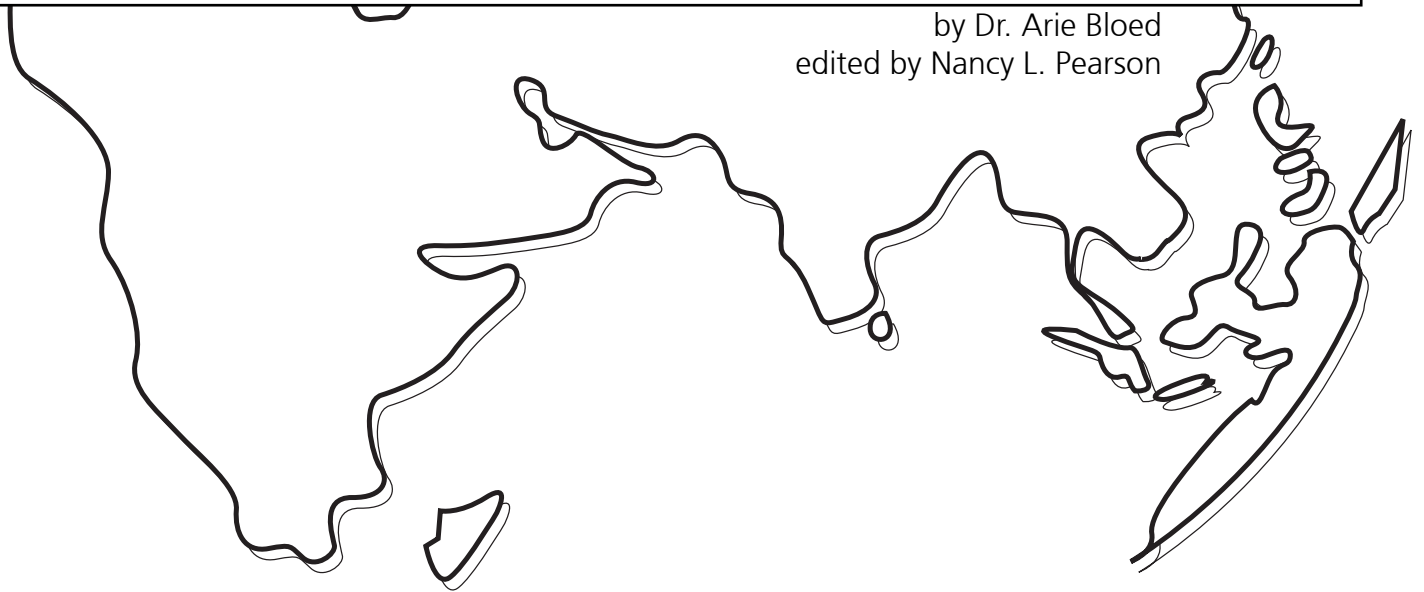


POLICE TRAINING:

Opening the door for professional and community-oriented policing

by Dr. Arie Bloed
edited by Nancy L. Pearson



A Tactical Notebook published by
the New Tactics Project
of the Center for Victims of Torture

Published by

The Center for Victims of Torture
New Tactics in Human Rights Project
717 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA
www.cvt.org, www.newtactics.org

Notebook Series Editor

Nancy L. Pearson

Copyediting

Nick Gardner

Design

Sue Everson

Layout

Richele Kuhlmann

© 2006 Center for Victims of Torture

This publication may be freely reproduced in print and in electronic form as long as this copyright notice appears on all copies.

- 4 Organization & author information
- 5 Letter from the New Tactics project manager
- 6 Introduction
- 7 Understanding the strategic and tactical approach
- 7 Laying the foundation for the police training program in Thailand
- 9 Building the collaborative partnership
- 11 Preparing for Implementation: Making the Police Training Program Accessible
- 12 Understanding the COLPI computer-based interactive police training program
- 13 Innovative characteristics of the program
- 15 Successful Results of the Police Training Program
- 18 Challenges and problems in implementation
- 20 Lessons Learned—Ideas for transferability and implementation in other contexts



The Center for Victims of Torture
New Tactics in Human Rights Project
717 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA
www.cvt.org, www.newtactics.org

About the Author

Dr. Arie Bloed served as the Executive Director of the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute (COLPI) in Budapest from 1997-2002, which was part of the global Open Society Institute. At present he is working as a senior consultant for various intergovernmental organisations (e.g., OSCE, UN, EU, ADB) and non-governmental organizations (e.g., AIHR) on various projects on police reform, interethnic relations and human rights. Since 2002, one of his activities is directing an extensive program on police training in Thailand and other South East Asian countries in partnership with Forum-Asia Foundation, a Bangkok-based regional NGO. His involvement in the area of police reform and police training dates back to the beginning of the 1990s.

He started his career as a lecturer and finally Associate Professor at the Law Faculty of the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) in 1976. In 1988 he defended his Ph.D. at the Utrecht University, devoted to the External Relations of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. In 1994 he was appointed Director of the newly founded Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations in The Hague which was created by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. In this capacity he acted as senior advisor to the High Commissioner in his efforts to prevent conflicts relating to minorities, in particular in former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1997 he accepted the above-mentioned appointment at COLPI in Budapest.

Acknowledgements

A delicate project as the present one on police training is always the outcome of a joint effort of many dedicated people. Those to be acknowledged are, in particular, Mr. Somchai Homlaor, the then Secretary-General of Forum-Asia, and Miss Suphaphorn Darak, the first Police Training Coordinator of FAF (2003-2004). Both of them showed a remarkable dedication, diplomacy, as well as professional sensitivity towards the nature of police work and police training. I also want to acknowledge the great support, extended to FAF/AIHR by various representatives of the Royal Thai Police. Without underestimating the work done by others, I want to mention in particular: General Sereepisut Taemeeyaves (Deputy Commissioner-General and Inspector-General), General Charnchit, former Deputy Commissioner-General, General Israphan Snitwong, Deputy Commissioner-General and former Director of the Police Education Bureau, General Supawut, present Director of the Police Education Bureau, and Colonel Khemarim, Police Education Bureau.

Contact Information

As of July 2005, the Police Training Program is located at the Asian Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), under the umbrella of the Forum-Asia Foundation. For further information contact:

Address: Asian Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Suthisarnwinichai Road 111, Samsennok, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320. Thailand
(aihr@hrdfoundation.org)

Contact Information:

Dr. Arie Bloed, Police Program Advisor, Forum-Asia Foundation/Asian Institute for Human Rights, Bangkok, Thailand
(arie@hrdfoundation.org)



May 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the New Tactics in Human Rights Tactical Notebook Series! In each notebook a human rights practitioner describes an innovative tactic used successfully in advancing human rights. The authors are part of the broad and diverse human rights movement, including non-government and government perspectives, educators, law enforcement personnel, truth and reconciliation processes, and women's rights and mental health advocates. They have both adapted and pioneered tactics that have contributed to human rights in their home countries. In addition, they have utilized tactics that, when adapted, can be applied in other countries and situations to address a variety of issues.

Each notebook contains detailed information on how the author and his or her organization achieved what they did. We want to inspire other human rights practitioners to think tactically—and to broaden the realm of tactics considered to effectively advance human rights.

This notebook will discuss how a strategy working toward promoting community-oriented and human rights friendly policing in Thailand and other countries in Asia utilized the introduction of a unique, computer-based police training education program to engage and enlist the support of key leadership of the Royal Thai Police (RTP) to champion the training tool. The computer-based police training program was a valuable tactic within their strategy serving to build mutual trust, acknowledgement and support while also helping police to more effectively address their immediate day-to-day policing challenges.

The entire series of Tactical Notebooks is available online at www.newtactics.org. Additional notebooks will continue to be added over time. On our web site you will also find other tools, including a searchable database of tactics, a discussion forum for human rights practitioners and information about our workshops and symposium. To subscribe to the New Tactics newsletter, please send an e-mail to newtactics@cvt.org.

