Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security
FOREWORD

Welcome to the 34th edition of the SOLLIMS Lessons Learned Sampler – Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security!

This lessons-learned compendium contains just a sample – thus the title ‘Sampler’ – of the observations, insights, and lessons related to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) available in the SOLLIMS data repository. These lessons are worth sharing with military commanders and their staffs, as well as with civilian practitioners having a peacekeeping or stability operations related mission or function, such as those currently deployed on stability operations, those planning to deploy, the institutional Army, the Joint community, policymakers, and other international civilian and military leaders at the national and theater level.

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We encourage you to take the time to provide us with your perspective on any given lesson in this report or on the overall value of the Sampler as a reference for you and your unit/organization. By using the ‘Perspectives’ text entry box that is found at the end of each lesson in the SOLLIMS database – seen when you open the lesson in SOLLIMS – you can enter your own personal comments on the lesson. We welcome your input, and we encourage you to become a regular contributor.

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“QUICK LOOK” (Preview of the Lessons)
Click on [Read More ...] to go to full lesson.

A. Election seasons unearth deep-seated divisions within a nation and may trigger violence as a result. Women’s participation in early warning mechanisms can mitigate this instability, as evident in Kenya’s 2013 election, when citizens prevented extreme violence by using mobile phone technologies to report violent incidents, dispel inaccurate rumors, and spread messages of peace… [Read More ...]

B. The recent and historic peace process between the government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) provides an opportunity for provisions for various identity groups to be taken into account during implementation of the peace accords – especially gender-sensitivity in demobilization and reintegration processes… [Read More ...]

C. Proactively seeking to achieve a gender balance when building U.S. Government (USG) trainer teams will likely enhance counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD) training when providing instruction on chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) consequence management topics… [Read More ...]

D. Studies have shown that women have higher mortality rates than men during natural disasters, due primarily to vulnerabilities arising from gender inequalities. Yet despite their increased vulnerability and also their capacity to address disasters, women are often excluded from both short-term humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts as well as disaster risk reduction (DRR) prevention measures… [Read More ...]

E. In 2010, a Norwegian Specialized Police Team deployed with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in order to build the Haitian National Police’s capacity to conduct investigations into sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)... [Read More ...]

F. The United Nations (UN) Headquarters (HQ) staff learned that Congolese women’s voices need to be heard in order for the UN to gain better situational awareness. Experiences of women in a village in North Kivu were different than the men’s and they had more relevant information about illegally armed groups, which they provided to the MONUSCO Military Gender Adviser… [Read More ...]

G. A U.S. military communications group developed extensive radio programming for eastern Afghanistan without taking into consideration the gender of listeners. After programming was adjusted to account for this crucial missing element, many lives were saved in that region... [Read More ...]

H. A decorated Green Beret was almost forcibly retired from the military due to physically confronting an American-backed Afghan police commander who raped a boy in Afghanistan in 2011. The New York Times reported that Soldiers had been instructed to look the other way to such incidents of child abuse, considering them ‘cultural practices’… [Read More ...]
1. INTRODUCTION


United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 established the principles of Women, Peace and Security (WPS). WPS aims to empower half the world’s population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace, while endeavoring to rectify the disproportionate, adverse impacts of armed conflict on women.

Since UNSCR 1325 was issued in 2000, over 60 nations around the world have created National Action Plans (NAP) to incorporate WPS principles into their institutions. The United States NAP on WPS was established in 2011 by Executive Order 13595, with an accompanying Department of Defense Implementation Guide in 2013. The U.S. NAP strives to institutionalize a gender-sensitive approach to defense, diplomatic, and development activities by supporting participation of women in decision-making processes, protection from violence, conflict prevention initiatives, and equal access to relief and recovery assistance. Of note, in October 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (S.1141) was signed into law after being passed by the U.S. Congress. The Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) currently serves as the lead for U.S. Army WPS efforts.

Lessons in this compendium demonstrate the incorporation of WPS principles into various initiatives across the conflict continuum, ranging from conflict prevention & resolution, security cooperation, and crisis response to peacekeeping and stability operations. These lessons, based on experiences of peace and stability practitioners around the world, seek to answer two important questions – Why? and How?

- Why is WPS relevant to the security sector?
- How can WPS be operationalized across the spectrum of conflict?

The following diagram shows at a glance how lessons from this Sampler are applicable across the range of interventions to conflict/crisis situations. Read the lessons for yourself to discover more!

![Diagram](United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Capstone Doctrine, 2008)
2. LESSONS

A. Early Warning Systems to Prevent Extremist Violence in Kenya (Lesson #2607)

Observation:

Election seasons unearth deep-seated divisions within a nation and may trigger violence as a result. Women’s participation in early warning mechanisms can mitigate this instability during tense election cycles. This was evident in Kenya’s 2013 election, when citizens’ use of mobile phone technologies to report violent incidents, dispel inaccurate rumors, and disseminate messages of peace prevented extreme violence.

Discussion:

Following the 2007/08 Kenyan presidential elections, the country divulged into protracted violence which killed 1,300 people and displaced 650,000. The violence was fed by land disputes and ethnic divisions and especially by perceptions of electoral manipulation. Available technologies (phone, email, and internet) accelerated the pace at which election misinformation spread, escalating local rumors to a national audience within minutes, which contributed to a general sense of panic. Participants in the post-election violence used text messaging to spread rumors, promulgate distribution of weapons, and mobilize attacks.

The non-governmental organization Sisi Ni Amani Kenya (“We are Peace Kenya,” in Swahili) was founded by a forward-thinking woman in the aftermath of this election violence to affect social change through easily-accessible technology. Sisi Ni Amani Kenya (SNA-K) collaborated with local peacebuilders from Narok and from Nairobi’s Eastlands to analyze conflict dynamics, specifically concerning gaps in communications by local peacebuilders. Since many people in the general population did not have adequate information or means to question rumors, they were highly vulnerable to manipulation and violence. SNA-K identified that text messaging was a key component of spreading misinformation, rumors, and calls to violence. Since internet and mobile phones had been used effectively in 2007/08 to incite violence, SNA-K determined that those same mediums of communication could be used in future election seasons to incite peace.

As such, SNA-K established an SMS (Short Message Service, i.e. text messaging) platform in partnership with over fifty local organizations as well as the large telecom company Safaricom, which donated 50 million text messages. SNA-K built free SMS programming based on behavior chains outlining each step of how (mis)information could lead to violence. These behavior chains identified what types of messages were needed to break the link to violent responses, covering various scenarios such as election fraud or cattle theft.

SNA-K conducted participatory focus groups with target demographic groups (including young women, young men, older women, older men, community leaders, and people working in transit or commerce who tend to spread information, such as vendors on the road side) to expound on these behavior chains. Members of each group were asked what kind of messages would influence them not to participate in violence. For example, messages could be sent to people at an outdoor market urging them to question a rumor before automatically spreading it. The types of messages differed for each demographic group, which was why it was so important to include a variety of identities and differentiate by gender. (Male) youths who had physically participated in the violence previously
required different types of de-escalating messaging than (female) vendors who typically spread information in their marketplaces. These messages then became the template for what kind of messages to send from SNA-K during an actual crisis. Messages were also created for civic education, to reduce community vulnerability from misinformation about the election process. Voter education messages were vetted by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to ensure accuracy.

By the 2013 election, SNA-K’s platform had over 65,000 subscribers in over 20 locations. Each subscriber to this free platform identified factors such as their gender and their location, so that the SNA-K team could send targeted messages. Throughout the election cycle, SNA-K monitored the situation and sent tailored messages to inform community members about the election process, to encourage peaceful choices, and to intervene in specific instances of violence in local communities. Due in part to the efforts of SNA-K volunteers and many other peacebuilding organizations aimed at responding to and preventing electoral violence (such as Women’s Situation Rooms – “innovative, real-time groups convened around election cycles to anticipate and combat electoral violence,” (Bigio/Vogelstein, p. 4)), the 2013 election was relatively peaceful.

**Recommendations:**

1. Use easily accessible technology as a platform to incite peace through communication instead of violence, as Sisi Ni Amani Kenya did in the 2013 elections.
2. Consult with women and other identity groups including people of various ages, ethnicities, (dis)abilities, etc., to devise messaging to break misinformation paths that incite violence.
3. Include women in violence-prevention initiatives in volatile election seasons. Incorporate women and other identity groups on the ground to report emergent and actual violent incidents to enable efficient and relevant response.

**Implications:**

If various identity groups (including women, men, various ages and ethnicities, etc.) are not consulted in the development of messaging to prevent electoral violence, these messages will be less likely to effectively convince people to remain peaceful. If women are not consulted in the development of strategies to prevent violence, efforts are less likely to effectively reach the entire population, especially because women have unique perspectives which encompass experiences from roles in which they may engage large segments of the public, such as vendors, etc. However, if women are included, “research shows that women’s participation in early warning mechanisms can help mitigate instability during election cycles that are frequently marred by violence triggered by perceptions of flawed electoral processes or political and ethnic tensions,” (Bigio/Vogelstein, p. 4).

