

Norwegian Police in International Operations

1989-2016

Kari M. Osland

Main recommendations

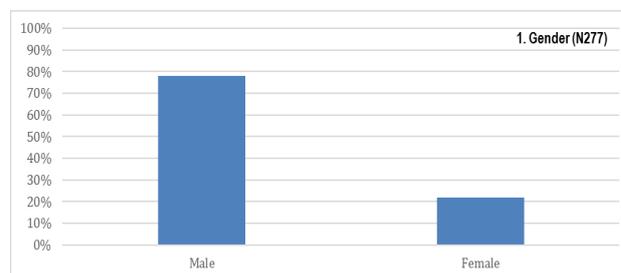
- Establish a knowledge management mechanism to collect and transfer knowledge
 - systematic monitoring before, during and after departure
 - systematization of learning at three levels: individual and police organization nationally and locally
 - consider pooling training and follow-up mechanisms of police with other departments and agencies deploying personnel on government contracts
- Establish clearer strategic guidance on the aim and intent of Norwegian participation in an operation and how to achieve the stated aim.

Introduction

This policy brief presents the main findings and recommendations from a longer survey-based report with the same title, documenting the experiences of Norwegian police personnel in international operations from 1989 until today¹.

The purpose of the survey was to systematically gather the knowledge Norwegian police bring home from international operations, be they peace operations, stabilization missions or other assistance missions. This information is an important source of information for policymakers, practitioners and academics in order to understand the challenges Norwegian police have met, not only in the field but also before deployment and after return. This is meant to provide an improved knowledge base for developing new policy and practice for Norwegian police deployments and international police assistance.

The survey was distributed to 440 participants and 277 responses were received, 78% from men, and 22% from women.

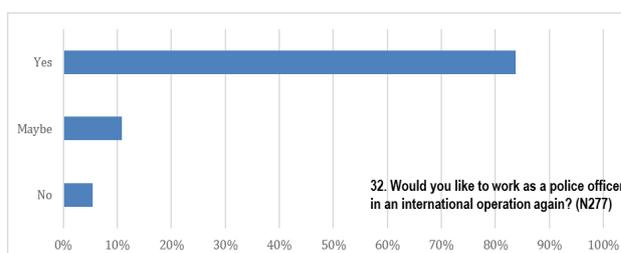


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The majority were between 41 and 57 years old and still employed by the police. A total of 57% have been seconded more than once and 81% of the respondents have been one or more times in Kosovo, Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Haiti (in descending order according to number of secondments).

Main findings

Most expressed that the expectations they had when applying for the job were largely fulfilled. Only 5% of the respondents had no wish to work in an international operation again.



The majority of those who served abroad were motivated by a desire to learn something new and to teach and help others.

Many stated that the training received before departure largely covered their requirements, although several had envisioned a somewhat longer period of training before departure, preferably also together with the Norwegian Armed Forces. The majority received additional training in the field.

While they were in the field, there were few who believed that the national police showed any improvement because of the international presence the participants represented. Several explained that this is complicated because many of the desired changes are time-consuming, and because they as police officers would only see a small part of a larger picture. However, the vast majority claimed that they essentially performed the tasks assigned to them and scored an average of 4 (on a scale of 0–6, where 6 is the highest) when asked if they felt that they made a difference.

Examples given as for where the Norwegian police officers observed positive change:

- the local police became more professional in their behaviour
- new administrative routines
- more formalised recruitment processes based on merit
- increased cooperation between the police and other parts of the rule of law system
- improved competence on topics such as human rights, management and administration, combatting drugs and corruption, gender and sexual based violence, interview and interrogation techniques; confidence building activities, etc.

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Many expressed that the main challenges for the police in the country where they worked were related to conditions that extend far beyond the police as such. Examples include widespread corruption, a non-functioning state system, lack of resources, limited expertise and ongoing conflicts. The cooperation between the police and local judiciary was perceived as poor, as was cooperation between the international police and judiciary, although this was somewhat better. The majority found it important to recognize the mandate of the international operation, and were of the impression that while the international police of higher rank knew the mandate, the local police officers of lower rank did not.

Most felt safe in the field; however, 60 participants (22%) said they felt less safe. Altogether 75% reported that they had not experienced anything traumatic, while 25% said that they had. Of these latter, 61% answered that they were cared for and received adequate follow-up, while for the remaining 39% this was not the case.

A total of 32% observed misconduct (such as sexual abuse,

corruption, alcohol and drug abuse) among international personnel. Altogether 62% stated that measures were implemented to prevent this form of abuse. A large majority believed that focusing on women, peace and security is important because women and children are the most vulnerable section of the population in conflict areas.