The New Tactics in Human Rights Project is an international initiative led by a diverse group of organizations and practitioners from around the world. The project is coordinated by the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) and grew out of our experiences as a creator of new tactics and as a treatment center that also advocates for the protection of human rights from a unique position—one of healing and reclaiming civic leadership.

We hope that you will find these notebooks informational and thought-provoking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Pearson".

Nancy L. Pearson

New Tactics Training Manager



Introduction

In Tak Bai, a small town in Narathiwat province in the south of Thailand near the Malaysian border, six local men were arrested, accused of having supplied weapons to the insurgents, on October 24, 2004. One day later, on October 25, a spontaneous demonstration took place to demand their release. The police had called in army reinforcements and the army used tear gas and water cannons on the crowd. Six men were killed by gunshot.

As a result, hundreds of mostly young Muslim men were arrested. They were made to take off their shirts, lie on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs. Later, soldiers threw them into trucks with the young men stacked five or six deep. During the three hour transport to an army camp in another province, 78 of these young men suffocated to death.¹

This incident took place just weeks before Forum-Asia held its third Training of Trainers with the Royal Thai Police in Songkhla. Significantly, this training was provided for newly appointed police trainers for the southern region of Thailand. At the closing session, the deputy police chief of Region Nine made the statement, "If this training would have happened a few months before, Tak Bai would never have happened.

For many years Forum-Asia (FA) has been convinced of the necessity and the importance of training police on human rights. At the core, Forum-Asia believes that engaging with police on human rights is essential for an effective protection of human rights for all.

Beginning as early as 1999, under the leadership of then Secretary General, Mr. Somchai Homlaor, FA became convinced that the existing police training programs were not yielding the desired changes or impact it was hoping for. FA started exploring whether there were more effective ways to address police training.

Around that same time, I was deeply involved with a very innovative, computer-based training program for police being developed for former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Mongolia. This police training program was developed by the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute (COLPI) in Budapest, while I was the acting Executive Director. The COLPI police training programs have been implemented since 1999 in former socialist countries including Mongolia, and are becoming part of the permanent curriculum of a considerable and growing number of police training institutes (schools, colleges and academies) in these countries. This kind of police training program excited FA and addressed many of

its concerns regarding police training efforts.

To our surprise, although the programs' training modules had been developed specifically for former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, they have been considered highly valuable for police training in many other countries. This is largely due to the fact that the policing behavioural skills highlighted in the program's training modules reflect problems with which police are confronted worldwide. As a result, there has been considerable interest from countries outside Europe, including Thailand and a number of other countries in Asia, to implement this police training program.

In this notebook, I will discuss the successful efforts of Forum-Asia—as a regional NGO, and my efforts, as a foreign consultant with expertise in the design and development of a unique computer-based police training program—to engage and enlist the support of top leadership of the Royal Thai Police (RTP) to implement the training program in Thailand.

To date, the engagement and support has resulted in the successful training and development of a core cadre of seventeen Thai police trainers from different institutions and departments of the RTP. It has also resulted in co-sponsorship between FA and the RTP of a regional workshop that took place in June 2004 that introduced the police training program to representatives from civil society and top police officials from eight other Asian countries. As a result, FA began a similar program with police in Cambodia.

As of July 2005, the Police Training Program is located at the Asian Institute for Human Rights, under the umbrella of the Forum-Asia Foundation (FAF). The police training program forms the core of our efforts with police in Thailand, Cambodia and, in the near future, other South and South-East Asian countries. To simplify reading throughout the notebook, I will use the initials of FAF to represent the groundbreaking work that has been conducted by the Forum-Asia Foundation over the past years and is continuing to move forward in the region.

¹ Website reports of the Tak Bai incident on 25 October 2004. Sources: The Age (<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/10/29/1099028209065.html?from=storylhs&oneclick=true>); Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency and the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A63714-2004Oct26.html>) cles/2004/10/29/1099028209065.html?from=storylhs&oneclick=true); Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency and the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A63714-2004Oct26.html>)

UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL APPROACH

The Strategic Goal

FAF's strategic goal has been to improve the conduct of the RTP to be more in conformity with international human rights standards. In spite of its relatively high level of professionalism, the RTP is sometimes accused of suffering from chronic diseases such as rampant corruption, abuse of power, an often public-unfriendly attitude, and its abuse by political leaders. In addition the RTP has some institutional problems such as its highly closed and centralized character, its military structure and its limited accountability.

Although FAF selected training of police as our tactical tool, the final goal was, and remains, the establishment of relations based on professional confidence and partnership which allows work on more delicate issues with the RTP as well as promoting overall reforms of the RTP toward a more public-service and community-oriented organization.

As a regional organization, FAF chose Thailand as a 'pilot' country for a number of strategic reasons including: the ability to engage and the assumed willingness of the RTP; the relative openness of Thailand to accept the training program; the central location of Thailand in the region; and the relative absence of major conflicts in the country at that time. Additionally, the location of the FAF regional office, in Bangkok, allowed for the planning of a long-term establishment of relations with the RTP. Building long-term relationships is essential to building necessary trust for each phase—preparation, ongoing development and institutionalization—of the police training program.

The Tactical Approach

FAF chose to introduce a professional police training program with the RTP as a first step in opening the doors for more long-term co-operation aimed at supporting the strategic goal to introduce community policing, more accountability and transparency.

A very important aspect of FAF's tactical approach was not to label the training program "Police and Human Rights," but rather "Professional Policing." This concept was a program of police and for police. FAF wanted to address the practical behavioural skills which police officers need in their day-to-day work. FAF offered the police a practical training that would meet the needs of police themselves.

Laying the foundation for the police training program in Thailand

Police training was seen as a core task for FAF as a hu-

man rights NGO. Although human rights training for the police is a favourite activity of many human rights NGOs around the world (it is being supported by many donor organizations) the results have been disappointing in altering police behaviour. Personal observations and lessons learned from others doing this work may yield explanation.

Training is often too theoretical, based on norms and standards from international documents and disregards the practical needs of police officers. Although knowledge of the theory of human rights is definitely necessary for the higher management and policy levels within the police, one may doubt whether it is really necessary for rank-and-file police officers. For the 'ordinary' police officer it is most important to learn the practical skills in line with the theoretical norms and standards.

Training is often based on the perspective of civil society, not from police. Unfortunately, this can result in training that has a moralizing or 'preaching' nature which does little to convince police officers to change their behaviour. Behavioural changes can only be expected if police officers themselves are convinced that a different type of behaviour will bring them concrete benefits. This requires programs which target their day-to-day needs. In addition, NGO police trainers are usually civilian experts without practical experience as police officers. Such trainers are usually seen as 'softies' by the police and not people from whom they could learn practical skills.

Training on human rights is often 'isolated' from other topics of police training. This gives human rights the image of being something 'separate' and not part of real police work. It should be integrated with 'classical' topics of police training, such as the use of force and firearms, communication and investigation skills.

Training programs are sometimes 'imported' from other countries without proper adaptation to local needs and circumstances. Although police officers will enjoy a day off to attend such trainings, they won't usually consider such programs as addressing their real day-to-day needs.

Training is often ad hoc in character. For sustainable change within a police organization as a whole, such training must be an integral part of the permanent training curricula of police training institutions. Over the years new cadets and servicing police officers will have received and will follow this instruction. Too often, human rights training for police resembles a type of "human rights tourism" by foreign experts. They arrive in a country for a short period of time, provide a brief training and leave. Training in and of



itself will not bring about real, sustainable change. Although training is indispensable for change, much more is needed. Changes in organizational structures, such as accountability, transparency mechanisms, and a change in overall management structure are also needed.

There are many admirable efforts being undertaken by NGOs and intergovernmental organizations around the world to improve police performance in their countries. I have seen moving examples of painstaking preparations to develop really 'practical' training manuals with only limited results. With these experiences and lessons to help guide us, FAF decided to invest in a long-term and different kind of approach and police training model. In order to do this, FAF asked a number of important questions.

Why focus on police training?

