideas and ways of approaching and solving problems are more likely to be found in training programs in the US and other countries. As such, they may be more appropriate sites for future policy and decision-makers or higher level preparation.

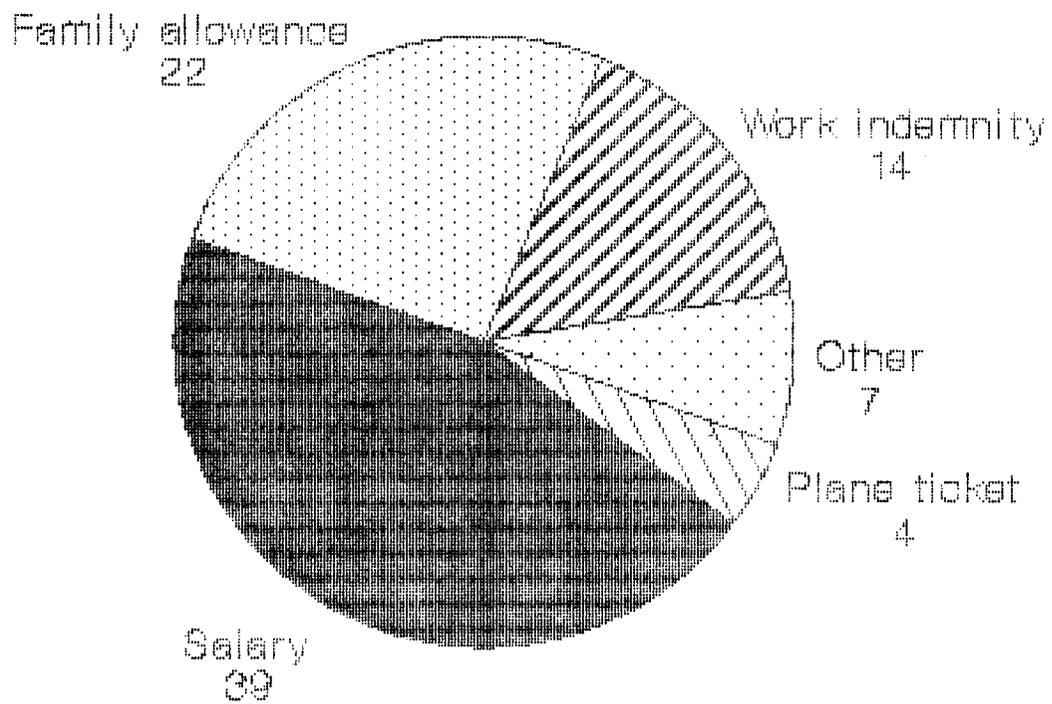
c. Post Training Impact - Both groups also feel that returned participants have had an impact on addressing Niger realities and development needs. A review of present employment status confirms that returned participants tend to be filling either middle or higher level management posts and as such are in the position of making important policy and procedural decisions in their respective organizations.

Whereas returned participants tend not to have had difficulty finding jobs after their training, they do encounter obstacles in applying their new skills and knowledge. Even though both they and their supervisors report that they have made positive contributions to their organizations, their actions are impeded by insufficient resources (financial, material and personnel).

Observation/Recommendation: As part of their post-training experience, many participants expressed the desire to meet, exchange ideas and maintain contact in a systematic manner by way of some type of Mission sponsorship. This appears to be an important follow-up activity which USAID/Niger could support. If an association was formed, one of its many activities could be to serve as a forum for returned participants to meet and address/find solutions for common job-related problems.

CHART 1

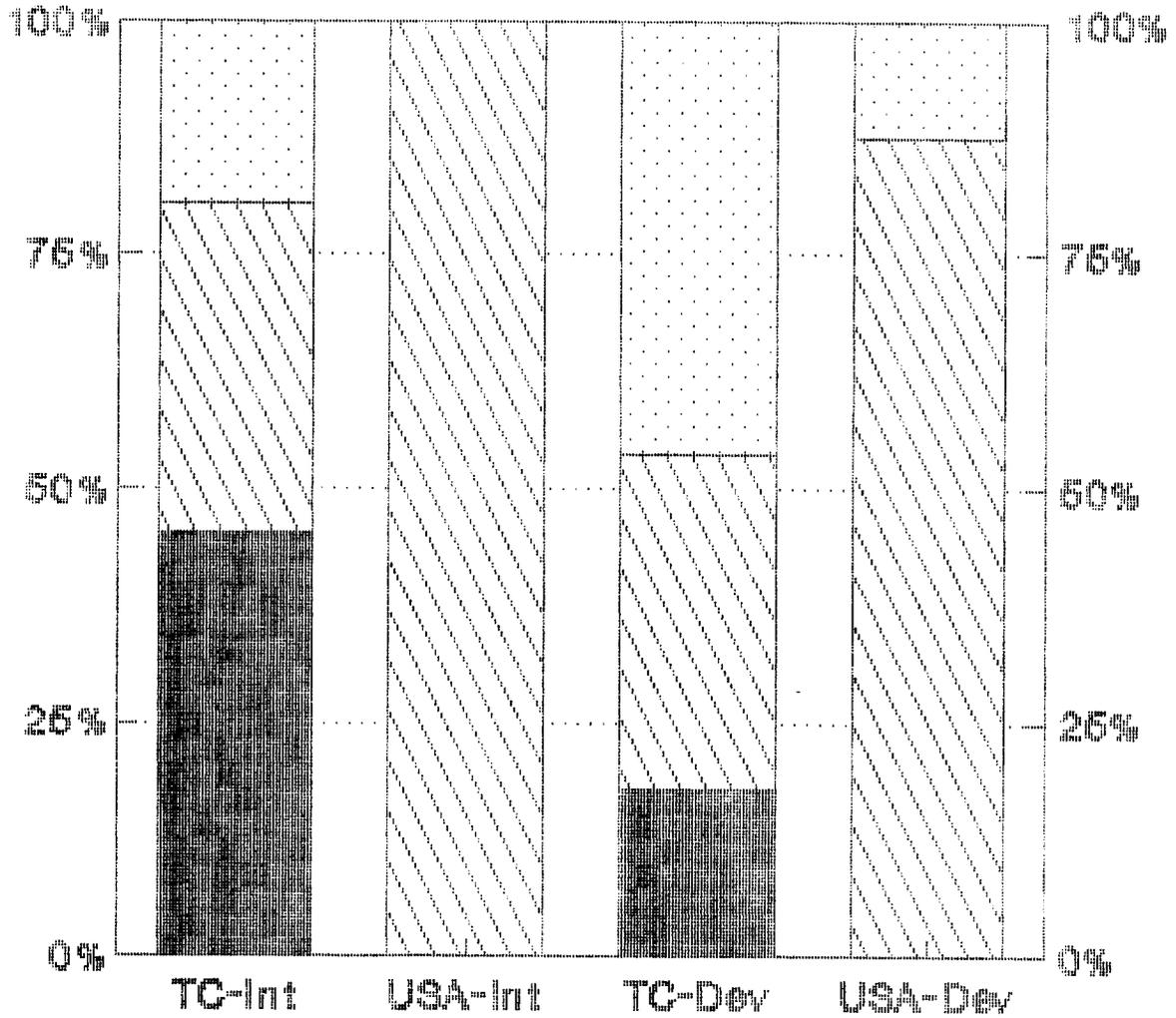
Employer Contributions Provided to participants (N=41)



