



Participants attend the Dominican Republic Needs and Gap Analysis for NCO professional military education (PME). Discussions are integral to the Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Center of Excellence's gap analysis process. They facilitate dialogue between NCOLCoE experts and partner nation representatives, which is crucial for assessing needs and aligning training with strategic objectives. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Paola M. Delarosa-Lloret)

# International Professional Military Education Program

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Division of Curriculum Development, Directorate of Training and Education

NCO Leadership Center of Excellence

**T**he mission of the Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Leadership Center of Excellence (NCOLCoE) is to provide “professional military education [PME] and training that develops enlisted leaders into holistically fit and disciplined warfighters to lead in multidomain operations” (NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, n.d.).

However, this mission statement doesn't mention how far NCOLCoE extends its influence globally. It is responsible for developing and delivering enlisted professional military education at the “Introductory, Primary, Intermediate, Senior and Executive” levels to U.S. Army Soldiers, its sister services, and global allies (NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, n.d.).

NCOLCoE's Directorate of Training and Education (DOT-E) is responsible for the International Professional Military Education (IPME) program, which plays a critical role in aligning military training and strategic objectives across global combatant commands, supporting the broader goals of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

IPME is "tailored support to individual countries in developing and reforming their professional military education institutions" (Department of the Army, 2022a). The Department of Defense (2022) describes IPME as "an investment in human capital that helps increase partner nations' institutional and operational defense capabilities."

### **IPME Objectives and Scope**

The primary objective of the IPME program is to foster a shared understanding and cooperation in support of Combatant Commands (COCOMs), which is essential for global security and operational success. This program focuses on providing a "well-defined, vigorous curriculum review program that accommodates near and long-term change in the PME environment" (Department of the Army, 2022a). It aims to instill a deep understanding of U.S. military practices, values, and strategies while respecting the participants' diverse cultural backgrounds.

COCOMs play a pivotal role in implementing the IPME. Each COCOM is responsible for a specific geographical region or function and works closely with the militaries of nations within their area of responsibility to facilitate their participation in the IPME. This involvement includes identifying individual country needs, coordinating educational opportunities, and ensuring that education and training align with each region's strategic objectives. Through COCOM invitation, NCOLCoE can assist in this identification process.

### **NCOLCoE Support**

NCOLCoE uses the Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) process as the enterprise Instructional System Design for support (Department of the Army, 2017).

The Department of the Army adopted ADDIE as a structured, five-phase process that forms the foundation for a systematic and iterative approach to designing, planning, organizing, and documenting learning solutions.

This approach helps identify learning needs based on analysis, which ensures training focuses on essential job performance requirements. Furthermore, it establishes specific learning objectives, delineates the required experiences, and specifies necessary assessments. Lastly, by incorporating technology, ADDIE reduces resource requirements while achieving desired outcomes (Department of the Army, 2017).

At the COCOMs' invitation, NCOLCoE conducts site visits and provides detailed gap analysis to help identify specific needs in the inviting country's current and desired PME capabilities and performance. The gaps may be in any area of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P).

The analysis helps identify a specific performance problem, the operational environment triggering the problem, the root cause of the problem, other DOTMLPF-P solutions, and current training and education solutions (Department of the Army, 2021).

After the site visit, NCOLCoE provides the COCOM with training and educational solutions or improvements, recommendations for non-training solutions, and learning product development requirements (Department of the Army, 2021). NCOLCoE has conducted gap analyses in New Zealand, Jordan, Rwanda, Belize, Peru, Guatemala, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Suriname, to name a few.

The NCOLCoE team takes the data collected during the gap analysis and converts it into a learning plan. To do so, the team identifies the resource requirements, learning environment, objectives, learning sequence, and student evaluation/competition requirements (Department of the Army, 2017).

It provides the COCOMs with this plan for review to ensure it aligns with their region's strategic objectives and final approval. Once approved, the team begins developing learning products, validating assessments and instructional materials, and developing the evaluation tools to use (Department of the Army, 2017).

NCOLCoE created tailored courses, such as the Instructor Course, with sterilized lesson plans for select subjects to help shape curriculum and course development sequentially and progressively to meet long-term goals and objectives.

It has conducted several subject matter expert exchanges in countries such as Suriname, Peru, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Belize, where they ran an instructor development exchange.