FAF aimed to conform police performance to international minimum standards of human rights. Training of the police was indispensable. However, we also believed that without demonstrating in a practical way how to act professionally and in conformance with human rights we could not expect officers to change their behaviour. This was a critical point for FAF since traditionally, human rights aren't part of police training curricula in many countries or only as separate, 'isolated' courses. As mentioned above, if human rights are included, it is usually in a rather theoretical and, therefore, impractical way.

Professional and human rights oriented policing are crucial elements for effective policing. It has been shown in many countries that this method of policing can help maintain stability and security, and prevent conflicts, in a country and region. At the same time, it is well known that police are part of the problem in many countries. Methods such as community-oriented policing, lead to police behaviour and structures that are part of the solution. This cannot be achieved without effective and professional police training.²

FAF wanted police training that would sensitize police to the fact that they are part of the society, that human rights pertain to them as citizens as well, and that they serve society in a very important way. FAF believed this community-oriented perspective should be part of any police training program it implemented.

² For information on this topic, see the report of an OSCE conference in 2002 at: http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2002/10/1792_en.pdf Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency and the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A63714-2004Oct26.html>)

Right: Two of the three Thai police trainers who were in charge of the Training of Trainers (ToT) Foreground: Mrs. Orawon from the Border Patrol Police and Seated: Mr. Chanapol, deputy director of the Yala Police School. They belong to the group of 17 Thai police trainers which received intensive training from FAF in 2003 and 2004.

Why start with police training?

Why start with the training of the police, while there are so many other issues to be addressed, such as corruption, abuse of power, torture, organizational deficiencies? Practice has shown that NGOs have great difficulty in gaining access to police and police structures. Traditionally, police institutions are very closed and difficulties will only increase if an NGO starts by addressing highly sensitive issues (such as torture or corruption). Therefore, FAF very strategically decided to use a long-term plan of engagement and tactically used this innovative, practical police training model as an effective tool to approach and engage the RTP.

FAF started with police training as a tactical way to achieve the aims of our human rights NGO for the following reasons .

First, based on previous experience, police training institutions are usually the more open-minded or 'liberal' parts of police organizations, and are more open to co-operation with civil society. Even though official approval from the central leadership of police is generally required for developing co-operation, this can more easily be achieved by providing training that genuinely addresses police needs.

Second, by providing the kind of highly professional training police see as directly benefiting their work, relations of confidence and even friendship can be established. A more long-term relationship can be built based on a growing awareness that both partners are not just criticizing each other, but have common goals: serving the community and, in particular, the more vulnerable groups in society.

Third, the training program would help us establish confidence, allowing future inroads to tackle more delicate issues of police reform, such as community policing.

I hope that FAF's experience of establishing a police training program as a first step in a long-term strategic



process may inspire other NGOs to consider future co-operation aimed at organizational change within police organizations. Keep in mind, however, that structural changes, such as the official criteria for evaluating the performance of police officers, will require much more than a police training program alone.

Building the collaborative partnership

Prior to approaching the RTP, FAF had to request a license (which is free of charge) from the Open Society Institute/COLPI in Budapest for introducing the training program in Thailand. Once this first step was taken, FAF approached the RTP to get their co-operation and approval. In Thailand, as in many countries, any formal co-operation requires the consent of the top leadership. This is the Commissioner-General, the chief of the Thai police. However, in another strategic decision, we decided to first approach the police training institutions because without their support, FAF could not expect a positive response from the national police chief.

Thailand has three large police training institutions: the Police Education Bureau, the Police Cadet Academy (PCA) and the training institution of the Border Patrol Police. FAF had to decide which institution should be the primary partner for the prospective project. It already had excellent co-operation with the Border Patrol Police (BPP) which belongs to the more popular and community-oriented police branches in Thailand. However, since the training program would focus in particular on behavioural skills for rank-and-file police officers, the Police Education Bureau (PEB) with its police schools all over the country would be the most logical long-term strategic partner, despite limited interaction to date.

Efforts to approach the PEB started in early 2002, making use of personal contacts. The UK Embassy provided very valuable assistance in establishing relations with the RTP. The Embassy was funding the implementation of the project. As quite a few UK citizens are serving long-term prison sentences in Thailand, the Embassy has frequent contacts with the Thai police. In addition, the Embassy had shown a keen interest in supporting projects aimed at improving police behaviour. Thanks to their relations with staff at the PEB, meetings were organized with the top PEB management.

The role of Somchai Homlaor, the Secretary-General of Forum-Asia at that time, was also essential to gaining access to the RTP and the PEB. Mr. Somchai is a widely-known and respected human rights lawyer in Thailand, and possesses personal diplomatic skills and a surprisingly good understanding of the position and problems of police officers. His long-term contacts with individual police officers at various levels were

definitely helpful in opening doors. This use of personal contacts must be noted. Personal connections, relationships and credibility are quite important in starting up delicate projects like this one.

Following successful discussions with the leadership of the PEB, a meeting at Police Headquarters was arranged. Any co-operation of the RTP with outsiders requires the official blessing and 'orders' from the top. Understanding this protocol and context, FAF sent an official proposal to the national police chief who assigned one of his Deputy Commissioners General to be in charge.

The official meeting with the Deputy Commissioner-General of the Thai police, who was in charge of police education, took place in May 2002. It was remarkable to see how well the PEB colleagues had briefed the deputy police chief about the project. When we entered his room, the demonstration video about FAF's police program was running. After only a few minutes of introduction, he indicated he was very interested in a partnership with FAF to introduce this program in Thailand. Afterwards, the RTP colleagues present at the meeting indicated that the Deputy Commissioner-General showed keen interest and wanted to enter into a detailed agreement with FAF immediately.

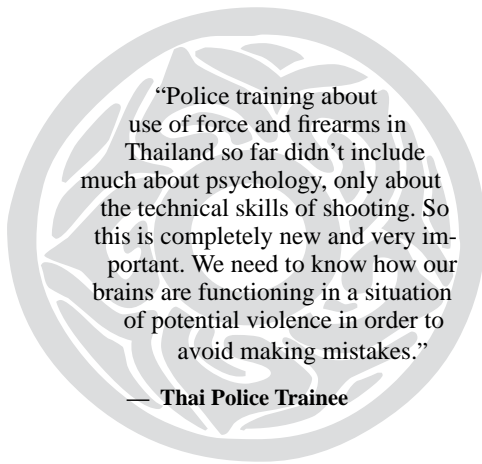
Unfortunately, since FAF didn't yet have a special police program coordinator, the follow-up task was assigned to an already-overburdened training coordinator. Half a year passed without concrete follow-up activities. In this same period the deputy chief was appointed to a new position. As a result, FAF had to start all over again trying to get entrance to the top leadership of the RTP.

It was not until the spring of 2003, after another official request to the Commissioner General of the RTP, that an Assistant Commissioner-General was assigned the task of negotiating with FAF. The meeting



Above, from left: Miss Kitiporn (Police Program Assistant), Mr. Somchai Homlaor (Former Secretary-General of Forum-Asia) and Miss Suphaphorn Darak (Police Program Coordinator)





“Police training about use of force and firearms in Thailand so far didn’t include much about psychology, only about the technical skills of shooting. So this is completely new and very important. We need to know how our brains are functioning in a situation of potential violence in order to avoid making mistakes.”

— Thai Police Trainee

various training modules.

Some staff members of the PEB were especially helpful in assisting with the heavy workload of the implementation process. The agreement between the RTP and FAF was that FAF would cover the costs for translation/adaptation and the costs for foreign experts. The RTP would cover all other costs, including the expenses of Training of Trainers—accommodation, food, transport for the trainees, and essential equipment for the training.

Finding Common Ground and Incentives for Initiating the Police Training Program

In contrast to other human rights courses for police, the COLPI police training program introduced by FAF to the RTP aims at teaching skills which enable police officers to be more effective and more respected in their work. It was clear that the RTP was very interested in the training program because it promotes respect for human rights in a very practical and pragmatic way useful for the day-to-day work of ordinary police officers.