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CHART 2

Preferred Country Training According to LT Participants

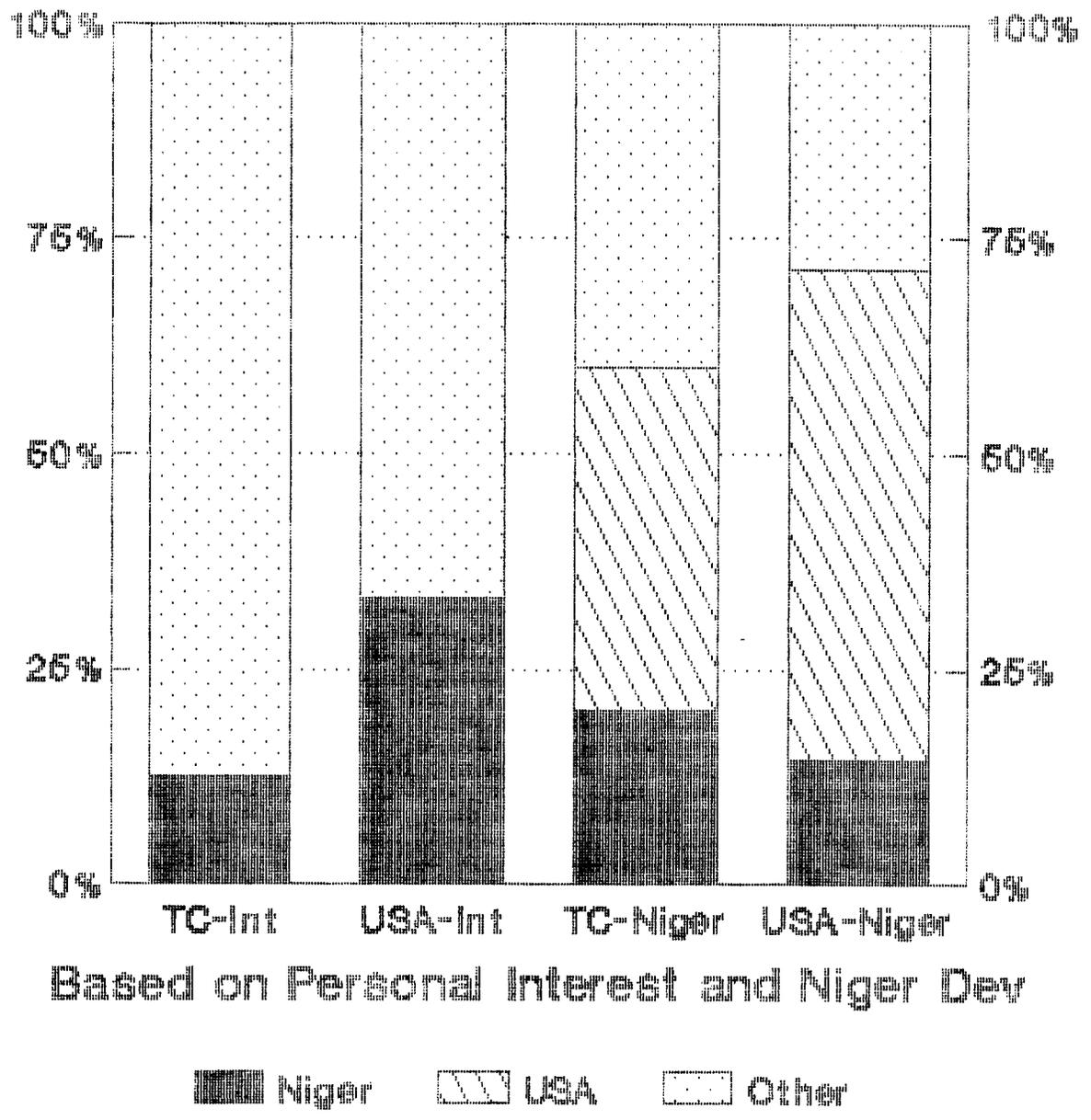


Based on Personal Interest and Niger Dev

Niger
 USA
 Other

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CHART 3 Preferred Country Training According to PS Participants