**Event Description:**

This lesson is based on these sources:

Additional Comments:

Similar technology was used to map and prevent violence for the 8 August 2017 election in Kenya (as well as for the 26 October 2017 re-election after the results of the first election were nullified by the Kenyan Supreme Court), as described in the bullet points below of organizations involved in that work. At least 37 people were killed in protests following the initial election results, amidst reports of security forces violently suppressing protests. It remains to be seen whether tension and violence will intensify or de-escalate; thus far, it is not as severe as the violence in 2007/08.

- **Ushahidi**: Following the post-election violence in 2007, a crowdsourced crisis mapping platform known as Ushahidi was developed by coders in Nairobi to track violence using mobile phones. During the 2013 elections, Ushahidi fielded thousands of messages in election situation rooms. In 2017, Ushahidi integrated Facebook Messenger to expand the election monitoring platform through the Uchaguzi partnership, an elections initiative developed in 2008 with Ushahidi, InfoNet, and the Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO).

- **Una Hakika**: Una Hakika (“Are you sure?” in Kiswahili) is an initiative from the Canadian nonprofit The Sentinel Project, which is an anti-genocide effort. Its goal was to “squash disinformation that can lead to conflict, especially in the lead-up to Kenya’s hotly contested general election.” Subscribers text rumors that they have heard to the Una Hakika platform and receive a response confirming whether the story is true or false.

- **Women’s Situation Rooms**: Women’s Situation Rooms are real-time processes utilized during election seasons; women and youths are recruited and trained to observe elections in regions identified as potential hotspots for violence. When issues arise, influential women leaders then intervene to persuade groups to settle disputes peacefully. First used in Liberia in 2011, the process has been replicated with success in Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Kenya.

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**Kamukunji, Nairobi, Kenya**

SNA-K volunteers show residents of Kamukunji, Nairobi, Kenya, how to subscribe. (Photo Credit: Unknown).
B. Incorporating Inclusive Security in the Colombia-FARC Peace Process & Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (Lesson #2589)

**Observation.**

People from various identity groups and populations have suffered in different ways throughout Colombia’s past half century of war. The recent and historic peace process between the government of Colombia and the largest leftist rebel group, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP, or FARC), provides an opportunity for provisions for these various groups to be taken into account during implementation of the peace accords – especially gender-sensitivity in demobilization and reintegration processes.

**Discussion.**

Colombia’s 52-year armed conflict with the FARC has left over 220,000 dead and more than 5 million people displaced. The FARC was one of several guerrilla groups founded by leftist peasants following *La Violencia*, Colombia’s decade-long brutal civil war between Liberal and Conservative political parties. In the mid-1960s, it originally operated as a self-defense force, concerned by political exclusion, vast land inequality, and lack of state resources. By the 1980s, however, the FARC began to use extortion, kidnapping, and the drug trade to finance its activities.

Myriad atrocities have occurred during the past half-century of the Colombian conflict by armed actors on all sides of the conflict, producing emotional/psychological, moral, political, and sociocultural damage. The impact of the Colombian conflict has been varied across various identity and population groups, by gender, age, regional provenance, and ethnicity (including indigenous, Afro-descent, etc.). Men have been more likely than women to be kidnapped, tortured, or forcibly recruited, while women were more likely to be displaced or subject to sexual violence and enslavement. All groups have been stigmatized and criminalized, while minorities and certain human rights defenders have been targeted for their work.

The most recent peace process with the FARC follows several other attempts at peace in Colombia’s tumultuous history. Several other armed groups had already demobilized; five of Colombia’s armed groups signed peace agreements with the Colombian government by the 1990s. The FARC itself was involved in three major prior peace efforts since the 1980s. Women’s groups such as Movimiento Social de Mujeres Contra la Guerra, Ruta Pacífica, and the Organización Femenina Popular, have demanded a negotiated solution to the war for two decades, preparing the way for the recent 2012-2016 talks in Havana, Cuba.

The current peace process between the government of Colombia and the FARC covered a span of five long years. Initial clandestine talks were held on the border with Venezuela in spring 2011 before secret negotiations started in Havana in February 2012. Four years of official public talks started in October 2012. The negotiators first agreed on a fixed agenda of six points (rural reform, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, end of conflict/demobilization, and peace deal implementation) before starting the official process.

Initially, few women were included in official roles in the talks. However, after women’s and LGBT groups protested the absence of female negotiators and a gender perspective in the agreement, the
table expanded. In November 2013, two high-level women were appointed as negotiators. Furthermore, in an unprecedented move, a subcommission on gender was established in the peace delegation in September 2014. The subcommission worked through texts that had already been finalized, introducing recommendations for gendered language as well as specific substantial gender issues, such as sexual violence. These recommendations were then taken into consideration in the main negotiations, although there was no guarantee that they would be included.

In 2014, in another attempt to include representation of various groups affected by the conflict in the peace accords, delegations of victims (60% of whom were women) traveled to Havana to meet with the negotiating teams. These delegations gave voice to their various traumatic experiences, including impacts of sexual violence in armed conflict. This humanized the victim experience for the negotiators and ensured their renewed commitment to end the conflict; as a direct result of the victim delegations, the FARC initiated a process of acknowledgement and apology.

After all of this input, the peace agreement was completed and signed on 26 September 2016 and presented to the Colombian people through a plebiscite referendum on 2 October 2016, in which they had the opportunity to accept or reject the peace deal with a "Yes" or "No" vote. In a shocking turn of events, "No" won with 50.21% of the vote. The vote was largely split along urban/rural lines, with rural communities who have remained more deeply affected by the ongoing violence voting "Yes." Ironically, the inclusion of a gender perspective in the accords also led to some groups – namely, conservatives and Evangelicals – voting "No," since they feared that language about reparations to people of “diverse sexual orientations and identities” was a threat to traditional family structure.

Following the rejection of the peace deal, the opposition, religious leaders, and other civil society groups opposed to the deal submitted some 400 proposed changes; the Colombian government and the FARC then reviewed and agreed on several modifications to the original agreement. The revised deal maintained the original focus on gender, addressing inequalities and victimizations in the conflict, as well as opportunities for political participation for the FARC. However, the new agreement will no longer be entirely incorporated into Colombia’s constitution, and the FARC will now be required to hand over assets for victim reparations. An amended peace deal was put before Colombia’s Congress and passed. The FARC and the government of Colombia signed a final peace agreement on 24 November 2016.

Although a gender perspective was incorporated in the final Havana agreement, implementation will remain a challenge. One of the main difficulties in implementation is providing a reintegration process that addresses the needs of both men and women. Some 3000 of the approximately 7500 FARC combatants to demobilize from the recent peace process will be women. Approximately 40% of the FARC are women, and most joined voluntarily to fight as equals with men, obtaining positions of military and political authority. While some have faced sexual violence or forced abortions within the ranks, others found gender equality within the FARC. Yet, Colombian society at large still stigmatizes many of these women for fighting instead of pursuing more domestic roles.

Between 2003-2012, about 20% of guerrilla participants in government reintegration programs in Colombia were women. However, past disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs have tended to stereotype women leaving guerrilla groups, offering limited domestic types of job training for female ex-combatants. Government reintegration support was not marketed effectively to these women, encouraging them to demobilize in order to "feel like a woman
again." This provided a mismatch between female ex-combatant ‘lived roles and experiences’ and societal perception. As such, many Colombian women who have demobilized in the past have chosen to reintegrate without government support.

If implementation of the recent peace process does not take female ex-combatants’ actual ‘lived roles and experiences’ into account, FARC women may not participate, which may negatively impact the peace accords. According to the UN Women Background Paper “Gender and the Role of Women in Colombia’s Peace Process,” “War often leads to rapid changes in gender roles and relations, and these must be considered in the transitions back to peace. […] A peace process is more than just the signing of an agreement at the peace table; it offers the opportunity to address the underlying social inequities and injustices of a society that are at the roots of a conflict,” (p. 23, 27). As such, it is important that the implementation of the DDR for the Havana accords does not revert women ex-combatants back to traditional constraints that many have fought to escape.

**Recommendation.**

1. Colombians of various ages, abilities, gender identities, ethnicities, religions, and regions should not be marginalized in the implementation of the Colombia-FARC peace agreement. International organizations and actors should continue to encourage the government of Colombia to listen to and include perspectives from a wide sector of society, especially since the "No" vote shows that many are still quite divided within the country.

2. The government of Colombia and any partner/international organizations should incorporate gender analysis into the implementation of DDR processes for the FARC, expanding DDR reintegration job opportunity options for women so that they are not shoe-horned into traditional roles or domestic careers. Consult with female ex-combatants in the process design, and market the DDR opportunities and process in a way which will attract female fighters so that they will obtain governmental support during this difficult transition phase. Provide access to health-specific psychosocial support for female ex-combatants who survived rape, forced abortions, and other types of sexual violence during the war. Ensure child soldiers also receive access to counseling and support.

