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SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

The international community increasingly deploys advisers to work alongside high-level officials in postconflict and transitional countries as part of the peacebuilding and reform process. But those advisers are often underprepared to do their jobs. Drawing on the author's experience in helping to design and develop an innovative U.S. Department of Defense training course for advisers, this report finds that many existing training programs fall short and explains what can be done to produce more effective advisers.

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SPECIAL REPORT 312

AUGUST 2012

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Preparing Advisers for Capacity-Building Missions

Summary

- As part of their efforts to support the rebuilding and reform of postconflict and transitional states, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, and other members of the international community are sending international advisers to work alongside high-level officials in national institutions.
- Advisers are recruited for their strong professional expertise in fields such as logistics and human resources. However, they have had little preparation in transferring that knowledge to others, especially in a transitional or postconflict environment.
- If they are to contribute to sustainable reforms, advisers need to be taught how to transfer knowledge in a complex and alien environment, how to operate without formal authority, and how to cultivate local ownership.
- Launched in 2010, a U.S. Department of Defense program to train advisers for institution-building activities in Afghanistan—Ministry of Defense Advisors, or MoDA—has incorporated lessons learned by former advisers and emphasized four principles originally developed for a USIP training course: supporting local ownership; designing for sustainability; doing no harm; and demonstrating respect, humility, and empathy. As of March 2012, five MoDA cohorts have been deployed and have performed effectively.
- The MoDA experience, together with insights gained from teaching courses at USIP and other venues, suggests that a good curriculum for training high-level advisers in any sector of government should include four parts: lessons on about how to be an effective adviser, including techniques for building relationships and communicating across cultures; briefings on the situation in the country; substantive information about the sector in which the adviser will work; and preparation through practice.

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- For capacity-building strategies to yield the desired results, policy officials who draft missions and mandates must also understand the challenges advisers face, the roles they have to play, and the mindset shifts they have to make. Preparation should be an integral part of strategy, factored into mission budgets, and deeply embedded in the planning process.

As the international community prepares to exit Iraq and Afghanistan, it is devoting greater attention to strengthening the capacity of institutions in postconflict societies and transitional states. In recent years and across the world, international forces have been exiting theaters of operations, allowing national security forces to shoulder the responsibility of strengthening and maintaining stability. As international donors are increasingly aware, sustaining gains in security and development requires national and provincial institutions that can provide a wide range of services to the population.¹ Those institutions typically need international guidance and support as they learn how to serve their communities reliably, systematically, and equitably. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations, the European Union, and a host of bilateral missions prefer to provide guidance and support by sending international advisers to work alongside public officials as they build or rebuild their country's national institutions.² Advisers thus carry a heavy responsibility, to both the international community that sends them out and the postconflict societies in which they work. They cannot, or should not, be expected to discharge their duties without appropriate preparation and training. Too often, however, advisers have been deployed with scant preparation. Many deploying agencies erroneously assume that they need do little more than recruit advisers who are already experts in fields such as logistics, human resources, and contracting. Such expertise, though invaluable, is inadequate to operate effectively in environments that are foreign in numerous ways, highly complex, highly political, and profoundly uncertain and unstable. What, then, should advisers be taught before they are deployed, and how should they be taught it?

This report focuses on the preparation of advisers who are sent to work in national-level government ministries, especially those that manage a country's security forces, though the lessons can be applied to capacity-building efforts in sectors as varied as education, health, finance, and agriculture. The descriptions and critiques of preparedness plans, and the prescriptions that follow, are meant to push national governments and international institutions to enhance their understanding of advising. By sharing lessons learned about and reflections on training and preparedness, the report seeks to begin a conversation across agencies, countries, and international organizations.