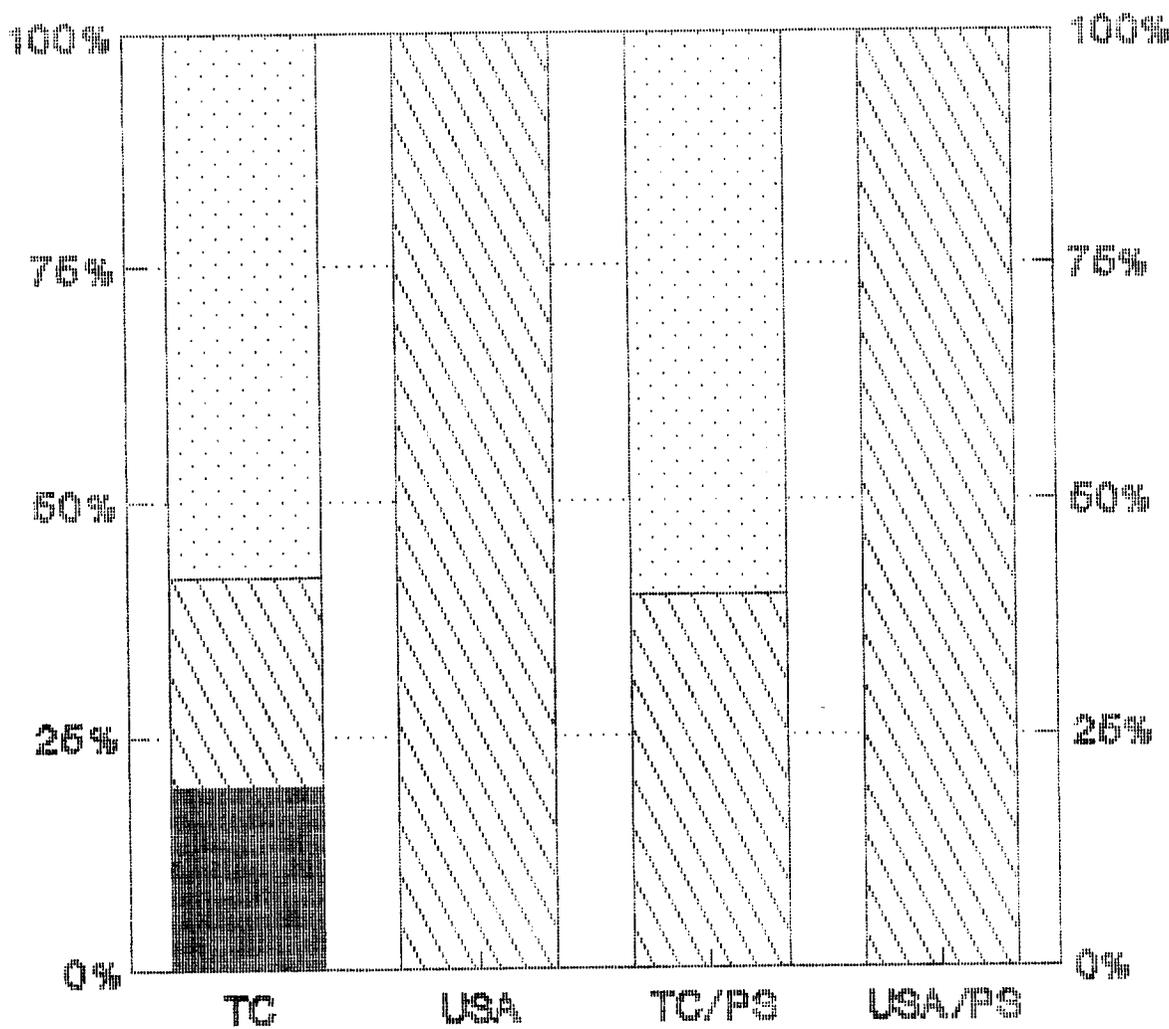


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Preferred Country Training

CHART 4

According to supervisors



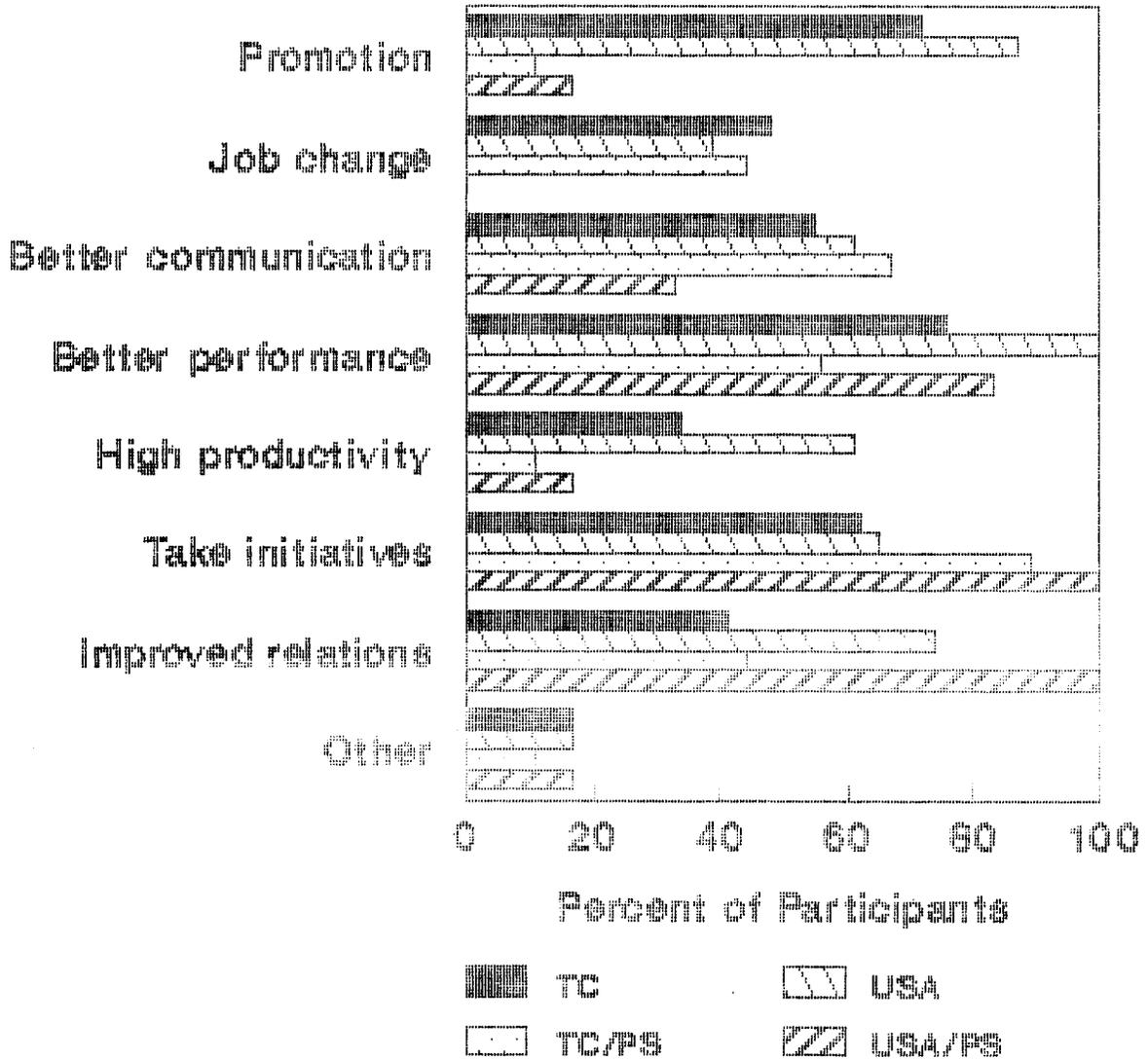
Based on Niger Development Needs

