



Policy Notes on Developing a Research Component at the Rwanda Peace Academy

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Research Departments are now commonplace within regional Peacekeeping Training Centres (PSTCs) across Africa. Research is seen as an essential part of peacekeeping training and indeed there is a requirement for expertise and analysis of contemporary peacekeeping and the issues they face to feed into training and the institutional development of the centre in question. Research Departments in PSTCs can and should play a crucial role in developing training courses as well as assisting PSTCs in other core activities. Furthermore good quality researchers can also be a resource for training delivery as instructors for appropriate modules. Finally research departments within PSTCs have a unique position in that they seek to bridge the gap between theory and practice in terms of using research to directly feed into training. In that respect Research Department's in PSTCs should pioneer research into peacekeeping and conflict management, given the insider's perspective and prioritization of practitioner-focused research activities.

However, currently research at PSTCs does not manage to meet the primary aim of informing training and institutional development. Current approaches to research in PSTCs tend to be detached from the training outputs of the centre and focused to more academic issues or externally oriented customers/stakeholders. Researchers then tend not to participate in training outputs nor are research products used to inform outputs of the centre. At a very basic level if the Research Departments at other PSTCs were removed the centres would still be able to deliver all courses and immediate outputs. Research needs to be an integral part of outputs to remain relevant. There is an opportunity then for the RPA to set the standard in applied research for PSO training.

This policy note seeks to provide an overview of research in PSTCs with suggestions for making the best use of Research Departments and researchers in support of institutional goals of the centre. Furthermore lessons from other PSTCs will be

distilled to demonstrate challenges and opportunities when developing research components in PSTCs.

Role of Research in PSTCs

Research in PSTCs is an important component of PSO training if used and developed properly and effectively. Research is essentially applied research. That is the focus is practical in nature and seeks to improve the centre's outputs and deliverables through providing analytical inputs into the institution through several ways. Aims of research should be:

- To inform and develop training design and outputs

- To inform and develop the training institution

- To contribute to PSO knowledge provision/discourse/debates and dissemination of these ideas

The primary aim of research should be to assist in the design and development of courses whether through papers, writing boards or developing training aids. The secondary aim is to assist the development of the centre itself. Researchers can be a resource for institutional development through developing policy advisory papers or being tasked by management to advise in specific areas. The final area of contributing to PSO knowledge is subordinate to the first two aims but is still an important contribution to the centre such as through publications and other externally orientated activities.

It is essential that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in relevant field. In order to ensure quality researchers must be of a high standard and relevant. For instance having a Masters degree in international relations or conflict studies is essential as well as having several years' practical experience in a relevant field, either research in PSO or relevant conflict related research or having participated in a PSO. Ideally a research team will have complimentary professional and research experience. For instance an appropriate individual from the military or police who

has participated in a PSO could be suitable to complement civilian researchers, as long as they are capable of producing analytical research products.

The size of the research team is also a key issue. It is important to remember that research is subordinate to training, even if the researchers play a significant role in developing training. Other PSTCs prioritise size over quality and effect, instead of prioritising quality with an appropriately sized research component to meet the centre's requirement. This has not been lost on donors who have pulled funding for research on the basis of seeing a lack of effect. PSTCs should then begin with a smallish research team that targets the outputs of the centre. Two to four quality researchers can provide all the analytical inputs a training centre needs. The key is for researchers and the research department to work closely with the training department and management of the centre.

Research Products

Outputs and activities of research are in four broad areas: 1) papers, 2) training, 3) research trips and 4) external engagement. All of these areas must be targeted towards the development of training, the development of the institution and to contributing to general knowledge on PSO training. These research activities should be both demand led as well as research initiative based.

Demand led products are commissioned, requested and tasked by PSTC staff to inform on a specific issue. Ideally the majority of the papers produced are demand led in order to institutionalise an effective system of research that supports training and institutional development. Demand led research products will consolidate and develop inter-departmental and individual relationships as well as develop a system that utilises research effectively in delivering outputs.

Research initiative products are self-commissioned by the research department and should seek to provide analytical and research inputs into the centre in order to stimulate institutional thinking. These can include a range of papers, suggestions for

training institutions, external engagement, emails, meetings and so on. The head of research should manage and direct the research department initiatives.

Policy and research Papers

Different typed of research and analytical papers are the core outputs of the research department. These include i) policy notes, ii) policy papers and iii) research papers.

Policy notes are perhaps the most useful research product. These papers should be of a concise nature and seek to stimulate and inform thinking and approach to delivering training and developing the institution. Policy notes should be regular products of around 5-10 pages that consist of punchy and policy relevant analysis that is easily and quickly digestible by decision makers in the centre with a selection of recommendations. These papers are for internal consumption only.