Although human rights make up the foundation and are woven through the whole of the training program, “human rights” are usually not specifically mentioned. That’s also the reason that the program is labelled “Professional Policing” and not “Police and Human Rights.” This approach has turned out to be very

with him was more successful than we had expected. He initiated the establishment of a formal working group, composed of several police generals and colonels of Headquarters and the PEB, which was tasked to supervise the translation and adaptation of the

successful. FAF has managed to communicate human rights using terminology which is familiar to the RTP, but which in no way is considered “threatening.” It is a good example of how significant progress can be made when the human rights framework can naturally intersect with the framework of the people we’re trying to engage. This approach is not about ‘selling out to the other side.’ Rather, it’s about finding common ground and common language with police partners in order to find the best way to promote professional and human rights-friendly behaviour by police.

The same approach has apparently been quite successful in a number of other tactical notebooks (for police and other hard to engage populations) featured by the New Tactics Project.³

Strategically, it is important to have a clear understanding of the interests of the ‘other side,’ as one can only expect a productive partnership, if both partners have an interest in co-operation. In this case, there were a number of very important factors that appealed to the RTP in order to accept the training program being offered by the FAF partnership.

Passing the Test

Mr. Somchai and I, as FAF’s Police Advisor, passed RTP leaders’ test of “professionalism” in the first meetings. For instance, in the very first meeting with the Deputy Commissioner General, the discussion about the FAF program itself took only about 20 minutes. In the remaining hour or so the General raised questions about all kinds of other policing issues and how these concerns were addressed in other countries. We were very honest and forthright in our exchange. Since that moment we have both been accepted as professional and trustworthy partners. I emphasize how important personal relations are in building relationships between civil society and police organizations. Our steady attention to maintaining professionalism in these relations has helped FAF in developing further co-operation with the RTP in more delicate areas, such as in the troubled Muslim south of the country where police are facing huge problems in containing flaring violence. In our experience, professionalism means honestly representing and acting within your own professional competency and authority without exaggeration, misrepresentation or concealment. It is equally important to communicate with respect, integrity and confidentiality and to honour your commitments with accountability, diligence and excellence.

Becoming “First” in the Region

A major incentive for the RTP was that Thailand would be the first country in the whole region to implement

³ Working within a law enforcement initiated structure, Liberian National Law Enforcement Association (LINLEA), “Promoting Human Rights Professionalism in the Liberian Police Force” by Cecil Griffiths. Source: New Tactics website: <http://www.newtactics.org/main.php/PromotingHumanRightsProfessionalismInTheLiberianPoliceForce>; Working with traditional leaders, “Powerful Persuasion: Combating Traditional Practices that Violate Human Rights” by Emile Short, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ghana. Source: New Tactics website: <http://www.newtactics.org/main.php/PowerfulPersuasion>; and Working with government officials, “Making Allies: Engaging Government Officials to Advance Human Rights” by Boris Pustynstsev, Citizens’ Watch, Russia. Source: New Tactics website: <http://www.newtactics.org/main.php/AdministrationandthePublic>

this project and would therefore act as a pilot. It was agreed that if positive achievements were seen, the Thai experience with the new training program would be apparent to colleagues in neighbouring countries. The RTP clearly appreciated this fact and were keen to act as a 'forerunner' in the region.

Well-trained Thai police trainers would become FAF's trainers for the program in neighbouring countries. This was also important for FAF, as part of its strategy was to gain the active involvement of the RTP in further promoting its program in the region. The official partnership with the RTP undoubtedly opened doors to introduce FAF's police training program to police in neighboring countries. From the beginning, FAF had developed a policy aimed at building local capacity and reducing the necessity of bringing in expertise from more developed countries. As a matter of fact, the leadership of the RTP has always been very helpful in giving their consent, whenever FAF approached them for their support in this context.

Real Value

Finally, the training program itself offered a real and practical addition to their traditional police training program. Although police training in Thailand is generally of a high level, the FAF police training program had clear value for them. It addressed issues which were not yet part of the regular training curriculum.

Preparing for Implementation: Making the Police Training Program Accessible

The process of translation and adaptation of ten selected modules, chosen from thirteen available modules, developed smoothly. Although the working group was officially responsible, most of this work was done by the FAF program coordinator and an experienced police trainer at the PEB. We used an information and communication technology (IT) company which delivered highly professional work for a very low price. This process takes time. The adaptation process for all ten of the chosen modules took about a year. This is actually a short time compared with experiences in Central and East European countries, where it often took a year or more just to adapt a few of the modules. The Thai success was also due to FAF having a full-time program coordinator available, and the RTP also invested substantially in the adaptation process.

After the completion of a substantial part of the modules in the Thai language, a first Training of Trainers (ToT) was organized for two weeks in September 2003. Seventeen experienced police trainers from the PEB,



Above: The official opening of the ToT on 3 October 2005.

PCA and Border Patrol Police (BPP) attended.

The selection of candidates was mainly done by the director of the PEB in consultation with FAF. Since FAF didn't have the overview of the possible candidates,

for the training, it relied on the PEB to choose the candidates, which turned out to be excellent.

The first ToT was remarkable and very successful. At first several of the participants hardly concealed their apprehension or even hostility to us as an NGO. They openly stated that they could hardly imagine that they would learn anything. After a couple of days, the atmosphere completely changed and the same highly critical participants at the beginning began to apologize extensively. They explained that they never expected an NGO to come up with such professional training programs which they could immediately use in their training practice. At the end of the ToT, FAF had made a group of strong friendships within the RTP. This became our core group in the development and implementation of new programs, both in Thailand and the Asia region.

A follow-up ToT was organized in January 2004 for this same group of trainers in order to introduce the remaining adapted training modules as well as offer a forum for exchanging their experiences using the previously introduced modules. Again, this ToT confirmed the very high quality of police trainers in the RTP in general and showed the enthusiasm of the Thai police trainers for the FAF training program. One of the main criticisms, expressed during the evaluation of the second ToT, was that participants missed a visit to a human rights NGO as part of the program. They were very interested to learn more about such work. This was a remarkable change in attitude indeed! This point is worth mentioning, as FAF is of course the NGO implementing the project, but is also seen as a



representative of civil society throughout Thailand. This is a big responsibility and should be kept in mind by all NGOs when trying to develop partnerships with delicate organizations like the police. NGOs need to take into account the traditionally antagonistic relationships which exist between them and find ways to build bridges of understanding.

The same change in attitude occurred at the top level of the RTP. The Assistant Commissioner-General in charge for our program informally told us that he had not had favourable opinions about NGOs as they are always criticizing the police.

His experience with us, however, made him change his opinion. This change in attitude was reflected in offers by two retiring Deputy Commissioners-General, of help after their retirement. FAF can rely on a growing number of police officers at various levels within the RTP for the implementation of its present and future programs.

This remarkable development was due in great part to FAF's contracting a highly talented police program coordinator, Suphaphorn Darak. Even as a young woman, she quickly managed to develop very professional relations with all her partners in the RTP. They clearly showed how much they came to appreciate working with her. For example, top-level generals started to call her directly on her mobile phone to discuss issues instead of using their assistants, which is the ordinary protocol in the RTP.

Such experiences highlight the significance of personal relations and quality of staff in working with partners like the police. NGOs must also be dedicated

to maintaining professionalism and high quality products to have an impact. Unreliable relationships or lesser-quality outputs only confirm existing prejudices among police about civil society and their work.

“What does POLICE mean?

- P – Polite**
- O – Organized**
- L – Lawful**
- I – Intelligent**
- C – Community-oriented**
- E – Educated”**

— Thai Police Trainee

Right: Title page of the CD-ROM of the module on Third-Party Conflict Intervention in Khmer with the following logos at the bottom: left Cambodian Defenders Project (the local NGO partner of FAF), in the middle the logo of the Royal Cambodian Police, and at the right the logo of Forum-Asia. The Khmer text on top reads: “Third-Party Conflict Intervention”

Understanding the COLPI computer-based interactive police training program

The COLPI police training program is quite innovative and very different from what is traditionally used for training the police about human rights. The training methodology is very different and requires substantial skills from the police trainers. The development of a module on “Trainer Skills” was a necessary addition for training police trainers in using the modules. The “trainer skills” module also contains basic guidelines for the use of simulation games as an educational tool for police training. This new police training program achieves two main aims: first, to introduce highly practical and effective training on human rights into the police training classrooms; and second, to introduce modern and sophisticated training methodologies as a way to influence how other topics in the police training curriculum are taught. In this way the quality of police training in general can, and hopefully will, be improved.