Little has been written on advising in recent years, and few other documents discuss the issues raised in this report.³ The agencies that deploy advisers and the leadership of the missions to which they are deployed themselves need advice on how to make effective advisers of people who are highly skilled in their fields but rarely practiced in the art of transferring knowledge in a foreign environment. Effective advisers can contribute to the policies, procedures, and practices of an institution. They do not dictate solutions to local actors; rather, as the title of their role indicates, advisers draw on their professional expertise to offer ideas and options for local actors to consider as they seek to provide better services. An adviser needs to know how to transfer knowledge in a culturally and institutionally appropriate fashion so that the advice offered is understood and, if accepted, more likely to produce sustainable reforms. The push to send civilian advisers on capacity-strengthening missions is unlikely to foster the desired stability and economic development if the advisers are not given the necessary tools to do their work. This report outlines an approach to ensuring that advisers are trained appropriately.

The Challenges Awaiting Advisers

Determining the right preparation for advisers requires recognizing the typical professional profile of an adviser as well as understanding the demands and challenges that advisers encounter in their work. First, there are differences among advisers, mentors, and trainers. All three activities involve knowledge transfer and capacity building, but each is distinct. Advising is the task of sharing knowledge and expertise with local actors to enhance their abilities to develop effective policies, procedures, practices, and ultimately systems. Mentoring and training, which are too often used interchangeably, differ from advising in that they impart a specific curriculum—for mentoring, while on the job, and for training, in a classroom.

Who Are the Advisers?

In the United States, advisers who work alongside high-level officials in the security sector are generally recruited either from among active-duty field-grade officers serving in one of the branches of the armed forces or from among private contractors, most of whom are former military or civilian police officers working for private military corporations, such as Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE), DynCorp, and Military Professional Resources, Inc. (MPRI). Government agencies recruit the advisers to support both administrative and operational reform efforts. Most have at least fifteen years of military or police service and have served in command and staff billets that deal with the issues they will encounter when deployed as advisers. Some advisers have previous deployment and combat experience; some do not. Some have advanced degrees and have attended a wide variety of service training schools. They have one key attribute in common: experience operating in complex, large, and diverse organizations. Civilians are usually recruited for assignments in ministries outside the security sector. In recent years, the U.S. departments of Justice, Agriculture, and Treasury, as well as other U.S. agencies, have been deploying an increasing number of senior civilian federal employees as part of the ministerial reform effort. All told, military and civilian advisers number in the thousands.

Advisers, especially civilian experts in diagnosing and prescribing institutional reforms, can contribute substantially to capacity-building and institution-building efforts. Doing so, however, requires additional skills and tools: among them, a cultural compass to navigate complex professional situations while developing local legitimacy and credibility as an expert, the capacity to balance the sometimes competing demands that the structure of the larger mission poses, and the ability to coordinate with other international actors.

Local Legitimacy

Many advisers report finding limited capacity or willingness to reform once they begin working with local counterparts and stakeholders. Such reports may reflect reality, or the skewed perceptions of the advisers, or both. The complex histories and modus operandi of institutions make it difficult for an outsider to identify what impedes reforms, but if advisers do not fully understand the institutions with which they are working—let alone local cultural norms and practices, including patronage systems—then their abilities to assess the local situation accurately, build relationships, and identify viable avenues to reform may be hindered significantly. It can be challenging for advisers to propose approaches that can be implemented or sustained without creating local rapport first. Recommending that an official from one ethnic group replace an official from another ethnic group can upset many actors and dynamics within an institution, as advisers in Iraq and Afghanistan have experienced.⁴ Advisers face additional challenges if their predecessors or compatriots had

negative reputations among local actors, who now regard any advice from external actors—or at least the adviser’s compatriots—suspiciously.

A lack of experience in transferring knowledge to local counterparts using universal language, rather than Western idioms, metaphors, and terminology, can complicate an adviser’s task further. Advisers have usually built their professional reputations by doing—that is, by achieving practical, concrete results—rather than by teaching others how to achieve results. Fortunately, teaching adults is something that can itself be taught.⁵

Mission Structure

The structure of the mission can be a challenge in cases—Iraq and Afghanistan are prime examples—where advisers working on civilian issues are part of larger military interventions. In such situations, civilian advisers, as well as military officers assigned to ministers and their subordinates, have to work within the military command. This can be problematic for a number of reasons. Reconstruction efforts may be in the middle of a tug-of-war between, on one side, civilian practices and approaches to governance and regulatory activities, and, on the other, military goals, priorities, and predispositions. Civilian advisers may also find themselves absorbed by the larger military command and placed according to the military’s plan rather than that of the adviser’s deploying agency or program. All advisers—civilian or military—must seek to balance the needs of the ministry to which they are assigned with the objectives of the multinational mission and with the foreign policy goals of the government that has recruited and deployed them.

