Australian Government

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Skills for Multiagency Responses to International Crises

August 2015

Contents

Executive Summary

Australian responses to international, complex emergencies and humanitarian crises, generated by natural disaster, conflicts or incidents, demand the coordinated responses of multiple civil-military-police actors and agencies.

A scoping study of Australian government agency training needs in the latter half of 2013 indicated that stakeholder agencies continue to have difficulty in identifying and developing individual skills to enable people to operate effectively in a high-pressure crisis environment that requires an integrated civil-military-police response. Agencies highlighted the need to develop a 'whole-of-government' set of skills for civil-military-police interaction that would complement agency specific skills.

In 2015, the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) commissioned Sustineo to undertake a project to address this gap. This report, based on Sustineo's research and consultations, goes some way to identifying the skills needed for effective civil-military-police interaction. However, the list is not exhaustive. In fact, the report highlights the difficulty of articulating a specific set of multiagency, cross-cutting skills for civil-military-police interaction.

Practitioners gave consistent advice that specific skills were less important than other factors in successful civil-military-police interaction. Skills and training are only one component of success. The factors that can facilitate and enhance civil-military-police interaction and the strategies required to address those factors are much broader. The report highlights some of these broader factors and how they interrelate. It identifies the interdependence of individual knowledge, skills and attributes, the value of building relationships, the importance of tolerance and understandings of difference and the need for trust and credibility.

The report concludes that an individual's ability to operate effectively in a civil-military-police environment is developed both prior to and during a mission or deployment and relates more to the type of person and their relationships than to specific skills.

Generic skills and attributes for effective civil-military-police interaction

- › Common and shared goals
- › Situational awareness
- › Understanding of whole-of-government
- › Personal attributes such as flexibility, resilience and working in a team
- › Professional skills, such as negotiation, mediation, conflict management and partnership brokering
- › Existing professional relationships and networks
- › Trust
- › Self-awareness (and social and emotional intelligence)
- › Tolerance of diversity (including of organisational differences and cultural diversity).

The report identifies considerations for developing people for deployments and it is hoped that these will inform agencies' training and development strategies. The findings support the ongoing work that the ACMC is undertaking to develop an *Australian Government Preparedness Framework* (the Framework). The Framework will draw together several streams of work that are interrelated, including this report, to further build Australia's whole-of-government effectiveness in responding to disasters and complex emergencies overseas.

Purpose

This document identifies the skills and attributes that agencies may wish to cultivate in personnel to enable them to operative effectively in a civil-military-police environment during a response to a disaster and/or complex emergency.

Methodology

Relevant stakeholders in government and non-government agencies were invited to provide input through interviews, meetings and focus groups. A list of stakeholders consulted is at Annex A.

Literature on multiagency collaboration in the civil-military-police and emergency services sectors was drawn from international and national policies and guidelines and research literature. A list of references is at Annex B.

The information sourced through consultations and the literature review was considered and validated by the ACMC Executive and representatives from stakeholder agencies.

Discussion

Limitations of the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes framework

Identifying multiagency skills was initially considered under a learning and development approach. Under this approach, the skills identified could be categorised using the conventional Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) framework. This would provide a basis for identifying learning and development objectives and delivery strategies to address the skills needs and gaps.

However, it became clear that skills and training were only one element required for enhancing civil-military-police interaction in crisis environments. There are limitations to using a learning and development frame of reference because it focuses on individual learning and does not adequately address organisational learning. Nor does it account for the impact of organisational relationships, culture and workplace systems, or the different types of skills and attributes required in high-pressure environments often marked by time pressures, limited information and heightened risk. Moreover, the categorisation of learning objectives into each of the three domains (knowledge, skills and attitudes) is not always distinct and does not adequately address interrelationships between these domains or support an integrated approach to learning and development.

As the factors critical to the success of civil-military-police interactions are much broader than individual learning and much broader than the individual, a learning and development framework and the KSA categorisation of skills had limited application. The identification of civil-military-police *skills* therefore needed a frame of reference that encapsulated the broader context of the interaction.