Niger
 USA
 Other

Evaluation Survey 1993

CHART 5 Participant Benefits According to Participants

Type of Benefits

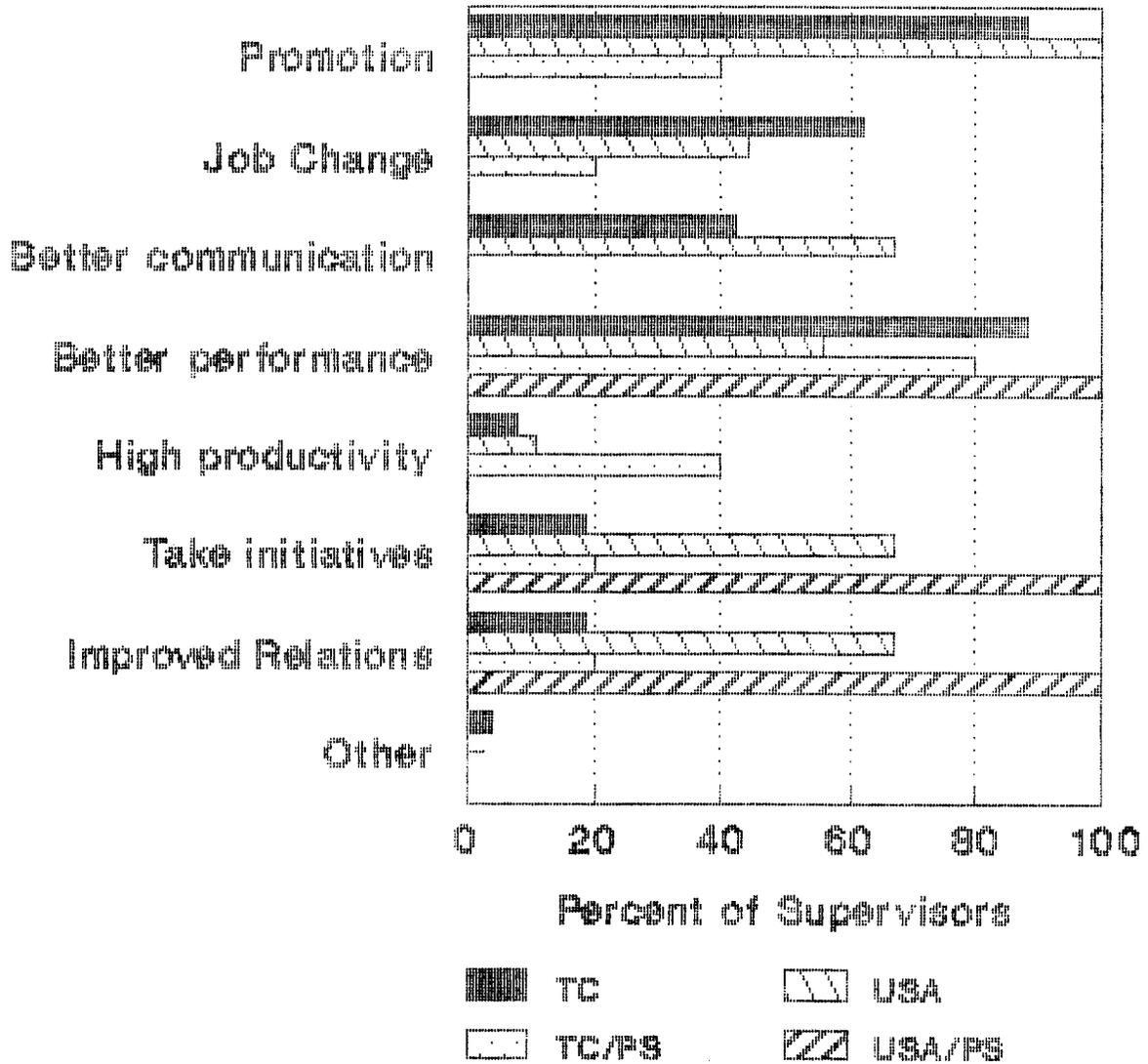


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B.

