

Best Practices Report

UNOCI Public Information Office (PIO)

April 2009

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Executive Summary

1. United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)¹ was deployed in 2004. As mandated and defined by the United Nations Security Council and Secretary General, the role of UNOCI Public Information Office (PIO) is to inform the population of Côte d'Ivoire about the UNOCI mission mandate and activities and to establish radio;² to provide the population with reliable, unbiased information on the peace process;³ to promote peace and the peace process and to extend radio coverage;⁴ to monitor Ivorian media, reporting any incitements to violence, hatred or intolerance to the Sanctions Committee;⁵ and to support the government in its media, communication, and sensitisation activities aimed at furthering the peace process.⁶

¹ Known in-country as Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI).

² United Nations Security Council resolution 1528, S/RES/1528, 27 February 2004: “*Public information*, (o) To promote understanding of the peace process and the role of UNOCI among local communities and the parties, through an effective public information capacity, including the establishment as necessary of a United Nations radio broadcasting capability.”

³ Ibid.

⁴ United Nations resolution 1739, 10 January 2007: “(l) Public information: To promote the peace process as referred to in resolution 1721 (2006) throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire, through the Mission's public information capacity, in particular its radio broadcasting capability through ONUCI-FM. To monitor the Ivorian mass media, in particular with regard to any incidents of incitement by the media to hatred, intolerance and violence, and to keep the Committee regularly informed of the situation in this regard.”

⁵ United Nations resolution 1572, S/RES/1572 (2004), 15 November 2004: “6. *Demands* that the Ivorian authorities stop all radio and television broadcasting inciting hatred, intolerance and violence, *requests* UNOCI to strengthen its monitoring role in this regard, and *urges* the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the Forces nouvelles to take all necessary measures to ensure the security and the safety of civilian persons, including foreign nationals and their property.”

⁶ Twelfth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2007/133, 8 March 2007: “51. UNOCI also continued to advocate for the creation of an improved media environment. In this regard, the mission provided support to the Ministry of Communication for the establishment of an early-warning unit on hate media that would include representatives of the Government, media regulatory bodies, the national journalists' association and UNOCI. The mission also strengthened its collaboration with media regulatory bodies such as the National Press Council, the National Council on Audio-visual Media and the Observatoire pour la liberté de presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie.”

Thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2007/275, 14 May 2007: “G. Supporting efforts to create a positive political environment. 79. In the Ouagadougou agreement, the Ivorian parties expressed their commitment to organize a wide campaign of information and sensitisation of the population to support the peace and reconciliation process and to refrain from any type of propaganda that might jeopardize national cohesion and unity. In order to address the lack of information among the population about the peace process, it is recommended that UNOCI and relevant United Nations agencies work with the Ivorian authorities and other partners to assist in the development and implementation of an effective public information plan that would make full use of the available national and UNOCI communications capacities, including Radio ONUCI-FM, Radio télévision ivoirienne [rtv] and the network of community radio stations...”

2. To fulfil this mandate, PIO developed a strategy that evolved into a multi-faceted approach that proactively addresses issues critical to the mission. PIO provides essential information to the Ivorian public, and reaches out with projects and programmes that build confidence in the peace process. Many PIO initiatives promote conflict resolution skills, strengthen peacebuilding capacity in civil society and promote a culture of peace. PIO provides training to media actors to enable them to perform to high professional standards that help maintain an environment supportive of peace.
3. PIO uses a number of tools to relay information and provide capacity-building support to the Ivorian population. ONUCI-FM is the United Nations' FM radio station in Côte d'Ivoire, and is arguably the mission's most powerful and effective communications tool. It operates 24/7 and, as of early 2009, covers approximately 80% of the national territory reaching a broad listening public that cuts across social sectors, ages, education, ethnicity, national origin and religion. UNOCI.org, the mission website, is updated daily and has some 600,000 hits per month. Given the limited access and use of the Internet by the general public in Côte d'Ivoire, its primary audience is likely to be international, yet the website does attract the Ivorian urban, educated and elite and has utility as an information resource. Efforts are being made to make the site more interactive and relevant to the Ivorian population, with competitions and discussions initiated on topical issues. With Internet access expanding in Côte d'Ivoire, it is important that UNOCI maintain a visible and engaging web presence. UNOCI publications include a monthly newsletter, *La Force de la Paix*, and issue-based leaflets, fact sheets, posters, cartoons, editorials and billboards. The newsletter covers UNOCI activities and promotes the mission's achievements and contributions to Côte d'Ivoire. Other publications are issue specific, and may work in close coordination with other UNOCI sections such as human rights, child protection, civil affairs, or elections to educate or promote a subject or event. UNOCI video productions include films, infomercials, and publicity spots about the mission's activities generally, or more specific issues that are part of the mission mandate or targeted by the United Nations as global issues of concern. Over the life of the mission, UNOCI video productions have had limited television exposure and have been used on an ad hoc basis at UNOCI sponsored events, on the UNOCI website, and for mission archival purposes. Videos are regularly given to UNIFEED. The photography unit covers many UNOCI events and activities, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's (SRSG) meetings and

public appearances for documentation purposes. Photographs are featured prominently in UNOCI publications and on the website. A spokesperson's office holds weekly press conferences and issues press briefings for national and international media. The briefings are also available on the UNOCI website. The media monitoring unit, created to apprise the Security Council's Sanctions Committee on the performance of the local media in the context of hate media and incendiary content, is also a part of PIO, though it was in 2008, like the Spokesperson's office, placed directly under the SRSG rather than reporting to the chief of PIO.⁷

4. Direct outreach initiatives are focused on specific population sectors that have been identified as core target audiences (pillars)—women, youth, traditional chiefs and the media—that individually and collectively act as multipliers of UNOCI messages and capacity-building initiatives. PIO chiefly engages with pillar groups by establishing relationships with civil society organization that address their needs. Outreach activities are aimed at engaging the local population nationwide, and provide informational support at the field level in collaboration with local civil society partners and, on occasion, with other UNOCI sections. Activities include the organization and support of public forums, school caravans, artistic caravans, and sporting events. Seminars and workshops that aim to strengthen capacity of Ivorian civil society are also part of these people-to-people initiatives. The media pillar receives special attention as part of a media development campaign that aims to build up the Ivorian media sector as a professional entity, a crucial component of democratic society and a contributor to peace and stability. In this context, in addition to offering trainings and workshops to local media professionals to improve skills and address specific issues relating to the peace process, UNOCI also gives support to the government in its efforts at organizing and strengthening local media institutions.
5. PIO has developed as a dynamic and creative body of UNOCI, taking initiative and working with great flexibility to tackle numerous needs in the population. PIO has taken a broad

⁷ With the retirement of the Chief of PIO, Margherita Amodeo, in January 2009, the mission Spokesman, Hamadoun Toure, has been appointed PIO's Officer in Charge and thus is once again, more appropriately, part of the PIO team. At the time of this writing, the monitoring unit still reports directly to the SRSG and not through PIO.

interpretation of its traditional informational role, and stepped up to perform many duties that typically fall outside a traditional DPKO PIO's realm of activities.⁸

6. While PIO's embrace of so many activities is admirable, it is an open question whether or not some of the roles PIO plays and niches it fills, especially in its sponsorship of workshops and seminars, may more appropriately fall under the authority and expertise of other UNOCI sections. Thus, for issue-based workshops and activities falling outside of PIOs direct mandate, PIO is advised to hand over responsibility to other UNOCI sections. PIO would retain a central role as the coordinating UNOCI section, including the activities in a comprehensive mission strategy of communications, but allow other sections, as appropriate, to identify and plan the programme content and agenda, and be responsible for follow-up. In so doing, PIO officers may more effectively concentrate on their areas of expertise – information, public relations, media, communications – creating opportunities for other UNOCI sections to share their knowledge and expertise with the target community while not diluting their own activities or distracting themselves from PIO's principal objectives.
7. The theme of coordination and cooperation amongst the UNOCI sections, and the necessity for PIO to more proactively include other sections in the organization and planning of public relations and informational events, comes up repeatedly. PIO is at the mission's forefront in communicating with the public, and should remain so, yet it is important to bear in mind that outreach to the public is not a means by which PIO promotes itself, but is a method by which UNOCI as a whole communicates with the Ivorian public. Such outreach requires a cooperative and united effort among the different sections of UNOCI to be successful in the short and long term.
8. In identifying PIO's goals as they relate to the UNOCI mandate and framing PIO's activities within a context of media, communications and information, PIO is invited to reassess the many and varied activities it engages in and distinguish between those that fall within PIO's realm of expertise and mandate and should therefore be supported, and those that may be handed over to other UNOCI sections or dropped entirely without substantial detriment to the mission or the population. The process of assessing the goals and desired outcomes and results

⁸ For example, the use of direct outreach programmes (trainings, workshops and seminars) and public relations events as part of a communications strategy, as well as the inclusion of media development in PIO activities is not standard to DPKO PIO.

of each project and initiative, along with a method of monitoring the success of each initiative, will likely lead to fruitful conclusions about how to best utilize the skills and experience of PIO staff to achieve those goals as they relate specifically to media, information and communications.

Key recommendations

9. PIO's activities should be more narrowly focused on its mandated role—public relations, media, communications and information in support of the mission and its sections and in service to the local population.
10. PIO engagement with the pillars should be focused on specific and identifiable goals.
11. PIO's support to the media pillar and its development as a professional sector must be given priority over its support to other pillars. Specifically, PIO should not engage in capacity building programmes aimed at civil society organizations other than media.
12. PIO should institute a protocol of monitoring and evaluation for every initiative, beginning with a careful delineation of goals, intended outcomes and results, and indicators by which achievements will be measured, and continuing as an ongoing process of assessment at regular intervals throughout the initiative's implementation.
13. PIO should integrate other UNOCI sections more closely in the planning and execution of public relations events to ensure relevance and appropriate follow-up with the local community, as well as to encourage an inclusive working environment within the mission.
14. PIO must promote a commitment to transparency and open communication by all sections of UNOCI, amongst sections within the mission and between the mission and the local population.
15. Decisions and planning for ONUCI-FM's post-mission continuity or dismantling should begin immediately.⁹

⁹ This decision is for UNHQ DPKO to make and not within the UNOCI mission's power to determine. Regardless, the mission, and specifically PIO and the leadership of the radio station, may be in a good position to advocate on behalf of the station and press for resolution on its post-mission future.

Methodology

16. During a 7 week period from January to March 2009, an independent consultant conducted a field study of the work of the UNOCI Public Information Office, with a special emphasis on its outreach work, the target audiences (pillars), and the tools the section uses: radio, video, Web and publications. Based at mission headquarters in Abidjan, the consultant travelled to PIO field offices in Bouaké, Boundiali, Daloa, Duékoué, Korhogo, Man, and Yamoussoukro, and other cities and villages in Côte d'Ivoire including Agboville, Adzopé, Bassam, Divo, Tengrela, and Ferkessedougou where PIO is active in order to gain an understanding of how the various initiatives and information sharing methods are implemented and, as importantly, to assess the efficacy of these same PIO activities. Working primarily through programme observation, discussions and interviews with Public Information Office staff, relevant UNOCI heads of sections and field officers, local authorities and local partners, the consultant developed an understanding of the goals, methodology, and implementation of PIO initiatives. The observations and interviews were conducted with the goal of assessing PIO activities' value and efficacy, with an interest in citing practices that may be emulated by other DPKO missions. The Best Practices report is accompanied by this final report, which is a lengthier and more detailed assessment of UNOCI PIO practices, commending PIO for the innovative work it is doing, noting achievements and added-value, and making recommendations to improve performance and positive impact.