**Note:** Inclusive Security provides a briefing on “Engaging Women in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Insights for Colombia,” (Jacqueline O’Neill, 31 March 2015) with several specific recommendations for designing and implementing DDR processes which will adequately support the approximately 40% of FARC ex-combatants who are women.

**Implications.**

As apparent from the "No" vote, Colombia is still a deeply divided society. The more that concerns of all people are addressed in the ongoing implementation of the peace process, the more legitimacy the process will gain in society as it is implemented. If women are not fully engaged and included, it is more likely that the peace will not be sustainable.

Creating and implementing a peace process is an opportunity to address underlying social inequities and injustices in a society, including power dynamics between men and women. This is important to remember, especially in the context of DDR, since many female ex-combatants had experienced a degree of gender equality and leadership within the ranks of the FARC. Implementing a DDR process
which includes respectful and equal opportunities for both men and women can begin to address the root of underlying inequities and contribute to a safer and more peaceful Colombia.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is primarily based on the following sources:

- “To Be a Guerrilla, and a Woman, in Colombia,” Megan Alpert, (28 Sep 2016).

See also [Colombia Reports](#) for more information on the peace talks.

**Lesson Author:** Ms. Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI

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**Havana, Cuba (December 2014)**

Representatives of women's organizations and networks that were part of the first delegation of gender experts at the talks in Havana – Subcommittee on Gender present their proposals for building peace with Government and FARC-EP negotiators. (Photo Credit: Peace Talks, Havana, Cuba)
C. Institutionalizing a Gender Perspective in the Development of International Partner Capacity to Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (Lesson #2601)

Observation.

DOD COUNTERING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD) POLICY (DODD 2060.02, January 27, 2017) states that DOD will “Increase barriers to WMD acquisition, proliferation, and use, in concert with other elements of U.S. national power” by, inter alia, “working with other USG departments and agencies and with international organizations and partners to secure and limit the availability of WMD-related capabilities through tailored risk-reduction programs.” These programs include combatant command (COCOM) initiatives to train partner nations’ contingency response teams to operate within a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) environment, exercise CBRN response plans, and integrate civilian and military assets. Proactively seeking to achieve a gender balance of appropriately skilled and capable men and women when building USG trainers teams will likely enhance CBRN counter WMD training by including a gender perspective when providing instruction on CBRN consequence management topics. DOD should also seek to increase host nation’s women participation in such training events.

Discussion.

(1) The 2009 USCENTCOM executed the Cooperative Defense Program (CDP) aiming to increase Bahrain’s indigenous WMD consequence management and CBRN Passive Defense (CBRN PD) capability through the conduct of targeted workshops and situational training exercises designed to evaluate existing plans, and validate military and civilian capabilities. Training was conducted on the Bahrain Defense Forces (BDF) Al Dhila Base in Manama. The training audience consisted of about 45 members of the BDF and Ministry of Interior Civil Defense Directorate. There were no women trainees and only one of the five DOD trainers was a woman.

(2) Upon conclusion of the 2010 Southern Caucasus Workshop on Public Health, Security, and Law Enforcement Partnership in Bio-Incident Pre-Planning and Response (which included the Bioterrorism Tabletop Exercise Southern Caucasus BioShield 2010), one Azeri participant expressed his admiration for the organizational and technical skills of the two (US and Georgian) organizers (both female): “you were so good like you were men”. The interpreter emphasized to US participant that that was a compliment.

(3) The 2017 USEUCOM Diablo Shield training event in Georgia was conducted in collaboration with FBI WMD Directorate, as part of USEUCOM’s Diablo Pathways series of engagements supporting the development of WMD detection, border surveillance interdiction, and other counterproliferation capabilities in SE Europe and Black Sea region. Diablo Pathways series supports USEUCOM countering WMD objectives: (i) Use or proliferation of WMD or WMD-related materials, technology, and expertise into, out of, and through the USEUCOM AOR is deterred, disrupted, or defeated; and (ii) Loss of control of WMD and associated materials, technology, and expertise is prevented. The Diablo Shield training event involved FBI-trained Georgian instructors from the Department of Emergency Management of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) who imparted their knowledge and expertise via classroom and hands-on training to other MoIA contingency response teams, primarily Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and HazMat response units. A locally employed security staff team from US Embassy also participated as trainees and three Azeri observed the training. There were
no women in the SWAT and HazMat response units trained or among the MoIA instructors. DOD
team included one woman and FBI team included two.

Recommendation.

At the tactical/operational level: COCOMs should proactively seek to include women trainers in
counter CBRN WMD international programs and activities.

At the strategic level: DOD should also seek to increase host nation’s women participation in counter
CBRN WMD international programs and activities. This effort should be complemented by programs
and initiatives enabling increased women participation in decision making processes related to WMD
treaties, negotiations, implementation, and verification.

Implications.

Disregarding gender considerations in counter WMD programs and initiatives would fault the
development of a gender responsive culture and its contribution to effective CBRN response plans
and strategies. Areas primarily affected may include the assessment of the disproportionate impact of
a WMD on women, the psychosocial aspects of mass decontamination, and understanding the needs
of vulnerable populations (or at-risk-individuals) during decontamination (as well as generally during
response and recovery operations).

Event Description.

Based on personal experiences with Bahrain Cooperative Defense Program- CBRN Passive Defense,
Southern Caucasus BioShield, and Diablo Shield missions, and the following references:

- **DOD DIRECTIVE 2060.02** DOD Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy.
  *The Cooperative Defense Program - CBRN Passive Defense*. Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA)
- **Southern Caucasus Workshop on Public Health, Security, and Law Enforcement Partnership in Bio-
  Incident Pre-Planning and Response and the associated Southern Caucasus BioShield 2010 Tabletop
  Exercise**, 11-12 May 2010, Tbilisi, Georgia.
  CBRNe Portal.
  Constructive Pathways: Stimulating and Safeguarding Components of WPS, pp 95-108, April 16-17, 2015
  Biosafety and Biosecurity: Future Trends and Solutions, 4-6 Nov 2015, Milan, Italy.

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D. Host Nation Gender Considerations in Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (Lesson #2487)

Observation.

Studies have shown that women have higher mortality rates than men during natural disasters, due primarily to vulnerabilities arising from gender inequalities and cultural gender roles. Yet despite this vulnerability and their capacity to address disasters, local women are often excluded from humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) and prevention measures. As such, all humanitarian actors involved in disaster response (including the Host Nation (HN), United Nations (UN), U.S. Government, military, civil society, international agencies, etc.) need to understand how HN men and women may be impacted by disasters, mainstream such gender considerations into disaster response, and include HN women in leadership, as encouraged by several UN Frameworks.

Discussion.

During natural disasters, mortality rates for women are typically much higher than for men, as shown through several studies. This was primarily brought to attention during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which struck 14 countries, including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India, with approximately 230,000 fatalities. Oxfam found in a 2005 study that in the worst affected villages in Aceh, Indonesia, 80% of victims were female, and approximately three times as many women were killed as men in Cuddalore, India. Other disasters have produced similar results. Victims of the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh that killed 140,000 were 90% girls and women. Furthermore, one study of life expectancy within natural disasters from 141 countries between 1981 and 2002 showed that natural disasters lower the life expectancy of women much more so than that of men. Even more recently, the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that struck East Japan produced 54% female fatalities in the country’s three most affected prefectures.

The disproportionate vulnerability of women to disasters is exacerbated by gender inequalities in access to resources/opportunities. If only men have access to early warning and evacuation information, for example, women experience more adverse effects from natural disasters. During the 1991 Bangladesh cyclone, women were ill-informed about the coming hazard and were not allowed to make decisions to evacuate, resulting in an extremely high percentage of female fatalities. In Sri Lanka, more women than men were killed from the Indian Ocean tsunami because they lacked skills of tree climbing and swimming that were needed to survive the tsunami – skills which had only been taught to men. In Indonesia, the tsunami hit women the hardest because the men were either out fishing at sea in the coastal areas or working in the fields in the agricultural areas, while women were home with children. A woman’s socioeconomic status greatly affects the gender gap in mortality rates – the higher her status, the smaller the gap. Thus, it is not primarily the biological/physical capabilities of women per se that put them at a disadvantage – it is “inequalities in access to resources, capabilities, and opportunities [that] systematically disadvantage certain groups of people, rendering the more vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters,” (Neumayer, p. 2).