Coordination with International Actors

Finally, coordination with the development and aid community is usually extremely difficult to achieve. The adviser’s method of operating and those of development and aid agencies can differ greatly and even contradict each other. Even with more than ten years of capacity-building efforts in Afghanistan, lack of coordination among international actors on civil service reform and civilianization of security ministries has led to a civil service still not viable in either of the Afghan government’s main security ministries. British efforts have been notable but underresourced and not well emphasized in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) campaign plan, and they do not appear to be balanced or integrated with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) work in nonsecurity ministries. This has been a huge missed opportunity in developing the work force but—more important—in building decision-making processes and authorities within the security ministries for civilians to actually control and direct military operations in support of the Afghan constitution.⁶

Furthermore, some capacity-building efforts become fiercely competitive and others redundant because international programs have already achieved those goals. Funding mechanisms for improving Ministry of Interior and law enforcement capacity in Afghanistan were complicated by multiple funding streams and late application of revised funding authorities. Thus, Afghan law enforcement institutions and various forces have been developed along conceptual and legal lines that are tied to the nationalities of the funding sources—Germany, then the United States, and now increasingly EU Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA) resources. Some niche capabilities in Afghan law enforcement have been disjointedly developed, such as the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) over uniformed military, due to U.S. ability to fund capacity building. Many inefficiencies have been created as a result, ultimately delaying viable law enforcement in Afghanistan even as it is increasingly needed to allow U.S. coalition forces to withdraw.⁷ Incompatibilities between funding rules and specific projects also hinder advisers’ abilities to follow specific paths

Lack of coordination among international actors on civil service reform and civilianization of security ministries has led to a civil service still not viable in either of the Afghan government’s main security ministries.

to reform. An adviser may see the need to train ministry officials, but funding rules may stipulate that funds be spent on local engagement only, not on training.

The issues of local legitimacy, mission structure, and international coordination, moreover, are not discrete problems. In practice, they combine to create a problematic dynamic for advisers seeking to help institute reforms.

A Typical Scenario

A United States Air Force officer was assigned to serve as senior adviser to the Foreign Relations Department in the Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan at the request of the multinational command leading the intervention there. The officer's mission was to advise on how to build within the ministry a sustainable institution devoted to orchestrating cooperation between the ministry and international military forces. The adviser's specific duties included

- helping create and implement standardized procedures for managing donations of equipment and training;
- systematizing the interaction between the ministry and NATO and its member countries to improve the ministry's ability to accept donations of police equipment and training in the use of that equipment; and
- advising the Foreign Relations Department on how to develop the capability to administer and manage donations of funds, equipment, and training.

The adviser quickly encountered several obstacles. The Foreign Relations Department turned out to be irrelevant to managing donations, given that donor relations were organized and controlled by the Office of the Minister and by deputy ministers. That office also set policy and determined the role of the Foreign Relations Department.

In the personalities involved, the adviser found reason for both optimism and pessimism about accomplishing his assignment. Encouragingly, the minister believed that the Foreign Relations Department should handle cooperation with the military and donations of equipment; discouragingly, he believed it should do so only if it reported directly to his office and only if his chief of staff participated in the process. The deputy minister, who had been the main contributor in developing a system to manage donations, believed that managing and soliciting donations of equipment was too important to leave to anyone but the people in his office. The deputy minister had had advisers in the past who had shown a great deal of disrespect for the systems already in place; not surprisingly, he had lost faith in the idea of getting guidance and support from international advisers. Meanwhile, donors had provided equipment for several months but were becoming disillusioned by the lack of response to their requests for information on how the equipment was being distributed, used, and maintained, and on how individuals were being trained to use it.

Past advisers had tried to shoulder the burden of managing donations themselves, but in doing so left the department's staff inexperienced in the day-to-day management of operations and relations with the military. The staff had limited management experience generally and no restructuring experience. To make the new adviser's task yet more daunting, training was unpopular among both upper and lower ranks of the staff.