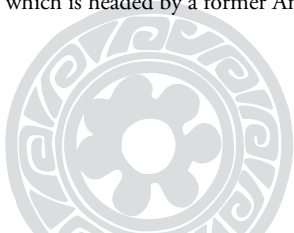
Above: One picture shows the “credit screen” (= screen with acknowledgement of the initiators of the module) of the Thai version of the module on “Third-Party Conflict Intervention”, as follows: top left the logo of the Royal Thai Police, top right the logo of the Police Education Bureau, and at the bottom the logo of Forum-Asia.



Innovative characteristics of the program

- It is fully computer-based (CD-ROMs) with separate student and trainer manuals for each of 13 modules with English and Russian as the original languages. Since the implementation of the program in various countries, a number of adapted modules are now also available in languages like Romanian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Mongolian, Thai and Khmer.
- The modules are interactive, aimed at stimulating discussion in the classroom.
- The modules address human rights from a purely practical point of view, translating the norms and standards in practical behavioural skills which ordinary police officers can use in their day-to-day work.
- The total training program consists of 13 modules: 1) Use of Force and Firearms; 2) Treatment of Victims; 3) Policing with Society; 4) Handling Traffic Offenses; 5) Police and Media; 6) Communication Skills; 7) Third-Party Conflict Intervention; 8) Domestic Violence; 9) Rape; 10) Sexual Abuse of Children; 11) Stress and Trauma Prevention for Police Officers; 12) Police and Drugs; and, finally, 13) an extensive module on Trainer Skills.
- The modules focus heavily on ‘visualizing’ police training, based on the experience that police officers are highly ‘visual’ in nature. Therefore, each CD-ROM contains many video clips and animations with many different, practical scenarios that demonstrate desirable or less-professional police behaviour. Practice has shown that such visual elements of training programs have a much stronger impact on the trainees than traditional lecture formats.
- The modules have been developed from a police perspective, addressing the practical needs of policing. This was realized through the intensive involvement of professional police trainers from several countries in the process of developing the modules.
- Although the main human rights instruments are referred to briefly, the modules don’t contain unnecessary theoretical cargo. The program as such is not labelled “Police and Human Rights”, but “Professional Policing.” References to human rights often provoke prejudices among police officers all over the world and since the modules aim at developing purely practical policing skills, it is tactically much more convincing to use a “neutral” title for the program that better promotes changes in actual policing behaviour.
- The modules are ‘generic’ or ‘framework’ in character. They have been designed in such a way that they can be easily translated and adapted to the local circumstances of the countries that want to introduce them. For instance, the modules contain “empty containers” for issues such as the “national legislation” on use of force and firearms, in which the relevant legal texts can easily be incorporated.
- The modules are designed in such a way that they can be easily integrated into current police training programs in the permanent curriculum of police education institutions. This will contribute to a high sustainability of the program after its implementation.
- At the same time, the modules can also be used for ad hoc trainings of specialized groups of law enforcement officers. Several of the modules can also easily be used for joint interdisciplinary training of police, prosecutors, judges and attorneys. Other specialized training programs have developed as a result of this program.⁴
- The backbone of the program consists of the intensive Trainings of Trainers (ToT). The ToT forms the basic tool for the introduction of the program and aims to achieve a high level of sustainability by providing the training to carry it forward into police training institutions.

⁴ One of the spin-offs of the COLPI program is the development of a highly specialized and interesting training program for police and security officers by the ICRC, entitled “To Serve and To Protect.” The ICRC program was developed using exactly the same methodology as COLPI training modules and was developed by the same training consultancy company in Amsterdam, Netherlands, namely Cirquest which is headed by a former Amsterdam police



Sample Contents of one module: Domestic Violence

Each module contains a 'tree' that consists of three main 'chapters.' If you click on each 'chapter', a branch is opened with the indicated titles. For example under the branch of Psychological framework listed below, additional branches include common views, offenders, and victims. If you click on each of these titles, further branches are opened and available with access to introductions with voice-overs, animations, scenarios, etc. The selection "tree" of the module on Domestic Violence reads as follows:

Introduction: Definition

Psychological framework:

- *Common views*
- *Offenders*
- *Victims*

Guidelines:

- *Responding to a call*
- *Handling a report*
- *Action after intervention*

Permission to use

The COLPI police training modules are copyright-protected. The copyright is owned by the Budapest branch of the Open Society Institute, which issues free of charge licenses by request to partners who want to make use of the modules. The FAF is licensed to use and adapt the training programs in all South- and South-East Asian countries. Further information about the use of the modules in other regions of the world can be obtained from the Open Society Institute in Budapest, Hungary. Contact person: Zaza Namoradze, e-mail: namoradz@osi.hu.

Technical Requirements

Since this police training program is computer-based, the question may arise whether this program can be used in lesser developed countries where police may not have the technical resources of Western European or North American states. This is a valid question, as the availability of computer equipment is a serious problem for police in many developing countries. The program has been developed so that it can be used with very limited resources. For use in a classroom, just one desktop computer or laptop plus an LCD-projector (and screen) suffice. These will also suffice for mobile teams which provide in-service training to officers working in police stations in cities and in the country side.⁵

The adaptation of the modules to the language and local requirements of the countries concerned is another technical issue. The modules are designed so that a local IT-specialist will easily see how to approach it. In practice just 15 minutes is needed to find out what has to be done. Moreover, all texts of the scenarios, introductions and animations of the CD-ROMs and the texts of student and trainer manuals can be downloaded on any normal computer from a special CD-ROM with help files, which forms part of each module.⁶ In practice I have seen several police trainers who simply downloaded all texts and started translating and adapting the texts at their own desks. Most important is the selection of a proper IT-company with satisfactory experience with multimedia tools to guide the adaptation process and to put everything back on CD-ROM. This technical work includes the involvement of professional actors for the dubbing of the many video scenarios. In practice such IT companies can be found in each country, sometimes closely connected with national TV-channels, which deliver a quality product at reasonable prices.

⁵ Minimum system requirements are: Pentium 200MHz, 32Mb RAM, 4-speed CD-ROM player and 16-bits soundcard. Software requirements: Windows 95, 98, NT, 2000 or XP with Internet Explorer 4 (plus XML-add on) or Internet Explorer 5, Media Player version 6.4 or higher. In 'normal' words: system and software requirements are very minimal!

⁶ This means that each module consists of one or more CD-ROMs with the actual training program and an additional CD-ROM with help files (software, texts etc.) which contain everything a local IT specialist would need for the adaptation of the modules.

Successful Results of the Police Training Program

The successful and relatively speedy introduction of the new training program in Thailand enabled FAF to jointly organize a regional workshop with the RTP and the Police Education Bureau in Bangkok in June 2004. This training included the participation of representatives from civil society and top level police from eight other Asian countries. Participants came from Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India and Mongolia. Police from Laos were also invited, but did not attend the workshop. Although the deputy head of the Lao DPR diplomatic mission in Bangkok attended the opening of the workshop and later became very supportive in introducing the same program in his country.

The selection of countries was partially based on previous relations with police in those countries and partially on FAF's assessment, of the potential to support the introduction of its training program in these countries. Mongolia was the only exception, as the training program has already been fully implemented there in the last few years with COLPI's support. As a result, the Mongolian representatives served as resource persons during the meeting. Several countries sent high-level police representatives, including two deputy chiefs of the national police. This can be attributed to the fact that the RTP officially acted as a co-organizer and were responsible for inviting the police representatives.