Even if a woman survives a disaster, she faces many challenges if aid is not incorporated in a gender-sensitive way. In immediate response efforts, it is important to understand different needs of men, women, boys, and girls, arising in part from vulnerabilities due to inequality and from women’s exclusion from decision-making in these arenas. Immediate concerns for surviving women included
obtaining equal access to emergency assistance. In Sri Lanka, ration cards were registered under the husband’s name, which caused difficulties for some women to obtain access to benefits. Poor design of temporary shelter areas and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp latrines also often pose security threats to women. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, incidents of sexual assault were reported in toilet areas which lacked adequate lighting, and women in Aceh faced increased risk of sexual violence. Furthermore, designated facilities for washing sanitary cloths during menstruation are not always provided in a camp environment. Yet, “Cultural taboos exist against washing these cloths in public and women need to be comfortable while caring for their basic needs in the camp environment,” (Oxfam (2005), p. 10). Gender considerations are important across all contexts, yet often overlooked, even following the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake/tsunami. According to the Aid & International Development Forum, “In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami that hit Sendai in 2011, evacuation centres did not respond to women’s needs as they were mostly run by men; effectively, women had no place to change or breastfeed, had no separate bathrooms and lacked sanitary products.”

As such, it is important to incorporate gender considerations for both response operations (HA/DR) and for prevention efforts – known as disaster risk reduction (DRR) – and to work directly alongside women. Often, women and women’s groups are involved in both disaster response and prevention, but their work is not acknowledged or included in formal decision-making processes, policies, or programs. “This gap is evident around the world. According to a 2009 Huairou Commission survey, women’s civil society organizations active in DRR in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa region felt excluded from national emergency preparedness and other disaster risk reduction programs,” (“Disaster Risk Management,” p. 11). Efforts these women make to participate in disaster relief or risk reduction are often complicated by long-term social implications of high female disaster fatality rates. A gender imbalance post-disaster may greatly multiply surviving women’s domestic workloads if surviving men do not take on household and childcare responsibilities. Surviving men may also place more restrictions on surviving women’s mobility and visibility. Strains from natural disasters also at times exacerbate domestic violence and abuse of vulnerable populations, especially women and girls.

Several frameworks were created in response to these disasters and their gender implications. The landmark Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was formed after the Indian Ocean disaster, focusing on DRR for the decade 2005-2015. It emphasized bringing “gender perspective and cultural diversity” to the forefront by integrating it into disaster risk management policies and decisions, including risk assessment, early warning, information, and education. However, in the years following the HFA, progress on gender integration in planning has been quite slow – with only 20% of countries by 2009 relying substantially on gender integration as a progress driver (30% by 2013). According to the April 2014 paper “Towards the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2),” one problem with the approach of the HFA was that it focused on vulnerability reduction as opposed to capacity development; this risks limiting the capabilities of all societal stakeholders for reducing risks instead of “enhancing the strengths of the community reserves,” (p. 6).

An attempt to improve upon this framework was made in 2015. Four years following the 2011 Japan earthquake/tsunami, the Third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Sendai in March 2015, exploring the role of women in the post-2015 agenda on DRR. The Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 was formed, in part identifying gaps and improvements in engendering and mainstreaming gender into DRR. Some improvements have been made since this framework was
instigated. In 2011 Sendai, women composed only 10% of DRR roles in the city. Since the disaster, Japan has incorporated more women as representatives in prefectural disaster management councils to ensure that they play a key role. Thanks to the Sendai Framework, other nations are also asking the question—What is the role of women in reducing disaster risk, and how can they be more fully included in the future?

“Adopting a gender-sensitive approach to disaster risk management is not only an issue of basic human rights but also effective on the practical level. Simply put, policies that ensure that women as well as men are fully involved in planning DRR strategies and are full participants in recovery efforts are more likely to succeed. Disaster response strategies that protect and assist women as well as men are better for the community as a whole. A gender-sensitive approach is also a smart policy in that it enables the resources of all members of an affected community to be fully utilized,” (“Disaster Risk Management,” p. 17).

**Recommendation.**

1. **Gender Analysis:** “Humanitarian actors [including all stakeholders involved in disaster response, such as the HN, UN, U.S. Government, military, civil society, international agencies, etc.] should carry out a rigorous and context-specific gender analysis of the populations they set out to support. […] Gender-sensitive baseline information – both qualitative and quantitative – should be collected at household and community level. Sex- and age- disaggregated data, as well as data on other social determinants of vulnerability, should be collected and analyzed routinely, in order to target assistance towards those most at risk,” (Oxfam (2013), p. 3). It is important as such that gender considerations and a gender assessment be incorporated into all HA/DR doctrine, handbooks, and guides.

2. **Response:** Humanitarian actors as part of HA/DR must be mindful of vulnerabilities in disaster rescue and how gender and cultural norms may impact locations of where men, women, boys, and girls may be trapped during disasters. Temporary shelters should be designed in consultation with local women in order to take care of women’s specific needs. HN women should be in leadership positions during crises to ensure that women’s needs are addressed, and women’s and women’s organizations’ official and unofficial disaster relief efforts should be acknowledged. Long-term response efforts to humanitarian disasters must be designed to deal with the social impacts if fewer women survive.

3. **Prevention:** Implement the Sendai 2015-2030 framework to increase gender mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) efforts. Involving HN women and women’s organizations in HA/DR efforts is also paramount, making sure that women are not just included as tokens but as partners. Gender-sensitive prevention efforts aimed at decreasing the high rate of female mortality during disasters should include teaching women skills that may save their lives during disasters (e.g., tree climbing and swimming) and familiarizing them with early warning systems. Furthermore, development work targeting gender inequalities may decrease the high rate of female mortality, since the gender gap is most exacerbated by women’s socioeconomic status.

**Note:** See also the recommendations within this document from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) for increasing gender sensitivity in DRR: “20-Point Checklist on Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive.”
Implications.

If humanitarian actors involved in disaster response (such as the HN, UN, U.S. Government, military, civil society, international agencies, etc.) do not perform a gender analysis before beginning operations, they may miss important gender disaggregated data concerning which populations are most at risk and may subsequently not provide aid to those most vulnerable. If women are not consulted and included in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief efforts, rescue attempts, and temporary shelter design, then their needs may not be met and they may be more vulnerable to sexual violence. “If humanitarian interventions are not planned with gender dynamics in mind, the needs of those most under threat may not be adequately met, and an opportunity to support positive change will be lost. That is why gender equality is central to humanitarian action,” (Oxfam (2013), p. 1). “As long as women are excluded from effective engagement at such levels, gender inequities will be persistent, and countries will not recover as quickly from both the major and chronic economic shocks that disasters and climate change impacts engender,” (“Disaster Risk Management,” p. 13). If women are consulted and included in leadership for disaster efforts, however, disaster relief will more holistically address the needs of the entire community and ensure access of benefits to women.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on information from the following sources:

- “Gender,” United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

For more information on the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake & Tsunami:

- “Japan quake took toll on women and elderly,” by Brigitte Leoni, UNISDR, (12 March 2012).

Additional Comments.

Several U.S. military handbooks and guides pertaining to Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (FHA), including the Civil Affairs FHA Planning Guide from HQDA (August 2009), Disaster Response Staff Officer’s Handbook (December 2010), and DOD Support to Foreign Disaster Relief (Handbook for JTF Commanders and Below) (July 2011) do not focus on gender considerations in a disaster. With no additional detail or emphasis, the integration of gender considerations in HA/DR operations risks not being fully operationalized.

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI
E. MINUSTAH Specialized Police Team Builds Capacity for Police Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Haiti (Lesson #2491)

Observations:

In 2010, a Norwegian Specialized Police Team (SPT) deployed with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in order to build the Haitian National Police (HNP)'s capacity to conduct investigations into sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The SPT approach proved more effective than the UN's traditional approach utilizing individual police officers because the SPT police experts worked closely with Host Nation (HN) police to develop and implement a specific project over a 3-5 year framework. However, the SPT also faced challenges due to UN bureaucratic procedures and lack of collaboration across various elements of the mission.

Discussion:

MINUSTAH was established in Haiti in 2004 with a mandate focusing on rebuilding rule of law through professionalizing the Haitian National Police (HNP) as well as involvement with anti-gang efforts in the shantytown Cité-Soleil in Port-au-Prince. Its mandate has changed some over time, in response to political and socio-economic circumstances. (In October 2017, MINUSTAH transitioned to a smaller UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), comprised mainly of police.) While Haiti has not emerged directly from a specific armed conflict, the past decades have seen political instability and sporadic violence connected with dictators rising and falling and a military coup. This instability has been exacerbated by the substantial 2010 earthquake which caused as many as 220,000 deaths and at least 1.5 million displaced people, not to mention a cholera epidemic stemming from faulty sanitation at MINUSTAH bases, affecting over 770,000 people.