The adviser's assignment thus was rich in challenges: supporting reform by sharing expertise that had to fit in a foreign environment, supporting and assisting the development of plans and implementation activities in a system with dynamics the adviser was unfamiliar with, coordinating with other international actors, and suggesting change when the demand for change was not always welcome.⁸

Existing Preparation Programs

Most training programs for advisers provide three kinds of content. First are informational briefings about the specific environment in which the advisers' missions are to be carried out, involving local actors, a history of the country and the conflict, cultural considerations, and language skills. Second, induction training explains how the advisers are to participate in the mission and defines the mission, including procedures and rules of engagement. Third, personal security training teaches advisers how to survive in a highly insecure environment, including situational awareness and defensive driving. These are important components of adviser training but do not add up to an adequate training curriculum.

Transforming a logistics expert or a human resources professional into an adviser requires rethinking how to engage both local and international colleagues.

Apart from needing to learn how to teach their local collaborators, advisers also must shift their own mindsets. Transforming, say, a logistics expert or a human resources professional into an adviser requires rethinking how to engage both local and international colleagues. Recruits have to learn to operate without formal authority. At home, they are likely to have an impressive professional reputation, but once deployed they will find that they need to build a new reputation, demonstrating their ability to apply professional expertise to a local situation. Moreover, to work within a new culture, advisers must engage local actors in peer to peer, establishing themselves as partners, listeners, and sources of support and expertise. Meeting and brainstorming with foreign counterparts requires understanding complex local dynamics. When all foreign officials in the room seem to be socializing rather than responding to one's call to develop a strategic plan, one must not get frustrated and draft a plan oneself.⁹ Cultivating local ownership is crucial to the viability and sustainability of any reform activity.

A Different Approach to Preparation: The MoDA Training Program

In 2009, the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Center for Complex Operations (CCO) at the National Defense University undertook a needs assessment for adviser training and preparation. Around the same time, CCO organized a conference to identify what advisers would want to know before they were sent on their missions. Already teaching a USIP course on advising, I was invited to attend the conference as a facilitator. The conference led to the creation of a curriculum for training advisers. Realizing that USIP could teach much of that curriculum, I worked with CCO to organize a meeting at which CCO presented its versions of learning objectives and methodologies for a training course. At that meeting, the future head of the Ministry of Defense Advisor (MoDA) program, within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), said that the learning objectives might be a good fit for the program she was then establishing. In short, USIP helped produce a curriculum for training advisers at the same time as the Office of the Secretary of Defense–Policy (OSD–Policy) was creating the MoDA program, tasked with deploying civilian ministerial advisers to conduct institution-building activities. The new MoDA program office, the DOD's Personnel and Readiness Office, USIP, and CCO worked together to implement the curriculum.

OSD–Policy launched the training component of the MoDA program was launched in May 2010. It has since evolved into an intensive seven-week preparation program for senior civilian professionals deploying to Afghanistan as senior strategic advisers to officials in Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Once the advisers are trained, MoDA deploys its advisers for up to two years to help partners improve ministerial capacity. MoDA matches civilian experts with partners and funds temporary backfills for those civilian experts' organizations so that the advisers' positions are available for them when they return.

A great strength of the MoDA training program's content is that it rests on the comprehensive needs assessment conducted in early 2009, which incorporated the findings of a

focus group of highly experienced advisers. Members of the group, who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, revealed specific lessons that they wished they had learned before they were deployed. The program was developed to impart those lessons, incorporating four core principles from a USIP training course on capacity building for advisers: supporting local ownership; designing for sustainability; doing no harm; and demonstrating respect, humility, and empathy. These core principles set the tone for the program and have become a mantra for trainees, reiterated throughout all seven weeks of the program.

