



# Peace Operations Training Institute®

Study peace and humanitarian relief any place, any time



## January 2022 Newsletter

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## E-LEARNING ON PEACE OPERATIONS

# 2021



# 37,023

Students served



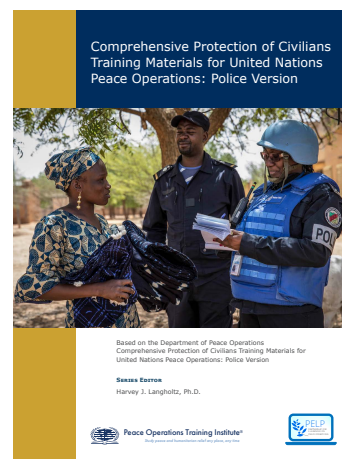
# 96,081

Enrolments

### New Course: *Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations: Police Version*

The Institute is pleased to announce the release of its newest course, *Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations: Police Version*. This comprehensive training package combines aspects of protection of civilians (POC), Child Protection, and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence for police peacekeepers, describing the complex linkages between these tasks and how to prevent, deter, and respond to interrelated threats. These course materials have been sourced directly from the United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub under a revocable licence issued by the Integrated Training Service.

POC has received considerable attention in UN peacekeeping mandates since it was introduced by the Security Council in 1999. Since then, the Council has mandated 14 UN missions to protect civilians. While POC has sometimes become the yardstick against which mission success is measured, it is arguably also the most challenging mandate to implement. Moreover, it is vital that peace operations personnel have a strong grasp of POC and all its necessary considerations.



## Interview with Jennifer Wittwer, CSM, POTI Course Author



**POTI: You are the author of the POTI course, *Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Peacekeeping*. What are the most important lessons you hope students take from it?**

**JW:** Primarily, that they understand the gendered impacts of conflict on women, men, girls, and boys, including the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, how conflict exacerbates existing gender inequalities, and how promoting the meaningful inclusion of women in public spaces and at all levels increases the success of peace negotiations and produces longer term and more sustainable peace and security outcomes.

**POTI: How long did you serve for, and what characterized your experience in the military? What were your career milestones and major achievements?**

**JW:** I joined [the navy] as a Midshipman in 1981 and retired from full-time service as a Commander in 2018. I continue to undertake Reserve service to retain the connection. I spent the first 20-odd years in my core role as a logistics officer, which included being the senior logistics officer of a warship in 1996 and a shore base in 1997–99. Military service prior to that was characterized by limited roles for women, a sense of always having to prove myself against my male colleagues, and many times being the “first” woman to achieve milestones as the military expanded roles and opportunities for women. I feel my greatest professional achievements occurred after 2008 as I pursued a niche career in gender, when I was appointed as the military’s first Gender Adviser. This led to later roles with NATO and the UN, including being Australia’s representative at the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives Annual Conference and the first Australian Gender Adviser deployed to Afghanistan in 2013, leading the implementation of Australia’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and a secondment to UN Women in

New York as a policy specialist on peacekeeping and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Since 2018, and in my capacity as an international consultant, I have developed numerous products that are contributing to other security forces’ NAP implementation, including gender mainstreaming strategies, a Gender Adviser Course and peacekeeping guides in Jordan, and a gender/WPS training framework in Ukraine. Additionally, I have been privileged to author numerous courses with POTI on peacekeeping and WPS. My greatest joy comes from mentoring women colleagues from international security forces as they progress towards full gender equality and meaningful inclusion in peace and security efforts.

**POTI: What does gender mainstreaming mean to you, and when did you start to become interested in it?**

**JW:** Gender mainstreaming to me means ensuring equal inclusion and participation by women and men in all activities and at all levels (gender equality) and implementing a gender perspective in all policies, programmes, processes, and decision-making to enable equality. I became interested in this work many years before I was practically involved as I witnessed first-hand the limitations placed on women in the Australian military and in most other professions. I was able to be more involved in policy development from the early 2000s on as the military began to implement organizational changes through cultural reform.