CHART 6 Participant Benefits According to Supervisors

Type of Benefits



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CHART 7

Organizational Impact

Type of changes introduced

Changes

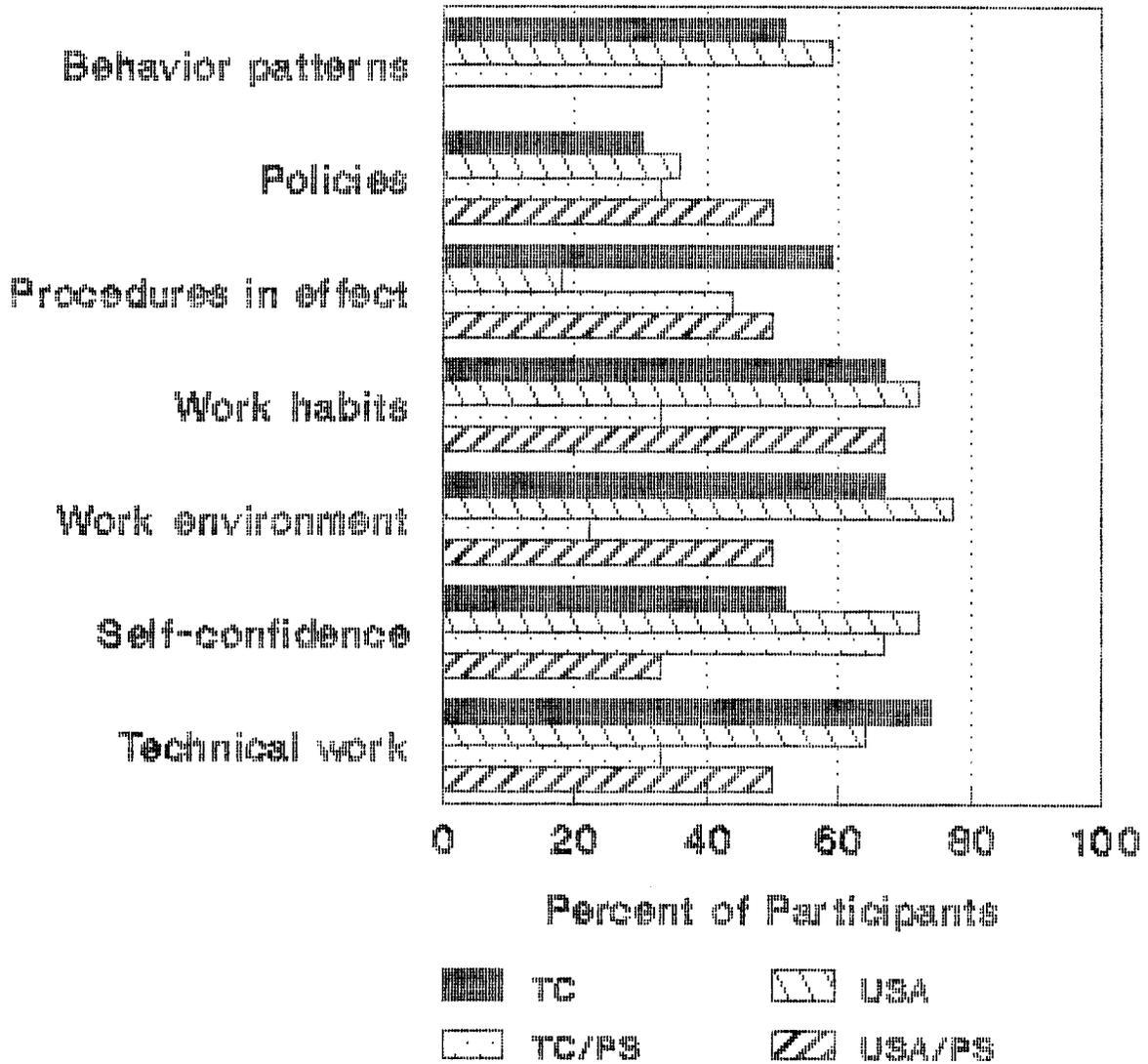
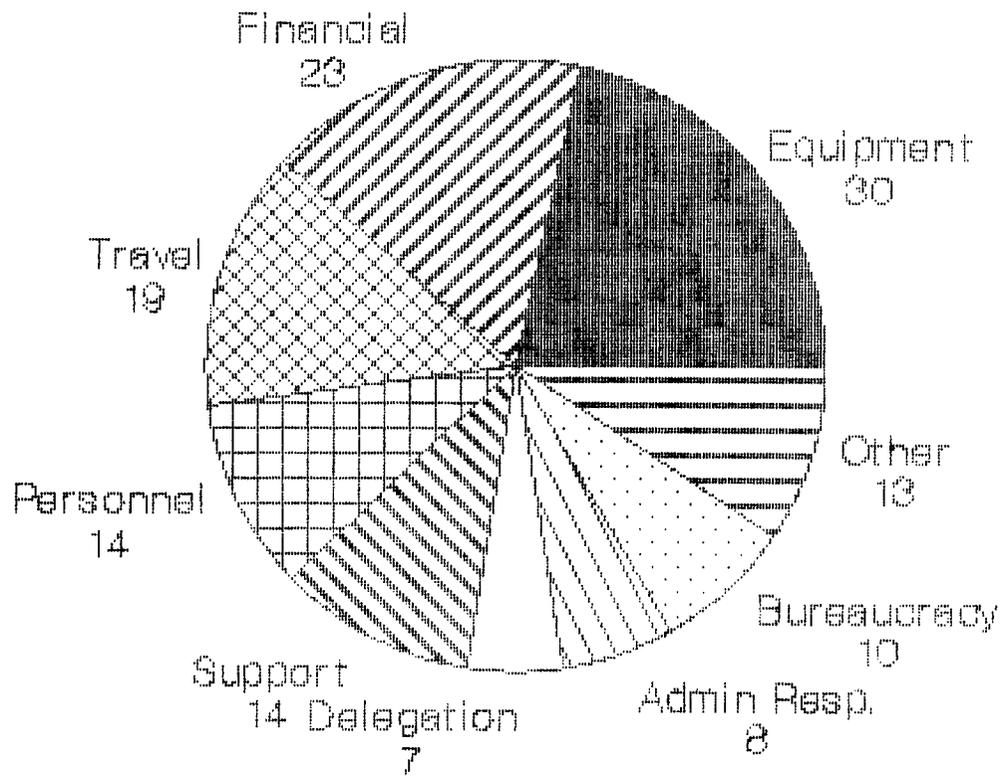