The principle of supporting local ownership encompasses the notion that a postconflict country must drive its own development needs and priorities even if transitional authority is in the hands of outsiders. Designing sustainability involves creating a foreign ministry's capacity to provide the services it was designed to provide, which will remain effective after the intervener departs. Doing no harm—an idea well known to the peacebuilding and development communities—requires the capacity builder to acknowledge that any intervention carries with it the risk of doing more harm than good. Advisers should proceed with programs only after careful consideration and widespread consultation. Finally, demonstrating respect, humility, and empathy is the key to developing a professional relationship with counterparts. Respect enables an adviser to recognize what policies and practices are in place locally and why. Humility signals to counterparts and stakeholders that advisers understand that reforms are impossible without the contributions of local actors. Humility involves being modest and supportive, and avoiding being arrogant, contemptuous, or rude. Empathy is the ability to understand why and how local actors behave as they do in light of their own environment and culture.

The MoDA training program gives advisers three sets of tools with which to adapt to the distinct demands of their missions. The first is the ability to cope with a fragile, uncertain, and highly stressful environment, characteristic of postconflict and transitional societies. The second are the skills required to work with local counterparts to build enhanced systems and, consequently, stronger institutions. The third is knowledge about the country in which the adviser will carry out the mission, including information about the country's culture and norms, demographics, legal framework, governance structure, and history.

When the seventeen members of the first MoDA class arrived in theater in July 2010, they were able to “hit the ground running,” as Lieutenant General William Caldwell, the commander of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, put it.¹⁰ The advisers arrived respecting local ownership and established relationships with their local counterparts at a pace that was noticeably quicker than the norm. This allowed for several concrete achievements: piloting a simple, Afghan-designed logistics tool that proved remarkably successful in tracking the location and status of Afghan National Police vehicles; developing and implementing a process to assess Afghanistan's efforts to reform its ministries; assisting Afghans improve business operations and health standards at the Afghan National Army slaughterhouse; and helping ministry counterparts develop an internal audit mechanism for the Afghan National Police to ensure transparency and oversight.

The advisers' record of achievement has been sustained. As of March 2012, five cohorts of advisers have been trained and deployed. The program has won applause from both Afghan counterparts, the NATO training mission, and Combined Security Training Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A).¹¹ MoDA advisers have been commended for their openness and flexibility, demonstrating abilities not only to engage Afghan counterparts successfully, but also to identify solutions to long-standing productivity and system problems at the ministries of Interior and Defense, as well as to launch reform efforts. MoDA advisers have attributed their success in large part to their training.¹² Meanwhile, the curriculum team has used the cohorts' experiences and feedback to refine the MoDA training program, which constantly evaluates how it can better prepare advisers to accomplish their goals.

Toward a More Comprehensive Approach

The lessons advisers learned in Afghanistan can inform the development of a curriculum to train all advisers, no matter where they are deployed. The MoDA advisers' experiences, together with lessons learned from the development and evaluation of the MoDA training program and from my own USIP training course, suggest that a curriculum should have four parts:

- knowledge about how to be an effective adviser in a postconflict reform and capacity-building environment, including techniques for building relationships, navigating typical obstacles, and communicating across cultures;
- briefings on the situation in the country in which the adviser is to work;
- substantive knowledge about the sector in which the adviser is to work; and
- preparation through practice (such as role-playing simulations).

The order in which these parts are arranged is important, because adults learn best from material presented logically. For most adults, both chronological order and a deductive approach—that is, moving from broad principles to specific illustrations—are most conducive to acquiring new knowledge. Adults generally want to learn only what they believe will be useful to them, and they like to have the relevance of material explained to them. Many adults are more attracted to country-specific than to conceptual material, but if the trainees are to create an analytical framework for their work, the curriculum must include broad concepts. A general understanding of the principles and key elements of capacity building, first, provides a good basis on which to build knowledge of a specific capacity-building mission. The general and specific knowledge together can then be the context for acquiring substantive knowledge, allowing advisers to develop visions and plans for their missions.

Cultural adaptability should be a theme running throughout the training. Advisers can be trained to develop a cultural compass, giving them the tools to identify cultural cues and avoid gaffes. Such training also helps advisers understand the concept of culture more generally, which in turn enables them to understand the relevance and importance of cultural issues. It is difficult to prepare advisers for all the cultural adaptations they will have to make, but a training program can make them more aware and analytical about this very important aspect of their work.