Policy papers are longer policy relevant documents that seek to inform on specific aspects of the centre such as training delivery or institutional development. These more lengthy documents should include data collection that seeks to inform the research/analytical findings. Partnering with other departments may be useful for these papers in order to ensure synergy and utility. Policy papers should be around 20-30 pages with an executive summary and recommendations. These papers can range from providing detail on how to develop the centre's internal strategy to developing case studies for training courses. The key is that these papers are practical and target an institutional need with suitable recommendations. These papers are for internal consumption only.

Research papers are more grounded in academic analysis, although should still retain a strong practical focus. These papers will seek to contribute to general knowledge on PSOs and peacebuilding while at the same time trying to influence and compliment other researchers and research organisations. These papers will also be a useful public relations tool for the centre. Research papers should be

around 5-8000 words and are for external consumption. Research papers should seek to be published in external outlets such as peer-reviewed journals.

Informing Training

The Research Department should play an instrumental role in training design and delivery. It is key that training and research have a close and complimentary relationship. The research department can play an invaluable role by assisting training design, developing training aids and assisting in training delivery.

Researchers must be part of the training design process, along with other relevant individuals such as members of the training department and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Researchers can provide deep context and analysis for specific courses by participating on writing boards as well as developing course concept notes, course learning plans, course modules and so on. The key is to collaborate with other relevant departments and individuals; providing much needed inputs and a 'joined up' approach that incorporates as much expertise as possible.

Researchers can assist in developing training aids for specific courses based on detailed analysis, research and expertise. Developing case studies in support of specific courses is perhaps the most useful activity in this regard, and one that is yet to be adopted by other PSTCs. Researchers are extremely well placed to design case studies tailor made for courses.

For example the research department at RPA could produce case studies of protection activities from three different UN PSOs for a Protection of Civilians course or a detailed study of how justice reform has been approached in South Sudan by UNMISS for a SSR or Rule of Law Course. Developing case studies is a crucial part of PSO training and one that the research department is uniquely placed to perform. Case study design can also be the subject of the papers highlighted above.

Other training aids could include developing a training methodology, developing interactive scenarios or 'war gaming' and other practical modes of instruction.

Research Trips

Research trips are essential for developing analytical inputs and for building up the knowledge and expertise of individual researchers. Ideally an individual researcher should undertake at least two research trips a year. Priority is to undertake research in PSOs and peacebuilding missions in order to identify best practice and lessons from current conflict management and resolution initiatives but also challenges, opportunities and to develop analysis for papers and assisting training and institutional development. Trips should be utilised for maximum effect and should inform all research products and activities. It is essential that after each research visit a brief trip report summarising activities with a recommendations/action points section is produced (2-5 pages), in order to maximise utility. Other data collection sites should also include the African Union, other PSTCs and Troop, Police and Civilian Contributing Countries when relevant.

External Engagement

In addition to data collection researchers should participate in relevant international and regional conferences and workshops, along with other staff members. These fora are part of developing an institutional reputation but will also provide avenues for data collection for training, developing best practice and lessons learned as well as for institutional collaboration between PSTCs, with potential customers and donors and with other organisations such as the AU and APSA. Brief post conference reports (2-3 pages) should be produced that highlight key messages and action points.

As well as conferences researchers should provide the gateway between the outside analytical and academic world with the PSTC. These individuals should have an existing professional network that includes relevant research institutions and

individuals that should be built upon, in Africa but also in Europe, North America, Asia and Latin America. Organising meetings to share knowledge and for external outreach generally should be a core activity of researchers. Meetings are not just in the physical sense but can be conducted remotely by email and by video call, even if face-to-face meetings remain the most useful. After important meetings a brief email of what was discussed and with whom should be circulated to staff members. Follow up communication with the individual is crucial to cement relationships.

Lessons from Research Departments in Ghana and Kenya

Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) Ghana

KAIPTC is the most developed and institutionalised PSTC in Africa and the first to develop a research component. It has a large and partly autonomous research department called the Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research (FAAR). The research department was developed initially to feed into training when the KAIPTC was established in 2004. By 2009 a number of thematic areas were established for the research department covering different aspects of PSO and conflict management. In 2011 the department included academic programmes and was rebranded the FAAR.

The FAAR is split into two wings: a research wing and an academic wing. The research wing is split into a Peace Support Operations Programme, Conflict Management Programme and Peace and Security Studies Programme. Research products include monographs, occasional papers, policy briefs, reports and newsletters. Monographs are lengthy academic oriented papers of around 30-40 pages that seek to contribute to the discourse and debates around peacekeeping and conflict management. Occasional papers are shorter punchier papers of around 15-20 pages that discuss policy relevant issues around PSOs such as assessments of protection activities or police pre-deployment training. These papers seek to influence ECOWAS, AU and other policy makers on regional peace and security matters. Policy briefs are very short three page punchy briefs on a specific issue.