Following the 2010 earthquake, displaced Haitians lived in makeshift shelters and crowded encampments with limited sanitation facilities. Extremely high rates of sexual violence were reported in these Internally Displaced Person (IDP) settlements; one study documented 14% of displaced respondents (or their household members) having experienced sexual violence and/or rape since the earthquake. In Cité-Soleil, state police did not have much of a presence, and rape was used routinely by gangs for area control. Furthermore, the police often dismissed cases or failed to act in response to victims who did report sexual assault, which perpetuated de facto impunity for many SGBV perpetrators. Due to a lack of trust in the Haitian police and justice departments as well as community stigmatization and fear of reprisals, most victims of sexual assault or domestic violence have thus not reported to the Haitian police.

Due to the exorbitant rates of SGBV in Haitian IDP camps, Norway decided to spearhead an effort to deploy police peacekeepers focused specifically on this task. There are two main options for how police typically deploy in UN missions: 1) Individual Police Officers (IPOs), or 2) Formed Police Units (FPUs). IPOs are deployed on an individual basis, seconded as police or law enforcement personnel to perform specific policing tasks. FPUs, on the other hand, are cohesive mobile police units composed of 120-160 armed and self-sustaining police officers tasked with supporting higher-risk UN operations, ensuring the safety of UN personnel/facilities, and managing public order. More recently emerging is an alternative option for UN police – the Specialized Police Team (SPT) concept. SPTs are a group of experts with a particular specialization seconded to serve with the UN as a team working on a specific policing project.
After conducting a fact-finding mission and approving the concept through the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)’s Police Division and through MINUSTAH, Norway decided to form a Specialized Police Team to tackle the issue of police response to sexual and gender-based violence. This SPT was composed of five police officers. The SPT also made an effort to include French-speaking UN Police (UNPOL) officers on the team (since few Norwegian police spoke French). As such, they formed a partnership with Canada, because in addition to possessing French language skills, the Canadians had a similar policing culture to Norway and so approached project considerations in a like-minded way.

The Norwegian SPT arrived in Haiti in October 2010. When the SPT deployed, however, the mission was not prepared to handle it. MINUSTAH initially sought to assign the officers to individual posts, as was typically the case for IPO assignments, even though the SPT was designed to work together as a team. As such, it took the SPT time to establish its place within the UNPOL component of the MINUSTAH mission, as its members were not initially allocated an office, equipment, or vehicles. Once the SPT did become established, the mission requested a specific project proposal from the team. The SPT proceeded to perform a comprehensive assessment on SGBV in the Haitian police and judiciary systems in order to form the requested proposal. However, due in part to poor communication between the police and civilian components of the mission, similar assessments had already been performed, which the SPT members did not find out about until after completing their own assessment. Despite these delays and redundancies, the SPT completed a viable project proposal.

The first phase of the SPT proposal (“SGBV I”) implemented from 2012-2015 included two strategic objectives: 1) professionalize the HNP, and 2) strengthen HNP operational capacities. In order to contribute to professionalizing the HNP, basic investigation courses on SGBV were organized and facilitated in Haiti’s ten regional departments. SGBV requires sensitivity in terms of how victims and witnesses are interviewed and evidence is collected, so special training is required in order to investigate SGBV cases in a trauma-sensitive manner. In close consultation with local Haitian police, a one-week course was designed, utilizing local instructors from the Haitian Police School, with the intent not only to train technical skills but to create a mind-set change in attitudes of officers towards sexual violence. In prior years, the HNP had often been trained by various foreign police with competing policing models which were driven by foreign interests instead of local needs. A priority of the Norwegian SPT was to ensure that any programs designed would connect to actual needs on the ground in a sustainable way, so the SPT consulted closely with local HNP and HNP senior management, valuing local knowledge and buy-in for the project.

Over the first four years of SGBV I, the SPT trained 35 HNP trainers, who in turn trained a total of 1191 Haitian police personnel (9% of the entire HNP). The SGBV course that they designed was also incorporated into basic training at the Haitian Police School; since 2014, all Haitian police recruits have received this one week of SGBV training during their 7-9 months of basic training. Phase one also included a capacity-building initiative for infrastructure development. Via this initiative, fifteen offices for SGBV were built or renovated in order to increase police reception facilities for SGBV victims to enhance privacy and reduce stigma. After the success of phase one (“SGBV I”), a second phase (“SGBV II”) was developed for the following years 2015-2017. SGBV II focused specifically on training specialized investigators at the Central Directorate of Judicial Police, who will be responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and focusing on investigating more serious cases.
While the Norwegian SPT has thus been met with many successes, it has also been met with many challenges. One major hurdle was the initial lack of support by the mission for this new concept. Though the team had independent funds, transferring its funds became a major problem as there were many financial bureaucratic procedures which required the SPT to acquire special authorization to carry out its activities, even though the mandate had already been agreed between the DPKO and the Norwegian government. This caused several month delays on project disbursements, which led to the cancellation of one training, overdue payments, and issues with other planned events. SPT team members did not understand the financial procedures and so spent a great deal of their time trying to sort out the UN system instead of focusing on their specialized SGBV police capacity-building. Despite these bureaucratic obstacles with procurement, independent funding of the project still proved critical to its success, since it guaranteed that financial resources would be available for the implementation of the project – which totaled $1.2 million by December 2015.

**Recommendation:**

1. Continue to utilize the SPT concept in future UN missions to partner with local HN police forces for capacity-building. “With its defined project, independent budget, and specially selected team of personnel, an SPT is likely to be more successful in achieving its objectives than many independently deployed IPOs,” (NUPI, p. 31). This model, using 3-5 year project cycles, provides greater coherence and continuity of assistance. Small teams also lead to a greater sense of accountability and solidarity across the contingent. In addition, “Specialized teams present an opportunity for Western/Northern PCCs to re-engage with peacekeeping, as a modality that arguably represents more effective use of their personnel and resources,” (NUPI, p. 33).

2. Form SPTs from team members with a common police culture, as this SPT did by including Canadians and Norwegians in order to advance a coherent policing message to the HN counterparts. “This stands in contrast to the prevailing UN approach to capacity-building in which host-state police are subject to a plethora of varying national approaches from the succession of individual police officers tasked with capacity-development,” (NUPI, p. 30). Including police officers with context-specific skills, such as the Canadian police’s fluency in French, is also beneficial in terms of connecting with counterparts in the HN.

3. Ensure that SPTs are “properly informed about the roles and work of other relevant components and divisions in [each UN mission] (such as justice, human rights, rule of law, gender) that may overlap or intersect with their project” (NUPI, p. 33). It is also important to include an administrative focal point within the Specialized Police Team to assist with navigating UN bureaucratic procedures, so that the police personnel can focus on their specialized expertise instead of getting lost in administrative processes. Equip SPTs with independent project funding for planning and procurement so that they are not in competition with other mission elements for resources.

4. Continue to utilize local ownership approaches in SPTs by consulting closely with HN police departments, not delivering “widely-used approaches to capacity-building in which external actors tend to deliver externally conceived projects to host populations,” (NUPI, p. 30). (In addition to ensuring local HN buy-in, consult with and obtain support for the SPT capability from the UN mission's police component.) Strengthen Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) capacities within UN policing projects, such as the SGBV SPT, so as to determine whether the training courses have in fact changed policing mindsets and improved SGBV investigative practices in the local HN.
Implications:

If SPT teams are not formed from member states with similar police cultures, then their policing message to the HN may be incoherent, which may affect the degree to which any program can be effectively implemented. If SPT team members are able to communicate in the local language, then they will be more effective in connecting with their HN counterparts to design and implement programs. If personnel specializing in the UN’s bureaucratic administrative process are not included in SPTs, then SPT team members with policing expertise will not be able to focus on their specializations but will instead spend much of their time trying to figure out how to make requests through the UN systems. If SPTs are not funded independently, then they will be in competition with other mission/police components for scarce project funding. If SPTs are not properly informed about the other parts of the mission, then they may do redundant work and waste precious time and resources. If SPTs do not consult directly with local HN police departments in program design, there will be less local ownership and the programs may be less effective in reaching the host nation populace. Aside from SPTs, SGBV should be included in all UNPOL police training for HN police.

Event Description:

This lesson is based primarily on this article:

- “MINUSTAH's Specialized Police Team to Combat Sexual Violence in Haiti,” by Marina Caparini and Kari M. Osland, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), (2016).
- For further information on UNPOL, see also: “External Review of the Functions, Structure and Capacity of the UN Police Division,” (31 May 2016). See also: UNPOL and PKSOI’s MINUJUSTH Peace Operations Estimate in the POET2 Portal of SOLLIMS.

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Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
(8 March 2014)
Two UN Peacekeepers and a young Haitian girl attend an event organized by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) at the Haitian Police Academy.  
(Photo Credit: UN Photo/Logan Abaassi)
F. No Protection Without Participation – The Importance of Engagement with Women by Women Peacekeepers – United Nations Experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Lesson #6212)

Observation.