Cultural adaptability training also enables advisers to better understand cultural orientation training, which explains how a particular culture differs from American culture and provides advisers with general rules that they should observe when interacting with people from that culture. Cultural orientation training should also include information on substantive areas—such as the security sector—that the adviser is to help reform. Once the practical phase of the training begins, culture should no longer be taught, but cultural awareness and adaptability should be exhibited and tested at every twist and turn, with culture experts offering feedback on the trainee's performance.

Knowledge About Being an Effective Adviser

Trainees who have not served as advisers before—and even some who have—need to be taught how to function effectively in a postconflict environment and how to transfer their expertise to local actors, whether that expertise is in logistics, procurement, budgeting, production and processing, personnel management, or any field from which advisers are recruited. They also need to understand the various dynamics, obstacles, traps, and opportunities that typify a reform environment, as well as the relationship-building tools required to develop an effective professional exchange with local actors. For advisers in the MoDA training program, content has included the following topics, ordered from the broadest to the most specific, which is the way that most adult learners like to learn:

Advisers can be trained to develop a cultural compass, giving them the tools to identify cultural cues and avoid gaffes.

- how foreign policy is made (in both the donor country and the host country)
- how to deal with multiple bosses (and objectives)
- how to work with interpreters
- how to make expertise accessible to people from other countries and cultures
- how to recognize various forms of corruption
- how to mediate and negotiate on the micro level
- how to understand the nature and scope of strengthening capacity
- how to function as a peer despite having no authority
- how to assess capacity
- how to identify existing capacity

Usually, past advisers failed in their missions not because they lacked expertise in their field but because they did not know how to draw on that expertise to allow it to be communicated to local counterparts. Expert knowledge by itself is insufficient; in whatever section of government advisers are working, they also need to know how to transfer that expertise.

Briefings on the Situation in the Country

Critics of the curriculum may argue that knowledge and briefings are the same. They are not, but they are complementary. This is perhaps easiest to see when talking about culture: the difference between knowledge and briefings lies in distinguishing between cultural adaptability training generally and imparting knowledge about a specific country's cultural norms and habits.

Information about the environment in which the trainees are preparing to work should paint a picture of the current situation and cover the following areas:

- introduction to the history, culture, politics, and economics of the country
- the structure of the multinational command, if any
- other parties involved in the effort
- the organizational structure of the ministry within which the adviser will work
- who holds what positions in the ministry
- the nature and scope of plans to develop the ministry
- the progress made in training the military and the police to tackle corrupt practices and strengthen weak systems
- the ability of the ministry to deliver services to the population
- the failures and successes of previous advisers
- the reputations those predecessors acquired
- local perceptions of internationals in general
- the security situation and the conflict context
- spoilers and other threats to security and reform

Briefings should include information needed to assess capacity gaps and to vet ideas on how to fill those gaps. However, once advisers are in the field, they must make individual assessments based on their expertise; the nature of the interaction between, on the one side, the adviser and, on the other, his or her counterpart; and the challenges inherent in a complex mission. Advisers should use the briefings more as a checklist to consult than as a prescription for service, and be taught not only what questions to ask but also how to ask them.

Substantive Knowledge

Substantive knowledge involves an understanding of the sector in which the adviser will seek to help build capacity. In the security sector, substantive knowledge consists of knowing the processes and desired end states of military, police, and institutional reform, at both the operational and administrative levels. Trainees are likely to be high-level civilian federal employees or military officers with extensive experience, either running programs, departments, or administrative systems or practicing a craft, such as judging, policing, or managing correctional facilities. However, they are highly unlikely to have experience in—or even to have devoted much thought to—specifically reforming postconflict institutions and their systems. This warrants training advisers headed for Afghanistan in the broader goals of the mission, in addition to the such topics as the differences between the functions and goals of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, or the goals and progress of police reform.