International policies and guidelines

Several relevant international polices and guidelines address civil-military-police coordination and interaction. Key documents include:

> *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies* (MCDA Guidelines), UN OCHA, 2006

> *Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies – An IASC Reference Paper*, UN OCHA, June 2004

> *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief* (Oslo Guidelines), UN OCHA, 2007

> *Civil-Military Guidelines and References for Complex Emergencies*, UN OCHA, 2008

> *Civil-Military Coordination Officer Field Handbook*, UN OCHA, 2008[1]

> *CIMIC Field Handbook*, NATO, 2012

> *Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines For The Use Of Foreign Military Assets In Natural Disaster Response Operations* (APC MADRO), UN OCHA, 2014

The primary focus of these documents is on the architecture of the coordination arrangements rather than the *skills* required for effective coordination and interaction. However, a common theme throughout is the importance of common cross-agency training, joint planning, liaison roles, and protocols for information sharing:

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1   The *Civil-Military Coordination Officer Field Handbook* was revised and a new version released in June 2015.

> In the UN context, civil-military-police interaction (referred to as UN-CMCoord) is seen to be enhanced through common training:

> > *Training provides the mutual understanding and common vocabulary necessary for information sharing and proper task division in the relief phase and is the foundation of the process.[2]*

> There is also an underlying theme on the need for cultural sensitivity, mutual understanding and respect, trust and relationship building in providing coordination - although this guidance is implied or less prominent:

> > *The relationship between actors during international disaster response is based on cooperative teamwork concepts and established on the basis of mutual respect and personal relationships as well as professional relationships and links.[3]*

> While the guidelines in general do not provide advice on how to improve civil-military-police interaction, they provide a sound basis for developing interaction by providing a shared focus and information that enables the development of mutual respect and understanding. Critical to effective civil-military-police interaction is shared (and continuous) training and ongoing dialogue:

> > *At every level, then, the success of civil-military engagement will be a function of how individuals relate and represent their respective organisational aims and objectives to one another. Field practitioners under enormous pressure particularly need and warrant support, which at the civil-military interface must include relevant guidance on how to conduct such relationships between people of different cultures, mandates and expectations.[4]*

National polices and guidelines

Key national frameworks and guidelines covering crisis and emergency management include:

> *Australian Government Crisis Management Framework*

> *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements*, 2009

> *National Security Statement*, 2008

> *Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia's National Security*, 2013

> *Guide to Australia's National Security Capability*, 2013

While each addresses respective roles and responsibilities and the need for collaboration, and outline the architecture of coordination arrangements, there is little specific guidance on the skills required for effective multiagency interaction and collaboration.

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2 UN OCHA, *Civil-Military Coordination Officer Field Handbook*, 2008, p. 17.

3 UN OCHA, *Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for the Use of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response Operations* (APC MADRO), 2014, p. 16.

4 E Thompson, 'Country Civil-Military Guidelines: Rehash, Refocus or Shred?', *Small Wars Journal*, 30 November 2014, p. 40.

The Australian Government Guiding Principles for Civil-Military-Police Interaction in International Disaster and Conflict Management[5] provides a set of five principles:

1. Clearly define strategic objectives and operational roles and responsibilities
2. Engage proactively
3. Share knowledge and understanding
4. Leverage organisational diversity
5. Commit to continuous improvement

While the principles do not explicitly address the skills required for effective civil-military-police interaction, they refer to factors consistent with the literature review and stakeholder consultations including building a culture of engagement based on trust and mutual respect, the need for flexibility, ongoing and proactive engagement and relationship management, and common goals and objectives.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) guidance on civil-military operations (CMO) is presented in *Australian Defence Doctrine Publication (ADDP) 3.11 Civil-Military Operations*.[6] While the document does not provide explicit guidance on skills for civil-military-police interaction, it does include concepts and principles that inform this topic. For example, in outlining the ADF's broad approach to CMO, it notes that adaptive action and situational awareness are key elements; the other being that CMO is a component of military power. ADDP 3.11 notes that success in CMO is based on balancing the principles of war and the tenets of CMO, which are:

> mission primacy

> unity of effort

> coordination (and transparency)

> identification of common goals

> minimising adverse military impact

> prioritisation and concentration

> legal obligations and humanitarian considerations.

To facilitate civil-military coordination and interaction, or CIMIC, ADDP 3.11 suggests several practical approaches, including joint planning, information sharing, liaison officers and collective training.