- The United Nations (UN) Headquarters (HQ) staff learnt that Congolese women’s voices need to be heard in order to have better situational awareness. It was apparent that the experiences of women in the village were different than the men’s and that they had more relevant information about the illegally armed groups than the men;
- Military Commanders often don’t consider the importance of having women military personnel engage with local women as part of understanding the human terrain;
- A woman peacekeeper with linguistic skills can be more useful than a male Swahili speaking (in this case) Community Liaison Officer;
- The mere presence of senior UN military leadership at a meeting with women can lift the status of women in the eyes of their community; (the UN Force Commander and his insistence on speaking to the Congolese women was a lesson to the Congolese Territorial Administrator who was at first dismissive of including the women of the community in engagement with the UN);
- The Congolese women felt more empowered than before as the UN had made an effort to hear their side of the story;
- The UN’s reputation may have slightly improved for showing both that it wanted to hear from both women as well as men and that it took time and resources to visit an isolated location;
- There is a possibility that the information from the woman which was fed into the military component’s planning cycle led to a reduction in attacks in the Eringetti region – but this is difficult to assess.

Discussion.

Eringetti, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – November 2014

The Force Head Quarters (FHQ) of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) had received several reports that villagers (mainly women) were being attacked in the area north of Beni on the perimeter with Virunga National Park. The Military Gender Adviser approached the Force Commander and asked if it would be possible to take some Swahili speaking women soldiers from the Tanzanian Battalion (Bn). She hoped they could meet and talk with the women in the villages affected by the attacks.

Initially the FHQ was reluctant to release the assets needed – a helicopter to get to the city of Beni and then to go north the next day to the village of Eringetti. The Force Commander did at last agree and stated that he would visit the area too.

When the UN Military Gender Adviser asked the Tanzanian Bn Commander if she could take a couple of his women soldiers to meet with the Congolese women, the Commander was puzzled. He offered up 16 of his Special Forces troops (all men) and struggled to understand why the FHQ staff only wanted women. Eventually the Bn Commander nominated a military police woman to accompany the Military Gender Adviser. It should be noted that at that time there were no women peacekeepers in...
the Tanzanian patrols nor in the Nepalese patrols. These units were the closest to Eringetti and the lack of women peacekeepers made engagement with the local women quite challenging.

The following day the helicopter landed on a cleared area very close to the Eringetti Administrators’ hut. A crowd gathered and followed the Force Commander, his close protection team, the Military Gender Adviser, and the Tanzanian military police woman. The (male) Community Liaison Assistant met the HQ entourage and took the Force Commander to meet with the (male) Territorial Administrator.

The Territorial Administrator was perplexed – why had the Force Commander come all this way to talk to the women? The Force Commander briefly looked equally perplexed but then recalled that the Military Gender Adviser had said that it would help to enhance the understanding of the situation if the UN could meet with the women. Still bemused and unimpressed, the Territorial Administrator negotiated that the UN envoy could meet with the women, but that the Force Commander would speak with both women and men beforehand.

The Force Commander held a meeting with local men and women and listened to their concerns. He then left and the local women remained to talk with the Tanzanian military police woman and the Military Gender Adviser. Initially, the discussion was about more trivial matters such as nail varnish and clothing. After a while, however, the women explained that when they were tending their crops, they were being attacked. They also said that Congolese security forces in the area (known as the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or “FARCD”) took the women as wives, but that when these troops left to go to another area, they would not take the “wives” with them, some of whom were pregnant.

The women drew a map of the farming land and pointed to the fields next to the bushes and wooded area of Virunga National Park. They explained that this was where the men hid before attacking them and then running away. Attacks took place during the day in isolated fields, and sometimes the illegally armed men would attack the villagers in their huts during the night.

The Military Gender Adviser took the notes she had taken and the hand-drawn map back to Goma HQ and shared it with the Intelligence and Operations branches. As a result, the troops near Eringetti were directed to conduct patrols near the fields where the women worked and to carry out night time patrols to deter the illegally armed groups from attacking the villages.

**Recommendation.**

- Ensure each mission has a Military Gender Adviser who can prompt and remind the leadership of the need to speak with women and men in order to better understand the human terrain;
- Remind the Military leadership to meet with and listen to women from local communities, as well as to set up regular meetings with Civil Society;
- Ensure there are women military personnel deployed and that they are trained and able to join patrols and key leader engagement meetings;
- Use women with linguistic skills to meet and talk with women;
• Ensure each mission has a Female Engagement Team (FET) capability; (in a UN mission context, "FET" refers to 30 women added to an Infantry Bn for the purpose of going on patrol with male soldiers and creating a mixed patrol);
• Ensure the Intelligence and Operations staff receive a back brief from the meetings in order to feed information into the planning cycle and to enhance situational awareness;
• Allocate resources to support Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in the field.

Implications.

If these recommendations are not followed, then:
• Situational awareness will be poor which leads to weak protection of civilians strategies;
• Civilians will continue to be attacked;
• The reputation of the UN will be undermined as it is not protecting civilians.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the personal experience of the MONUSCO Military Child Protection and Gender Adviser 2014, Major Rachel Grimes (UK) in Eringetti, North Kivu, DRC 2014.

Lesson Author: Rachel Grimes, MONUSCO Military Child Protection and Gender Adviser 2014

Editor's Note: The province of North Kivu (with capital city Goma) is in the east of the DRC, bordering Lake Kivu and the countries of Uganda and Rwanda. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 precipitated a refugee crisis in the region and sparked what has become the current armed conflict. Following the Second Congo War which took place from 1998-2003, myriad armed groups continue to operate in eastern DRC and exploit its rich natural resources. Millions of people have been displaced amidst the ongoing violence.

MONUSCO is a UN Peacekeeping mission established in the DRC to protect civilians and to support the DRC Government in stabilization and peace consolidation amidst this conflict. This mission took over from a prior UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) in July 2010. For more information on MONUSCO, including its current mandate, see the mission website at: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/index.shtml. See also the MONUSCO Estimate in the SOLLIMS database.
G. Including All Listeners in Radio Communication in Afghanistan  
(Lesson #2600)

Observation.

A U.S. military communications group developed extensive radio programming for eastern Afghanistan (prior to late 2014) without taking into consideration the gender of listeners. After programming was adjusted to account for this crucial missing element – the gender dimension – many lives were saved in that region.

Discussion.

The Communications Action Group for Regional Command-East was responsible for coordinating information operations (IO) and public affairs in eastern Afghanistan. This group developed an intricate system to consistently communicate the military campaign plan with the Afghan people. Over 500,000 hand cranked radios were handed out to Afghan villagers in a vast coverage area. These radios caught signals from 54 high-powered radio stations staffed by Afghan disk jockeys. Over 50 officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were involved in an extensive effort to train Afghans and broadcast culturally appropriate program content and public service messages.

However, despite hours and hours of pre-deployment training, cultural awareness briefings, and mission analysis, these officers missed one crucial element - the vital component of gender analysis. Even though Afghan women play key roles in society (albeit often from behind the scenes), they had been completely omitted from consideration by the U.S. Communications Action Group since the group had not seen or interacted with Afghan women. As such, the content of the radio programming was constructed for Afghan men. Yet, many Afghan men were outside of the home during the day – working, farming, or fighting – not at home listening to the radios. Instead, Afghan women were the main people who had access to the radios at home and who listened to the programming.

A brigade IO officer in eastern Afghanistan brought this omission to the attention of the director of the Communications Action Group. This officer had spoken to a female engagement team in the area who was familiar with the local women. From this team, he had learned that many mothers and babies were dying in childbirth and that a primary concern of Afghan women was healthcare. For cultural and religious reasons, these Afghan women were not comfortable going to a male doctor; however, female physicians had either fled or been killed and so were not available.

The officer suggested that radio programming be shifted immediately to reach these Afghan women by broadcasting female Afghan doctors discussing pre-natal health. The director decided to support this suggested initiative with resources, contracts, and coordination. Within a week, two hours of broadcasting time each day was devoted to female physicians. These broadcasts reached across all of eastern Afghanistan.

Within six months of this shift in programming, incidents of death in childbirth and infant mortality decreased by 50% across eastern Afghanistan. There were also reports of an increase of calls to the radio station. Furthermore, this shift raised awareness among military units and local politicians, changing attitudes about the importance of women in Afghan society. Many lives were saved by incorporating gender considerations into this initiative, reaching out to women and not just to men.
“My young major had given me a lot to ponder. Somehow, after all our pre-deployment training, hours of cultural awareness briefings, mission analysis and pre-mission rehearsals, we had missed something vital and important. We’d been wearing blinders without knowing it. Years of experience in Afghanistan hadn’t exposed it, nor had our doctrine, lessons learned systems or transitions with outgoing units. Our commanders at all levels were tough and hardnosed and knew how to fight. But this was a game we had to go back to school on.” (-Director of the Communications Action Group, as quoted in the November 2014 edition of Army Magazine, p. 68).