Preparation Through Practice

An opportunity to practice new skills in a safe environment, where one can make mistakes and learn from them, is crucial to preparation. Trainees practice through role-playing simulations, planning exercises, and analyses of case studies as well as real or fictional scenarios. This allows advisers to use the knowledge they have acquired during the training and to become more comfortable using the tools they have been introduced to. Specific areas that advisers should practice include

- building a relationship with other international actors and with local counterparts and stakeholders;
- adapting to the cultural specificities of the local environment;
- cross-cultural communications skills, including active listening;
- participating in meetings;
- identifying possible solutions and presenting them to the appropriate authorities; and
- supporting the implementation of solutions.

Advisers should focus first on presenting their mission and individual role to a counterpart and then on transferring specific information and proposing or evaluating specific solutions. This part of the curriculum builds self-confidence in the recruits, who can test their newly acquired understanding, awareness, and skills before using them in the field.

The Profile of Instructors

Content and methodology are important to appropriate preparation, but the profile of the instructor is also significant. Two key issues arise when selecting instructors: professional background and vetting content. Many predeployment preparation programs rely heavily on instructors who are practitioners with recent and relevant experience. Students listen carefully to instructors who have returned recently from working in the country to which the trainee advisers will be deployed. The instructor, however, may have encountered challenges very different from those awaiting this group of advisers. A practitioner who worked in one area of the country may give trainees about to be deployed to another area a misleading impression of the conditions they will encounter. This risk is amplified if a preparation program employs only one or a handful of instructors. The danger can be avoided, however, if one selects instructors who can develop generalizable principles validated by experience. Such instructors may be practitioners, academics, or both. The key is to provide a framework that helps advisers think critically and plan, not just follow a tactical game plan or replicate

previous advisers' lessons. The best instructors can teach critical thinking, bridge theory and practice, and apply ideas to practical skills and cases.

Instructors should be trained in adult education. As mentioned, one of the central principles of adult learning is immediacy: adult learners need to quickly see the relevance and utility of what they are learning. In most cases, predeployment training requires devoting a significant amount of time to establishing links among the trainees' mission, the tools being introduced, and the cases or stories being presented. Instructors in charge of curriculum content should select only those cases from the field that resonate with the goals of the training program and the challenges the trainees are likely to encounter in the field. This means carefully vetting guest speakers so that trainees are exposed to several points of view but not distracted or misled by inappropriate perspectives. A multiplicity of voices is essential.

Evaluations

At the end of most courses, trainees are asked to evaluate the instruction they have just received. Course evaluations can reveal much about the training's effectiveness and efficiency. However, the evaluations must be carefully crafted, especially if they are to inform subsequent training programs. Lessons from MoDA and other courses for practitioners highlight four important points about evaluation.

First, an evaluation should have separate sections for each of the training goals. If improving trainees' weapons skills is one goal, and if learning how to coordinate with international actors is another, the evaluation should have separate sections for each. Those reviewing the completed evaluations should also bear in mind that trainees give most of their learning energy to sessions devoted to security and logistics issues and less to more knowledge-based sessions. The dynamic of preparation for deployment is important to remember when designing and evaluating a training program.

Second, evaluation questions must be formulated to encourage answers that signal what trainees have actually learned. Most evaluations tend to ask broad questions that test only the entertainment value of the program. Asking how participants liked the session does not require an assessment of whether something was learned. Trainees should be asked to inventory what they learned in an open-ended format tailored to the session. A productive question might be, "In this session, we spoke of corrupt practices and how to counter them. What wisdom did you gain from this session that you will take with you on your advising tour?" This requires trainees to become aware of the knowledge they have just acquired. If they cannot answer the question, the session may not have been as effective as expected.

Third, evaluations should not be the only tool to identify ways in which the program can be improved. Decisions on a program's content and delivery must also be based on needs assessments conducted periodically with returning advisers. The content and delivery of the material taught to trainees should not depend on what the trainees want to know at a particular time; a training program should give new advisers the skills to play a role they do not necessarily grasp when they are trained. Hence, revising a training program in light of the results of evaluations should be done purposefully and with the intention of preparing advisers for the mission, rather than catering to their necessarily limited understanding of what they need to know.

Fourth, host-nation counterparts should be invited to participate in any evaluative process, providing their perspective on how the advisers have helped them and their departments. They can also identify issues that those in charge of the training program may have overlooked.

Instructors should select only those cases from the field that resonate with the goals of the training program and the challenges the trainees are likely to encounter.