Key themes from policies and guidelines

Analysis of international and national policies and guidelines relating to civil-military-police interaction suggested the following key themes:

> working towards common goals

> situational awareness in relation to the local context and culture, mission objectives and role and contribution of other agencies (and their diversity)

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5   ACMC, *Australian Government Guiding Principles for Civil-Military-Police Interaction in International Disaster and Conflict Management*, 2015.

6   Australian Defence Force, *Australian Defence Doctrine Publication (ADDP) 3.11 Civil-Military Operations*, Defence Publishing Service, 2009.

> use of common training, joint planning, liaison officers and other mechanisms to enhance mutual understanding and coordination

> information sharing

> a common language

> building and maintaining relationships based on trust, cultural sensitivity and respect.

Research literature

There is only a small body of research literature in relation to the skills required for multiagency collaboration in the civil-military-police and emergency management and related sectors. This includes research that identifies factors that contribute to effective civil-military-police interaction. The following research points to factors that may inform effective interaction, and in most cases is based on a synthesis of existing research in the field. It is worth noting that the literature review is not comprehensive and the publications cited, while relevant and informative, are not necessarily definitive.

Trends and Challenges in Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination[7] provides a review of the literature on humanitarian civil-military-police coordination and identifies the key challenges as:

> organisational differences in motivations, goals, approaches and cultures

> inadequacy of current guidance

> lack of awareness or compliance with guidance

> diversity and complexity of missions (which are not well covered by current guidance).

The review provided little direction in relation to the *skills* required for effective coordination, though it emphasised some important factors: clear coordination structures and leadership, shared goals, dedicated coordination roles and established (existing) relationships. In relation to relationships, the review concluded that, '… investment is needed over time to establish a relationship, to explore areas of common ground, establish boundaries and increase mutual awareness and understanding'.[8]

Developing Collaborative Capacity: A Diagnostic Model[9] focused on developing a diagnostic tool for collaborative capacity. While the tool is drawn from research in the homeland security sector and is being applied to defence procurement, it is generic in nature and could inform the civil-military-police context. The diagnostic tool is based on five key factors for effective collaboration:

1. purpose and strategy—common goals, adaptive

2. coordination structures and roles

3. communication, information sharing, networking and organisational understanding / interoperability

4. incentives for collaboration—leadership support, resource sharing

5. people—trust, respect, tolerance of differences and competencies for collaboration.

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7   V Metcalfe, S Haysom, S Gordon, *Trends and challenges in humanitarian civil-military coordination: A review of the literature*, HPG Working Paper, Humanitarian Policy Group, May 2012.

8   Ibid, p. 29.

9   S Hocevar, E Jansen and G Thomas, *Developing collaborative capacity: A diagnostic model*, paper presented at the 4th Annual Acquisition Research Symposium of the Naval Postgraduate School, 2007.

Coordination during Multiagency Emergency Response[10] identified key factors that, if absent, may limit multiagency coordination:

> organisation—clear leadership, command structures, role clarity

> information management

> communication—communication structures and links and quality of communication

> situational awareness—context and other agency roles, resources and contributions

> equipment—adequacy and interoperability of communication technology

> cultural issues—understanding and compatibility of the culture and methods of other agencies

> training—collective training and experience working with other agencies.

This research also suggests that shared mental models underpin effective coordination, '[c]ompatible mental models are critical to a number of key team behaviours, including coordination, communication and situation awareness… This can be achieved through joint training exercises'.

A Typology to Facilitate Multi-Agency Coordination[11] focused on the emergency management sector and identified a typology for facilitating multiagency coordination based on a review of the literature and empirical qualitative and qualitative research. The typology is based on four broad dimensions:

1. system enablers—communications technology and access

2. capabilities—situational awareness, role clarity, mediation and negotiation skills and training

3. organisational linkages—interoperability, information sharing, liaison roles and memoranda of understanding

4. communication—suitability, quality and timeliness of communications.

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10   P Salmon, N Stanton, D Jenkins and G Walker, 'Coordination during multi-agency emergency response; issues and solutions', *Disaster Prevention and Management*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2011.

11   Ibid, p. 157.

While there are several commonalties in frameworks for civil-military-police coordination, there is a lack of consensus in the literature. It is clear, however, that effective civil-military-police coordination and interaction is informed by a broader dynamic involving purpose and strategy; organisational attributes; structures and processes for coordination; linkages between organisations, networks and relationships; and individual performance and effectiveness (*skills*). In this context, *skills* is only one of a number of considerations that need to be identified and developed to enhance civil-military-police effectiveness.