Outreach¹⁰

Public Forum

17. A forum is a public gathering intended to introduce UNOCI to the Ivorian public, and particularly to influential sectors of the population identified as the four pillars of youth, women, traditional chiefs and media. A forum is designed to inform the public of UNOCI's mandate and activities as they relate specifically to the village or region where the forum is

¹⁰ One of the main reasons that PIO developed direct outreach programmes to civil society groups, as articulated by the chief of section, Margherita Amodeo, was to circumvent traditional media. Ivorian media played and continues to play a debilitating role in the Ivorian conflict, frequently exacerbating tensions and divisiveness. Media outlets are politicized and polarized, and are frequently abused by influential actors for insidious goals. (See footnotes 4, 5, 6 for relevant United Nations resolutions addressing this problem.) For this reason, Ivorian media are generally distrusted as sources of accurate and impartial information. Thus, although PIO utilizes traditional media methods to reach the public—notably, ONUCI-FM and print publications, and prioritises media development as a core PIO goal in an effort to positively influence and change local media, it was deemed necessary for PIO to develop alternate routes to inform and influence important social actors and the public.

held. Local authorities are invited and are given places of honour at the podium along with UNOCI delegates. A forum is sometimes used as a tool to help UNOCI gain acceptance by a community, as when an UNOCI military contingent is to be deployed in a new location,¹¹ or when long-standing hostility to UNOCI has prevented the population from receiving information and needed assistance and support.¹² In addition to being an opportunity for UNOCI to inform the public of its role and deliver a message of peace, a forum and, particularly, the pre-forum workshops, are opportunities for UNOCI to listen to the community express its needs and wants. Through a format of structured dialogue, community concerns are voiced to UNOCI and UNOCI, in turn, can respond.

18. A forum lasts several hours and usually begins with a traditional libation ceremony officiated by a traditional chief, followed by welcoming speeches by the local authorities such as mayor and prefect and the UNOCI delegation representative. Interspersed with artistic entertainment in the form of music, dance and drama, the event provides an opportunity for UNOCI components to present their work in short statements to the public, followed by a question and answer period where the floor is open to the public.¹³ Formal statements made by local authorities and the UNOCI delegation representative mark the closing. After the formal proceedings end, there is frequently an opportunity for the public to pick up printed information about UNOCI in the form of newsletters, posters, and leaflets.
19. On the day prior to a forum, an afternoon of facilitated discussion is organized for each pillar, with the aim of having each group identify community concerns and make concrete recommendations to UNOCI. Subsequently, as part of the forum agenda, representatives from each pillar make public statements about the outcomes of the prior day's discussion and offer their recommendations and requests for UNOCI assistance in this public setting. For the purpose of transmitting substantive and detailed information about the mission and its role, these workshops are more effective than the forum around which they are coalesced.

¹¹ i.e. Pakistani contingent to Dabakala

¹² i.e. Gagnoa, Agboville, Divo. These were areas hostile to the UNOCI presence and where public forums were organized to formally mark a changed relationship, for the better, between the community and UNOCI.

¹³ PIO has provided guidance to section representatives to assist their public speaking skills and make them more dynamic and easily understood. The question and answer portion of the forum, led by the event emcee, was developed in part to facilitate their contribution to the proceedings.

Benefits

20. A forum gathers influential figures and multipliers in single high profile event. It attracts a large audience that receives direct exposure to UNOCI information; the format is further amplified by the audience's message multiplying potential. As public relations events, forums have been cited as excellent tools to "open the door" to other components to work in areas that have been hostile to the UNOCI and other international presence. The legwork that must be done in order to prepare for a forum, including meetings with local authorities and civil society leaders, are the vehicles by which a forum is realized and a community begins to cooperate, if not accept, UNOCI. A forum is sometimes linked to other UNOCI events to further publicize UNOCI achievements and contributions to the community.¹⁴
21. A portion of a forum is broadcast on ONUCI-FM to give national coverage to the event. Radio coverage which shares one community's concerns with the rest of the nation serves to inform and humanize issues, revealing that concerns and problems may be shared amongst Ivorians regardless of ethnic, religious, geographic or political identities. It also shows that UNOCI is reaching out to the Ivorian public in all regions of the country without preference or prejudice.
22. A forum provides an opportunity for the public to interact directly with UNOCI representatives of the different components and to ask questions about the role of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire. Many staff of UNOCI sections expressed appreciation for this exposure and interaction with the public.¹⁵
23. A forum is also an opportunity for misconceptions and misinformation about UNOCI's role to be directly addressed and corrected.¹⁶ It is a chance for UNOCI to diffuse tensions with the

¹⁴ i.e. as a celebration of the completion of Civil Affairs QIPs (Quick Impact Projects), the deployment of UN troops in a new location; the inauguration of a new UNPOL office.

¹⁵ In particular, Civil Affairs cites forums as being useful tools to identify the need for QIPS in a community, or, subsequent to a QIPS completion, to announce and celebrate UNOCI's contribution in a public way.

¹⁶ For example, there is a widespread belief that the UN brings war to African nations, or at the very least, is responsible for intensifying war rather than contributing to its resolution. In some parts of Côte d'Ivoire, there is a strongly held conviction that UNOCI is siding with the rebels and is committed to undermining and deposing the president, Laurent Gbagbo, and his party, the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). In other parts of the country, notably parts of the west and north, the opposite view is held—that UNOCI is too close to FPI and is providing it too much support, undermining the opposition. The forum is an event that serves to address such misconceptions about the influence and function of the United Nations, emphasizing the fact that UNOCI is present in Côte d'Ivoire at the invitation of the government and with the agreement of the rebel forces, and is committed to playing a support role in the peace process and in creating an environment conducive to democratic elections.

population and to manage expectations by giving a realistic picture of what UNOCI's mandate does and does not allow it to do on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire and its people. Furthermore, as a forum is the first and only direct interaction many in the Ivorian public have with UNOCI, it is a critical opportunity for UNOCI PIO to frame itself not only the mouth of the mission—the disseminator of information—but also as the ears of the mission—listening to the Ivorians themselves express their needs and concerns.¹⁷ Ivorians are given respect, responsibility and acknowledgment for their ability to identify their own needs, and UNOCI is thereby able to do its job in addressing those needs in a more responsive and effective manner.

24. A forum is also an opportunity for local concerns and needs to be aired in the presence of local authorities, who may have jurisdiction (rather than United Nations) over many of the issues and community problems raised. When other NGOs are present, it is an occasion for them to learn where their services may match the needs of the community. Within a pillar group, a forum provides an opportunity for members of different ethnic, national and religious communities and identities to communicate with each other openly in facilitated environment to find areas of common concern and collaboration. And for the different pillars or sectors of civil society, it is a platform to communicate with each other and potentially find areas of common interest and concern where they may collaborate to most effectively address community problems, each pillar contributing its own experience, resources and strengths.

Recommendations

25. The timing and location of a forum should be carefully considered. A forum may be most appropriate at the start of a mission, when massive outreach efforts introducing the United Nations to the public in large gatherings are useful, when inaugurating new mission field offices, and on such occasions where large public events may be symbolically meaningful, such as after long-held hostility, a community welcomes the presence of UNOCI.
26. The goal of providing high profile publicity for UNOCI is well-served by forums; however, the goal of informing the public may be better served through other methods such as small gatherings of discrete groups with specific issues or agendas addressed. While a forum is a

¹⁷ As part of its interactive approach to local civil society, PIO often begins pre-forum workshops by posing the question “What are you doing to bring peace and long-term development to Côte d'Ivoire?” In addition to generating discussion and ideas, one of PIO's objectives is to learn what UNOCI can do to support already existing and locally driven initiatives.

powerful tool to provide a positive image of UNOCI to the public, it does not seem to have a deep impact in informing the public of what is a complicated and nuanced mission mandate, nor of the details of what each UNOCI component can and cannot do in regard to direct population impact. Smaller, more targeted gatherings are more cost effective and will likely provide deeper understanding of the UNOCI mandate and be more productive in the long term for engendering positive relationships between civil society and UNOCI and the UNOCI components.

27. Other UNOCI sections should be brought in during the planning phase of a forum. Currently, other sections are brought in with one week, or more commonly, several days notice, when the location, theme and programme agenda have already been determined. They are brought in as guests, not partners. Even if one regards a forum as a public relations event, the contribution of other UNOCI components with experience and expertise may be useful in identifying the tactical location where a forum would benefit the mission and the people, and appropriate and relevant themes for the forum.¹⁸ At the very least, the gesture of inclusiveness does much to engender a feeling of cooperation and shared concern and effort amongst UNOCI components and would encourage collaboration. Bringing in various relevant actors at the planning stage also makes the follow-up much smoother, as invested partners have more interest in continued engagement if they have a stake in making a forum a success from start to finish.¹⁹
28. In addition to the importance of having relevant substantive sections involved in forum planning, execution and follow-up, it is critical to have mission leadership on-board from the beginning. Having visible and vocal leadership commitment sets a tone and precedent, demonstrating to section heads and staff that forums and other UNOCI organized public events are mission-wide activities that should receive full support.
29. Similarly, other UN organizations and NGOs could be brought into the planning and organization process.²⁰ While this would involve a tremendous coordination effort, the benefits

¹⁸ For example, a forum in Tengrela addressed the human rights issue of female excision.

¹⁹ See also the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Peacekeeping Operations' *Operational Policy: Policy and Guidance for Public Information in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, July 2006, paragraph 115.

²⁰ In some regions and on targeted subjects, and where it is not UNOCI but a national or local body that has authority and responsibility, it may be useful for UNOCI to invite representatives from the relevant body to address specific issues with the population. This could be done on a large scale, as in a forum, or in smaller meetings.

may outweigh the negatives. Providing a valuable service both to the Ivorian public and to the locally operating international organizations, a forum could bring together relevant actors in one place to inform the public of their role, while also providing a medium for the NGO community to hear directly from the local population.²¹ With the other UN agencies and NGOs invested in the success of a forum from the outset, their willingness to follow up to address community needs that fall within their mandate may be strengthened. Given that many of the needs and community requests that arise from a forum do not fall within the mandate of UNOCI, and that in order for UNOCI to be responsive and follow-up on the forum proceedings PIO frequently has to (or should) connect other UN agencies and NGOs with local civil society organizations, it is prudent to do so from the very start. As a forum is currently organized, other UN agencies and NGOs may be invited as guests to a forum, but play no part in identifying location, themes or subjects addressed by the forum. Their contribution and investment in follow-up, consequently, is minimal.²²

30. Bearing in mind the key utility of a forum as a public relations event, the workshop day prior to a forum need not necessarily accompany a forum. That said, the workshops organized for the pillar groups are nonetheless extremely useful tools to engage the local community in the forum. With this desired engagement in mind, the pre-forum workshop would be better timed a week or a month prior to the forum day and not the day prior. Having at least one and preferably two meetings with the pillars before the forum day allows participants time to absorb the information UNOCI imparts, and ample opportunity for contemplation and considered discussion. With time between the workshop and the forum, too, cohesion and understanding amongst the pillar participants are given an opportunity to develop. Having a

For example, in areas with many IDPs and where the population has many questions regarding the registration and certification process in anticipation of national elections, it may be appropriate and productive for UNOCI to invite the Independent Electoral Commission to share information and answer questions in an UNOCI organized event. This happened as part of an artistic caravan held in September and October 2008 where local representatives of the national identification and electoral census organizations gave information about the process to the assembled crowds.

²¹ Often, it is the beneficiaries that are best able to identify their own needs.

²² UNOCI PIO is part of a coordination meeting held once a month that includes communications officers from UN agencies and organizations in Côte d'Ivoire (World Bank, ILO, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, UNHCHR, etc.) called the United Nations Communication Group (UNCG). UNCGs have been or are being established in most countries where numerous UN bodies are active. Some field offices also participate in regular coordination meetings in their region. These meetings are useful for PIO to share information and to coordinate activities.

In late 2008, the PIO office in Bouaké partnered with OCHA and UNDP on a social cohesion seminar held in Sakassou. The seminar included local authorities, the prefect and sub-prefect, as well as NGOs and addressed the prevalent conflict between fishermen and cattle breeders in the region. This is a good example of the organizations uniting for a common purpose.

number of structured meetings involving the pillars in preparation for the forum gives recognition to their importance as social leaders, makes them more invested in the forum's success, and will allow them to make a more substantive contribution to the forum proceedings.

