

The comparison with military training should not be extended overly far, since military recruits start with relatively few relevant skill, and undergo extensive and expensive training (measured in months and years as opposed to days or weeks) both on initial recruitment and throughout their careers. Most of the time, individuals identified for HROs will already have a high degree of relevant expertise. However, UN operational demands and the inevitable need to operate in quite disparate foreign cultural and political environments, places very new and unique skill demands on those deploying as UN human rights personnel. The present practice of sending in human rights experts with little or no additional training for field operations, is quite unacceptable. Most military peace-keepers would not put up with this, and neither should civilian 'peace-keepers' or 'peace-makers'.

As to the content of training for HROs and their field partners, it is useful to examine this under the rubrics of generic training, and operation specific training²²⁸. Generic training deals with skills that are common to all or most HROs, and thus can be provided well in advance of, and without any extensive knowledge of, any specific operational theatre. The second type, operation specific training, builds upon or refines generic training to meet a specific operation's socio-political environment and unique operational demands.

11.2.2.1 generic training

Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of generic training is that "urgency and crisis are almost hallmarks of the context in which human rights field missions are deployed"²²⁹ When a crisis arises, there is simply not enough time to conduct all of the training that is required to deploy military or civilians into a field situation.

Generic training ensures that there is a basic standard of operational preparedness. There is substantial generic human rights operational training that can be carried out far in advance and without any firm idea of where any individual or HRO would be deployed. This includes such topics as international human rights and humanitarian law; UN HRO doctrine and standing operating procedures; monitoring, reporting, and investigative procedures; media and public relations; mediation and more active intervention; UN field logistics and administration; critical incident stress management; security; and not least of all, a knowledge of potential human rights field partners such as CIVPOL, military peace-keepers, ICRC, NGOs, etc.

Similar to military training, generic training allows the trainers and others to assess the abilities and capacity of particular individuals undergoing that training. This is particularly important in the absence of sufficient relevant field experience to assess candidates for an HRO. Training should include a number of 'field' scenarios or exercises, not only as an optimum training vehicle for many field skills, but as a means to evaluate the trainees' reactions, judgement, and decision making capacity in a quasi-operational context. Where possible, much of this

²²⁸ For a more comprehensive assessment of training needs see Karen Kenny, *Towards effective Human Rights Training for International Field Missions*, first draft paper 1.0, April 1996. This is part of the Irish Governments Human Rights Training Project.

²²⁹ p.9, Kenny, *ibid.*