Consultations

Consultations were undertaken through interviews, meetings and focus groups with a range of government and non-government stakeholders (Annex A). Remarkably, the input elicited from stakeholders showed a high degree of consensus, and is closely aligned with the analysis of the literature. The key themes emerging from the consultations are shown below.

Knowledge

> Objectives and roles (and constraints)

> Context

> Strategic perspectives (the bigger picture)

> Professional mastery (subject matter expertise)

> Government and whole-of-government processes

> Relevant policy frameworks (not necessarily in depth—know who to go to or draw on)

> Knowledge of the organisational context, procedures and cultures of other agencies.

Skills

> Assess and analyse situation and context

> Interpersonal communication

> Engagement and influencing

> Management and leadership including authority (personal authority) and decision-making

> Coordination—with other agencies and whole-of-government

> Soft skills—self-awareness, social and emotional intelligence (can be a skill or attribute)

> Networking and relationship building

> Cultural sensitivity in all settings.

Attitudes

> *Lose the ego*

> Collaboration/inclusion

> Shared outcomes

> Resilience (working in hardship)

> Flexibility and agility—adjust to local context and culture, etc

> Knowing what you don't know

> Admitting you are wrong and asking for advice

> Understanding and tolerating diversity and difference (e.g. other agency cultures etc).

A large number of stakeholders identified pre-existing relationships as the most important factor in effective collaboration in a multiagency response. This view was encapsulated by the comment of one respondent: 'if you are handing out your business cards on the tarmac (as you arrive for the deployment), then it's too late'.

There are multiple benefits that flow from existing relationships including:

> established working relationships

> familiarity with the procedures, equipment, terminology, rank, etc of other organisations

> understanding and tolerance of agency differences.

Many stakeholders also suggested that these pre-existing relationships were fundamental to building the trust required to enable agency teams to quickly establish collaborative arrangements.

Findings

It is clear from the literature and consultations that skills represent a small component of what is required for effective civil-military-police interaction. These skills are mostly generic in that they are developed through a practitioner's career progression and not specifically for the purpose of, or in the context of, civil-military-police interaction. For example, influencing skills, which is a leadership skill that would be developed generically and applied to specific situations, is a skill required in a multiagency response. It should be acknowledged, however, that learning how to apply these skills in a crisis environment often sits outside individual career development and training.

Feedback from stakeholder consultations demonstrated a high-level of convergence in relation to the importance of the way in which individuals *behaved* during the mission. While this related to a broad range of attributes, much of the feedback focused on people's ability to be flexible, adaptable, self-aware, able to get along with others, and to understand and be considerate of others. Not surprisingly, the people dimension is also addressed in the literature—implicitly in the official literature and specifically in the literature on multiagency collaboration. The *people* factor can be split into four specific categories: working in a coalition, trust/credibility, respect and communication skills.

Coalition personality and coalition culture

Individuals who are seen to be effective in a multiagency response demonstrate attributes that have been characterised by some stakeholders as the *coalition personality*. While this term was not used by all, others identified a similar range of individual attributes required to be effective in this environment.

This characterisation relates to the type of person and how they behave, rather than a specific skill set, and results from a range of formative factors rather than just training. These factors include selection, career development, mentoring and exposure to situations likely to require and develop these attributes, such as joint training and exercises, secondments, etc. Civilian respondents referred to the *safe pair of hands* concept that results from continued exposure and testing in progressively demanding situations, while military respondents referred to the *well-rounded officer* concept in a similar fashion.

While the coalition personality can be developed through selection and formation over time, it is not a skill set that can be easily acquired through specific training for civil-military-police interaction.

The coalition personality

Members of a multiagency team who demonstrate the *coalition personality*:

> work towards a common and shared goal

> are resilient (in demanding and challenging situations)

> are flexible and adaptable

> can *get on* with people and work in a team environment

> are aware of themselves and others

> are willing to see others' perspectives

> are culturally aware and sensitive.