Another example is NCOLCoE's participation in several conferences, workshops and working groups with the Africa Military Education Program (AMEP), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP), and the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) workshop for the Colombian Military's Programa Integral para Suboficiales de Alta Jerarquia (PISAJ) to establish shared understanding on PME, training, and NCO professional development.

These exchanges have been invaluable to the continued growth and development of enlisted PME across all COCOMs. NCOLCoE partnered with other agencies, such as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) and the

Department of Defense State Partnership Program, to implement educational opportunities in different countries using their experience and operational reach in their respective regions.

Since its inception, the IPME program has supported more than 30 partner nations with curriculum development, facilitator workshops, NCO PME analysis, site visits, peer-to-peer consultations, assistance with course execution, and other educational and training support requests.

Partner nations used these resources in various ways. For example, the Belize Defense Forces have professionalized their NCO corps by accrediting their instructor program, increasing salary for NCOs serving in instructor positions.

The nation of Rwanda developed and executed a leadership course for its senior NCOs that greatly enhanced their capabilities and skills. Other examples of the positive impact of the NCOLCoE's IPME program include the instructor certifications in Guatemala, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. These developments enabled the countries to have certified instructors and train their instructors internally.

### **Partner Nations Request for Support**

The process for NCOLCoE to provide support may begin with partner nations defining their requirements and needs based on their objectives, situations, and priorities. They must first assess their strategic and operational needs and capabilities to accomplish this.

Suppose they want the U.S. to run an assessment. In that case, they contact their country's Security Cooperation Officer (SCO), Military Department (MILDEP) Country Manager, or the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) country portfolio director. Any of these personnel can coordinate a meeting with U.S. experts "to discuss requirements, constraints, timelines, and potential options" (Department of Defense, 2018).

Although dialogue can begin through the SCO, the official process starts with the partner nations Letter of Request (LOR). The LOR has no official format; therefore, it can be a "formal letter, an e-mail, or even signed meeting minutes from a recognized official representative" of the partner nation's government (Department of Defense, 2018). The MILDEP or the DSCA reviews and validates every LOR. During the process, they ensure:

- The requested defense articles or services may be sold
- The LOR originated from a recognized official representative
- The LOR is clear and finalized (Department of Defense, 2018)

### **Dominican Republic Case Study**

In 2023, at the request of USSOUTHCOM, the NCOLCoE team visited Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, to conduct a needs and gap analysis on the Dominican Republic Armed Forces (DRAF) NCO PME development plan. This visit was in support of the USSOUTHCOM and partner nations' Enlisted PME Development Strategy goal to "align with the goals and objectives of our partners and support the commander's lines of effort (LOE) to strengthen, counter threats, and build our team" (Department of Defense, 2023).

The team conducted the needs and gap analysis over five days, visiting DRAF bases to analyze each area of DOTMLPF-P. At the end of the visit, it briefed the Instituto Superior para la Defensa "Juan Pablo Duarte y Diez" (INSUDE) Provost, Brig. Gen. Francisco Antonio Ovalle Pichardo, Ejercito Republica Dominicana (ERD), and his team on the needs and gap analysis findings and its recommendation to assist the DRAF in achieving its goal of professionalizing their NCO PME.

In 2024, a team visited Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, comprised of instructors:

- Sgt. Maj. Paola Delarosa-Lloret (NCOLCoE)
- Sgt. 1st Class Pedro Quinones
- Sgt. 1st Class Rosanna Cedano (WHINSEC)
- Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Otero (Puerto Rican National Guard)

They educated over 50 servicemembers across the DRAF in a basic instructor exchange and delivered the systems approach to training, encompassing the ADDIE process.

At the end of the exchange, the participants prepared and delivered a 20- to 30-minute class demonstrating their understanding and mastery of facilitating learning in an adult learning environment, instructor roles and responsibilities, classroom management, ADDIE, and teaching and learning models. The participants' successful completion showcased their proficiency and dedication to enhancing DRAF enlisted educational standards.

### **Conclusion**

The NCOLCoE IPME program's impact is significant in building capable, interoperable, and mission-ready international forces. It provides the resources to leverage the knowledge and networks to enhance enlisted PME and defense capabilities to foster better international collaboration.

Looking forward, NCOLCoE may continue to expand the IPME program, incorporating more advanced technology and virtual learning tools to reach a broader audience. It is a cornerstone in the U.S. strategy to promote global peace and security. By aligning with the National Defense Authorization Act's goals and leveraging COCOMs' capabilities, the IPME ensures the U.S. and its allies are better prepared to face future challenges together. ■



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