31. Following a public forum, it is critical to have organized follow-up with the pillar groups to ensure that they receive feedback on their recommendations and requests of UNOCI, even if those requests are declined. Frustration and resentment of UNOCI are quickly engendered by a seeming lack of responsiveness, and this problem can be easily addressed by open and timely communications with the pillar representatives. Currently, there is no mechanism in place for follow-up to occur, and it is done on an ad hoc basis with the main PIO investment going into the preparation and organization of the forum itself.²³ To ensure follow-up, an UNOCI forum follow-up committee is advised, comprised of the various invested UNOCI components.
32. The committee is advised to formalize the post-forum follow-up in the form of UNOCI meetings with the individual pillars at a standard interval or intervals like one week after and again, one month after the event. A relevant UNOCI section should be assigned to coordinate the follow-up.²⁴ Such a formalized structure will allow communication channels to remain open, and force UNOCI to be responsive to the specific requests and recommendations made during the forum within a set period of time.
33. Independent of the forum agenda, one of the services that the organization of a forum performs is in bringing together disparate people from a single region²⁵ who are united by being part of the same pillar group. A forum or the pre-forum workshop may be the first time various communities, ethnic and religious figures have come together to identify and discuss issues that are important to their own identity group as well as to the community as a whole. In coming together to address and resolve issues that are mutually beneficial and where common

²³ Reportedly, there is a lesser degree of PIO official support for smaller activities than there is for large events that have high visibility. Small meetings should receive equal emphasis, if not more, than PR events as they have a greater likelihood of achieving meaningful long-term changes in the civil society participants, and thereby, in the society itself.

²⁴ Thus, for example, at a forum where the traditional chiefs and women express confusion and concern over the identification, certification and registration process in the run-up to elections, UNOCI's Electoral Unity could be tasked with organizing follow-up meetings to inform these pillar groups of the process, perhaps bringing in the national bodies responsible for delivering on the processes. PIO would always be in charge of follow-up with the media Pillar, with whom it should have a strong and sustained relationship anyway.

²⁵ For example, women from different ethnic and religious communities may come together for the first time under the auspices of a forum workshop to discuss issues of their concern.

ground can be found, the tools for conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the sustainability of peace may be forged. Regularizing pillar meetings outside the framework of the forum is key and should be encouraged on an ongoing monthly or bi-monthly basis, with or without UNOCI facilitation.²⁶ Regardless of the presence or absence of an UNOCI representative at the meetings themselves, UNOCI should be in regular and predictable contact with the pillar representatives to remain apprised of developments and to maintain open communication channels between UNOCI and the community. As with responsibility for forum follow-up, this task need not fall upon PIO (except with the media pillar) and should be taken over by a more relevant UNOCI section.

34. A forum should be scheduled to begin at a time that is suitable and can realistically be achieved, given cultural norms and conditions. Events frequently begin one or more hours late, and while this may be the norm for Côte d'Ivoire, it is not a practice that encourages confidence or sets an example of professionalism by UNOCI. A United Nations event should begin at a specified time, and planning and scheduling should proceed accordingly. This respects the time of UNOCI staff as well as that of all invited guests and participants.²⁷

Small meetings

35. Although small meetings do not fulfil the public relations function that a large scale, forum-like event, does, they are effective tools for reaching out to key stakeholders with information that they may then disseminate widely. As devices to “open the door” to UNOCI in hostile areas, small-scale, low profile meetings may do the job more effectively and more economically than large public forums. The benefits of a largely symbolic public event²⁸ must be weighed against more substantive small meetings that, by including authorities and civil society leaders, pave the

²⁶ The need for facilitation must be determined case by case. In areas where tension between communities is high and there is a danger that un-facilitated meetings will result in increased tensions if not actual violence, facilitation may be required. In such cases, it is outside the realm of PIO to provide guidance, as this type of facilitation in a conflict environment is a skill requiring specialized training.

²⁷ This recommendation applies to all PIO events.

One reason that PIO's public events (forums and caravans) frequently start late is that local authorities are and must be invited to these large events, and they can, by custom, only begin after those authorities have arrived (which is frequently late). Thus, UNOCI is respectful of local custom and authority in delaying the scheduled start.

This reason does not apply to all PIO public events, however, nor does it apply to the late starts of many PIO activities to which local authorities are not invited that nonetheless start late, keeping invited guests and participants needlessly waiting.

²⁸ This is not to denigrate the value of symbolic events; they are very important. It is only to point out that the value of each type of event must be assessed and matched to UNOCI's desired result. A forum may be perfect for some circumstances, while smaller low-key meeting/s may better serve UNOCI's needs in others.

way for general community acceptance of UNOCI. Local authorities and representatives of pillar groups and civil society are the people who UNOCI must reach out to and convince in order to change public opinion. With their buy-in, UNOCI gains legitimacy and local support. Small meetings with these key players may achieve more meaningful and long-lasting results than the large forum events.²⁹

36. Similarly, small “meet the people” events are of value to village communities that, because of their size or geographic location, do not otherwise receive UNOCI information. Direct outreach by PIO and relevant UNOCI sections to such villages can have a meaningful and immediate impact on issues concerning the community.³⁰
37. If PIO relies more on small substantive meetings instead of holding forums in the future, the planning for meetings and subsequent seminars or workshops with pillar groups should, just as with forums, include other UNOCI components in planning and delivery. While an initial meeting to establish contact or hear pillar needs may be convened by PIO, once pillar and community concerns have been identified, the organization, planning and content of meetings should be handed over to the appropriate UNOCI section unless it explicitly addresses a PIO goal.³¹ In general, except for the media pillar that rightly falls within PIO’s jurisdiction, the UNOCI section that should be most closely engaged with civil society is Civil Affairs. PIO may play a role in initiating contact or supporting Civil Affairs’ outreach to civil society by allocating part of its budget to this outreach initiative, but it is Civil Affairs that should embrace responsibility for this work as part of its mandate, not PIO.
38. Meetings may include one or more of the pillar groups, as the needs addressed dictate. Group size should be limited to 20 or fewer for optimal interaction and cohesion and to best achieve the desired outcomes. There are a number of simple techniques that can be employed to create

²⁹ Numerous interviews with leaders of civil society organizations revealed a lack of clear understanding of the role of UNOCI. If these key stakeholders who have attended PIO forums and workshops and have closer relationships with UNOCI than the public nevertheless do not accurately understand UNOCI’s function and authority in Côte d’Ivoire, it is very unlikely the public attending the forum understands. Small meetings with local leaders of civil society, designed specifically to address this issue, will likely fulfil PIO’s need for informing the public of UNOCI’s role more effectively than forums.

³⁰ For example, the village of Kafolo in the north of Côte d’Ivoire, near the border of Burkina Faso, does not have electricity or water, and does not regularly receive Ivorian media. It does not have reception of ONUCI-FM. A “meet the people” session to reach this village and others like it with information relating to DDR or human rights issues/health issues that concern its population could be conducted by PIO staff and a representative of one or both of the relevant UNOCI section. Such a focussed, small event would likely have a meaningful impact on Kafolo’s population and achieve PIO’s informational goals.

³¹ Thus, if a youth organization is seeking support for a soccer tournament that can serve to promote UNOCI, PIO may rightfully assume the role of leadership within UNOCI in providing that support.

an environment that is conducive to dialogue, such as seating people in a circle along with the facilitator, everyone as equals, rather than in the familiar “classroom” and “head of the class” formal set-up. This physical arrangement allows people to speak directly to each other, and works against the tendency to make statements and take rigid positions when addressing the authority at the front, and only the backs of heads of the others in the room.³² Participants should be carefully selected for maximum influence and impact on the community, and be inclusive of the different ethnic and religious groups that make up the community. When appropriate, it may be useful to deliberately include members of two or more pillars that may be in conflict over an issue and/or have a common interest in uniting to address an issue of mutual concern.

Artistic caravan

39. An artistic caravan is a large-scale public event featuring national artists in a peace-promoting tour. Caravans are held throughout the country, and attract audiences of thousands.³³ Between performances of music and dance, UNOCI messaging is relayed to the audience by UNOCI staff or by the performing artists themselves. Prior to performances, participating artists are given one-day workshops on the role and activities of UNOCI in Côte d’Ivoire, and the concept of a culture of peace. The artists serve as peace envoys and as positive representatives of the mission, reinforcing and strengthening UNOCI’s purpose and messaging. The artistic caravan is an excellent public relations device, successfully giving UNOCI a positive image in a celebratory atmosphere. ONUCI-FM broadcasts the artistic caravans nationally using its mobile transmitter or a phone line.

Benefits

40. An artistic caravan helps to promote peace and reconciliation amongst communities by utilizing high profile artists as messengers of peace. Well known musical artists have tremendous influence over cultural perceptions, particularly that of youth, and affiliating them with the mission and with the peace process is strategic and smart. Using music and the arts as

³² Many additional techniques may be employed to improve discussion and create empathy and compassion among participants, some related to the physical environment and others related to the manner in which dialogue is facilitated. These methods are teachable and strengthened by experience.

³³ An artistic caravan in Ferkessedougou in 2008, for example, attracted an audience estimated by the mayor at 4,000 people.

a vehicle to promote the mission, the artistic caravan attracts a diverse audience, including members of the public who may otherwise be uninterested, unreceptive or even hostile to UNOCI. It is an attractive event for youth, who are a significant constituency in the peace process as they are often used and exploited by politicians to be agents of violence. A caravan provides positive exposure of UNOCI peace promoting messages in a highly accessible way, and allows opportunity for more detailed information to be disseminated to the interested public in the form of publications. Similarly, the support and sponsorship of sports events involving different communities in Côte d'Ivoire, on both small and large scales, is effectual public relations policy and serves to promote social cohesion.³⁴

41. An added value is the direct impact on artists as individuals, offering them an opportunity to experience different communities positively during time of conflict and to strengthen their own commitment to the peace process by providing them a positive experience of the “other side” when crossing lines of division.³⁵ Their positive personal experience of the “other side”, if reflected in their work and public appearances, counteracts the prevalent negative propaganda.

Recommendations

42. An artistic caravan is the most effective large-scale public relations event PIO organizes. By using popular culture to transmit a message of peace and reconciliation, and as a platform to promote UNOCI's presence and work in country, PIO reaches a broad swath of the public, including the important youth sector. The modest goal of publicizing UNOCI without aiming to educate the audience more deeply is appropriate, reasonable and attainable. It does not require follow-up, though it may be advisable to tie other small-scale initiatives or programs to an artistic caravan in order to capitalize on the immediate impact of the event and build a more lasting positive presence in the community.
43. It is recommended that PIO continue organizing artistic caravans throughout the country, as needed, focusing its large-scale public relations efforts on these events to promote the mission

³⁴ UNOCI PIO provides support to many sports events, ranging from organizing soccer tournaments to partnering with civil society to promote events and donate t-shirts and trophies. February-March 2009, UNOCI provided logistical support to the African Nations Championship (CHAN) soccer games held in Côte d'Ivoire, promoting peace and reconciliation. Eight countries from the region participated in the championship. 40,000 people attended the opening ceremony in Abidjan, including many national and international journalists.

³⁵ The reported “personal transformation” of participating artists was particularly true during the time of travel restriction between Government and the Forces nouvelles (FN) held regions, when propaganda on both sides led to manipulation of the population, misconceptions and hostility. At such times, the personal experience of key influencers in society can act as a counteracting agent.

and create a positive image with the public. They are additionally useful in disseminating general information related to educational campaigns (i.e. HIV/AIDS, child education, gender).

Sports Events

44. UNOCI PIO regularly provides support to local sports events and tournaments involving different communities in Côte d'Ivoire, on both a small and large scale and often in association with local youth organizations. PIO's support may take the form of organizing the event, contributing logistical support, or donating t-shirts or trophies to participants.

Benefits

45. UNOCI involvement generates goodwill in the community and publicizes the mission's presence in a positive way. Like other PIO sponsored public events, sports events provide an opportunity for UNOCI's printed information to be distributed to the public.

