

WHERE PEACE BEGINS...

...at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC).

Developing the potential of the sub-region and beyond...

Named in honor of Ghanaian diplomat and former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, the KAIPTC is a regional Centre of Excellence for education, training and research in peace support operations. The Centre, which began classes in 2004, builds on Ghana's 50 years of U.N. peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo and Lebanon. In the past nine years, more than 174 training courses have taken place, with over 7200 attendees representing more than 100 countries. At the helm of the Centre is Air Vice Marshal Christian Edem Kobla Dovlo. The Commandant/Executive Director who has high hopes for KAIPTC'S main objective.

"In Africa there is a movement and keenness to having sustainability on the continent; we all realize that it is a necessity if you are to develop," he said. "So every country, I believe, is geared towards that way and that in time this continent shall be a lot more peaceful. I believe that we at KAIPTC are playing a role in showing how this comes about. Additionally, I believe that the potential that we have is quite enormous, but what we do need is training."



Front view of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)

The training at KAIPTC gives graduates the skills and tools to support the missions of the U.N., the AU and ECOWAS. The Centre's training also helps regional governments. "If you think of it from the military aspect, we bring people for Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria and all over, they all come in here; there is a lot of networking," Dovlo said. "And these are at the levels where in a couple of years they will be quite influential in their own countries in terms of decision making, and I think it opens up alliance. We believe that if you do train people to go and

perform that well outside, no matter where they are coming from, when they come back home they are bound to perform in the same manner.”

Courses Diversity

A recent U.N. Recruitment Development course drew 13 students from seven nations: Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Liberia and China. The goal of the class is to increase the number of peacekeepers eligible to hold higher positions at U.N. headquarters and to support missions in the field. The classes are not typical lectures. Desks are arranged in a loose U-shape, and students learn from instructions, films, presentations, flip charts and one another. On some days, students wear uniforms of their home countries; on other days, students wear traditional or business attire. Students sometimes divide into teams for friendly discussion. Some sessions are marked with laughter and agreement while others require some diplomacy. The interactive instructional model encourages the students with real- world mission experience to share what has worked and what has not. Instructors evaluate participation and feedback from the students to gauge comprehension and provide any needed clarification.

At the Centre, a student may be the only one from his or her country and initially have little in common with others, as is common during international missions. But camaraderie grows as the course continues and students bond as teams and then as a class body.

Students learn inside and outside the classroom. Some of the men gather in the fitness Centre to exercise and socialize after class, learning how to talk to each other and overcome preconceived ideas and stereotypes. Students also share and get to know each other over meals in the dining facility. Each weekend provides an opportunity to go into town together for shopping and sightseeing. There are cultural, recreational and team-building exercises structured into the course to help students broaden their understanding of each other and build lasting friendships. Participants learn to peacefully disagree, to see differences as strengths rather than obstacles.



*An Advanced Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) training session at the KAIPTC.
The KAIPTC is the only training centre in Africa to offer this course in Peace Support Operations.
Courses comprise military, police and civilian personnel*

The instructors teach in English and French, and language development is a part of every course. During the last two days of a recent course, students gathered their desks in a small circle to practice English. A student, a course director and a principal commissioner of police from Niger, encouraged fellow students as they discussed reasons why they would recommend the course to others, such as the delivery of content and the professionalism of the instructors. Students asked questions about one another's families, hobbies, cultures, histories and conflicts. Curiosity was evident as they listened to the candid and detailed replies. By the end of the course there was a common bond among the students that will help build the networks influencing and supporting future missions.

Current financial support to the Centre is provided by Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, UN (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women) and the U.S.

"For the long term, the center would like to establish an endowment fund to attract benefactors to enable future operations that are not solely dependent on donor support," Dovlo said.

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