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BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING GENDER TO THE MILITARY

The 16th meeting of the Security Sector Reform Working Group of the Partnership for Peace Consortium, hosted in Oberammergau from 17 to 20 July 2012 in collaboration with the Education Development Working Group and the NATO School Oberammergau, brought together experts on military education, gender training for the military and integrating gender in military operations.¹ They shared experiences and collectively identified good practices in teaching gender concepts and content to the military, and in employing gender-responsive teaching practices.

The best practices listed in this document span six broad aspects of teaching gender to the military:

- (1) [Using effective teaching methods and strategies](#)
- (2) [Making effective use of online learning tools, including Advanced Distributed Learning \(ADL\)](#)
- (3) [Encouraging a respectful learning environment and non-discriminatory dynamics in the classroom](#)
- (4) [Building teachers' gender expertise](#)
- (5) [Evaluating gender teaching](#)
- (6) [Institutional practices to support gender education](#)
- (7) [Other](#)

(1) USING EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES

- ✓ While the message that is being taught should always be consistent, the teaching methods have to be adapted according to the audience and context.
- ✓ Use a good mix of teaching methods to create an engaging learning environment.
- ✓ Use active learning methods and interactive sessions to draw from the different experiences and perspectives in the room in order to overcome resistance to gender issues.
- ✓ Highlight the benefits of integrating a gender perspective and make teaching practical: let the learners know how they can put what they have learned into practice.
- ✓ Use argument development exercises to voice and counteract stereotypes.
- ✓ Use role plays so that learners may experience differences in views and perceptions.
- ✓ Where applicable, include the commander's guidance in designing training and focus on the command's priorities.

¹ For the after action report of this workshop, see <http://dcaf.ch/Event/PFPC-Workshop-on-Teaching-Gender-to-the-Military>.

(2) MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF ONLINE LEARNING TOOLS, INCLUDING ADVANCED DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (ADL)

- ✓ Use an ADL gender course as a pre-learning instrument, having students complete the ADL module before coming for face-to-face education or training.
- ✓ Ensure students receive certification or accreditation for completing an ADL gender course to increase students' motivation.
- ✓ Develop ADL gender courses that are Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) compliant (allows other institutions to use and adapt parts of it, as deemed appropriate).
- ✓ Use online learning tools to counteract cultural barriers and gender-related power dynamics between students and teachers, as well as between students.
- ✓ Online learning tools on gender should supplement other teaching methods.

(3) ENCOURAGING A RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY DYNAMICS IN THE CLASSROOM

- ✓ Be aware of gender and cultural differences in the classroom and take care to not favour one sex above another.
- ✓ Engage all students in the classroom equally and empower those who need encouragement.
- ✓ Ensure an environment of respect in order to create a safe and open learning environment. This could include a "No hats, no salutes" policy in the classroom.
- ✓ Prepare the trainer/teacher with class management methods, and tips and tools on how to address gender dynamics.
- ✓ Avoid voicing or assuming national stereotypes and prejudices when teaching gender in an international environment.

(4) BUILDING TEACHERS' GENDER EXPERTISE

- ✓ Teachers should be able to explain the theoretical dimensions of gender, but also have relevant practical experience or examples to share.
- ✓ Learn from practices that work and use lessons learned in delivering training and education.
- ✓ Intersperse military phrases and expressions into gender lessons to ensure gender is understood as a military topic.
- ✓ Include gender concepts and issues in other lessons, to mainstream gender throughout training and education.
- ✓ Venture outside of the military to draw from other experiences and resources (academia, NGOs, police, online sources, international standard setting institutions) in teaching gender.
- ✓ Create a network or community of practice to exchange expertise.

(5) EVALUATING GENDER TEACHING

EVALUATE WHETHER GENDER LEARNING OUTCOMES HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED:

- ✓ Develop a needs assessment so you have a baseline against which to measure achievement of gender learning outcomes.
- ✓ Use a set of diverse and complementary assessment methods and tools to evaluate whether gender learning outcomes have been achieved.

EVALUATE TEACHERS:

- ✓ Informally observe teaching and students in the classroom, if appropriate.
- ✓ Encourage self-assessment of teachers and peer review of lesson plans before each session.
- ✓ Include gender sensitivity as a criterion within the formal performance evaluation of all teachers

(6) INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES TO SUPPORT GENDER EDUCATION

- ✓ Ensure that gender is integrated into all doctrines and that key leaders are engaged.
- ✓ Ensure that institutional policies that address gender training and education exist at all levels.
- ✓ Regularly publish articles on gender and the military highlighting the achievements that the institution has attained by integrating a gender perspective for public and academic use.
- ✓ Make gender sensitivity a criterion in job descriptions, recruitment, evaluation and promotion. Specifically, include gender in leadership criteria for promotions to motivate higher levels and higher ranks to undergo gender education.
- ✓ Ensure sufficient allocation of resources to gender training and education, in terms of time, personnel, and money.

(7) OTHER

- ✓ Start with gender training and education at the highest levels, emphasizing that this is not additional work but rather makes operations more effective.
- ✓ Let relevant branches know how you can support them in teaching gender (avoid a “watchdog” atmosphere).
- ✓ Gender is a cross cutting issue and has to be reflected in all branches. It needs to be integrated into all training and education.