CHART 8

Job Obstacles/Problems

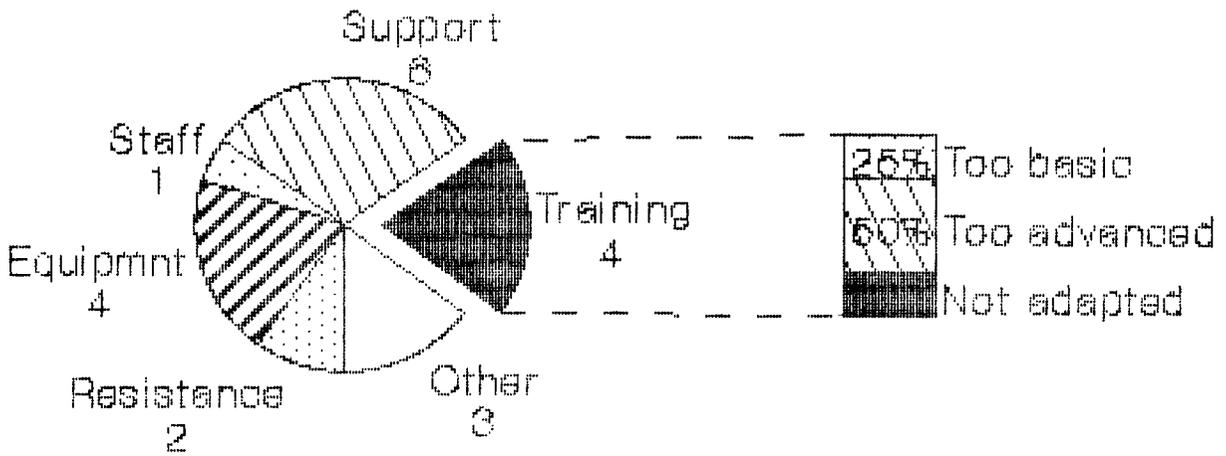
Reason no application (N=37)



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CHART 9

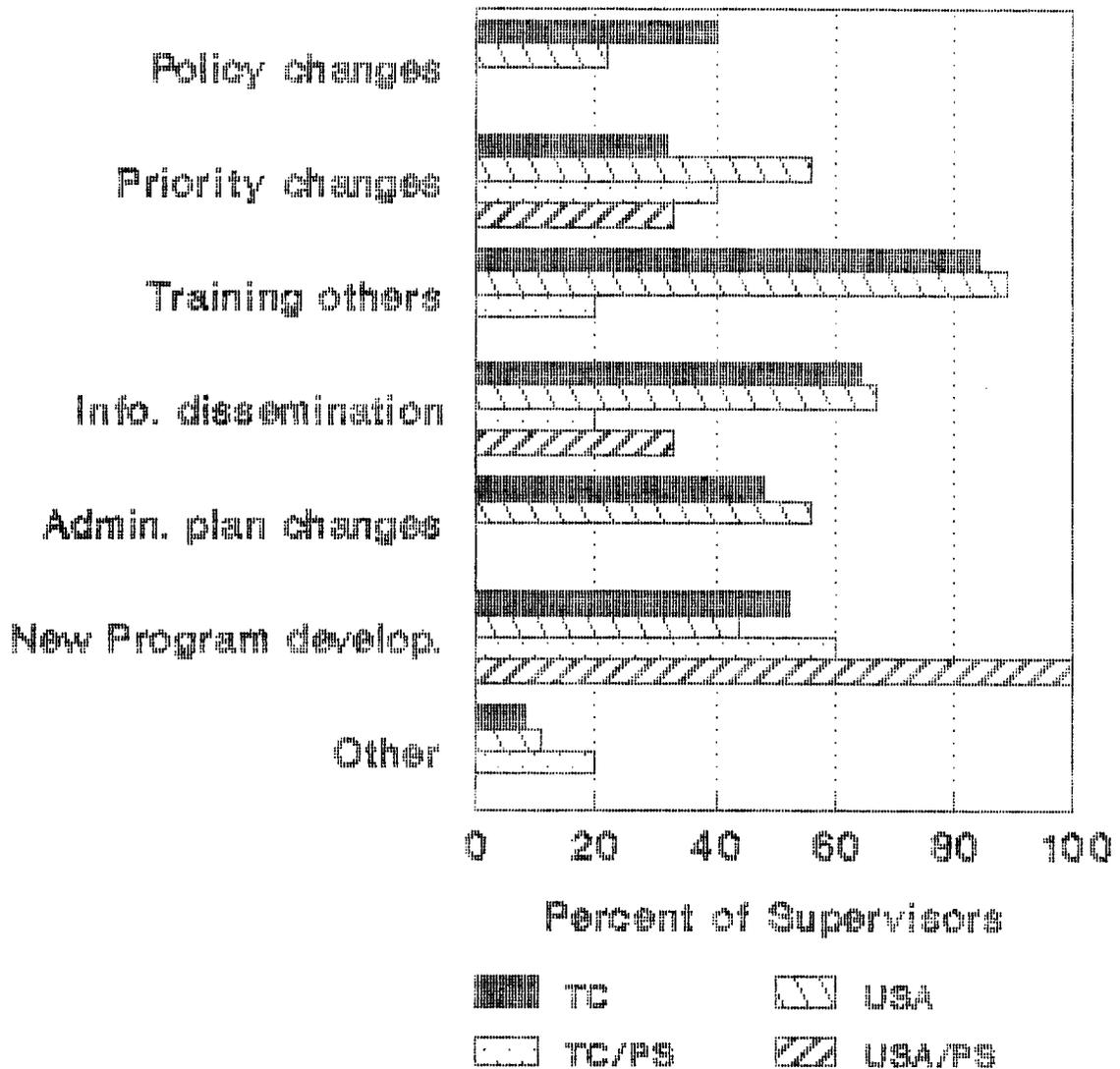
Lack of Employer Benefit Reasons not benefit (N=9)