At the workshop the results of the Thai pilot project were demonstrated. Several of the Thai police trainers from the original group of 17 trainees played an active role in the workshop. It was obvious that these

Thai police trainers were thrilled with the idea and opportunity to share their newly gained expertise with colleagues from so many neighbouring countries.

The workshop provided a chance for a real brainstorming session about the many problems faced by police in the region, with a special focus on the role of police trainers. As a result, it came as no surprise that FAF and the RTP were urgently requested to continue organizing such workshops. The workshop highlighted a couple of significant "firsts." opportunity to gather together with the participation of civil society representatives from all the countries concerned. It was also the first time that police, as trainers, from the region had the chance to be together. Typically regional co-operation is focused on operational policing activities.

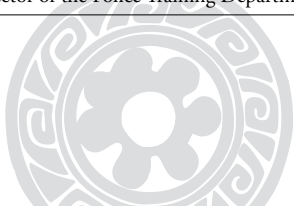
It was the first time that police trainers from the region had an opportunity to gather together with the participation of civil society representatives from all the countries concerned. It was also the first time that police, as trainers, from the region had the chance to be together. Typically regional co-operation is focused on operational policing activities.

The outcome of the workshop was a series of requests from other countries to FAF to implement the program in their countries (Cambodia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, in addition, Vietnam wanted to consider its options, convinced that the program would be important for them).

Another very encouraging outcome of the workshop was the strong desire of the police trainers to continue working together with civil society in establishing a permanent regional network.



Above: FA's demonstration of the police training program to the Cambodian police leadership in April 2004. The FA staff, a Thai police trainer (Lt-Col Chanapol), the Director of the Police Training Department of Cambodia Gen-Maj. Ma Chhoeun and some other high Cambodian police officers.



During the implementation of the Thai project, FAF explored possibilities in Cambodia with the active support of a local NGO, the Cambodian Defenders Project (CDP). Our regional workshop to introduce the police training came just in time, as the Cambodian police planned to start the training of new recruits for the very first time after the civil war. It had buildings and facilities, but no curriculum. The new training program, therefore, was exactly what was needed to fill part of the gap. The program in Cambodia is now in the process of implementation and the first ToT was organized in October 2005.

It is remarkable that the 'generic' COLPI training modules originally developed for use in former socialist countries are considered highly applicable to the further professionalization of police in many other countries. In contrast to our original expectations, the fact that only 'white faces' in 'neutral' police uniforms are seen in the many film scenarios has appeared to be even an asset.

Thai, as well as Mongolian, police students consider these scenarios to be important sources of inspiration, as in their view they reflect modern policing in the more developed countries in the world. The Border Patrol Police have been so impressed by the innovative training methodology of the new programs that they decided to reform their entire curriculum (consisting of approximately 80 topics/modules) along the same lines. The BPP also became the most active in replicating the training program throughout Thailand in its own four regional police training centers.

The training modules are now being used in a growing number of regular Thai police training programs in the PEB and BPP. The Police Cadet Academy is still considering how they can be integrated.

The successful implementation of the program has produced relations of great confidence between us and the RTP. This has opened doors for much more delicate activities which was one of the main aims of starting the program. As stated above, FAF considered its police training program as a first step to more comprehensive co-operation aimed at addressing more strategic issues of police reform in Thailand. The training program made it possible to gain the confidence and trust of the police, without which it would be impossible to approach more delicate issues. This is not to imply that police training, as such, is not important. However, more organizational or institutional changes are required, such as introducing elements of community policing. This approach will gain practical experience and provide direct relevance for new police programs in neighbouring countries, which is an important aspect for FAF as a regional

organization.

Our focus in Thailand is now on assisting the RTP in improving its relations with the local communities in the three restive Muslim provinces in the south of the country. Possibilities for co-operation with the police in this highly sensitive region are only due to the established relations of confidence. The result of these positive relations includes the helpfulness of high-level officials in the RTP at Headquarters to assist in opening the doors to the police in the south. At present FAF enjoys a warm welcome by the police whenever it visits the region to assess the situation and prepare new forms of co-operation.

As mentioned previously, newly appointed trainers in the deep south got their first training at our ToT in Songkhla in November 2004. Since police training in Thailand was recently decentralized, each police region had to develop its own training capacity.

Prior to our ToT, they had not had received any specialized training for their future activities, let alone experience as police trainers. Perhaps even more significantly, the ToT took place just weeks after the above-mentioned, devastating event at Tak Bai in Narathiwat province on October 25. This tragic event left more than 85 young Muslims dead after a protest demonstration which was quelled by the military. The deaths occurred during the highly unprofessional transport of hundreds of arrested persons to a remote army camp in Pattani province. Given these events, the trainees were all the more impressed by the practical information and skills which the FAF police training program provided. As mentioned, it was at the closing session of the ToT, that the deputy commander of Region 9 made the statement, "If this training would have taken place a few months before, Tak Bai would never have happened." This was also confirmed by statements of participants in the training session who also indicated that the training



Above: Two police officers conducting a role play in front of their colleagues in the ToT in Cambodia in 2005.

had brought them new skills which they could use immediately in the field.

Another important result of the training program has been the request and subsequent development of a completely new, computer-based training module on "Policing in a Multicultural Society," mainly focusing on the huge problems the mainly Buddhist Thai police have in their contacts with the predominantly Muslim and Malay-speaking population in the three southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. The new program, which is in its final stage of development at present, is filling a real gap. Up to the present, Thai police training has not included anything about police work with minorities—be they Muslims or hill tribes or others. This is quite remarkable since the country has faced such problems for many years. In the best case so far, police training institutions have representatives from minorities to tell something about their groups in the classroom.

This, of course, is far from adequate or an effective means of police training however useful the provided information may be. The new program maintains exactly the same training methodology as the other modules. Based on the existing agreements with the RTP, it will be immediately used in classrooms when completed. The first ToT using the new module in a test format took place again in Songkhla in October 2005. We are very encouraged that some neighbouring countries have already indicated their interest in incorporating this new training module in their programs (e.g., Cambodia, Philippines).

An even more significant result of our efforts is the plan to promote elements of community policing in

the south of the country. Since confidence in the RTP from the local Muslim communities has achieved a near all-time low, the work of the police has become increasingly difficult. The situation is characterized by serious flaws in ordinary police work, such as abuse of power, lack of linguistic skills, corruption and lack of proper preparation for working with the Muslim-Malay communities. The situation has been further worsened by heavy-handed central government policies which many observers consider highly counter-productive and actually stimulates the insurgency. Efforts to increase the level of confidence between police and the local population are therefore highly necessary. Yet this is much easier said than done. Such confidence building is very hard to achieve since co-operation by local community leaders with the police may be seen as a 'betrayal' by the separatists and could lead to life-threatening danger. As a case in point FAF, in co-operation with the police chief in Yala province, had planned a number of joint sessions between local police and local community leaders—convened in the context of Civilian Advisory Committees or CAC's in that province— but we had to change these plans for fear of reprisals against potential participants in these exercises.

At present, FAF is exploring the option of undertaking similar activities in neighbouring Songkhla province where the level of violence is much lower. We aim to gain practical experience in improving communication between police and community leaders through joint trainings and advice. If successful, such a model can also be applied in the three southern-most provinces.

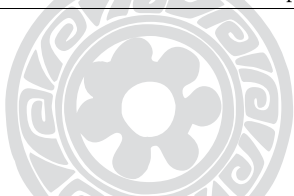
Part of this exercise involves the development of




Above: A group photo immediately after the official opening of the ToT with, among others, the British Ambassador to Thailand, the Governor of Songkhla Province, the Deputy Chief of the Border Patrol Police, the trainers and the 16 participants.