**Recommendation.**

Incorporate gender dynamics awareness training into standard pre-deployment training. Analyze gender considerations in all programming as part of standard analysis processes to determine factors and variables in decision-making, so that half of a population will not be missed.

**Implications.**

If gender considerations are not taken into account when planning and executing programming, vital information could be missed which may render an entire effort unsuitable. If, however, gender considerations are taken into account and women are included, lives may be saved.

**Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the personal experience of U.S. Army COL (Retired) Richard D. Hooker, Jr., who wrote an article entitled “We’re in Business!” in the November 2014 edition of Army Magazine (Vol. 64 Issue 11, p. 68). He was the director for the Communications Action Group for Regional Command – East in Afghanistan. A copy of his article can be found via EBSCOhost.

**Lesson Author:** Ms. Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI

**Editor's Note:** The U.S. communications group described above is not the only group to reach Afghan women via radio. There are several radio stations led by Afghan women and women’s organizations throughout Afghanistan, many reaching isolated women in rural areas. Most notably, local journalist Sediqa Sherzai runs Radio Roshani (“Enlightened Radio”) in Kunduz, a city home to Afghanistan’s women’s movement but contested by the Taliban. The station encourages women to assert their rights to participate in their communities, despite the Taliban’s opposition to public roles for women in Afghan society. Radio Roshani broadcasts interviews with local women and readings from the Quran to contest violent extremist interpretations of Islam and restrictions on women. Read more at United States Institute of Peace: “Afghan Women Defend Their Rights Against the Taliban,” James Rupert, (9 May 2017).
H. Necessity for Pre-Deployment Training on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
(Lesson #2590)

Observation.

A decorated Green Beret was almost forcibly retired from the military due to physically confronting an American-backed Afghan police commander who raped a boy in Afghanistan in 2011. The New York Times reported that Soldiers had been instructed to look the other way to such incidents of child abuse, considering them ‘cultural practices.’ Lack of clarity/guidance in not only reporting such violations but also taking action against them set the scene for Soldiers to be punished when they tried to actually do something about a human rights violation. This underlines the importance of clear policy to protect child abuse victims and clear guidance and training for Soldiers on responses to and 2nd/3rd order effects of sexual violence downrange.

Discussion.

In 2010 and 2011, American Special Forces teams began forming local Afghan police militias to hold villages that had been retaken from the Taliban. However, in some of these areas, the pushback of the Taliban opened a vacuum for other unintended consequences. In some of these rural areas, a ‘cultural’ practice that had been outlawed by the Taliban was re-emerging. Known as bacha bazi, or boy play, powerful Afghan men used teenage boys as sex slaves for dancing and entertainment. Most of these boys were from poor families without means; they became a status symbol for these men. In some cases, the same police officers who had been funded by Americans to defeat the Taliban and protect the villages were participating in this exploitive practice, even though sexual violence is one of the six grave violations against children recognized by the United Nations.

Soldiers would come in contact with this exploitive practice and other forms of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) during deployments. However, guidance was not always clear for Soldiers as to how to respond to these human rights violations. According to an article in the New York Times, based on interviews and court records, American Soldiers and Marines were instructed not to intervene in the practice of bacha bazi, even when these boys were being abused by Afghan allies on military bases. The NY Times asserts that “The American policy of nonintervention is intended to maintain good relations with the Afghan police and militia units the United States has trained to fight the Taliban. It also reflects a reluctance to impose cultural values in a country where pederasty is rife, particularly among powerful men, for whom being surrounded by young teenagers can be a mark of social status.” (This claim was later denied by General Campbell, according to an October 2015 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Report, who maintained that a policy since 2011 instructs U.S. service members to report human-rights violations to the chain-of-command, who will report to Afghan authorities; in September 2015, he issued a statement for suspicions of sexual abuse to immediately be reported to the chain-of-command.)

In summer 2011, two Green Berets were deployed in their second tour in northern Kunduz Province where some of these Afghan Local Police (ALP) units were stationed – Special Forces Captain Daniel Quinn (the detachment commander), and Sergeant 1st Class (SFC) Charles Martland, who was highly regarded by his peers and had received a Bronze Star for actions taken during a Taliban ambush. These Soldiers began to hear serious complaints against the police. Upon hearing about the rape of a 14/15-
year old girl by a police commander, Captain Quinn informed the provincial police chief. However, the perpetrator only got one day in jail and then the girl was forced to marry him. So, Captain Quinn informed his superior officer who said that there was nothing else he could do since he had already told local officials. Captain Quinn witnessed several other violations without repercussions; after each incident, he would lecture the Afghan police commanders on human rights. Meanwhile, village elders and villagers were getting more and more upset at the behavior of these American-backed commanders who were committing atrocities which many locals saw as worse than the Taliban.

In September 2011, a mother with visible bruising came to their American base with her limping 12-year old son, explaining how he had been abducted, tied to a post, and raped repeatedly by a local American-backed police commander, Abdul Rahman. The woman had also been beaten, and she wanted to make sure that the abuse to her son would not happen again, especially because, being good-looking, he was coveted as a status symbol by local commanders. Upon hearing the account, Captain Quinn confronted Rahman. The police commander admitted this was true, but laughed it off when Quinn lectured him on how a higher standard was expected from him. At this point, Captain Quinn and SFC Martland threw Rahman to the ground so that he would know that such behavior would not be tolerated.

After this physical confrontation, both Captain Quinn and SFC Martland were given a “relief for cause” from that 2011 deployment. Both Soldiers were removed from that camp in Kunduz Province and eventually sent home from Afghanistan. Reports vary as to extent of injuries to the police officer, although another Afghan officer corroborated that they were not serious. It is unclear whether there were positive or negative repercussions for the boy or his mother as a result of the physical confrontation between the Green Berets and the police commander; news outlets have not reported whether or not the child was abused again.

After being forced to leave Afghanistan, Captain Quinn left the military. Sergeant 1st Class (SFC) Charles Martland, however, decided to continue his military career. In 2015, however, under the Army’s Qualitative Management Program (QMP) – a process for downsizing the military by involuntary separation of Soldiers with black marks on their records – SFC Martland was selected to be separated from the Army due to the incident of shoving the child rapist, even though SFC Martland was highly decorated. SFC Martland appealed his case with high support from Representative Duncan Hunter, R-California, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and petitions from outraged citizens. After months of advocacy, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records reviewed his case and removed him from the QMP list.

Although SFC Martland in the end was not actually separated from service, these types of challenging situations continue to face Soldiers. The realities of human rights abuses and sexual violence continue, and Soldiers need to be prepared to deal with them in a constructive way, without turning a blind eye. CRSV is a threat to security and will become increasingly dangerous if not addressed by commanders and other leaders. Of Afghanistan, Captain Quinn reiterated that, “The reason we were here is because we heard the terrible things the Taliban were doing to people, how they were taking away human rights. […] But we were putting people into power who would do things that were worse than the Taliban did – that was something village elders voiced to me.” SFC Martland wrote a letter to the Army that he and Captain Quinn “felt that morally we could no longer stand by and allow our ALP to commit atrocities.”
Recommendation.

1. Do not use the idea of ‘cultural norms’ as an excuse not to protect children experiencing sexual violence as one of the Six Grave Violations against children recognized by the United Nations. Authorities should hold perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable and protect victims.

2. Provide training for all deployed Soldiers on CRSV, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and other threats of SEA which they may encounter downrange. Ensure that they are trained on the protocols for how to respond to these situations in order to protect civilians – so that they do not turn a blind eye and also do not exacerbate a situation. This training falls under the wider umbrella of training on gender dynamics and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

3. Create and implement clear policy and authority regarding reporting requirements for Soldiers for cases of human rights abuses, child abuse, and sexual exploitation; in this policy, include clear instruction on how to respond to incidents to protect civilian victims when local authorities are implicit and/or are not taking responsibility for responding to such crimes. The Army could/should address this issue in a number of ways, such as through specific instruction on this subject during pre-command courses.

Implications.

Without clear policy (both written and understood), Soldiers may turn a blind eye to such abuses or not know how to handle these situations. Without training on CRSV, GBV, and other topics under the purview of WPS, Soldiers may not be prepared to see or handle such incidents downrange; furthermore, without clear training on how to respond if local authorities do not take action, Soldiers may respond in a way that has potential negative 2nd and 3rd order effects for victim families. (It is not known whether or not the shoved police officer returned to rape the boy and beat his mother.) With proper training, Soldiers may respond to such incidents in a way that both addresses the human rights violation and protects the dignity and human rights of the victim(s) as well as not putting themselves in danger.

If human rights abuses are tolerated or viewed as merely ‘cultural practices,’ this can have dire consequences, both for local victims and for the forces. According to the New York Times, “the American policy of treating child sexual abuse as a cultural issue has often alienated the villages whose children are being preyed upon.” If this type of abuse is perpetrated by American-funded/backed allies with no repercussions or accountability, victims of the abuse will continue to suffer. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the allied police will be undermined and sentiment against Americans may grow. On military.com, SFC Martland claimed that “the Afghan Local Police had been ‘committing atrocities,’ raising concerns that many locals viewed as ‘worse than the Taliban’ – and if locals returned to the Taliban, attacks against U.S. forces would increase.”
Event Description.