**POTI: What inspired your work in supporting other women in the military, and what changes have you witnessed while doing that work?**

**JW:** I was inspired through a personal incident in 1982 whereby I was sexually assaulted by a male sailor while I was under training and living in Navy accommodation on base. To me, this reflected the misogynistic and patriarchal culture that existed at the time, when military women were harassed, humiliated, and considered to be of less value than men. I decided to pursue my career despite this and was inspired to be a part of future changes that would reverse this culture and allow women to achieve their full potential. I’m very proud that through the numerous posts I held since 2000, I have been able to do this and am now seen as a valuable and credible mentor to younger women.

*“What [my] secondment did was open my eyes to the myriad of problems faced by military women around the world and spurred me towards wanting to be part of their solutions.”*



**POTI: What did your work on secondment to UN Women in New York involve? Did your travel and assignments crossing borders and cultures change your perspective on the most pressing problems for women in the world's armed forces and in UN peacekeeping?**

**JW:** I was seconded as a military officer but in a civilian capacity alongside UN Women colleagues working on peacekeeping, SEA, and security sector reform. But I was regularly asked by UN Women Country Teams to assist with security sector reform projects, such as conducting a gender impact assessment and developing a gender equality strategy for the Ukraine Armed Forces or speaking at conferences in the Middle East on women's participation in peacekeeping. What I found in my travels is that the challenges and barriers to women's participation in the armed forces are quite similar around the world. For peacekeeping, some of the issues that women experience that disable them from applying for deployments, such as lack of English, weapons training, or driving experience, are often experienced in countries where gender equality has not been fully achieved. What this secondment did was open my eyes to the myriad of problems faced by military women around the world and spurred me towards wanting to be part of their solutions.

**POTI: Have you had to train or advise individuals who were resistant to implementing gender mainstreaming? Are there any examples of challenges or successes that you can share?**

**JW:** Usually, resistance comes from men and some women who see gender mainstreaming as affording special privileges to women, or reverse discrimination against men, and are therefore vocal in resisting measures to address women's participation and inclusion. They see militaries as responsible for traditional warfare, a practice and culture in which women are not expected to participate, nor capable of being trained for. So often, my conversation revolves around the changing nature of warfare and how contemporary conflicts require the skills and capabilities of both women and men. Putting women's inclusion aside, resistance also comes to implementing a gender perspective; some think this means applying political correctness about gender identity and diversity rather than the importance of understanding the different gendered impacts of conflict on communities within an operation or in a peacekeeping capacity. Ultimately, I think "converting" people to the WPS agenda comes through one conversation at a time. I developed this ethos as the Gender Adviser in Afghanistan in 2013 as I initially briefed senior officers individually so we could discuss their context and concerns.

The Institute thanks Jennifer Wittwer, CSM, for answering our questions and her many contributions to e-learning on peace operations. She is the author of the POTI course *Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Peacekeeping and Against the Wind*, which was published in 2020 and available from most major online bookstores and her website. Jennifer was a primary contributor to the Institute's updated women, peace, and security course suite developed with UN Women.



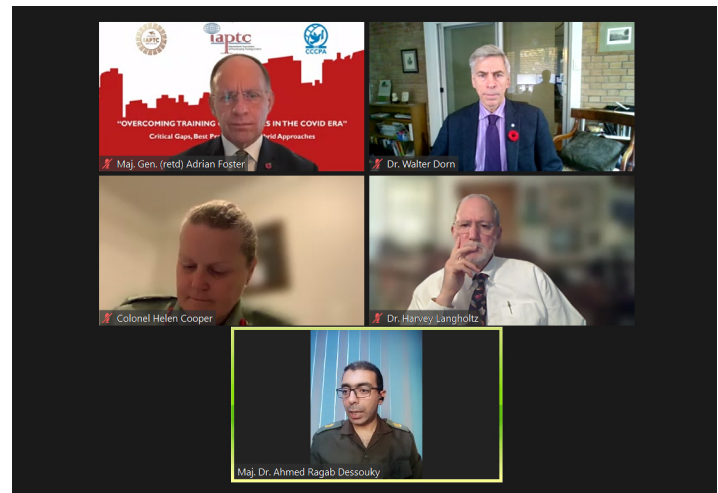
UN Photo by Gregorio Cunha.