First row from left to right:

- 1) Mr. Fergus Auld, Political Officer at the UK Embassy in Thailand;
- 2) Pol.Maj.Gen.Direk Pongpamorn, former Deputy Commissioner of the Border Patrol Police (BPP);
- 3) Mr. Sampart Kaewarporn, Vice-President of the Rajjaphat Songkhla University (the place where the ToT took place);
- 4) Mr. Somporn Chaibangyang, Governor of Songkhla Province;
- 5) The UK Ambassador, H.E. David William Fall;
- 6) Pol.Maj.Gen. Worrapoth Inthaseth, Deputy Commissioner of the BPP;
- 7) Mr. Somchai Homlaor, former Secretary-General of Forum-Asia;
- 8) Dr. Arie Bloed, Police Program Advisor of FAF
- 9) Pol.Lt.Col. Annon Pinjang, Deputy Commander of BPP Region 4.





“This program is great in order to make us aware of the sometimes bad image we create among the public due to our behaviour. I was not so much aware of this before.”

—Thai Police Trainee

another special training module on community policing in Thailand for which the manual has already been written.

FAF is working intensively with the trainers from the RTP which come from ‘its’ core group of 17 Thai police trainers with the support of the RTP top leaders to implement these activities in the near future.

Finally, a really important achievement at present is that FAF is apparently the only NGO which has direct relations and access to the RTP at all levels. This also puts a heavy responsibility upon FAF as gained confidence also leads to expectations by the RTP. Serious efforts have to be undertaken to maintain the same high level of professionalism and ‘discipline’ in the development of new programs. We plan to continue working on the development of other new training programs in the country and region with Thai police trainers on developing special programs on police management issues, police and media relations, police and drugs and other important human rights-related issues.

Challenges and problems in implementation

Obviously, many challenges arise for an NGO trying to develop a close partnership with a traditionally closed and highly bureaucratic institution such as the RTP. FAF was confronted with many delicate issues and faced a number of problems on a regular basis. I’ll summarize a few of the main problems we encountered:

The regular change of senior commanders in the RTP. This regularly caused delays since we had to re-establish relations with the newly appointed commanders. Fortunately, due to the top-level support we had secured, new commanders were usually more than willing to co-operate with us. Nevertheless, each occurrence required renewed efforts as well as creating some uncertainties. We could not be sure that the newcomers would show the same enthusiasm and support as their predecessors.

Although this constant change is indeed discouraging, whenever it occurs, there is no alternative but to face the problem and keep the longer-term goal in mind. Based on our experience, I want to emphasize that it is quite important for NGOs not to rely on just one or two high-level police officials, but to ‘network’ more broadly in order to bring more allies on board.

The integration of the new training modules into the permanent curricula of the various training institutions is a long-term goal. The introduction of new topics or changes to existing topics in the police training curricula is a highly bureaucratic and centralized process. In addition, it is often ‘politicized’ to a certain extent. In Thailand, the final decisions about permanent integration of the training program still haven’t been taken. The new programs are being widely used, but mainly because the group of 17 trainees have now introduced them into their own programs and institutions. They have made the efforts necessary to train their colleagues in the new methodology. In this way FAF has been able to initiate a “critical mass” for the creation of internal change within the police structure. This “critical mass” will work to ensure the wider use of the newly introduced training programs. Due to lack of capacity, progress is relatively slow even in the Border Police Patrol, the most enthusiastic and progressive police branch.

Lack of capacity. This has been a constant challenge for us as the NGO as well as for the police. As previously stated, we have intensively trained 17 trainers from the three main police training institutions. However, this was an absolute minimum and was due to limited funding. It is also clear that just the two ToTs for this group of 17 trainers is not sufficient to stimulate the process properly. Within the police, there was and continues to be a capacity problem. Training ideally should have included a much larger number of police trainers. As a result, FAF is highly dependent upon the good will of the 17 trainees in further implementing the program, both within Thailand and more broadly in the region. At the same time, FAF’s capacity has also been limited due to the turnover of staff in the key position of the police program coordinator—providing the on-going, consistent liaison work with the police. In addition, at best funding allowed for only one coordinator and an assistant. The past capacity has been clearly insufficient to realize all the ambitions.

Linguistic Skills. Unfortunately, lack of knowledge of the English language among the Thai police trainers has been a noticeable issue during the ToTs. Simultaneous interpretation was necessary and it cannot always be perfect in the sense of being able to express all the nuances which both the foreign trainers and

Thai participants wanted to express. To a certain extent it also hampers spontaneous discussion. Even more serious, however, is that the lack of English-speaking Thai trainers makes the number of potential Thai police trainers for future police training activities in neighbouring countries quite low.

As a matter of fact, only a few trainers have mastered English enough to be engaged as trainers in the ToTs in Cambodia and other countries. This is a serious problem in the short term and continues to be a long-term issue. It cannot be solved by being more “critical” or “selective” in the selection process itself for the ToTs. Potential police trainers should be selected on the basis of decisive criteria concerning their quality as national police trainers, not their knowledge of English.

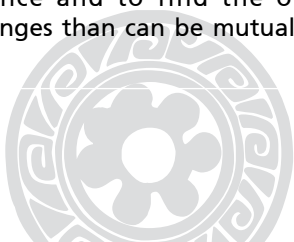
Personal Relations and Professionalism. Although it may be surprising to categorize ‘personal relations’ as a challenge, to a certain extent it must be seen from this perspective. Co-operation with police in many countries is only possible if strong relations of personal confidence exist. This may be particularly the case if the outside partner doesn’t have huge funds for providing technical equipment (such as funding from USAID, the EU, or other sources). Changes in the persons involved, both from the side of the NGOs and from the police, may have considerable consequences. Therefore, it is very important to build up a network friendship with several police officers in order to secure some kind of continuity. However, if persons change at the NGO, this may even result in the end of the program or at best the need to start all over again. In my experience, the success of NGO programs with police are often highly dependent upon the quality of individual personalities and when these ‘disappear,’ this may hamper the continuation of the partnership as a whole. Moreover, it has to be mentioned that developing relations of personal confidence is a time-consuming, sometimes painstaking process. On the other hand, the trust that has been so painstakingly developed can be very easily destroyed. Again, this is a critical reason to be extremely careful and responsible in relations with police organizations. Working with police organizations requires a very high level of professionalism, diplomacy, mutual respect and tact. It is often very difficult to identify the proper persons to work as coordinators or experts in the program. Just having a good training program is far from enough.

This issue is all the more pressing since the “culture” within an NGO and within police organizations is very different. It requires special personal skills for an NGO representative to move fluidly between these “cultures” to engage in such delicate partnerships with confidence and to find the openings for proposing changes that can be mutually beneficial.

Balance between ‘constructive cooperation’ and ‘criticism’. Working with police in a constructive partnership can cause problems of credibility for the NGO. This is particularly the case when police get involved in serious abuses of power or other serious violations of human rights. Traditionally, human rights NGOs have the task of monitoring state structures, including the police. NGOs usually air their criticism in public. However, this raises serious problems for an NGO engaged in a partnership with the police. It is obviously quite hard to work constructively with police on the one hand while criticizing them publicly on the other. In our experience, this problem can be overcome. There are other NGOs that can express public criticism, and the added value of one more NGO joining the ‘chorus’ is limited. In this case, the NGO engaging with the police can remain silent, at least in public. This in no way precludes the potential for confidential discussions with police that could then offer effective channels to transmit ‘messages’ to them. The problem becomes more serious, however, in cases where the police with whom one is actually partnering get involved in very serious violations of human rights. In such cases, the NGO itself may be in danger of losing credibility and legitimacy if it continues working with that police organization as if nothing has happened. Circumstances may force an NGO to discontinue partnerships with police in order not to undermine its own credibility. It is extremely difficult to anticipate such circumstances in advance. For example, in Thailand we were facing such a situation in October 2004 when the Tak Bai incident happened with more than 85 Muslim young men dying under army hands. The fact that this operation was mainly handled by the military and not by the police actually saved our partnership. I hope it is clear from the above observations, that FAF does not believe that ‘constructive co-operation’ with the police equals ‘selling out to the other side’.

FAF’s strategy has been based on the conviction that the most effective changes in police behavior must be realized within the police organization itself. In practice, when NGOs use only the tactic of criticizing police from the outside they are engaging only part of the total picture and having a mixed impact. NGOs can work together to engage in tactics that push on unacceptable behaviour from the outside while pulling for positive behaviour from the inside. .