An online edition of this and related reports can be found on our Web site (www.usip.org), together with additional information on the subject.

Conclusion: Stacking the Odds in Favor of Mission Effectiveness

Deploying advisers to help officials in postconflict societies reform institutions has become a preferred strategy of the United States and other members of the international community. If advising is a core element of a transition strategy, it should be properly supported. This includes appropriate and ample training. Advisers need much more preparation than a few guidelines on how to engage the local population in a culturally sensitive manner and a few briefings that provide snapshots of a ministry, its leadership, and its challenges at one moment. They need comprehensive training that equips them to identify decision-makers and the dynamics within which they operate, to ask questions and conduct assessments that will lay a foundation for viable and sustainable solutions, and to understand how to support counterparts with well-timed and well-judged proposals for reform.

The expertise for which advisers are recruited is crucial to the execution of their mission, but it is not enough by itself to enable them to accomplish that mission. Advisers' expertise must be denationalized and complemented by training in the art of transferring knowledge in a fashion that will foster local ownership and generate sustainable results. Advisers themselves must be equipped during training with the various conceptual, perceptual, and practical tools they will need once deployed. For capacity-building strategies to yield the desired results, policy officials who develop missions and mandates must also understand the challenges advisers face, the roles they have to play, and the mindset shifts they have to make. Only then will the needed preparedness be administered to outgoing advisers. Preparation should be an integral part of strategy, it should be factored into mission budgets, and it should be deeply embedded in the planning process.

Notes

1. See, for example, Communiqué, "A Renewed Commitment by the Afghan Government to the Afghan People, A Renewed Commitment by the International Community to Afghanistan," Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, July 20, 2010, www.cfr.org/afghanistan/kabul-international-conference-afghanistan-communicu-july-2010/p22678; Government of Canada, "Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Quarterly Report to Parliament for the Period of July 1 to September 30, 2010," December 8, 2010, www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/assets/pdfs/docs/r09_10-eng.pdf.
2. Nadia Gerspacher and Adrian Shtuni, "Lessons from MoDA: Continuing the Conversation on How to Advise Institution-Building," *Prism* 3, no. 3 (June 2012), 75–87, www.ndu.edu/press/lessons-from-moda.html; German Federal Ministry of the Interior, "Germany's Support for Police Rebuilding in Afghanistan," October 2010, www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/556146/publicationFile/131751/Polizeiaufbau_AFG_engl.pdf; UK House of Lords, European Union Committee, "The EU's Afghan Police Mission: Report with Evidence," February 16, 2011, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldselect/lddecom/87/87.pdf.
3. Recent literature on advising includes Metrisko Michael, "The American Military Advisor: Dealing with Senior Foreign Officials in the Islamic World," PKSOI Papers series, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute and Strategic Studies Institute, August 2008, www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=869; and Clifton David, "Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI): Advisor Guide, Version 1.0," May 2011, unclassified, Rel: NATO, ISAF. More is written about an earlier advising program, the CORDS—Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support—program, which was established in 1967 to coordinate U.S. civil and military pacification activities in Vietnam.
4. Gerspacher and Shtuni, "Lessons from MoDA."
5. Bhawani Shankar Subedi, "Emerging Trends of Research on Transfer of Learning," *International Education Journal* 5, no. 4 (2004), <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v5n4/subedi/paper.pdf>; International Labour Organization, "Guidelines for Training of Trainers," September 2002, www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/child/trafficking/downloads/tia-f.pdf; Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, "Train the Trainer: Adult Learning Principles," 2010, www.sos.state.mn.us/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=5061.
6. Email from adviser to author, July 2012.
7. Email from adviser to author, July 2012.
8. Conversations with former students and advisers.
9. Drawn from conversations with advisers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Liberia, and elsewhere.
10. Comments made during a video teleconference at the Pentagon in 2010.
11. Gerspacher and Shtuni, "Lessons from MoDA."
12. David Clifton, USMC, noted the value of his training in a speech he delivered at the conference held to mark the one-year anniversary of the MoDA program, held at the National Defense University in Washington, DC, on August 12, 2011.



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