The characterisation of the coalition personality focuses on the individual and how they behave in a team; however, there is also a collective element to the coalition concept—the coalition culture. Building a coalition or collaborative culture across agencies is also not a simple or short-term endeavour and results from a range of factors:

> a common purpose

> shared values (that support collaboration)

> an environment that acknowledges and rewards collaboration

> processes, structures and tools that enable collaboration (or remove/reduce barriers to collaboration).

Building a coalition or collaborative culture is a shared responsibility, with leadership making the desired culture explicit and ensuring alignment between this expectation and mission plans, policies, structures, systems, processes, etc.

Trust and credibility

Agency teams deployed to a response have a need to quickly establish collaborative working arrangements and work together in a manner that requires reliance on each other to perform tasks jointly. Stakeholders identified two key characteristics that facilitate this reliance and close working relationship:

1. Trust—which largely results from a pre-existing relationship (or the ability to quickly establish a working relationship)

2. Credibility—which is multifaceted and established by traits such as personal credibility (for example honesty, integrity and authenticity) and expertise and experience (for example professional mastery).

An individual's ability to engender trust and be seen as credible, like a coalition personality, flows from a range of formative factors over the long term.

Respect

Acting in a respectful manner in a civil-military-police environment is important at a number of levels:

> respect for local cultures, customs and sensitivities

> respect for organisational differences (across the multiagency teams)

> respect for individual diversity in terms of gender, race, sexuality, etc and the need to comply with diversity and equity policies and strategies (both in terms of the local community and the agency teams).

The ability to act with respect requires knowledge (e.g. of relevant policies or of the differences between organisations), skills (such as analysing differences and communicating sensitively) and attitudes (such as valuing and tolerating differences).

Communication skills

The final category in the *people* factor relates to the skills necessary for effective communication, coordination and collaboration, particularly interpersonal skills. The full range of interpersonal skills regarded as necessary for job performance in general is not included here; rather, what is important for civil-military-police interaction in a crisis environment.

The skills seen as most important for successful interaction are:

> self-awareness

> cultural sensitivity

> engagement, relationship building and networking

> influencing skills

> negotiation, mediation and conflict management

> partnership brokering

> multiagency and whole-of-government coordination

> self-awareness (citing traits such as 'admitting that you are wrong', 'knowing what you don't know' and 'asking for help')

> social and emotional intelligence

These skills are generic and not always unique to civil-military-police interaction, and individuals will be exposed to opportunities to develop these skills through their agency career development and other opportunities. It is important, however, in the context of civil-military-police interaction, that individuals apply these skills, and this needs to be supported by naming the skill set required and by valuing (and rewarding) their application to these situations.

Successful individuals

Effective civil-military-police interaction is a function of a set of broad factors that are developed both prior to and during a mission and that relate more to the type of person and their relationships than to specific skills and to organisational factors. These factors include:

> common and shared goals

> situational awareness (shared across agencies)

> understanding of whole-of-government

> personal attributes (flexibility, resilience, working in a team)

> professional skills (negotiation, mediation, conflict management, partnership brokering)

> existing professional relationships

> trust

> self-awareness (and social and emotional intelligence)

> tolerance of diversity (including organisational differences and cultural diversity).

These characteristics are developed through a wide range of formative and development experiences over the long term, and these characteristics are broader than the skills that can be developed through specific training opportunities. These characteristics result from:

> agency career development and other opportunities

> joint training, exercises and planning activities

> cultures and practices that value and support (and reward) these characteristics at the level of individual agencies and in a multiagency activity or mission.

Conclusion

The findings in this report identify skills and attributes considered to be important in civil-military-police actors responding to an international emergency, disaster, conflict or humanitarian event. The list is not exhaustive and many characteristics are not unique to civil-military-police interaction. However, the list provides agencies with a model of the types of skills that can be developed and built in personnel to enhance multiagency preparedness.

The ACMC's Preparedness Framework will build on this work and provide tools and resources to agencies to help strengthen these skills. The resources will include lists of current training courses and exercises that provide the broader exposure needed to build and refine skills and attributes that enhance civil-military-police interaction. Training courses provide opportunities to work closely together, observe each other and engage in dialogue that builds the skills and learnings outlined above, and exercises provide these opportunities in high-pressure simulated crisis environments.

Annex A: Stakeholder Agencies Consulted

Attorney-General's Department

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Australian Council for International Development

Australian Federal Police

Australian Public Service Commission

Department of Defence

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

RedR Australia

Annex B: References

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