Role of politics. Although it may have been tempting to try to get political support, and therefore potentially more publicity, for our activities, experience shows that this has mixed results and needs to be examined carefully. FAF chose to conduct its relations on a purely professional level in order not to be ‘hijacked’ for political reasons. From our strategic perspective,



it has been more important for us to have a positive impact on the police rather than gain publicity.

Publicity can be important for NGOs, especially for funding purposes. FAF deliberately opted for a low profile in its work with the police and avoided seeking approval from government officials. In the Thai context, addressing politicians at the ministerial level involved potential risks to developing relations with the police. First, government tends to be wary of any foreign or NGO involvement in the problems of the country and could have resulted in outright prohibition for the RTP to work with FAF. Second, FAF wanted to be sure that the government would not use FAF's involvement in police training as a way to demonstrate to the outside world that 'everything is under control' in terms of human rights. Both these scenarios would have resulted in the end of the partnership and joint projects. Rather, FAF chose to pursue a low-key partnership with the RTP to ensure progress toward the strategic, long-term goals. Because the development of such co-operation is strictly within the RTP's jurisdiction and does not require any governmental approval or endorsement, even the RTP encouraged FAF to work exclusively with them and not to involve the political level. Thanks to this low-profile approach, FAF has been able to do more effective work than if it had sought lots of publicity and involvement from government side. The strategy of professional and low-key partnership has definitely paid off.

Lessons Learned—Ideas for transferability and implementation in other contexts

The success of the police training project and the ensuing activities has gone beyond our own expectations. This success didn't 'fall from the air'. Let me mention a few 'lessons learned' from my experience in Thailand as well as taking into account my experiences with police programs in other countries such as Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

Some DON'Ts to keep in mind:

- Don't attempt to impose your ideas or training programs. It is very enriching to learn from police in any country how they deal with specific problems. Such experiences can often be used as a source of inspiration for finding solutions for similar problems in other countries. As a matter of fact, lesser developed states have contributed very innovative ideas in the area of community policing which sometimes are more useful than the highly "sophisticated" experiences from Western countries which are less likely to be replicable in many developing countries.
- Don't start your attempts at relationship

building by criticizing the police or pointing out the things which don't work so well in their organization. This will more than likely have the opposite effect of immediately closing their door for any kind of co-operation.

- Don't offer to train them on human rights. Unfortunately, police carry their own biases and they are not usually thrilled by such 'offers' unless motivated by political or other reasons (real interest, a need to appear cooperative, improving public image, etc.).

Here are some things to DO:

- When approaching police, do keep in mind that police training institutions are often the more open-minded or 'liberal' parts of police organizations. They may be more open for co-operation with civil society. Even though official approval from the central leadership of police is often required for developing cooperation, this can more easily be achieved by providing training in areas which police themselves consider being problematic areas, such as domestic violence or sexual crimes. Such areas are either not addressed at all in traditional police training or only in a very legalistic way.
- Offer and provide highly professional training which police see as directly benefiting their work. This goes a long way in establishing relations of confidence and even friendship. Both partners have an opportunity to build on a growing awareness that they are not just criticizing each other, but have things in common, particularly a dedication to serving the community and, in particular, the more vulnerable groups in society.
- Go into the work with the knowledge that this will be a long-term organizational endeavour. Only after established relations of confidence have been built with the police can efforts be made to tackle more delicate issues of police reform, such as community policing. In other words, start with providing beneficial assistance for training the police.

By doing so, NGOs may open the door for future co-operation on more strategic issues which aim at organizational change within the police. Training alone won't have substantial or an encompassing impact upon police performance if this is not accompanied by more structural changes within the police, such as changes in the official criteria for evaluating the performance of police officers and management.

- Show respect for the work being done by police in the country concerned and show real understanding for their problems. Police in all countries are faced with very difficult tasks and their labour condi-

tions are quite often very poor in terms of salary, available equipment, political support, training, etc. Organized crime groups regularly are much better equipped than police and this leads to serious frustration among police officers. Acknowledge that they are very experienced in their own context. In many countries police organizations are developing highly innovative ideas for addressing specific problems. It is important to get to know these experiences, acknowledge their contributions and show respect for their work.

- Choose staff with professional skills to work with police organizations. NGOs should be very critical in selecting staff members who will be in charge of the development and implementation of partnership programs with police. People without basic respect and understanding of the problems and specificities of police work will find it very hard to be accepted as an equal partner. In contrast, a really qualified and skilful NGO staff member with a good sense of how to work with police may probably be able to move the program forward beyond expectation. Keep in mind that relations with police are substantially benefited when personal confidence and trust have been acquired. This can be achieved when attention to professional behaviours, as mentioned earlier, are maintained and carried out.

- NGO partners should do their best to understand the difficulties which police face in many developing countries concerning human rights-related issues, as police are under constant pressure from politicians and civil society. Thailand offers a good example of such problems, when two years ago the Prime Minister ordered a “War on Drugs” which resulted in a high number of killings of (suspected) drug dealers without any due process.

- NGO partners should show and maintain strict reliability. Police organizations are highly disciplined and bureaucratic in nature. This implies an expectation that NGOs should also fulfil any agreements according to set timelines and quality standards. Unfortunately, this is not always the case in civil society circles. NGOs are often accustomed to a more ‘relaxed’ atmosphere. It is important to remember when working with police that discipline in the implementation of co-operative programs is essential in order to build and keep confidence.

- Follow the protocols. Working with police may be quite a new experience for NGOs. Be prepared for a considerable number of rules of a protocol nature which are likely to be quite different from the usual atmosphere within which NGOs are

working. At openings or closures of workshops or trainings, in order to visibly express respect for the partner organization it’s important to make every effort to comply with such protocols. By violating rules of protocol one may easily offend higher-ranking police officers such as inviting the ‘wrong’ police representative at official or unofficial events.

“Police training about use of force and firearms in Thailand so far didn’t include much about psychology, only about the technical skills of shooting. So this is completely new and very important. We need to know how our brains are functioning in a situation of potential violence in order to avoid making mistakes.”

—Thai Police Trainee

- Discuss and plan for the kinds of situations that may occur which will force the discontinuation of a working partnership with a police organization. For example, when the police organization has been involved in very serious violations of human rights such as extrajudicial killings or other serious abuses. Recognize that continuation of a partnership in such instances might seriously affect the credibility and legitimacy of the NGOs concerned. Advance planning regarding what kinds of circumstances would jeopardize partnerships can be very helpful. Although in practice it may be very hard to clearly identify criteria to that effect.

This may pose serious dilemmas for NGOs since giving up a successful partnership with departments within the police for abuses which may be partially beyond the control of the police themselves.

For example, they are ordered to act by the political leadership, such as the 2003 war on drugs in Thailand which led to more than 2,000 extrajudicial killings in the country. These are very tough decisions to make especially when substantial efforts have been made to build up an effective relationship.

Nevertheless, such scenarios should be considered in advance to be able to explain to partners within the police in a professional manner as to why certain events or behaviours make it impossible to continue together until efforts have been taken to remedy the event and/or behaviour.



In conclusion, NGOs can find tremendous rewards in developing long-term, productive partnering relationships with police organizations. In my experience, the rewards have been highly satisfying. There is much work yet to do. We can and have found partners to work together toward positive changes, both outside as well as within police structures. Like an old Chinese proverb, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." ⁷

⁷ Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist Philosopher, founder of Taoism, wrote "Tao Te Ching" (also "The Book of the Way"). 600 BC-531 BC

**To print or download this and other publications in the Tactical Notebook Series,
go to <http://www.newtactics.org>**

Online you will also find a searchable database of tactics, forums for discussion with other human rights practitioners and other useful tools and resources for strategic and tactical thinking.

The Center for Victims of Torture
New Tactics in Human Rights Project
717 East River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA
www.cvt.org / cvt@cvt.org
www.newtactics.org / newtactics@cvt.org