Newsletters are quarterly products that consist of several articles from staff members that form part of KAIPTC's publicity.

The Academic wing is affiliated with the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and provides postgraduate degrees at Masters and PhD levels in issues of gender, conflict, peace and security. An academic Dean who is a Ghanaian Professor from GIMPA oversees the degree programmes supported by a large number of academic staff at the University.

Research staff are highly qualified and some have PhDs in relevant subjects. Others have picked up expertise 'on the job' and research products are of a reasonably high quality. There are around 3-5 researchers with who are managed by a longstanding and capable Director, Dr Kwesi Aning and deputy Director Dr Thomas Jaye; both have been widely published on peacekeeping issues, mainly through the KAIPTC.

Research products do contribute to on-going debates and analysis around peacekeeping, PSOs and peacebuilding. These products are well researched and the diversity of papers is useful in conveying key messages. However it seems unclear to what extent these products are read by policy and decision makers, certainly outside of Ghana and West Africa. Nor is it clear to what extent these papers effectively influence decision making. Most importantly there is no link whatsoever between research and training delivery which is a crucial shortcoming and an issue that detracts from the rationale of having a research department at all.

KAPITC and research has been overly ambitious and has never really achieved its initial goal of developing training through research. Instead KAIPTC has focussed on developing a think tank within a PSTC that is autonomous from training. It is important to note that it has taken around a decade from the Centre's inception to develop a functioning research department with respected products and an academic wing. The intent is to influence decision makers and to generate funds through academic programmes, although the extent to which research actually influences decision makers outside of KAIPTC is overstated and the quality of

academic programmes remains in its infancy compared to more established centres of learning such as universities and national military training centres.

Key Lessons:

Development of a large research and academic component can take 10 years
Start from a small research department and expand when there is a need or requirement.

Staff need to be well qualified and produce quality
Expansion and external focus can lose effect of research informing training and development.

Be cautious of expanding into overly ambitious areas

International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC)

IPSTC in Kenya is perhaps the most developed PSTC in Eastern Africa. The IPSTC research department was developed simultaneously to the training wing from 2007 and was came into effect in 2008. The research department was rebranded the Peace and Security Research Department in 2009 and split into applied research and curriculum design sections. In 2015 construction of a large research building was completed comprising 4 floors of office space. The government of Japan is the only donor supporting research at IPSTC. The EU was a significant donor to the research department but they have pulled funding and support due to poor quality of research products and lack of a strategy. Plans exist at IPSTC to develop postgraduate programmes in conflict and gender studies.

The research department seeks to contribute the current debates around peacekeeping, inform the African Peace and Security Architecture, assist in developing training courses, institutionalise a system of training, and provide outreach to other training and research organisations. Research products include

newsletters, issues briefs and occasional papers. Newsletters showcase the centre and are on a quarterly basis consisting of small articles of IPSTC's activities. Occasional papers produced annually are lengthy (40 pages) and academic in nature with all papers having a literature review. Topics are extremely varied and cover all aspects of conflict from regional PSO issues to sub-national issues, mainly related to Kenya. Issue briefs are produced on a quarterly basis and are lengthy (20 pages). Furthermore these papers prioritise conceptual frameworks and contributing to academic debates.

Research products at IPSTC are generally of an extremely poor quality and neither contributes to debates and current thinking on PSO and conflict nor do they help to develop training. Few people read these products and when they do it is in a negative manner as the content is often of a very low quality. The EU has pulled funding for IPSTC's research department due to these issues. Part of the problem is the poor quality of staff. All staff members are completely unqualified for the job in hand and have never previously worked in a research or training capacity or in a PSO. The head of research is Colonel Kombo, a Navy officer who has only recently completed an undergraduate degree, a BA in conflict studies from Hekima College in Nairobi, which itself has an extremely poor reputation. Col Kombo is completely unqualified to be head of research and his position is turning donors away and calling the entire institution into disrepute. Other research staff members are also completely unqualified for their positions and are neither researchers nor academics, nor have any experience in analysing PSOs, peacebuilding or conflict management issues. The shortcomings in staff quality are clearly visible when reading research products.

Related to this is lack of a research strategy. Due to donor insistence research is central to everything that IPSTC does and yet fails to achieve any sort of analytical inputs into developing training at IPSTC. Researchers do not develop training aids or assist in training delivery and research products do not seek to inform training or institutional development. Essentially research is for research's sake with no effect from analysis whatsoever. Due to staffing and institutional strategy issues research

products are of an extremely poor standard, there is no research strategy or direction and aims of research are not achieved. Donor fatigue has also set in after large amounts of aid money have been poured into IPSTC's research department with little to show for it except a big building.