Recommendations

46. The support and sponsorship of sports events is effective PIO public relations policy and should be continued. Wherever and whenever mission support is given, the mission's contribution should be leveraged to allow the highlighting and publicizing of mission activities, goals and priorities in the most visible ways possible.³⁶

School caravan

47. The school caravan is organized with school and regional educational administration involvement and is a large-scale event aimed at educating secondary school students, and by extension, their teachers and families, about UNOCI's role and presence in Côte d'Ivoire. Additional educational goals may vary from one school caravan to another, and may include,

³⁶ An example is UNOCI's agreement to provide logistical support to the African Nation Championship (CHAN) football matches held February-March 2009 in Côte d'Ivoire. Involving eight African national teams, CHAN presented a tremendous opportunity to UNOCI to raise its profile nationally and regionally and to promote mission priorities. The opportunity could have been capitalized upon to a much greater degree than that which was realized. Although the CHAN matches were televised on the national broadcaster, RTI, and promoted throughout the country, UNOCI's contribution to the event was invisible to the public. There was no UNOCI signage on the playing fields, no messaging (i.e. broadcast of public service announcement raising awareness on a mission-related issue or priority) and no official role for UNOCI in the proceedings save for the handing over of a "cup of peace" by the UN Deputy Special Representative to Côte d'Ivoire's Prime Minister Guillaume Soro in the closing ceremony. See UNIFEED, 9 March 2009. <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/d/12483.html> (accessed 14 May 2009).

for example, a theme of human rights or environmental stewardship. The school caravan programme usually lasts several hours and is comprised of local and UNOCI speakers, entertainment, school group presentations and a competitive quiz about the United Nations in general and UNOCI in particular. The programme agenda may include time where UNOCI staff representing the different mission components describe their work to the assembled audience.³⁷ The school caravan typically reaches a large student audience.³⁸ There is no organized follow-up to the caravans, though participating schools are encouraged to form peace clubs and a caravan is sometimes associated with the launch of a peace club.³⁹ School caravans have been held throughout the country since 2007.

Benefits

48. The school caravan promotes a positive image of UNOCI to an audience of young people who are, proverbially, the future of Côte d'Ivoire. Young people have been used in the conflict to foment and execute violence, and reaching them with a message of peace and reconciliation is vital to the future stability of the nation. The event relies upon the participation of members of the target audience in planning and preparation, and allocates time during the event for local school clubs and individuals to perform and speak out on the subject of peace. The school caravan is a way to expose students to UNOCI's work and to the importance of the process of peace.

Recommendations

49. Acknowledging the target group as important for UNOCI to touch in terms of instilling a culture of peace in the next generation of Ivorian social, political and cultural leaders, and in planning for the long-term stability of the country, the results and overall impact of school caravans seem minimal in relation to the PIO investment to make such events happen. While

³⁷ The school caravan that the consultant observed in Adzope on 28 January 2009, however, cut this portion of the program from the agenda because of time constraints caused by a delayed start time of 11:30 a.m. rather than 8:00 a.m. as scheduled.

³⁸ School caravans usually draw students and educators from several schools in the district. The crowd assembled runs in the hundreds.

³⁹ Peace clubs have been initiated by UNOCI PIO in several schools to promote an understanding amongst students of a culture of peace. In some schools, the clubs are peace and human rights clubs, or peace and environment clubs. Apart from the formal initiation and a workshop on conflict resolution or a culture of peace, UNOCI support for ongoing club activities is extremely limited.

Peace clubs are discussed in the Stars of Peace section.

part of the school caravans' intended value is to educate, there is little evidence that they do so with any degree of depth.⁴⁰

50. To be an effective educational event, a school caravan would be strengthened significantly if it were grounded in the school curriculum. Without reinforcement in the classroom, the goal of teaching facts about the United Nations via a caravan is not a meaningful or lasting endeavour. The goal of giving exposure to the concept of a culture of peace would be better served by introducing the theme into the classroom curriculum, perhaps tying it into a human rights framework,⁴¹ or by having UNOCI present the theme to smaller groups of students, classroom by classroom. Thus, to achieve tangible results in an educational framework, a different methodology should be employed to inculcate young people with a culture of peace, and it should be coordinated and implemented with the involvement, ideally, of the Ministry of Education, or with the district educational authorities.
51. Therefore, it is recommended that PIO either cease the school caravans, or make a serious investment in rethinking the aims, and consequently, the organization, structure, and content of the caravans with the involvement of educational experts and partners including other UNOCI components, particularly those that work or have experience with working with children and the education sector. In this vein, collaboration with organizations such as UNICEF may be appropriate to best build upon and strengthen work already being done in the area.
52. A careful review of school caravans' intended impact and goals should lead to realistic follow-up programmes and tie-ins with other similarly oriented initiatives, whether sponsored by UNOCI or other organizations.

Trainings/Workshops

53. Trainings and workshops are provided to groups on culture of peace, conflict management, social cohesion and other issues relevant to their activities in support of the UNOCI mandate and peace process. Trainings and workshops are often requested by the pillar groups in the

⁴⁰ The students who participate in the quiz competition evidently do learn facts and memorize trivia about the United Nations, but this is quite different from in-depth knowledge or an understanding of a UN peacekeeping mission's role.

⁴¹ UNOCI Human Rights has, reportedly, worked with the Ministry of Education to introduce human rights into the educational curriculum.

pre-forum discussions, and are a positive outcome of the forum giving evidence to UNOCI responsiveness to on-the-ground needs voiced by the community. Trainings and workshops are provided by PIO and sometimes coordinated in partnership with other UNOCI sections. Trainings and workshops are also occasionally provided outside the forum framework to respond to expressed or perceived community needs.

Benefits

54. Trainings and workshops provide an opportunity for UNOCI to respond to real needs in the community, thereby generating good will and concrete evidence that UNOCI is active in supporting the country in the peace process and in economic recovery. Trainings and workshops engage interested and influential actors in upholding the UNOCI mandate, and educate participants on such important issues as the prevention of violence against women, human rights and the culture of peace. Trainings and workshops build local capacity.

Trainings and workshops as they relate to the forums are discussed in the Forum and Small Meetings sections.

Trainings specific to the media are discussed in the section on Media Development.

Recommendations

55. Because of its close contact with the public, PIO is in an optimal position to generate input from the community and to promote trainings and workshops on various UNOCI mission and mandate related issues. It is not, however, equipped to organize and provide support on all issues, nor should it.
56. PIO's trainings and workshop activities seem to have largely grown out of the needs expressed by the pre-forum focused discussions and a need for forum follow-up rather than by the UNOCI mandate and a subsequently developed communication strategy and work plan. Instead of delivering capacity building and issue-specific workshops to the pillars, PIO's focus should more firmly be on transmitting UNOCI related information to the public, promoting professionalism in the media and in media coverage, and supporting the development of local media—individuals and institutions—in support of sustainable peace. In its communications support role to other UNOCI sections, PIO should encourage and promote the sections' work

to engage and educate the local population. However, PIO itself should not be delivering or organizing programs on issues only tangentially related to its own mandate.⁴²

57. With its field presence and frequent interactions with the local communities, PIO is well situated to act as a liaison between the local population and the UNOCI mission components (i.e. Human Rights, Child Protection, DDR, Electoral) and their representatives, or to refer civil society groups to other UN agencies as appropriate (i.e. WHO, UNICEF), with the aim of having the appropriate section or agency take up the task of providing the trainings.⁴³
58. It is recommended that PIO play a coordinating role, integrating direct outreach programmes such as workshops, seminars and trainings into a more comprehensive and strategic approach to the mission's overall communications activities. Direct outreach activities should be included in an interconnected and cross-cutting manner with PIO's informational, awareness raising and educational campaigns and events and traditional modes of communication, with each element reinforcing messaging and information.⁴⁴ A coordinated strategy integrating these elements and clearly defining what UNOCI section, if other than PIO, has primary

⁴² Every issue, arguably, can be said to be in support of the peace process and a culture of peace, and thus, within the scope of the PIO mandate. It is nonetheless advised that PIO should be more selective and discerning in the trainings and workshops it provides, focusing on those that deal specifically with media, information, communications, while leaving to other, more appropriate, bodies the subjects relevant to their areas of expertise. PIO's work to build capacity in civil society should be focused exclusively on the media pillar.

In this context, the argument was put forward that other UNOCI sections do not have an adequate budget or have shown neither interest nor initiative in providing workshops and seminars to the public addressing their areas of responsibility. Seeing a void, PIO stepped in to fill a niche and a need. Without addressing the cause, and while commending PIO for taking initiative, it is nonetheless advised that PIO would serve its constituents better if it involved other UNOCI sections in a central role in planning and providing workshops and seminars, and provided only budgetary (if necessary) and promotional support as needed. The quality and relevance of such public education outreach efforts would thus be enhanced, and PIO could concentrate on meeting needs more closely associated with its public information, communications and media role.

⁴³ UNOCI PIO is part of a coordinating meeting held once a month by OCHA that includes UN agencies and humanitarian organizations to promote cooperation and exchange of information. These meetings are useful for PIO to share information and to coordinate activities.

⁴⁴ In addition to pillar-focused meetings, there is value in bringing different pillar groups together for facilitated discussions that involve common concerns or conflicts. Rather than addressing each pillar as a separate entity with its own concerns, pillars may be brought together to unite on specific cross-cutting issues where two or more pillars may have a role or be influential in resolving the issue. Similarly, workshops that bring together a pillar with local authorities may be useful to directly address community problems where the government role is significant. Such workshops will encourage open channels of communication between government and civil society and support a well-functioning public sphere. As with other workshops, seminars and trainings that are not specific to the media pillar, it is advised that PIO play a coordinating role, but not bear exclusive responsibility for content and delivery where another UNOCI section or sections may be more appropriate.

responsibility for delivery, should be devised and shared. It should have clearly defined goals, results and indicators of success.⁴⁵

59. Although PIO frequently works with local organizations⁴⁶ to deliver special trainings on conflict resolution, social cohesion and a culture of peace, PIO staff often play the role of facilitators at meetings and workshops that bring together different communities to specifically discuss their contribution to a culture of peace.⁴⁷ If PIO staff are to continue in this role, it is recommended that they receive special training in conflict resolution and management, and thereby develop facilitation skills specific to environments of violent conflict. Without an adequate foundation in the field, there is a risk that bringing together people from opposing sides of a conflict may result in immediate clashes, or other unforeseen, unintended, negative consequences that may be calamitous, not only for the individuals and communities involved, but for UNOCI as well.
60. UNOCI staff and, critically, chiefs of section and senior management, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) should receive mandatory trainings on media and information and the importance of open communications to the success of the mission.⁴⁸ Such trainings may alleviate several problems encountered frequently by PIO in its internal relations with UNOCI sections, plus allow PIO to provide more accurate and timely information to the local beneficiaries, the Ivorian population. It will also facilitate and improve the mission's relationship with local media channels, and by extension, with the local population.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Currently, workshops, seminars and trainings are provided on an ad hoc basis by PIO and, sometimes, by individual sections. The measurements of achievement are vaguely defined and rarely assessed. As such, these activities are of limited impact and uncertain value.

⁴⁶ i.e. Centre d'études et de recherche pour la paix (CERAP)

⁴⁷ UNOCI offers social cohesion programmes to various sectors of society, including, for example, a seminar in Yamoussoukro on the role and responsibility of teachers in a culture of peace. The recommendation in this paragraph refers to such PIO programmes, as well as the pre-forum workshops, where members of conflicting communities frequently come together in the same pillar group.

⁴⁸ See also the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Peacekeeping Operations' *Operational Policy: Policy and Guidance for Public Information in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, July 2006, paragraph 115.

⁴⁹ These problems are unlikely to be limited to UNOCI and are probably common to many DPKO missions. They include but are not limited to the following: the leadership (and subsequently, the staff's) debilitating reluctance to speak on the record to PIO, ONUCI-FM, or local media outlets; a tendency to delay an official response to events that impact the mission; a harmful disengagement and lack of cultivation of the local media because of distrust or misunderstanding of motives.

Stars of Peace and peace clubs

61. The Stars of Peace programme grew out of the school caravans and was instituted to create a platform to engage students and educators in dialogue and exchange on the culture of peace, civic education, children's rights and human rights.⁵⁰ Stars of Peace are students who are selected by UNOCI PIO upon nomination by school teachers and administrators, and based upon a criteria that includes demonstrated leadership; excellent rapport with their peers; interest in a culture of peace, justice, and tolerance; and a good understanding of the goals of UNOCI. The programme is intended to engender an appreciation for peace, and to assist PIO in the organization of activities in the schools to raise awareness of a culture of peace. Approximately 35 Stars of Peace from different schools in the Abidjan area have been selected, and these students have participated in UNOCI trainings and workshops on topics including the culture of non-violence and conflict management.