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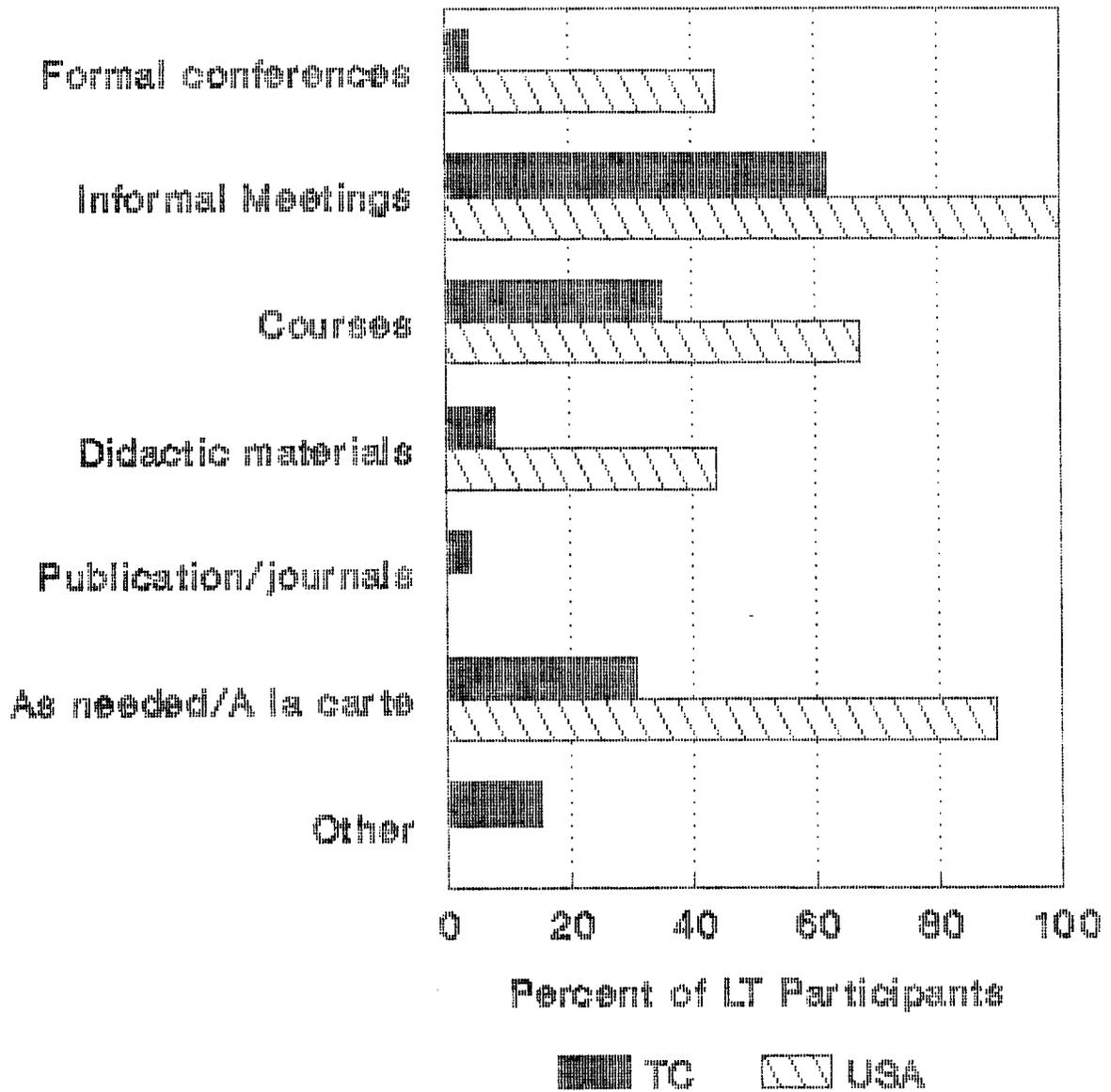
CHART 10 Organizational Impact According to Supervisors

Participant Actions



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CHART 11 Participant-Led Training Types of training provided