Lessons from IPSTC:

- Need to have qualified and competent staff.
- Need to maintain quality, relevant and effective research products.
- Too conceptual, theoretical and academic research does meet the aim.
- Shorter more accurate and policy relevant papers are more useful than lengthy abstract articles.
- Donors will seek to dictate but will also quickly pull funding.
- Need to work with donors to ensure support is addressing institutional needs.
- Research needs to directly feed into training otherwise relevance is lost.

In looking at the development of both KAIPTC and IPSTC's respective Research Departments some broad lessons can be observed and learnt with a view to developing research capacity at RPA.

There is an opportunity to develop training and institutional development utilising research and analysis. PSTCs are perfectly positioned to pioneer peacekeeping research as well as be at the forefront of developing relevant and effective training packages, with research playing a key role in these issues.

There are significant partners and donors willing to fund and support Research Departments in PSTCs. Notably liberal minded states and multinational organisations and especially the Government of Japan and the European Union. However donors tend to dictate how their aid money is spent. Research is no different and donors may want to direct research activities further away from the Centre's core business. Furthermore donors will pull funding with very short notice if either their aims are not being met (as with IPSTC and the EU as in 2015) or if internal reasons such as

budget restrictions (as with KAIPTC and the UK in 2009) mean aid money must be redirected elsewhere. It is essential then that the RPA secures funding from donors for research but are extremely clear about how the research money will be used. This is easily justified and it is likely that a frank conversation with donors about support on 'our terms' as well as constant dialogue and communication that will encourage partners to continue and expand support. The key is to demonstrate effect and utility of research in developing training and institutional development.

Qualified and experienced staff are essential. Researchers must have appropriate qualifications in a relevant field and several years experience of producing analysis and research. KAIPTC has quality staff which is reflected in the quality of research products. IPSTC does not have quality staff rendering research outputs almost useless.

A coherent and effective research strategy is essential. Both KAIPTC and IPSTC focus on external audiences and stakeholders. While it remains unclear to what extent these actors are influenced by research at KAIPTC and IPSTC the core outputs of the centre are far detached from research products calling into question the rationale for having a Research Department. Research at KAIPTC and at IPSTC does not help develop training. This is a significant shortcoming.

Related to the above point is that overly ambitious expansion of the research department can dilute and skew the role of research in PSTCs. At KAIPTC and IPSTC the research department has rapidly expanded to the extent of delivering academic programmes. These academic programmes are not of a high quality and are far lower down the rankings of academic excellence and rigour one would find at a good university or military college. However revenue is being generated by academic programmes. At the same time research is further detached from the training outputs of the PSTCs.

In part due to the desire of both KAIPTC and IPSTC to have large research departments research products themselves do not feed into training delivery.

Research products from the PSTCs in Kenya and Ghana tend to be lengthy more academically focussed papers that again speak to an external audience as opposed to meeting a requirement or need in order to develop training and the institution. These issues alone mean that many research products are never read and are therefore largely irrelevant for developing cutting edge PSO training.

Conclusions

Research is a crucial component of PSO training if used and developed properly and effectively. The aims of research in PSTCs should be to:

- I. To inform and develop training design and outputs
- II. To inform and develop the training institution
- III. To contribute to PSO knowledge provision/discourse/debates and dissemination of these ideas

The primary aim of research should be to assist in the design and development of courses whether through papers, writing boards or developing training aids. The secondary aim is to assist the development of the centre itself. Researchers can be a resource for institutional development through developing policy advisory papers or being tasked by management to advise in specific areas. The final area of contributing to PSO knowledge is subordinate to the first two aims but is still an important contribution to the centre such as through publications and other externally orientated activities.

It is essential that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in relevant field. In order to ensure quality researchers must be of a high standard and relevant.

It is important to remember that research is subordinate to training, even if the researchers play a significant role in developing training. PSTCs should then begin with a smallish research team that targets the outputs of the centre. Two to four quality researchers can provide all the analytical inputs a training centre needs. The

key is for researchers and the research department to work closely with the training department and management of the centre.

Research products should include a variety of papers, assisting training design and delivery, conducting research trips and external engagement. All of these areas must be targeted towards the development of training, the development of the institution and to contributing to general knowledge on PSO training.

Key lessons from Ghana and Kenya are:

- There is a key role for research to develop training and institutional development in PSTCs.
- Donors are keen to support research in PSTCs, but will also dictate certain parameters and pull funding and short notice if their aims are not met.
- Qualified staff are essential.
- Developing a large research department can take up to 10 years.
- It is crucial to develop a coherent and effective research strategy that targets training and institutional development.
- Overly ambitious expansion of the research department can dilute and skew the role of research in PSTCs.
- Conceptual and theoretical analysis does not meet a training or institutional requirement.

The RPA is well positioned to pioneer research in PSTCs. It is essential that a research strategy that supports and targets training through a variety of means are developed and that staff recruited are well qualified and experienced. It is key that research should start off small and effective that meets a need. Expansion can develop as greater needs develop.

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