Benefits

62. Stars of Peace have initiated activities to raise awareness on the culture of peace in their own schools, and have been associated with the launching of peace clubs engaging their fellow students, thereby acting as multipliers of UNOCI's message of peace.
63. Extracurricular clubs are common in Côte d'Ivoire's educational system. Peace clubs have been promoted by UNOCI PIO, and are initiated with students and teacher involvement. Peace clubs are intended to raise awareness and promote dialogue and discussion on the peace process, conflict resolution, reconciliation and the culture of peace amongst participating students as well as promote peace, civic education, children's rights and human rights.⁵¹

Recommendations

64. The initiative to include young people as integral components of the peace process and to highlight their achievements by recognizing them as Stars of Peace is commendable. However, the current level of UNOCI PIO support seems insufficient to make their value as message multipliers in their schools and communities a success. To be truly successful and have deep

⁵⁰ UNOCI PIO Integrated Communications Programme: Strategic Approach (2007-2008? No date on document).

⁵¹ UNOCI PIO Integrated Communications Programme: Strategic Approach (2007-2008? No date on document).

impact on the student population, both projects necessitate greater resources, planning and a strategy that clearly identifies desired outcomes and results.

65. There is overlap between the intended goals of peace clubs with the goals of other UNOCI sections, primarily, Human Rights. In some schools, the peace clubs are “peace and human rights” clubs, and in still others they are “peace and environment” clubs. The exact nature, role and function of these clubs are unclear, and apart from the initial founding and occasional trainings on conflict resolution and the culture of peace, UNOCI PIO support is limited. If PIO is committed to this programme, it must make a greater investment in providing guidance, organization, and fiscal support to peace clubs in order to make them effective.
66. As public relations figures, like the artists taking part in artistic caravans, the Stars of Peace are useful to promote UNOCI and a culture of peace. Their role and success as UNOCI “ambassadors” to the Ivorian student and youth population can be amplified, however. Rather than focusing on their outreach work as promoters or leaders of school peace clubs, the emphasis should be shifted to integrate them into UNOCI PIO publicity campaigns that reach a larger youth audience more immediately. A monthly column or essay by a different Star of Peace could be featured in the monthly UNOCI newsletter or on the UNOCI website, for example. ONUCI-FM could have a Star of Peace host a youth oriented ONUCI-FM programme that interviews youth on a different subject each week, or hosts a call-in programme, or addresses youth issues in some other way.⁵² By promoting the Stars of Peace using UNOCI media, the students could be catapulted to celebrity status⁵³ and thereby be used more effectively as UNOCI representatives or “ambassadors”. Once a Star of Peace has obtained some public recognition, their value as information and message multipliers among the youth population would be strengthened dramatically.
67. Unless the Stars of Peace project is reconfigured and better integrated into the overall PIO strategy, it is recommended that the programme not be expanded further. Similarly, further

⁵² “Radio Rookies” is a New York Public Radio youth initiative that includes teenagers from various ethnic and socio-economic groups, and provides them the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities and their world. The project supports one or two workshops a year, each lasting four to eight months. Participants learn to be radio journalists and develop skills to create their radio documentary; they learn to conduct interviews, develop a story, craft a script and digitally edit audio. The Rookies tell true stories from their own lives that are broadcast on public radio’s morning programmes and online. The first person narratives effectively give a listening audience of approximately one million weekly listeners a glimpse of the issues and challenges young people grapple with in their own city. Such a programme may be a useful model for one way in which Stars of Peace could be integrated into ONUCI-FM programming. See http://www.wnyc.org/radiorookies/about_what.html (accessed 21 March 2009.)

⁵³ To keep expectations realistic, celebrity status should be understood as “minor celebrity status”.

PIO support to peace clubs is discouraged until a cohesive strategy with realistic outcome expectations and commitment to their technical and material support is made.

Target audiences (pillars)

68. Members of the pillar⁵⁴ groups, individually and collectively, act as multipliers of UNOCI messages and capacity-building initiatives. All the identified target groups—traditional chiefs, youth, women, media—are influential in Ivorian society and therefore thought to be critical to the UNOCI mission’s success and the upholding of the peace process.⁵⁵ Each can play a pivotal role in legitimising UNOCI’s presence, if not endorsing it. PIO has reached out systematically to all four groups identified through formal and informal meetings and outreach activities in the form of workshops and trainings on the culture of peace, social cohesion, and specific issues related to each pillar to raise awareness and build local capacity. PIO additionally offers support to civil society organizations by sharing with them UNOCI produced informational publication that they may use with their own members.⁵⁶
69. The recognition of the four pillars (largely via relationships with associated civil society organizations) and their inclusion in UNOCI outreach activities empowers individuals and organizations, strengthens local capacity, and works to benefit their communities and the nation as a whole. The pillars are well positioned in Côte d’Ivoire’s social fabric to act as multipliers of UNOCI information and messaging.

Recommendations

70. As discussed in recommendations made for the forum, the primary and ongoing contact with pillars and civil society organizations in terms of capacity building, except for media, should fall under the responsibility of Civil Affairs and not with PIO.

⁵⁴ PIO engages with traditional chiefs, youth, and women pillars primarily through civil society organizations. With the media, engagement is mainly via contact with media institutions including newspapers, radio and television stations and through media organizations such as unions and journalist associations.

⁵⁵ Côte d’Ivoire has a developed and active civil society. Local NGOs have tremendous outreach potential, and many lack only the means and resources to work to their capacity. Staffing is largely voluntary.

⁵⁶ The strategy of identifying key target audiences is rooted in the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Peacekeeping Operations’ *Operational Policy: Policy and Guidance for Public Information in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, July 2006, paragraph 110.

71. While there is no doubt that traditional chiefs, youth and women are critical groups for PIO to reach out to, PIO officers should not be burdened with organizing meetings, workshops or events on subjects that are not directly associated with the PIO mandate,⁵⁷ most especially, with those activities that aim to build capacity. The value of civil society organizations to PIO, and PIO's value to them, should be viewed strictly in an informational context and PIO involvement with them should be understood in this framework.⁵⁸
72. If Civil Affairs is unable to assume responsibility for many of the services that PIO now provides, and, as is likely, the Civil Affairs budget does not allow the unit to engage deeply with civil society in this manner, it is advised that PIO allocate the portion of its budget that goes towards supporting non-media pillar groups to support Civil Affairs activities. These expenditures may be justified because supporting such activities is fulfilling PIO's mandate of providing service and material support to UNOCI sections. Should UNOCI Civil Affairs be unable to assume the role PIO has been playing in organizing and providing capacity-building support to the pillar groups,⁵⁹ the relationships between UNOCI PIO and civil society organizations should be clearly defined and formalized to manage expectations of both parties.
73. Currently, the relationship between PIO and the local community is largely based on personal initiative and the individual relationships between PIO officers and local representatives. Some of the relationships are individual, with a traditional chief or with a particular journalist, for example, while others are with civil society organizations and their leadership. Collaboration with local civil society varies greatly from one PIO office to another.⁶⁰ The formalization of the relationship between PIO and the pillar groups and civil society organizations, and the clear

⁵⁷ i.e. violence against women, social cohesion, conflict management and mitigation, rule of law, children's rights, etc. are not topics on which PIO should be organizing seminars.

See Trainings/Workshops section and footnote 37.

⁵⁸ Thus, capacity building support to, for example, youth organizations falls outside the realm of PIO's jurisdiction, whereas capacity building support to media organizations falls within PIO's mandate.

See Trainings/Workshops section and footnote 37.

⁵⁹ In addition to having extremely limited financial resources to support such activities, Civil Affairs also has a very small staff.

⁶⁰ This is not a criticism of PIO staff, but an indication that they are taxed with too many diverse and divergent responsibilities, and thus have little alternative but to pick and choose where their efforts and attention are most effective. If they have a strong community organizing background, they are likely to give time and excel at cultivating relationships with the pillar groups; if they have a strong journalistic and communications background, they are likely to be better at supporting media and communications initiatives and be closer to the media pillar than to the other pillar groups.

delineation of PIO's role in interacting with them, will address some of the challenges UNOCI PIO currently faces in its engagement.

74. Regular meetings or conversations on a monthly basis, by phone or in person, with more frequent meetings or conversations depending on priorities and needs should be instituted as a way to regularly exchange information.⁶¹ A predictable schedule as a basis for contact will allow for a consistent channel of communication between UNOCI and the pillars that, importantly, flows in two directions, allowing PIO to truly be the mouth and ears of the mission.⁶² Creating and maintaining these channels of communication between PIO and the pillars is crucial for PIO, and thereby the mission, in order to remain apprised of changes in the social and political environment, especially as they concerns security. Formalizing contacts will also facilitate transitions between PIO changes of personnel, thereby avoiding gaps in communication and stalled progress.⁶³
75. The evidence of PIO's success at utilizing the potential of the pillars as multipliers of UNOCI information and messaging is limited. Clearly defining both PIO's and the civil society partners' roles in the relationship will improve pillar capacity in this specific expected outcome. At this time, there is no information, other than anecdotal, on how UNOCI print materials that are given to the local civil society organizations are distributed to their constituents, the methods used, the numbers reached, nor where those constituents reside. Such information would be useful to PIO to determine how UNOCI material is used, what civil society groups are useful in distributing materials, and to indirectly learn who the key players in a community are, what pillar groups or individuals are most influential in a locale, and where and with whom more work needs to be done.
76. Pillar groups can help UNOCI gain access to a community that may otherwise be inaccessible.⁶⁴ In exchange, UNOCI can offer a service that directly assists their work. For

⁶¹ Formalizing the contact in this way in no way precludes more informal or more frequent communication. It is merely meant to ensure that some communication occurs with regularity.

⁶² Such regularized contact is also recommended between PIO and other figures, such as local authorities.

⁶³ There is little institutional memory or continuity when UNOCI PIO staff changes occur. From an institutional perspective, without mechanisms for continuity and process, the transition from one PIO officer to another as a focal point or in a field office often results in wasted time and resources as the new officer "catches up" and spends time recreating the relationship that preceded.

⁶⁴ For example, the organization OIS Africa, works primarily with women and children affected by the war, and also reaches out to Forces nouvelles soldiers with programmes to combat violence. Soldiers are a critical target audience for UNOCI, and reaching them with information is challenging. By working with OIS Africa, UNOCI may make inroads with this target group.

example, a women's health organization may travel village to village to disseminate information directly. It is stymied by a lack of transportation. If UNOCI can provide transport, and PIO additionally provides supporting print materials, or a film (UNOCI produced, or something produced by another organizations) and the equipment to screen it, it would help the women's organization raise awareness of the issues that concern it, and would help UNOCI gain entry to a village in a subtle and positive manner. Similar quid pro quo arrangements can be made, where in exchange for access or distribution of UNOCI informational materials or resources, the pillar organizations gain a meaningful service or needed materials.

77. Similarly, using locally operating civil society organizations as surrogates to spread UNOCI information in areas where there is hostility towards UNOCI allows UNOCI to effectively reach target audiences. PIO can use the legitimacy and personal relationships that a local NGO naturally has established in a community to help it with its informational outreach; by associating UNOCI with the local NGO, information may be better received. By cultivating mutually beneficial relationships through regular and productive contact, PIO may be able to do more to exploit its relationships with civil society organizations to be of benefit to both entities.

78. It is also important to clearly outline expectations to avoid misunderstandings. Pillar groups need to have a clear understanding of the role of UNOCI PIO and, more generally, the UNOCI mission and the ways in which it can impact their work and lives. There is a great deal of misunderstanding of what UNOCI can, in fact, provide to local organizations and individuals in terms of capacity building and material support. The needs in the community are great, and expectations of UNOCI by civil society actors are often unrealistic and mistaken. Many pillar groups and representatives seem to regard UNOCI as a humanitarian organization, rich with resources. This is a problem of communications and messaging that UNOCI PIO has tried to address in public events and in smaller meetings, albeit with limited success. It is a problem that must be highlighted and addressed with a revised strategy, as the false assumptions about the mission's capacity and resources are surely damaging.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ An additional but related problem, revealed in interviews with many leaders of local NGOs that work with PIO, is that even they do not understand the function of PIO within the UNOCI structure. They, and very likely the constituents they represent, regard UNOCI as a monolithic entity.