## POTI Executive Director Participates in IAPTC Conference

For many years, POTI has participated in the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC) Annual Conference. Due to the pandemic, this year's conference was virtual.

POTI was invited to contribute to Session 2.1 on "Training for Peace Operations: Gathered Experiences & Expectations for this New Era". On 9 November 2021, Executive Director Dr. Harvey Langholtz presented his conclusions on "Overcoming Training Challenges in The COVID Era: Self-paced E-learning Serving the Peacekeeping Community".

Leaders from UN missions and peacekeeping training centres shared the challenges faced by peacekeeping personnel, their perspectives on how training has changed during the pandemic, and the most important takeaways for the best path forward.



Executive Director Dr. Harvey Langholtz and fellow presenters in Session 2.1 on day one of the two-day IAPTC conference.

An underlying theme from this conference was the importance of blended (in-person and online) learning. POTI is proud to meet this need and serve as a resource for e-learning on topics of peace support, humanitarian relief, and security operations.

## POTI Partnerships: The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is one of the Institute's valued E-Learning for Mission Staff partners. POTI provided MINUSCA with 2,049 enrolments in 2021.

A peacekeeping operation to the Central African Republic was proposed in a March 2014 Security Council report, following a crisis of continuing violence that left thousands of people displaced and more than half the population in need of humanitarian assistance. MINUSCA has been in the country since April 2014, and 15,760 personnel were deployed there as of October 2021. MINUSCA's mandate prioritizes the protection of civilians and tasks personnel with supporting transitional justice, facilitating humanitarian assistance, promoting and protecting human rights, and various other duties.

POTI had the opportunity to ask a training officer at MINUSCA a few questions on their work. We thank Mr. Amr Sallam for taking the time to speak with us.

**POTI:** How does MINUSCA incorporate e-learning into its training?

**Amr Sallam:** MINUSCA has not yet fully migrated to e-learning. What we offer now is a blended learning approach with some instructor-led courses via MS Teams. One of our goals in 2022 is to have a variety

of e-learning courses available for our clients. We are already in the design phase, and we foresee the start of the implementation in the first quarter of next year. We need to also thank our partners in the United Nations System Staff College who supported the capacity-building of IMTC MINUSCA personnel by offering "From in-classroom training to e-learning: A hands-on workshop".

**POTI:** How has training changed during the pandemic?

**AS:** COVID-19 took everyone in the world by surprise, and we had to adapt fast to the "new normal". In the first phase, where we had a complete lockdown, we started thinking fast on how we could continue our support to the mission. We are proud that we were one of the very first missions to react. Within a couple of weeks we started offering our courses using an instructor-led virtual classroom, and to be honest, we were surprised to see the participants' high turnout. The second phase was to implement a blended learning approach, where courses had an online component as well as an instructor-led virtual classroom component. We are expanding our offerings soon with self-paced online courses. Important to say that we are not giving up on any of the approaches, and we will continue offering instructor-led, blended, and the soon to come self-paced courses.



**POTI:** Which topics in MINUSCA’s curriculum do you feel are the most needed or valuable?

**AS:** Career development courses are in high demand. Project management, coaching on performance management, and supervisory skills would follow.

**POTI:** What should our students who are not on mission should know about the world of peacekeeping?

**AS:** Well, you can get a lot of information about peacekeeping from a variety of sources. What you would not find published, though, is how agile, versatile, and creative you should be to be successful. With a goal to achieve a crucial mandate, you work in the most challenging spots in the globe, and you must take responsibility in always keeping your energy and morale levels up, should think of your safety and security constantly, and should protect the image of a peacekeeper, while achieving the desired results.

**POTI:** Are any POTI courses recommended for study at your mission or available in your mission’s intranet?

**AS:** We share the POTI website to our newcomers and inform them about the learning opportunities available there in the first presentation of the induction training. Also, we regularly disseminate POTI flyers to both military and UN Police as well as civilian personnel.



