



Policy Notes on the Communication, Collaboration, Coordination and Consensus (Four C's)

The Communication, Collaboration, Coordination and Consensus

Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations Training Centres (PSTCs) need an effective and institutionalised system of internal organisation and management. The Rwanda Peace Academy (RPA) as developing PSTC is extremely well placed to implement quality organisational systems and strategies that maximise the utility of existing staff expertise and skills. An effective communications system should encompass not only the sharing of information but also the fostering of a collaborative work ethic and shared sense of purpose and effort. In developing and implementing effective organisational strategies the RPA will be more efficient and able to achieve their stated goals far better.

The RPA needs to institutionalise a comprehensive and effective communications strategy and develop a concept and culture of collective responsibility and collective effort in order to maximise the quality and effectiveness of outputs and activities. Although the RPA is still developing its processes and organisational systems it is essential to think about developing and institutionalising an internal organisational and communications strategy with the aim of becoming organisational culture. This policy notes sets out a useful and informal framework centres around the 'Four C's' that aims to develop effective organisational habits and culture.

Developing an Organisational Culture and the Four C's

The RPA must develop both formal guidelines for organisational practice as well as institutionalising a culture of work. This implies both formal and informal strategies and modes of operation. Formal guidelines on how the centre functions should be in the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SOPs should provide detailed guidance on the steps staff at the RPA must take for any given activity such as developing and delivering training courses, for holding writing boards, official visits, events etc. the SOPs should be a formal document, agreed by the Director, RPA staff and Defence HQ.

At the same time the RPA must develop a culture of work that supports the effective activities and outputs of the centre. This institutionalisation of effective practice is about working together as a team to the best of ability, both individually and collectively. In that sense it is essential to develop a collective work culture. This can be achieved by conceptualising effective collective activities through the four C's: Communication, Collaboration, Coordination and Consensus.

Communication: Communication is crucial. It is essential that all staff members communicate regularly with each other through a variety of different means, both formally and informally. Face to face meetings are the most useful mode of communication and should be conducted as often as possible. Skype video conferencing is a further invaluable communications tool that assists face to face meetings. Skype is an internet based video calling service that is free to use. Email is the primary mode of communication. All staff member should use email on a daily basis. It essential that emails are replied to quickly and regularly, almost as if it is an SMS. All work related emails should copy/cc in all RPA core staff. Whatsapp is also a useful communications tool. Whatsapp messenger is a free to use messenger service on smart phones. Both individual messages can be used but also group messages can be set up. Phone calls and SMS are a further communication method that should be used.

Collaboration: Collaboration between all RPA staff members on all activities and out puts is essential. It is key that all senior RPA staff are informed, included and involved in issues such as training, research and organisational development. All aspects of training require collective input from all departments and senior staff. This includes aspects such as training design and writing boards, training/course delivery, course evaluations and post-course/training follow up. Collective input in training can range from leading the activity, active participation in any specific activity or simply awareness of the activity and opportunity to input.

Coordination: Related to the above elements of communication and consensus is the notion of coordination. This implies an understanding and the implementation of

different roles, skills and relevant inputs into all activities at the RPA. It is crucial that all key stakeholders are informed and involved in areas of responsibility. This can be achieved through establishment of working groups of relevant individuals on specific projects to RPA coordination meetings.

Consensus: Developing consensus on the conduct of activities at RPA is the fourth element of effective organisational practice. It is crucial that RPA staff input and agree on developing and delivering RPA's activities. Inclusion of staff is essential to utilise skills, knowledge and expertise as well as to develop organisational cohesion.

Conclusion

In order to operate effectively the RPA needs unity of effort with skills, knowledge and expertise utilised in an effective manner. The 'four c's' of communication, collaboration, coordination and consensus provide a framework of operations to maximise teamwork with a view to developing and delivering activities at the RPA as well as contributing to organisational cohesion.

Although not a measureable or ridged set of guidelines, the 'four c's' provide an invaluable framework to develop informal and inter-personal best practice that compliments more official operating guidelines and SOPs.

A number of recommendations can be suggested that will improve efficiency and outputs at the RPA. These are not exhaustive with a range of other practices available and are open to discussion. But the approach of the recommendations below seeks to inform a culture of work habit that is effective and adaptable to organisational realities.

Recommendations:

- There should be monthly coordination meetings with the Director, heads of department, strategic adviser and other relevant staff. Minutes should be circulated after the meeting to all staff at RPA. The agenda should cover all

activities for the month, organisational issues and other issues of relevance to RPA.

- A strategy meeting should be held twice or four times a year to address bigger picture issues with longer term time frames. The strategy meeting should include the Director, senior staff and invited guests where relevant (Defence HQ, key partners).
- Every output and activity should have regular meetings using a 'working group' model in the pre-delivery, delivery and post-delivery phase. Meetings should include all senior staff at RPA, even if just to inform individuals of the detail of operations or solicit views.
- Every course should be discussed through meetings with all senior staff at RPA.
- Regular contact between staff is essential, both by email and phone (whatsapp etc). Ideally this should be daily.
- It is crucial to establish wireless internet at RPA. It is essential for organisational communication. One way around this is staff allowances for data packages on phones to access emails.
- It may be useful to have a training day on the 'four c's' for all staff at the RPA to cement best practice.

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