



Taking Leadership to the Next Level: UN Peace Operations 2020

Challenges Forum Workshop

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Stock – take of UN current policy, guidance, reviews, capacity-building, pre-deployment
preparations and evaluation tools, for mission leadership
– The How

Check Against Delivery

Strategic communication

As a Force Commander or Head of Mission (HOM) you have the power and opportunity to do a lot. Possessing such power implies that the selection of leaders becomes extremely important. From my point of view it is important to understand that with everything you do in the mission, you are sending a message, from the strategic to the tactical level.

Earlier, we had a much clearer separation between the different levels from the strategic to the tactical level. Today, these levels are blurred. Very often, actions taken in the field go up to the strategic level right away. The “strategic corporal” is a fact in today’s peace operations. Since I have just recently ended my tour of duty as Force Commander of UNFICYP I have seen this in my day to day work and I would like to share some of that experience.

In mission

In the mission, you must build trust within your Headquarter (HQ) and of course to external partners. My experience is that your work environment must be healthy. I made sure that I participated in the program *Inside the Blue*, which is a program made to encourage a better work environment among the civilians in all UN HQ. I motivated other vital civilians and military to join. This was an important area in which to build trust and a better understanding among each other.

When I was Designated Official, I used a lot of time talking to different civilian components within the HQ. It was hard to believe that when I entered into our Chief of Mission Support (CMS) office on my first or second day of duty, he told me that this was the first time in six years that a Force Commander has entered his office. It is not strange that we still have some way to go concerning civilian and military relations.

What are the some of the most difficult issues as a top leader in UN? You have to represent all that the UN stands for, the core values and core Competencies. Not at least all the Security Council Resolutions. As Force Commander you want to be a role model for men and women, civilian or military. As the first female Force Commander you are very visible and you have to consider that in all of your actions. There are no differences in on or off duty. Especially when it comes to Code of Conduct you as a Force Commander must act in a professional way. I tried to be present in the entire cross cutting training for the HQ staff. First and foremost present at the lectures about Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and HIV/AIDS.

You need to know about the role and regulations in the respective Troop and Police Contributing Country (T/PCC) when it comes to e.g. prostitution. For the UN there is a zero tolerance. When I got to know that I had TCCs where prostitution was legal I needed to discuss this issue with the Sector Commander/Contingent Commander in detail.

Every week we had a meeting with the Sector Commanders. When the UN issued a lot of cables after the SEA accusation in Africa we addressed every one of them in quite detail. We talked about survival sex and emergency sex. There were a lot of temptations on Cyprus.

Other important tools of communications:

- Transition, exercise and contingency planning

- Inspections in the field together with Chief of Mission Support/Director of Mission Support (DMS) or other from the civilian staff
- Create good working mechanisms between Civ/MIL/United Nations Police
- Co-location of Joint Operations Centre (JOC)/Joint mission analysis cell (JMAC)

As a female Force Commander many doors opened up. I was included in different women groups and networks that took an active part in the peace process. Furthermore, we were able to engage the first ladies to actively work together. This was important for all women on the island, and they became good role models.

As Force Commander you need to be involved with SRSG's Compact: there is no information about that during the pre-deployment training. This is between SRSG and SG, but we need to work on that together. We have to be a team: establishment of the Mission Leadership Team (MLT)/Senior Management Group (SMG) – creating a team – to have a common understanding about the vision, HOM's tasks etc. When NATO deploy, they have to go through a procedure with certification and not at least Key Leader engagement training. This is to make sure that the HQ is operational and that all the elements are functioning. Maybe the UN should establish training teams just doing that, to help the HQ to be well equipped to tackle different crisis that can occur.

Should each leader write their leadership philosophy before you are accepted to your position? Maybe this is how you should be evaluated? The UN need to pick the best leaders, not depended on numbers of boots on the ground.

Leonardo Da Vinci said: 'Fix your course to a star and you can navigate through the storm'.