A peacekeeper serving with MINUSCA stands guard at a polling station in the capital of Bangui. UN Photo.

## POTI Student Classroom: Course Author Question Feature

Our goal at POTI is that every student succeeds in their chosen course of study. The Course Author Question feature is a key e-learning enhancement developed by our programmers to help achieve this end.

The Course Author Question tool allows communication between POTI students and the experts who write the courses they study. Students may ask course authors questions about specific material, such as policies and procedures in UN peace operations. Authors can provide insight and clarity on questions submitted through this easy-to-use tool and welcome the opportunity to communicate with students.

The Course Author Question feature is located in the Student Classroom under “My Courses”. When a student selects a course they are enrolled in, this option will appear at the bottom of the page.

POTI courses are developed by UN agencies and other organizations, respected practitioners, and scholars.

Example of a student-submitted question and author answer:

*Peacekeeping and International Conflict Resolution*  
by Professor Tom Woodhouse

**Student: What are the positive impacts of peace studies and conflict resolution management?**

TW: There is a wide-ranging literature on this, and it is not easy to provide a succinct response. One of the best overviews is provided by Steven Pinker in his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, which charts what he called the conquest of violence, by which he means that measured across a long timespan, and despite exceptions, human beings have learned to live more peacefully. Much of this he attributes to knowledge gained and applied within and by peace and conflict researchers.

# From the desk of the Executive Director, Dr. Harvey Langholtz



Dr. Langholtz

With the start of the new year, we reflect on 2021 and look ahead to 2022. Here at POTI, it was our honour during 2021 to meet the demand for over 96,000 enrolments from more than 37,000 individuals representing over 180 nations. Not surprisingly, many POTI students came from the largest troop- and police-contributing countries. Of the 30 nations with the highest demand for POTI e-learning, 13 are in Africa, four are in South Asia, and nine are in Latin America. But it is our honour here to serve each and every individual student, including the one each from Lichtenstein, Tonga, and Uzbekistan. We also note with satisfaction that 19 per cent of POTI enrolments were from women — but we still hope to raise that figure next year.

We offered programmes to serve all sectors of peacekeeping in 2021, but our flagship programme is the National Training Centre E-learning Platform (NTCELP). National training centres put a POTI link on their website, and with two clicks, students have free access to the full POTI curriculum. The training centre then blends POTI e-learning with its own classroom instruction. During 2021, NTCELP Africa met the demand for 5,249 enrolments, NTCELP Latin America provided 12,680, and NTCELP South Asia granted 5,327. Similar to NTCELP is the E-Learning for Peacekeepers in the Asia Pacific (ELPAP) programme for Australia and her regional neighbours, which met the demand for 1,186 enrolments. The E-learning for Mission Staff (ELMS) programme is provided for peacekeepers serving on all UN, AU, EU, and other missions and served 13,596 enrolments, with AMISOM, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA having the highest demand. And for peacekeepers not yet in training at a national training centre or on mission, the Individual E-Learning for Peacekeepers (IELP) programme provided 32,334 enrolments directly.

Looking ahead, as reported on page 1 of this newsletter, we are now accepting enrolments for the recently released *Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations: Police Version*, sourced directly from the UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub under a revocable license issued by the Integrated Training Service. For those of you considering enrolling in *Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Peacekeeping*, you will find on page 2 an interview with the course author, Jennifer Wittwer, CSM. She has served in several peacekeeping-related positions, including in Afghanistan and on secondment to UN Women at UNHQ.

We are always glad to hear directly from students. You will find a link to our help desk in your virtual POTI classroom, as well as the course author question feature, discussed in this newsletter. It is our pleasure here at POTI to provide all of this to our students. We look forward to serving you during 2022 and beyond.

Our thanks to the founding member nations of the Partnership for E-Learning on Peace Operations (PELP) for providing the support that makes e-learning on peace operations possible:



Australia



Canada



Denmark



Kingdom of the Netherlands



United Kingdom



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Download the Peace Operations Training Institute Mobile Application

All the major features of the POTI online classroom are available. Internet connection typically required.

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