This lesson is based on articles concerning these events, such as:

- “Green Beret who beat up accused child rapist can stay in Army,” (by Kyle Jahner, 28 April 2016 – Army Times).

A few useful training resources include:


For more information on exploitative bacha bazi, see the 2010 documentary “Dancing Boys of Afghanistan” by Afghan journalist Najibullah Quraishi.

Lesson Author: Ms. Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI

Kabul, Afghanistan (24 June 2017)
The U.S. Army’s Commanding General of Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, an integral part of NATO’s Resolute Support mission, along with the First Deputy Ministry of Interior visited the MoI’s temporary Family Response Unit (FRU) to inspect recent improvements. The FRU supports women and girls who are victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, child marriage and other known issues in Afghanistan.”

(Photo Credit: DOD Photo/Sgt. 1st Class E. L. Craig)
3. CONCLUSION

The lessons in this Sampler span regions from the Middle East to Latin America and cover initiatives from crisis response to peacekeeping in order to address the questions Why? and How? Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security matters to the security sector.

Why is WPS relevant to the security sector?

- **To prevent conflict.** Women’s participation in early warning mechanisms can mitigate instability and prevent violence, such as when women designed messaging that influenced citizens to solve disputes with peace instead of violence during tense elections in Kenya.

- **To create sustainable peace.** Peace agreements are more likely to last longer when women are meaningfully involved in their creation. Women’s participation in the Colombia-FARC peace process ensured that concerns of several different identity groups were taken into consideration.

- **To increase security.** By consulting local women who have different perspectives than men due to different social roles, UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) achieved better situational awareness and formed stronger protection of civilian strategies, likely reducing attacks against local villagers.

- **To meet the needs of entire communities.** When a U.S. military communications group adjusted radio programming to account for health concerns of women listeners in Afghanistan, infant mortality was reduced in the region. Such inclusion has the potential to improve security.

How can WPS be operationalized across the spectrum of conflict?

- **Encourage participation of women in decision-making.** Consult with women and include women in decision-making, whether in peacekeeping missions, peace agreements, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes, or humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.

- **Support women’s role in conflict prevention.** Include women and various other identity groups in strategy development to prevent violent extremism and in early warning mechanisms to mitigate instability during election cycles, such as in Kenya.

- **Promote equal access to relief and recovery.** Perform a rigorous and context-specific gender analysis with sex-and-age-disaggregated data of the affected population in order to target disaster assistance towards those most at risk. Include women leaders in humanitarian relief response and shelter design. Incorporate gender assessments into HA/DR doctrine, handbooks and guides.

- **Develop violence protection mechanisms.** Provide pre-deployment conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) training for security sector personnel. Improve the capacity of police to investigate allegations of sexual violence in a trauma-sensitive manner, as the Norwegian specialized police team deployed with MINUSTAH did with the Haitian National Police.

- **Institutionalize WPS in the security sector.** Ensure each mission has a gender advisor to remind leadership to speak with both women and men in order to better understand the local security situation. Proactively seek to include women trainers and host nation women in counter weapons of mass destruction/security cooperation programs. Ensure there are women personnel/peacekeepers available to communicate with local women as was done in the DRC, as long as this does not put local women in danger.

Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security is both relevant and achievable.
Annex A. Additional WPS Lessons in SOLLIMS

[Ensure you are logged in to SOLLIMS to access these items.]

Stability Operations – Afghanistan

Inclusion of Gender Perspectives Increases Security… (Lesson #2461)

Including gender perspectives in operations increases security by enhancing situational awareness. This is illustrated by a Swedish Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan in 2009 whose engagements with women provided information that prevented misinterpretation of a local event, averting a potential security incident.

“Success Reporting” by Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan (Lesson #2430)

Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in southern Afghanistan from 2010 to early 2012 reported many of their engagements with Afghan women as successes without culturally-appropriate indicators to evaluate whether or not there were substantive outcomes.

Recruitment & Retention of Policewomen in the Afghan National Police (Lesson #2550)

Afghan women have faced barriers to both recruitment and retention in the Afghan National Police due to cultural attitudes, security threats, and lack of institutional support.

Afghanistan National Solidarity Program Increases Participation in Governance (Lesson #2543)

Women were often less involved in public governance in rural Afghanistan at the beginning of U.S. military operations there. The National Solidarity Program mandated a quota of women’s participation in local governance decisions for funded projects so that women would also have a say in the development projects that would affect their lives.

Conflict Resolution – Africa

Women’s Participation in Peace Processes Contributes to Sustainability of Peace Agreements (Lesson #2547)

Recidivism rates for countries returning to civil war are extremely high, and many peace treaties have had low success rates. Evidence suggests that women’s participation in formal peace processes contributes to the sustainability of peace agreements.

Liberian Women’s Mass Campaign for Peace Secures Peace Process (Lesson #2546)

Peace talks often exclude women from substantial roles. Liberian women, however, exerted pressure on all sides at the negotiation table and secured a place for the women at the 2003 peace talks to end Liberia’s civil war. This ensured that interests of ordinary Liberians were not forgotten in shaping a new Liberia.

Gender-Sensitive DDR Processes: Integrating Female Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone (Lesson #2486)

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes have narrowly defined women’s roles in armed conflict by focusing on women primarily as victims, showing reluctance to identify them as soldiers. Because of this lack of gender sensitization in programming, female ex-combatants, such as those from Sierra Leone’s 11-year civil war (1991-2002), have largely avoided participating in DDR processes.

Additional Lessons Written by: Ms. Katrina Gehman, Lessons Learned Analyst (Ctr), PKSOI

See also the previous SOLLIMS Sampler on WPS (August 2014)! (Click Here)
Annex B. WPS-Related RESOURCES & REFERENCES

[Ensure you are logged in to SOLLIMS to access some of these items.]

Organizations / Links / Repositories
- NDU’s Military Education Research Library Network – MERLN / WPS
- U.S. Department of Defense Joint Staff-Run WPS Portal (accessible with CAC only)
- U.S. Department of State – DOS Office of Global Women’s Issues
- U.S. Agency for International Development – USAID Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- U.S. Institute of Peace – USIP Gender
- U.S. Civil Society Working Group on WPS – CSWG; NGO Working Group on WPS
- UN Women; Commission on the Status of Women – CSW
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization – NATO WPS
- Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations – SWEDINT / NCGM
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – OSCE Gender Equality
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – PeaceWomen
- Women in International Security – WIIS
- Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security – GIWPS
- Inclusive Security
- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders – GNWP
- Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies – APCSS WPS Library

United Nations – Documents
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS – UNSCR 1325

NATO – Documents
- NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 – “Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspectives in the NATO Command Structure Including Measures for Protection…” (*update pending)

United States – Documents
- Executive Order 13595 – Instituting a National Action Plan on WPS (2011)
- DOS Implementation Plan of the NAP on WPS (2012)
- USAID Implementation of the U.S. NAP on WPS (2012)

U.S. Military Doctrine and Training Courses
- Army Techniques Publication: Protection of Civilians – ATP 3-07.6
- JKO Course – Improving Operational Effectiveness by Integrating Gender Perspective (CAC required)
- Other Training & Courses at MERLN WPS [“Research, Education...” Tab] and at the Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI)

For additional resources (documents, links, lessons), visit the WPS Portal on SOLLIMS!
### Annex C. Previously Published SOLLIMS Samplers

(Available in [SOLLIMS Library](#))

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<th>Year</th>
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| 2017 | Leadership in Crisis and Complex Operations  
Civil Affairs in Stability Operations |
| 2016 | Refugees & Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)  
Strategic Communication/Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations  
Stabilization and Transition  
Investing in Training for, and during, Peace and Stability Operations  
Building Stable Governance  
Shifts in United Nations Peacekeeping |
| 2015 | Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: Concepts, Principles and Applications  
Foreign Humanitarian Assistance [Foreign Disaster Relief]  
Cross-Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations  
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students  
Security Sector Reform |
| 2014 | Reconstruction and Development  
Women, Peace and Security  
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students  
Overcoming “Challenges & Spoilers” with “Unity & Resolve”  
Improving Host Nation Security through Police Forces |
| 2013 | Key Enablers for Peacekeeping & Stability Operations  
Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students  
Multinational Operations  
Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding/Engaging the People  
Protection of Civilians |
| 2012 | Medical Assistance/Health Services  
Reconciliation  
Civ-Mil Cooperation  
Building Capacity |
| 2011 | Ministerial Advising  
Fighting Corruption  
Economic Stabilization |
| 2010 | Transition to Local Governance  
Rule of Law and Legitimacy  
Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping |