

# Building partner-nation training capacity for weapons and ammunition management: the applicability of US Global Peace Operations Initiative training models

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## Introduction

The US Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) supports training, equipping, and facility renovation projects related to peacekeeping throughout the world. The overarching objective of the GPOI is to assist partners who have the political will but lack some of the resources to deploy on UN PSOs. More specifically, in Latin America, GPOI training capacity-building projects have captured lessons learned and best practices in three distinct training models, depending on the depth and breadth of the training programme required by a specific partner nation. These models are applicable to the design and development of a training capacity-building programme for WAM.

This paper describes the GPOI's history and objectives; highlights the three training capacity-building models that it has employed, as well as impediments that have been experienced; and then draws on these observations to suggest a road map for building training capacity for WAM in Latin America.

## What is the GPOI?<sup>1</sup>

The GPOI programme was launched in 2005 as the US contribution to the G8's Action Plan for 'Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support Operations', which was adopted in 2004. It is a US Department of State security assistance programme managed and executed by the US DoD. The GPOI focuses primarily on military capacity, with only limited support for formed police units. In the western hemisphere the US Southern Command manages and executes the GPOI programme. The command's cumulative budget of USD 110 million spanning fiscal years 2005–18 is focused on achieving six objectives in the following eight active GPOI partner nations: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay (not all the objectives are applicable to each partner):

The objectives are the following:

- **Build self-sufficient peace operations training capacity.** We assist Latin American partners to establish or strengthen the institutional infrastructure required to self-sufficiently execute core PSO training for military personnel.

- **Support the development and employment of critical enabling capabilities.** We provide training, equipment, and advisory assistance to Latin American partners with the political will to develop and deploy a critical enabling capability in areas such as engineering, aviation, medicine, logistics, signals, intelligence, or riverine operations. Political will must be demonstrated by the registration of the relevant enabling capability in the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.
- **Enhance operational readiness and sustainment capabilities.** We provide specialized or mission-specific pre-deployment training, technical and advisory assistance, strategic-level training, in-mission supplementary training, and training or deployment equipment to improve and maintain partners' operational readiness capabilities to deploy and sustain units participating in PSOs.
- **Strengthen rapid deployment capabilities.** We assist select partners to strengthen and institutionalize capabilities and processes to rapidly deploy forces (in fewer than 60 days) to emerging crises.
- **Expand the role of women and enhance gender integration.** We encourage women's participation, integration, and leadership in PSOs; train female peacekeepers; and integrate gender-related topics (such as preventing gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse) into training for all peacekeepers.
- **Build UN and regional organization capabilities.** We provide assistance to regional peace operations training centres<sup>2</sup> by establishing and emphasizing individual and unit performance standards, tasks that are essential to the mission, and reference guides.

All of these objectives either directly or indirectly support the Small Arms Survey's goal of reducing the diversion of weapons from PSOs and improving the ability of each TCC to manage and account for its weapons and ammunition, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of the overall mission and the protection of both the force in question and the local civilian population (Berman, Racovita, and Schroeder, 2017, p. 12).

## GPOI training-capacity models

Three GPOI-funded models are used.

### 1. Traditional three-phase train-the-trainer (T<sub>3</sub>) MTT model

The oldest GPOI-funded training capacity-building initiative supports gender integration in contingents' mobile training teams (MTTs) for UN PSOs. Due to the need to obtain buy-in at the ministry of defence level to institutionalize gender integration in deployed contingents, a methodical, three-phase, train-the-trainer (T<sub>3</sub>) model was adopted. The need to disseminate this programme of instruction throughout the re-

gion required the formation of a mobile team that was able to deploy to each partner country to train there. This model is therefore referred to as the traditional three-phase T<sub>3</sub> MTT model. The graduation event is the deployment of the in-country trainers with limited or no mentorship.

The key to this model is that the partner should take full ownership of the MTT after the third phase, including the provision of funding, administrative, and logistical support. This means the partner must have the resources and institutional maturity and—more importantly—the national will to sustain the MTT over time. One unintended consequence of the implementation of this model is that regional partners may feel ‘slighted’ if they are not selected to form part of an MTT. This misperception can be mitigated by forming a combined or multinational MTT, but each member partner must be willing to share expenses, which can present a challenge.

## 2. Multi-phase T<sub>3</sub> MTT model

The second major GPOI-funded training capacity-building initiative focuses on using behaviour to identify threats to peacekeepers and the local population (Meehan, 2018). The model adapted to institutionalize and build this training capacity required a slight modification of the traditional three-phase T<sub>3</sub> MTT model because the tactics, techniques, and procedures were more sophisticated and required a formal ‘certification’ by the developer. A modified T<sub>3</sub> approach was therefore adopted to fulfil the requirement of providing a combination of trained and certified instructors and assistant instructors (referred to as ‘coaches’). The additional phases in this model are required to certify the partner instructor and coaches in each MTT and to incorporate feedback from the deployed contingent to improve the programme of instruction (Meehan, 2018).

The advantage of the multi-phase model is that it works well for training programmes that have a formal certification process or requirement, although ultimately—just like the traditional model—the partner must take full ownership of programme sustainment. Obviously, the multiple phases make the initial time and financial investment more costly for the donor or capacity-building provider nation. Again, the long-term success of this model is based on resources and the critical ability to track personnel due to the training investment in each MTT member.

Furthermore, the formal certification requirement eliminates the viability of a multinational MTT because of logistical constraints. This is because a single-nation MTT is easier and less costly to certify than a multinational MTT.

## 3. Hybrid model

The third GPOI-funded training capacity-building initiative is a clear departure from the two previously discussed initiatives and their associated models. This hybrid

model focuses on the training of a national investigation officer (NIO) at the contingent level to analyse and document any and all allegations of illegal activities committed by contingent personnel, with a focus on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The hybrid model was required due to the highly specialized and technical nature of the subject matter in question. Due to sovereignty concerns and other sensitivities surrounding this type of training, the curriculum and programme of instruction were developed through a unique partnership between the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (UNOIOS) and the US DoD's Institute for International Legal Studies (Dudley, 2018).

An unintended consequence of this partnership is the increased credibility and legitimacy that the presence of UNOIOS instructors has provided, in the view of participants. In fact, the course gained such high-level national support in TCCs such as Uruguay that the entire URUBAT staff (including the battalion commander and executive officer) attended the NIO training prior to the battalion's deployment to the DRC in May 2018. This 'show of force' emphasized the importance that the battalion's leadership attached to the role of the NIO in investigating illegal activities, and sent a strong message to all ranks.

The advantage of the hybrid model is that it works well when the personnel being trained are a homogeneous group of professionals such as lawyers, engineers, infantry battalion staff officers, or medical doctors, because there is no need for a three-phase T3 approach. These professionals can walk away from a single event and deliver the programme of instruction in their own nations. This reduces costs across the board, since it essentially amounts to a single training event. On the other hand, a major shortfall of the hybrid model is that it does not work well if the technical nature of the subject matter overwhelms the audience or 'goes over their heads'. In this instance a more traditional, methodical, phased T3 approach is required.

## **Impediments to successful training capacity building**

It is safe to say that all TCCs (and PCCs, even though they are not the focus of this paper) are keen to create the best possible, self-sufficient indigenous training capacity for individual, staff, and unit training for their military personnel, but often lack the resources—human, financial, and institutional—to do so. Therefore, donor and capacity-building provider nations are crucial to complementing national efforts, although they can never be a substitute for national ownership. Simply stated, the largest impediment or risk to successful capacity building, including training capacity, is lack of national will to sustain it.

The challenge is to determine the optimal combination of national resources and reimbursements from the UN while minimizing the necessity for donor nation resources over time. The most effective way to do this is by:

- **obtaining political buy-in at the right decision-making level and within the right ministry** (such as the ministry of defence or ministry of foreign affairs) at the beginning of the partnership; and
- **identifying in advance the life-cycle costs for the particular training capacity** so that there are no surprises later regarding responsibility for paying the bill. Mature security sector institutions and inter-agency processes facilitate this process, which constitutes a real and formidable challenge for most developing nations, as the providers of the majority of peacekeepers.

Additional potential impediments to successfully building training capacity are the following:

1. **Delays in obtaining exemptions and waivers.** Obtaining proper exemptions or waivers for taxes, tariffs, and fees from the partner for donations is critical in order to expand the resources available to build capacity. Exemptions or waivers must be obtained in advance and—again—at the appropriate decision-making level within the right ministry or department responsible for granting them.
2. **Political interference.** Even though regional PSO centres of excellence are designed to reduce costs and eliminate duplicative training efforts, they can be an impediment if sovereign decisions or changes in political alignments negatively impact regional cooperation.
3. **Conditional deployment.** What does a donor nation do when facing the dilemma of a partner who has reservations about deploying its forces to a specific region or mission? Should it continue to help build capacity (which is a time-consuming process) while waiting for the political climate to change? The consensus at the implementer level (that is, US Southern Command) is to proceed with the capacity-building effort due to the associated lead time. But this consensus is not shared at all management levels. Clearly, it comes down to a question of ‘opportunity cost’.
4. **Staff turnover.** High turnover and lack of continuity of training staff and support personnel at peace operations training centres hamper progress in building true training capacity.
5. **Inadequate human resource management.** Inadequate human resource management tools for tracking trained personnel and an inability to establish and enforce service obligations (for example, an individual being obliged to serve for a certain number of years following an investment in his or her training) also hamper progress in building training capacity.

## Road map for building WAM training capacity in Latin America

It is very clear that Latin American militaries have the discipline and internal management control procedures in place to account for their own weapons and ammunition, remnants of war, and weapons and ammunition confiscated during operations, as illustrated by the few losses reported from countries in this region (Berman, Racovita, and Schroeder, 2017, pp. 28–31). Any training capacity-building programme for WAM in the region must leverage and learn from the major contributions of Latin American TCCs to PSOs over the years.

Since 2005 the GPOI programme has assisted 13 partners in Latin America to build their organic or indigenous training capacity to execute UN PSOs throughout the world, thereby directly contributing to international peace and security. Based on this experience, three distinct models (described above) have emerged for building sustainable, self-sufficient training capacity. The choice of model depends on the type, certification requirements, and level of sophistication of the training capacity desired, coupled with the experience level of the target recipients and the resources available (including time, funds, and facilities). The majority of GPOI training capacity-building efforts follow the traditional three-phased T<sub>3</sub> model to build a self-sufficient MTT designed to maximize limited pre-deployment training contact time through the extensive use of practical applications, simulations, table-top exercises, and situational training exercises.

Given the depth and breadth of the existing experience of Latin American TCCs with respect to WAM and the maturity of the now ten-year-old ALCOPAZ, a more comprehensive approach could be taken when developing WAM modules. This approach would involve early UN and ministry of defence buy-in and exchanges of GPOI facilitating instructors and students among the various Latin American peace operations training centres via ALCOPAZ. The focus would be primarily on the role of the contingents' leadership (officers and NCOs), without neglecting the critical functional role of subject matter experts such as armourers, ammunition technicians, inventory managers, and logisticians, and their unique training requirements. This innovative and comprehensive approach would overcome and mitigate many of the abovementioned impediments to successfully building training capacity.

Specifically, GPOI lessons learned and best practice suggest that given the complexity and multiple levels of the WAM problem set (involving COE, confiscations, captures, recoveries, controlled disposals, destruction, and shelf-life management, among others), there should be a two-track approach to WAM training:

1. **Track one** would focus on the role of armourers, ammunition technicians, and logisticians in the management of field armouries and ammunition supply points in an expeditionary environment during a UN PSO mission.

2. **Track two** would focus on the role of officer and NCO leadership in the contingent with respect to their authority, accountability, and responsibility, as well as the enforcement of internal management control procedures and an operational risk assessment methodology that is pertinent to WAM.

Even though the emphasis in both tracks is on pre-deployment training for contingents, the establishment of an MTT would provide the flexibility to conduct refresher training courses either at home bases or during the mission for individuals, staff members, units, or even other partners.

Finally, it is fundamental that UNOIOS's recently developed NIO course incorporates aspects of WAM, since NIOs will become more and more involved in small arms and ammunition-related investigations. This could be done in the context of the current SEA situational training exercise conducted on the first day of the second week of training, without adding additional time to the current NIO programme of instruction (Dudley, 2018).

## Conclusion

GPOI training-capacity models for building partner training capacity in Latin America are applicable to the development of WAM modules for TCCs deploying contingents in UN PSOs. More specifically, the traditional, three-phase T<sub>3</sub> MTT model could provide the basis for the first track of a WAM programme. This first track would focus on the role of technical experts in WAM in managing field armouries and ammunition supply points in the context of a UN PSO. The hybrid model used in the recently executed UNOIOS NIO course could provide the basis for track two of a two-track WAM programme. The second track would focus on officer and NCO leadership within the deploying contingent, and their role in WAM. The emphasis would be on the leadership triangle—authority, responsibility, and accountability—and its role in internal management control procedures and operational risk assessment methodology as it pertains to WAM and PSSM. The two tracks would leverage Latin American TCC experience in PSO missions and the ability of ALCOPAZ to facilitate the interchange of both instructors and students. All of these efforts could be facilitated by US Southern Command's GPOI programme.

This coordinated, comprehensive effort would involve the UN in its early stages and reduce training redundancies and the duplication of efforts. This would optimize the Small Arms Survey's goals of reducing the diversion of weapons from PSOs and improving the ability of each TCC to manage and account for its weapons, ammunition, and any recovered weapons. The knock-on effect would be to strengthen the legitimacy of the overall PSO mission, thereby protecting both the force in question and the local civilian population.

## Endnotes

- 1 With the exception of the last paragraph in this section, the following material is from US DoS, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (2018, pp. 1–2).
- 2 These are multinational centres in a specific region. In the DoD, in the US Southern Command's area of responsibility, the regions are as follows: Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean Ridge, and the Southern Cone.

## References

- Berman, Eric G., Mihaela Racovita, and Matt Schroeder. 2017. *Making a Tough Job More Difficult: Loss of Arms and Ammunition in Peace Operations*. MPOME Report No. 2. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. October.
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