Asked what they thought contributed to positive change, the following was among the points mentioned:

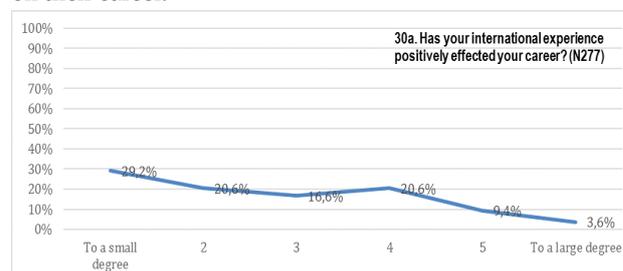
- mixed teams with local and international police officers
- practical training adjusted to local conditions
- serving as positive role-models
- treating everyone with respect and establishing good relations
- support to those that were willing to change
- holistic approach towards the rule of law sector
- a strategic plan for the local police
- long-term commitment
- close mentoring and dialogue with local police

Upon their return, 83% received a debriefing. Many suggested ways in which this could be done differently. A large majority believed that the experience they gained abroad was relevant to their daily work as a police officer in Norway.

When asked how their experience could be useful for the police in Norway upon return, the answers centres on improved personal skill regarding

- management in a cross-cultural context
- cultural understanding and sensitivity
- working under stress
- cooperating skills
- crisis experience
- risk assessment
- maximize scarce resources
- interaction across agencies
- communication
- working through interpreters
- specific country and region competence

Meanwhile, only a minority claimed that this expertise was regarded as relevant or was even recognized by their Norwegian employer. There are therefore few who believe that the international experience has had a positive impact on their career.



The questionnaire was extensive, containing 50 compulsory questions and 22 elaborate questions, which the respondents could choose to answer. These latter questions were to be filled out in free text. In total these answers fill 500 typed A4 pages, which gives an indication of the desire and need to communicate knowledge and experience.

Recommendations

Establish a knowledge management mechanism to collect and transfer knowledge

- Establish a knowledge collection mechanism with
 - systematic monitoring before, during and after deployment
 - systematization of learning at three levels: individual and police organization nationally and locally
 - consider pooling training and follow-up mechanisms with other departments and agencies sending out personnel on government contracts (such as national experts, diplomatic corps, etc.)
- Establish a mechanism that enables the transfer of experience
 - POD/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: using those who have recently been out on mission to prepare new contingents
 - local service location in Norway: establish a system for transfer of experience when the person returns home
 - internationally: rotation with overlapping periods of deployment
 - hiring local staff in the field: shorter contracts to ensure that more people take part in the transfer of knowledge such operations represent

Strategic guidance

- Establish clearer strategic guidance on the aim and intent behind Norwegian participation in a given operation and how to achieve the stated aim

Recruitment and selection

- Continue to promote the principle of matching competence to tasks
- Norway should actively seek to gain leadership positions and recruit accordingly

Training before departure

- Longer preparation and training before departure – parts of this together with the Norwegian Armed Forces²
- More focus on managing expectations.

In the field

- Induction training should ensure greater mutual understanding of the mandate
- Establish mobile teams to ensure that the local police are familiar with the mandate
- Have a greater focus on simultaneously addressing general obstacles to positive developments, such as widespread corruption, a non-functioning state system etc.
- Greater focus on local ownership of the reform process
- Customized training for local participants (adapted to degree of illiteracy for example)
- More focus on safeguarding security
- Implement rules ensuring zero tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- Zero tolerance for all other forms of abuse
- Continue to promote Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
 - stronger focus on quality – not only increase the number of women but also seeking greater clout for women's votes (e.g. in management positions)
- Continuous focus on efficiency of international efforts
 - increased use of Specialist Police Team with control of funds
 - simplified reporting mechanisms focussing on strategic goal achievement
 - quicker and less bureaucratic financing processes
 - holistic approach to reform of the judicial system

Homecoming

- Change procedures for debriefing
 - debrief quickly after returning
 - mandatory individual monitoring and healthcare support after returning from mission, in addition to group debriefing
 - follow-up after 6 months
 - consider implementing «medium-term landing» and «after landing» as used in the Norwegian Armed Forces³
- Increasing the recognition of police deployed internationally
 - statutory conversation upon return with national and local employer
 - include the police among the veterans being honoured on 8 May
 - establish procedures to ensure that clear competence counts towards further promotion.

Notes

1. This is part of the «Learning from Experience – International Policing»-project, which is financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and carried out by Dr. Marina L. Caparini and Dr. Kari M. Osland. The survey was developed with assistance from the Norwegian Police Directorate, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police University College. Thanks to the reference group consisting of people from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Police Directorate and the Norwegian Police University College. Thanks also the police officers who spent time answering the survey. All errors and omissions are mine.
2. This has been introduced in the last five deployments.
3. «Mellomlanding» implies that those having been deployed together have a stop-over in another, «neutral» country on their way back home, including debriefing, medical check and meeting with a psychologist. «Etterlanding» happens after return and includes normally a technical-tactical debrief, psychological debrief, presentations and group work about common challenges veterans encounter upon return. Family is welcome to join in the latter part of the meeting, which ends with a celebratory dinner and a medal ceremony. For more information, see <https://forsvaret.no/tjeneste/veteraner/informasjon> (only in Norwegian).

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