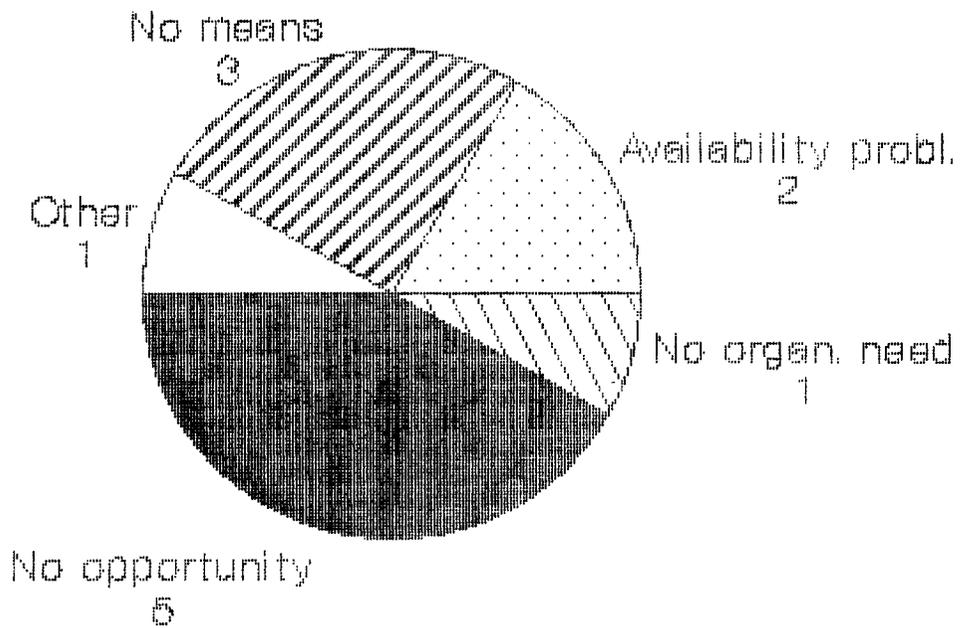


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CHART 12

Lack of Training Provided

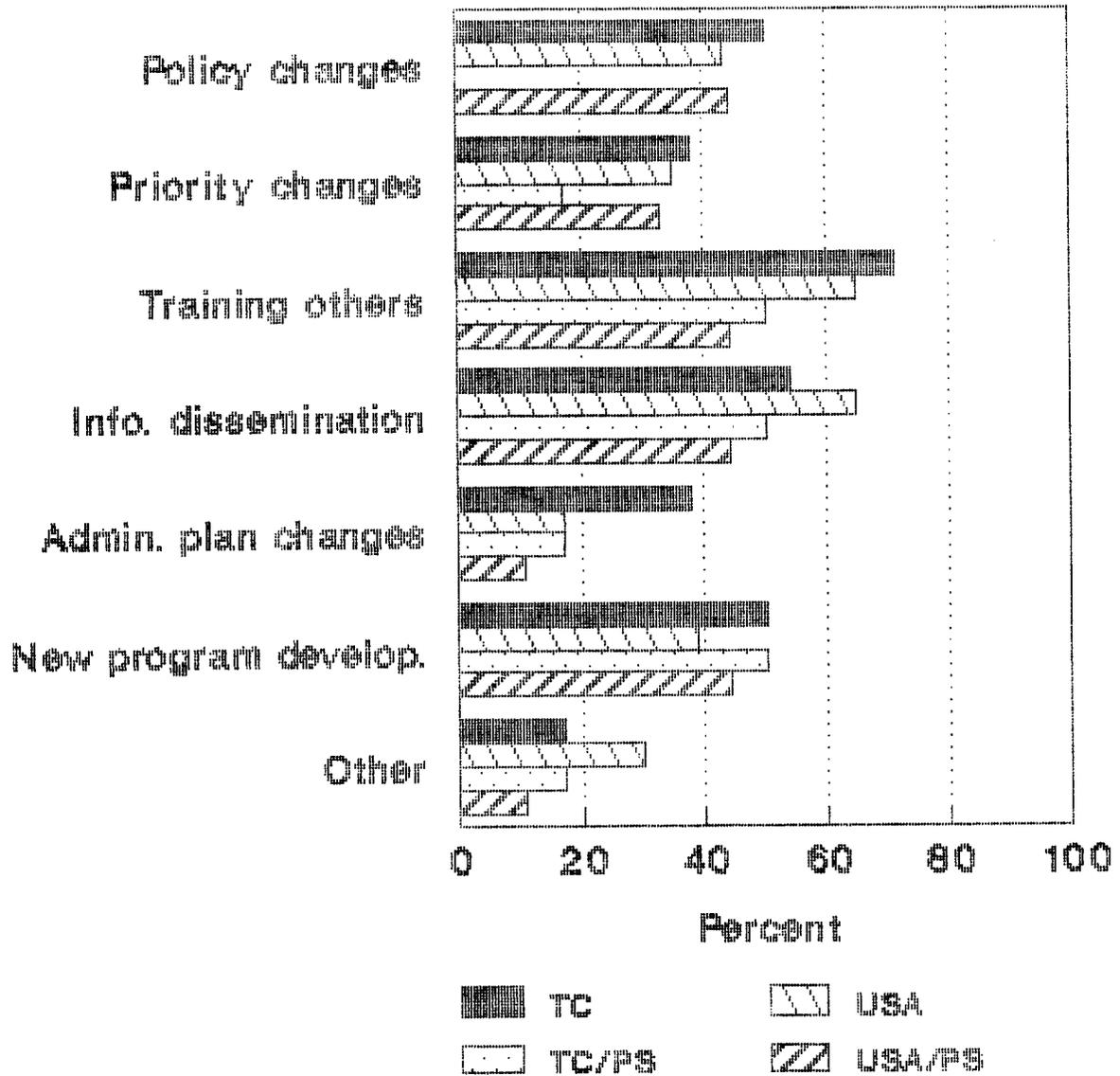
Reasons not train others



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25

CHART 13 Niger Development Participant Contribution



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