79. The workshop day prior to a forum is organized and facilitated by UNOCI PIO and is intended to provide the pillars an opportunity to together identify needs in the community and, subsequently, to make recommendations and requests of UNOCI. These workshops need not be associated with a forum.

This issue is discussed in the Forum and Small Meetings sections.

80. Of PIO's special concern is Côte d'Ivoire's media environment; this makes it critical to bring the media pillar together with the other three pillar groups for dialogue and to develop ways in which the media may engage with civil society in support of conflict resolution and management and the maintenance of peace and security.

81. PIO engagement with the pillars should be focused on specific and identifiable goals. PIO may act effectively as a liaison or referral to other UNOCI components, UN agencies, or non-governmental organizations for the issue-specific trainings or material support but should not overstretch its mandate and resources beyond its specific role. Thus, it is recommended that PIO disassociate itself to the extent possible from its intensive engagement (i.e. the provision of non-PIO informational and capacity building workshops and services) with the pillar groups, except for the media pillar.

Media pillar

82. Media are influential actors in society, and in the particular context of Côte d'Ivoire, they play an influential role in both fomenting violent conflict and supporting the peace process. Fitting with PIO's mandate, assisting, supporting and communicating with and via this pillar group is a primary goal. To this end, the mission spokesman holds weekly press conferences and PIO issues a press briefing summary, press release and transcript online. Relationships with the Ministry of Communications and media institutions⁶⁶ have been cultivated over time, and a media development programme has been implemented to professionalize the media and strengthen journalists' understanding of their role and impact on the peace process and social cohesion.

PIO's relationship with proximity radio is discussed in the ONUCI-FM section.

⁶⁶ Such as the National Audio Visual Council (CNCA), National Press Commission (CNP) and the media's own supervisory body, the Press Freedom and Standards Monitoring Centre (OLPED).

PIO's efforts to strengthen the Ivorian media are addressed in the Media Development section.

Recommendations

83. Evidenced by the Ivorian media's active role in fomenting violence in the early 2000s and again in 2006, and bearing in mind UNOCI's mandate and the role of PIO within the mission, the media is the most important pillar for PIO to focus on in its informational outreach efforts. It is the only pillar to which PIO should be directly delivering capacity building trainings and workshops.
84. UNOCI's weekly press conferences are very poorly attended. Journalists cite the difficulty in gaining access to UNOCI headquarters as one reason they do not attend, with the cost of transportation to the headquarters, which is outside Abidjan's business centre, being another. They also report UNOCI is too circumspect with information to make attendance of the usual press conferences of real value. In response to these complaints, PIO may consider changing the site of the press conferences to a more central location easily accessible by local journalists.⁶⁷ More importantly, PIO should directly address the perception that the mission is too guarded with information. One way is to encourage a more open approach to media by UNOCI. This may be accomplished by offering media trainings to staff and leadership of UNOCI to make them aware of the importance of transparency and of the benefits to the mission of sharing information more openly with the public. This understanding is especially important for the SRSG.
85. The relationship of the SRSG with the media is of critical importance. The SRSG should be encouraged to cultivate relationships with key journalists and media management and owners.⁶⁸ Greater trust between parties may thus be engendered, leading to more positive interaction and more open communication. These relationships are of tremendous value, and especially so in times of heightened tension between the population (or segments of it) and the mission.
86. In prioritising media as the pillar most deserving of PIO's attention and resources, PIO should also prioritise its support for government bodies and institutions that aim to support the

⁶⁷ Other international organizations hold press conferences at Abidjan hotels situated in the business district.

⁶⁸ When Abou Moussa, the current PDSRSG, was the Officer-in-Charge of the mission from February to October 2007, he organized dinners for editors-in-chief to establish rapport and open channels of communication. The SRSG of the UNTAES mission in the mid-1990s would meet regularly for informal breakfast meetings with local journalists to achieve the same goal.

Ivorian media.⁶⁹ Such support is political, and may attract criticism from one party or another, but is nonetheless a critical role PIO can play in developing media institutions and regulatory bodies in ways that comply with international norms.⁷⁰

Service and Support to UNOCI Sections

87. One of the roles of UNOCI PIO is to provide support to the other UNOCI sections in material and communication services to the public. This is achieved using the tools described, primarily through informational print materials and the provision of UNOCI gadgets, as well as exposure of issues and events in publications, on the website, and on ONUCI-FM. While functional, the overall engagement between PIO and other sections, particularly at headquarters, has been characterized by a lack of coordination and communication, resulting in less than optimal performance and satisfaction among the parties involved.

Recommendations

88. In order to improve its support to the UNOCI sections, PIO should more effectively inform and consult with the sections about its outreach initiatives, as well as about the content of its informational publications.⁷¹ Consultation with other UNOCI sections at every level will not only enhance PIO's communication effectiveness with the general population, but also engender a feeling of unity and common purpose amongst all UNOCI actors whose involvement will improve the quality and efficacy of the activity and product. This is to the

⁶⁹ Twelfth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2007/133, 8 March 2007: "51. UNOCI also continued to advocate for the creation of an improved media environment. In this regard, the mission provided support to the Ministry of Communication for the establishment of an early-warning unit on hate media that would include representatives of the Government, media regulatory bodies, the national journalists' association and UNOCI. The mission also strengthened its collaboration with media regulatory bodies such as the National Press Council, the National Council on Audio-visual Media and the Observatoire pour la liberté de presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie."

Thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2007/275, 14 May 2007: "G. Supporting efforts to create a positive political environment. 79. In the Ouagadougou agreement, the Ivorian parties expressed their commitment to organize a wide campaign of information and sensitisation of the population to support the peace and reconciliation process and to refrain from any type of propaganda that might jeopardize national cohesion and unity. In order to address the lack of information among the population about the peace process, it is recommended that UNOCI and relevant United Nations agencies work with the Ivorian authorities and other partners to assist in the development and implementation of an effective public information plan that would make full use of the available national and UNOCI communications capacities, including Radio ONUCI-FM, Radio télévision ivoirienne and the network of community radio stations..."

⁷⁰ For example, in late 2008, the National Audio Visual Council (CNCA), a national body, requested UNOCI's assistance in reintegrating the illegal radio stations of the Forces nouvelles region. The CNCA asked for transportation assistance to reach the stations in order to personally engage their leadership in the process of reintegration. For a number of reasons, the project has, to date, not been realized, but PIO leadership expresses a willingness to accompany the CNCA.

⁷¹ Primarily, issue-based leaflets and posters.

entire mission's benefit. Specifically, in organizing a forum, including the various sections early on in planning will result in a higher quality, more relevant and topical programme. Other UNOCI sections can assist PIO in identifying critical locations where meetings with the public are needed. Jointly identifying the location and themes addressed will help not only the intended audience in getting the information and resources they require from UNOCI, but reciprocally allow the UNOCI sections to best serve the public. Also, when UNOCI sections are given adequate time to prepare for a forum or public meeting, their presentation can be better tailored to the specific audience, matching the information given to the specific issues and concerns endemic to the area.⁷²

89. ONUCI-FM, in particular, is cited as an excellent disseminator of information to the population on human rights, child welfare, health, the electoral process, etc. There is a degree of distrust of ONUCI-FM among some UNOCI sections and staff, who tend to keep information close and are hesitant to share it with PIO for fear of negative results. Consequently, some ONUCI-FM journalists and PIO officers find their task of giving important information to the public made difficult by the lack of openness with their colleagues. There is sometimes the feeling that information crucial to their role and to the UNOCI mandate is withheld from them. Rather than being institutionalised, the sharing of information frequently seems left to individual relationships, which when they are good, works, and when they are not, is detrimental to the mission as a whole. Standard Operating Procedures on the sharing of information coming from the UNOCI sections to PIO could be drawn up, or the relationships formalized in some way to facilitate communication.⁷³ Perhaps, like PIO's daily brief that is distributed to UNOCI sections and other invested actors as a UN institutionalised practice, similar formalized information sharing from the UNOCI sections to

⁷² For example, in a region where there are many IDPs and there is tension between "original" and "stranger" communities, the comments of an UNOCI Human Rights officers may be concentrated on this issue whereas in another region of the country the human rights focus may be on arbitrary detention or violence against women. Similarly, an issue in a specific locale may dictate a need for a PIO forum or meeting with the population, and this need may be best identified not by PIO but by one of the UNOCI sections that is more closely engaged with the community. For example, in a place with a large IDP community, the identification process in preparation for national elections may be hampered and require special outreach by UNOCI. With its in-depth knowledge of the situation in the field, UNOCI's Electoral section may draw attention to the need for an organized meeting on this subject and be better placed than PIO to know that this need exists.

⁷³ The flow of communications between sections is weakest at headquarters in Abidjan. The field offices seem to manage the process better, perhaps because they are smaller and thus sharing information at a personal level is easier, but they are nevertheless stymied by the centralized nature of the mission.

PIO could be instituted.⁷⁴ The current daily or weekly meetings at the chief of section level are reportedly insufficient, as the information shared at this level does not adequately trickle down to the section staff. With all this said, formal or informal meetings are unlikely to produce the desired results unless there is a top-down directive that information must be shared, and that the mission and the individual sections will ultimately benefit. Leadership on this issue must be sought from the highest mission level, ideally from the SRSG.

90. A practice that may be of help to open communications between PIO and other sections is information training for UNOCI staff, chiefs of sections, senior management and the SRSG to help them understand the role of communications and how it may be useful, not harmful, to their aims. Such trainings may assist in bridging the divide and thereby not only facilitate PIO's work, but raise the quality and timeliness of information delivery, making it more effective, and thus better serve the UNOCI mission and the Ivorian population.
91. There is some overlap between PIO activities and the mandate of other sections, most notably Civil Affairs and Human Rights.

This is discussed in several sections of this report, including Forums and Small Meetings. The paragraphs below about Human Rights Clubs and Peace Clubs should be read with reference to the recommendations made in the Stars of Peace and Peace Clubs section.

92. Working with the Ministry of Education, UNOCI's Human Rights section worked to integrate a human rights curriculum into primary and secondary school education. Human Rights initiates poetry competitions, theatre performances, and art on human rights themes. It provides material support, training to teachers and to students, and facilitation. After a curriculum had been developed and the supporting activities put in place, Human Rights began forming human rights clubs in secondary schools. The role of human rights clubs is to supplement the school curriculum and to raise awareness of human rights amongst teachers and students. Human rights clubs are initiated by students and teachers, not by UNOCI Human Rights, and they thereby have greater national authenticity and ownership.

⁷⁴ See also the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Peacekeeping Operations' *Operational Policy: Policy and Guidance for Public Information in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, July 2006, paragraph 116.

93. The human rights clubs may be contrasted with the PIO initiated peace clubs that have been founded in a number of secondary schools around the country. The peace clubs lack the supportive framework that the human rights clubs have, as they are not linked to a curriculum and are instituted on a school by school basis rather than in an institutional framework. Their role and focus is less well defined, as is the support that PIO gives after a club has formed. Given that in some locales both peace clubs and human rights clubs coexist, it is recommended that where possible, peace clubs be folded into human rights clubs and that PIO's creation of new peace clubs cease unless PIO can provide strategic justification, guidance and support to the clubs. Human rights clubs have a clearer thematic focus and framework of support and may easily encompass the theme of culture of peace.
94. PIO has shown great initiative in promoting certain issues and providing substantive support to communities by providing workshops and seminars.⁷⁵ PIO would improve this work if it were to share ideas and bring in expertise of other UNOCI sections or other NGOs at the planning phase, and not simply issue invitations to those sections after the agenda has been drawn up. Conversely, greater information sharing and consultation by other sections with PIO would aid all sections in their work with the public. As recommended elsewhere in this report, PIO is advised to take on a coordination role for these types of issue-based informational activities.
95. Support in the form of leaflets and informational pamphlets is useful to all sections. Items such as t-shirts and gadgets, too, are greatly appreciated and used. The timeliness of the production and provision of these goods, however, has been problematic. There have been occasions where PIO has agreed to provide specific items by a particular date, sometimes in anticipation of a specific event,⁷⁶ and the promised materials were not delivered at all, not delivered in the agreed upon quantity, or delivered but in a poor quality. While focal points in PIO are identified to work with each section, their efficacy may be hampered by a seeming lack of authority and/or of initiative. In some cases, the section officers have claimed that in order for a request or agreement with PIO to be carried out, an appeal has to be made directly to the Chief of PIO rather than working through the established channels of hierarchy for any result.

⁷⁵ Including campaigns promoting children's rights, women's rights, elections, culture of peace, and raising awareness of sexual exploitation, etc.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Day, International Day of Women, etc.

PIO's poor track record in meeting deadlines should be addressed, the source of the problems identified and a solution found.

This issue is addressed in the Publications section.

Branding

96. In 2006, PIO contracted a communications firm to create a brand identity for the UNOCI mission, including imagery and slogan. The brand “la route de la paix/the road to peace” is used in various manifestations in PIO messaging, including t-shirts, billboards, ONUCI-FM jingles, fabric, calendars, umbrellas and other items.⁷⁷ The brand has become readily identifiable with UNOCI in all parts of the country.
97. PIO also commissioned Côte d'Ivoire's popular musical artist, reggae star Alpha Blondy, to compose and record a song entitled “La route de la paix” as part of this branding campaign. In September 2005, Alpha Blondy was named the first UNOCI Messenger of Peace.

Recommendations

98. The branding project well illustrates the creativity, energy and initiative taken by PIO in promoting the UNOCI mission. By applying a recognized marketing and communications strategy to the UN peacekeeping mission, PIO effectively created a brand and identity that has been enormously successful. Establishing a readily identifiable brand for every peacekeeping mission should be a practice that is endorsed by DPKO for all missions around the world.

⁷⁷ Messages include “nous sommes ensemble sur la route de la paix/we are on the road to peace together” and “avançons sur la route de la paix/we are advancing on the road to peace.”

Tools

99. In addition to the outreach activities described above, PIO uses more traditional informational tools to transmit information relevant to the UNOCI mission mandate and the peace process, and to support the various sections and components of the mission in effectively relaying information the public.⁷⁸ Education on the peace process, the culture of peace, conflict prevention and peacebuilding are also part of PIO's communications strategy and promoted via various communications tools. The tools are also used in support of communication campaigns related to UN Secretary-General's priorities.⁷⁹

Radio

100. ONUCI-FM is the most successful and far-reaching communications tool employed by the UNOCI mission to provide information to the public, surpassing all other tools in reach, popularity and impact. It was created to provide accurate information to the Ivorian population and to promote peace and national reconciliation. ONUCI-FM is heard in over 80% of the country and covers both government and Forces nouvelles (FN) zones. ONUCI-FM's news and entertainment programming is of a high professional quality, conforming to international standards of accuracy and impartiality. French is the language of broadcast, but news is also broadcast twice a day in five major languages: Baoulé, Bété, Gueré, Malinké and Yacouba.

101. In addition to informational programming, ONUCI-FM plays popular music. PIO has successfully branded the station as "la fréquence de la paix", corresponding to the overall identity and branding of UNOCI messaging "la route de la paix". Jingles promoting the station and the UNOCI brand, and thereby, peace, are heard frequently.

102. The station is popular with all listener groups, especially outside of Abidjan, and is, anecdotally, more popular in the FN zone than in areas aligned with the government.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁸ Information and promotion of such issues as DDR, human rights, the electoral process, etc.

⁷⁹ i.e. violence against women, children's rights, HIV/AIDS education, etc.

⁸⁰ The popularity and credibility of the radio has increased in the last few years, probably due to a number of reasons, at least one of them political. Although it is ostensibly an independent news source, it is part of UNOCI and because of its affiliation with the UNOCI mission, it benefits and suffers from the way the mission as a whole is regarded by the host population.

Prior to the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement in March 2007, ONUCI-FM was regarded by those aligned with the government as siding with the rebels and therefore, not to be trusted. After Ouagadougou, UNOCI and ONUCI-FM's image with this segment of the public, and especially supporters of the presidential party, improved significantly.

positive reviews come from rural and urban dwellers, educated and uneducated, professionals, students and unemployed, and, significantly, from media professionals, politicians and foreign diplomats.

103. The only other radio broadcasts that approach ONUCI-FM's broadcast coverage are Radio France International (RFI) and Radio Television Ivoirienne (RTI),⁸¹ but both competitors fall short of providing the same national access and of equalling ONUCI-FM in terms of perceived neutrality, trustworthiness, reliability and relevance of information.

Benefits

104. The information transmitted by ONUCI-FM is broadly regarded as credible, reliable, informative, and relevant. ONUCI-FM furthers UNOCI's mandate by informing the public of the peace process and political and social developments that affect the population and the future of the country, as well as providing information on topical issues,⁸² and promoting peace and reconciliation. It is effective in countering rumours and in fairly airing different perspectives on events. Non-news programmes address a broad range of issues such as education, women's rights, children's rights, culture, entertainment, peace promotion, as well as programmes targeted especially to youth listeners. ONUCI-FM sets a precedent for other media to follow in that it presents different sides of issues, allows opposing voices to air their views, and covers news items responsibly with attention to information's powerful role in supporting peace and stability. Programming further reflects the mission's commitment to open communication and a culture of peace by promoting honest discussion of divisive issues.

Correspondingly, before March 2007, the Forces nouvelles (FN) considered UNOCI and ONUCI-FM to be biased towards the presidential party. On at least six occasions, the General Secretariat of the FN contacted UNOCI PIO in Bouaké to complain about programmes or perceived biases in UNOCI reporting.

Each year that the UN accepted the postponement of the elections, the FN accused UNOCI of siding with the presidential party. Even after Ouagadougou the FN accused the UN of attempting to assassinate the PM (June – July 2007) and would often use the UN as a foil to deflect criticism from the local population. Trust in ONUCI-FM news programming may fluctuate according to political circumstance.

⁸¹ RFI has been on and off the airwaves in Côte d'Ivoire since 2004, and was off the air entirely for over a year before returning in late 2008. It is, anecdotally, listened to more in Abidjan than elsewhere in the country, and primarily tuned into for news. RTI is the national radio station and is affiliated with the government. It is not heard in some parts of the Forces nouvelles zone.

⁸² One example of a vital service ONUCI-FM provided to the population was information on where and when public hearings, begun in 2007 and intended to issue birth certificates to residents without ID, were being held in villages and cities throughout Côte d'Ivoire. ONUCI-FM broadcasts were a direct contribution to the peace process and the electoral process, supporting the government's efforts to bring about democratic elections.

Recommendations

105. Every effort should be made to increase coverage of ONUCI-FM to reach every part of the country. Many communities that do not currently receive the frequency have expressed strong interest in ONUCI-FM,⁸³ and there is a demonstrated need for reliable information in a local media environment prone to abuse, particularly where tensions run high over various issues of political and social conflict. Ivorian media has repeatedly demonstrated that it is susceptible to manipulation and it has been used to inflame passions and encourage violence. Especially in the current sensitive environment of transition from conflict to peace, where reconciliation and security to enable free and fair elections are needed, and where accurate information is critical to the peace and stability of the country, ONUCI-FM's service is critical.
106. ONUCI-FM has made oral agreements with several community radio stations around the country to allow them to rebroadcast ONUCI-FM news on their own frequency.⁸⁴ Such agreements, informal or formal, should be continued and expanded wherever possible to extend the reach and listening audience of ONUCI-FM. Attention should be given to ensure that favouritism is not given to one ethnic, political, or religious station over another, and that all community radio stations are considered equally as candidates to rebroadcast programs.
107. Currently, ONUCI-FM programmes on CD are made available on an ad hoc basis to community radio stations nationwide. The distribution is irregular, and the broadcast of the programmes is not assured.⁸⁵ Many individual stations welcome the pre-recorded programmes and air them repeatedly, whereas others, particularly private stations, refuse to air them at all without payment. Although ONUCI-FM is heard in most parts of the country, broadcasting UNOCI programmes and important messages on community radio can be an important tool to reach those who may not have access to ONUCI-FM, as well as those who may otherwise,

⁸³ In order to provide adequate security to UNOCI equipment, ONUCI-FM transmitter towers can only be stationed where an UNOCI military contingent is stationed. This limitation can be circumvented by installing taller and stronger transmitters with a greater geographic range, or by utilizing alternative channels of broadcast, namely, existing local radio stations.

⁸⁴ In Daloa, Radio Tchrato 101.4 FM made such an agreement and broadcasts ONUCI-FM news twice a day, in the morning and evening. Prior to the Ouagadougou Agreement of March 2007, the station did not rebroadcast ONUCI-FM programmes and, according to the station director, Tra Ora, would have for political reasons been unlikely to have made such an arrangement with UNOCI. In Bouakè, Radio Media+CI 103 FM made a similar arrangement to rebroadcast ONUCI-FM programmes four times a day. The agreement was made one and a half years ago at the initiative of the news anchor and host, N'diaye Tirangue Mathys, who approached the locally based PIO officer with a request to rebroadcast ONUCI-FM news. Both stations mentioned air ONUCI-FM magazine style programming, as well, when the stations receive programmes on CD.

⁸⁵ Distribution of CDs began in 2006 and was allegedly and inexplicably stopped for two years, and then restarted again in late 2008. There is no mechanism by which UNOCI monitors or is informed whether or not the CDs are broadcast, and if yes, how often.

and for a number of reasons, not be listeners to ONUCI-FM.⁸⁶ To ensure regular and timely re-broadcast of ONUCI-FM programmes, regularizing the distribution of the programmes is advised. Also, and linked to media development, incentives to broadcast may be offered not in the form of financial compensation (forbidden by UNOCI rules) but by recognizing “partners” who may, after a certain period of regular broadcast, qualify to receive, for example, professional training. This relationship is promoted by the organization Search for Common Ground that airs its programmes on local radio stations and, in exchange and after a specified period of time, rewards the station with professional or technical training or material support.⁸⁷

108. A further advantage to utilizing community radio to broadcast ONUCI-FM programmes is that in parts of the country where ONUCI-FM is not available, these local stations can provide an alternate route to reach the listening public. By providing CDs of programming to stations for rebroadcast, ONUCI-FM gains flexibility in being able to target a community in the language of the people as well as the theme or subjects addressed. Thus, in a part of the country where a high percentage of the women are illiterate and do not understand French, programmes could be translated from ONUCI-FM’s original French broadcast into the local language/s. The theme in such a region, for example, could be on the importance of sending girls to school and the provisions that the government and international organizations make to enable girls to go to school. In another part of the country, where arbitrary detentions are a problem, human rights programming could similarly be translated into the local language/s and broadcast on community radio to reach a particular target group. Such broadcasts would expand the area and audience ONUCI-FM covers and provide a needed informational service to the population.

109. In terms of providing support to other UNOCI sections and promoting particular issues, it is advised that ONUCI-FM include in its programming a regular timeslot that is dedicated to one or more UNOCI sections on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Such a dedicated timeslot would provide impetus to the UNOCI sections to share information with the population, and

⁸⁶ ONUCI-FM is broadcast primarily in French, with several minutes of news a day transmitted in five of the 60 recognized local languages. Many Ivorian listeners, particularly the uneducated, are not fluent in French and gain little from listening to ONUCI-FM. They may instead listen to a community radio station that broadcasts in their own language. Also, there are religious radio stations that reach a certain listening audience that may not be part of ONUCI-FM’s core audience of listeners. These same stations took an active role in promoting violence, and utilizing them now as conduits of UNOCI information, and thereby as agents of peace, can have a significant positive impact on their listeners and on calming the overall media environment.

⁸⁷ For example, after one year of broadcasting a program, the station receives a new sound mixing board.

thus meet a critical need for accurate and timely information. The UNOCI sections could fill the timeslot on a rotation basis, or on an as-needed basis when critical issues must be addressed.⁸⁸ As a number of sections express a distrust of the media, this direct line of communication may also serve to alleviate their fears of being misquoted or misunderstood.

110. ONUCI-FM produces a broad range of valuable information and entertainment programmes in addition to news. Programming on ONUCI-FM shows flexibility, creativity and ingenuity.⁸⁹ Such programming is a valuable service to the Ivorian audience and should be continued. The station also co-produces some informational programmes in collaborations with other organizations, local and international, and broadcasts program produced by others.⁹⁰ This practice raises the quality and accuracy of the information provided, and furthermore provides a service to local civil society organizations as well as invested international organizations that benefit from exposure on ONUCI-FM. Co-productions should be encouraged and continued.

111. ONUCI-FM functions in most ways as an independent journalistic entity conforming to international standards of professionalism. It is not generally perceived as a propaganda tool.⁹¹ Yet it cannot be ignored that its function is to serve the interests of UNOCI, and to reflect positively on the United Nations presence in Côte d'Ivoire. An area where there is an

⁸⁸ A call-in programme that would allow listeners to speak directly with the Chief of Human Rights or the Electoral unit, for example, would do much in the name of creating transparency, openness and connection between the population and UNOCI, and as importantly, provide timely and accurate information on critical issues. Because of Côte d'Ivoires recent history of media manipulation and abuse, and to avoid the risk of unintentionally broadcasting incitations to hatred and violence, ONUCI-FM does not air live programmes. Everything on ONUCI-FM has been pre-recorded. Although not an exact substitute for a live call-in programme, a similar function may be served by announcing a guest speaker on a given topic a week in advance and encouraging listeners to write in their questions by mail, e-mail and text messages. This would also encourage listeners to visit the UNOCI website, where presumably they could find additional information on the subject to be addressed. While this method of engaging the public lacks the energy of a live broadcast, the function of the programme remains the same and is possible within the Ivorian media environment and ONUCI-FM's editorial policy, plus having the added benefit of directing listeners to another UNOCI information source.

⁸⁹ Some examples of creative programming are a daily press review, "Le kpatato pressé" featuring a popular comedian who accurately but with humour covers the day's news coverage in the national press, and "A day in the life" programme that allows listeners to learn and identify with the challenges ordinary Ivorians like themselves (i.e. a beggar, a mother who is the sole provider of her family, a teacher, a market woman), face around the country, whether from government or rebel held zones. Magazine type programs covering issues of topical interest are common. ONUCI-FM also plays music and covers events of broad national interest, such as the Miss Côte d'Ivoire beauty pageant. Such coverage is important to attract a wide listening audience and create wide and positive recognition for UNOCI.

⁹⁰ ONUCI-FM broadcasts programmes produced by OCHA on the activities of United Nations agencies in Côte d'Ivoire, and airs several programmes a week produced by Search for Common Ground.

⁹¹ The public's attitude toward the station has, in the past, been somewhat dependent on the political atmosphere. Thus, prior to the Ouagadougou Agreement of March 2007, government supporters who believed the UNOCI mission and by extension, ONUCI-FM, sided with the rebels viewed ONUCI-FM as propaganda and did not regard it favourably.

occasional point of friction between what may be regarded as independent journalism and public relations is the coverage of events that may reflect badly on the United Nations or the UNOCI mission itself. In those circumstances, the role of ONUCI-FM as an information arm of a DPKO mission is brought to the fore. Since the success and function of ONUCI-FM, and any DPKO mission radio station for that matter, rests on its credibility with its listening audience, it is advised that all decisions around contentious issues that present the mission in an unfavourable or questionable light be approached with weight given to accuracy, honesty and openness and not to a public relations spin.

112. ONUCI-FM provides the mission and its leadership direct and immediate access to the population. Events that threaten to give the mission unfavourable attention, or cause rumours to exaggerate or fuel events should be addressed without delay and with professionalism and integrity. When and where appropriate, UNOCI officials, most importantly, the Spokesperson or the SRSG, should be given direct access to the airwaves to address the population. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for regular ONUCI-FM journalists to cover a story in the manner in which any newsworthy story would be covered in order to reinforce the notion of the station's impartiality and the credibility of reporting.⁹²

113. Most radio correspondents are Ivorian nationals with experience working for local media outlets and good contacts in the community. They are seasoned professionals who well understand the Ivorian context, and are frequently better attuned than international staff to their audience's listening habits and to the types of programmes Ivorians find attractive and relevant to their daily lives. Their value to the station and the mission should be recognized. The contractual agreement that many ONUCI-FM national staff are employed under is not a direct UN contract, but an RMO subcontract,⁹³ and they are therefore bound by certain rules that are detrimental to staff morale as well as performance.⁹⁴ ONUCI-FM correspondents and technicians should be hired as UNOCI staff.

⁹² Reports of rape and other sexual abuse by UNOCI military were cited as cases where the mission was too slow to respond, and where ONUCI-FM was not used or used with significant (and damaging) delay to adequately address or counter the allegations.

⁹³ The RMO contract is named for the company subcontracted by UNOCI.

⁹⁴ Under the RMO contract, employees are not entitled to the same benefits (i.e. pay scale, vacation and sick days, medical insurance) as UNOCI employees. They are not permitted to drive UN vehicles, which is extremely limiting for journalists who are meant to cover events, sometimes at short notice, and that take place in locations often distant from where they are based. It is especially difficult in the field offices, where the geographical range a correspondent is meant to cover is extensive. This seemingly small problem is compounded in most field offices, where only one UN vehicle is assigned to PIO. This means that if there is a event or

114. In the context of media development, PIO should select ONUCI-FM producers to serve as trainers for PIO journalist trainings.⁹⁵ National producers know from direct experiences their colleagues' working conditions, and can convey principles of professional journalism in a realistic and relevant manner. Furthermore, by recognizing the professionalism, experience and contribution of national UNOCI producers by calling upon them to be trainers, UNOCI acknowledges local expertise and strengthens local capacity that is beneficial to the delicate peace process and future stability of the country.
115. As with most if not all UN radio stations that are developed as part of DPKO missions, the sustainability of the UN station is not addressed in a meaningful way until the end of the mission is nigh. By not considering the advisability or inadvisability of long-term sustainability early on, and certainly once the need for a UN radio station is established,⁹⁶ a great disservice is done to all parties who invest time, money and effort in creating a professional radio station. In fragile environments where credible information is critical to the peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes in all of their phases, and where information is equally crucial to the stability of the region and country after the UN mandate has ended and the blue helmets and UN civilians have gone home, and where no other equivalent information sources to UN radio exist, the fate of the UN radio station should be considered and preparations for a transition to another form (i.e. privately run, public service broadcaster, or phase out) should be planned long in advance. The thinking and experience on this matter in missions such as Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone may serve to inform the question of what should most appropriately happen to ONUCI-FM once the mission ends. Currently, such information is not well shared amongst DPKO missions. In the UNOCI mission itself, little interest has been expressed in addressing the issue of ONUCI-FM's sustainability now. It is recommended that decisions and planning for the station's post-mission existence or dismantling be made as soon as possible.

story that warrants coverage, the correspondent must either arrange his own transportation at his own expense, or rely on the PIO officer or assistant to drive, in which case the officer does the duty of a driver and cannot fulfil his other responsibilities. While it is probable that, according to UN rules, the correspondents may be reimbursed for his personal expenses, the process is likely to be cumbersome and slow.

⁹⁵ If they possess good teaching skills and have an interest in leading journalist trainings.

⁹⁶ The need for a UN radio station is frequently established during a pre-deployment needs assessment.

Video

116. Television is an important medium in Côte d'Ivoire. It is widely available and very popular, especially in urban areas such as Abidjan. When UNOCI began its video production, the goal was to use the medium to inform local and international audiences of the mission mandate and activities. Initially, there was good cooperation with the national broadcaster, Radio Television Ivoirienne (RTI). UNOCI provided video footage to RTI that was broadcast throughout the country, including the Forces nouvelles zone where the pirate station, Notre Patrie, used the RTI signal and aired the UNOCI programme. In early 2006, after anti-UNOCI riots and the targeting of media outlets by rioters supporting the government and presidential party, RTI agreed to air UNOCI press conferences to address and help quell the violence. Between April and December 2006, RTI aired an UNOCI produced magazine format programme on a monthly basis, featuring topics related to the peace process. The programme allowed time for representatives of UNOCI and Ivorian authorities to discuss and debate major issues. However, following a change in RTI's Director General in late 2006, UNOCI's relations with RTI deteriorated and the monthly programme ceased. UNOCI continues to provide news footage to RTI on an irregular basis, and that footage is sometimes aired, but there is no guarantee RTI will broadcast it and on occasions where there is political tension between the government and UNOCI, RTI does not broadcast it.
117. In the northern part of the country, in the Forces nouvelles zone, TV Notre Partie airs virtually all video programming PIO provides. Distribution of UNOCI programmes and footage is on an ad hoc basis.⁹⁷
118. The video unit produces short films on a variety of subjects used to raise awareness on certain issues. Most films are 6-8 minutes, with none exceeding 30 minutes. They are usually projected on the night preceding the forum, after the pillar workshops. Some films have been provided to government ministries, but there is little feedback on where and how the films are being used. Since mid-2008, the video unit has also been working to create films in support of UNOCI sections to assist and promote their work, such as a training video for UNPOL, a

⁹⁷ The explanation given for the ad hoc sharing of programmes with TV Notre Patrie, rather than a formal agreement for broadcast, is that, due to the illegal nature of TV Notre Patrie, which remains unlicensed and is considered illegal by the national government, a formal agreement would be a political misstep by UNOCI.

promotional video about the Civil Affairs unit's Quick Impact Projects, and an informational film about human rights in Côte d'Ivoire.

119. Edited footage is also featured on the UNOCI website.

Benefits

120. Video productions are of a high professional quality. Exposure on state television would be optimal, but given the limitations posed by RTI on UNOCI's access to the national broadcaster in recent years, the fact that UNOCI has gotten even minimal access is commendable. The television exposure UNOCI gets on Notre Patrie in the north provides UNOCI positive television publicity in that region.

121. Civil society organizations have expressed interest in viewing more UNOCI produced films and organizing discussions around them to raise awareness on specific issues with their constituents, and thereby utilizing UNOCI films to promote their own work with the population.

122. Video footage is a useful tool to promote events and issues, and is used by the mission to promote its work internationally, and with UN member states and donors.

Recommendations

123. Whereas in other DPKO missions the importance of television as a vehicle to influence public opinion is negligible, in Côte d'Ivoire it is a significant force and not having regular access to state television or to a broad-reaching channel is a disadvantage to the mission. Official agreement to secure broadcast rights for UNOCI on television should have been secured at the start of the mission.⁹⁸ Given the current situation, the mission, through the influence of the Chief or OIC of PIO or the SRSG, should continue efforts to cultivate a positive relationship with RTI with the goal of getting gaining access for UNOCI programmes

⁹⁸ The need for guaranteed access to national television should have been established during the technical assessment in the planning phase of the mission. Ideally, the agreement for television airtime (or, it may be argued, for a UN television station) would be included in the SC mandate, just as the establishment of a UN radio station is included in UNOCI's mandate. See also the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Peacekeeping Operations' *Operational Policy: Policy and Guidance for Public Information in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, July 2006, paragraph 76.

and, ideally, to obtain a regular timeslot on the state channel.⁹⁹ UNOCI should continue to broadcast on TV Notre Patrie, and should do so with increased regularity.

124. Video productions that support the work of various UNOCI components with the public and promote important issues at a grassroots level should be prioritised over coverage of UNOCI events as news items.¹⁰⁰

125. Although television broadcast is ideal to reach the largest audience, it is possible to reach the public, albeit at a smaller scale, using other avenues. Thus, UNOCI PIO should give videos to local NGOs and civil society actors, provided they have the means to show the films, or, alternatively, organize screenings in partnership with UNOCI sections, other international organizations, and local civil society organizations. Such screenings could stand alone, or more effectively, be used as a part of workshops or meetings to facilitate discussion around specific topics.

See Small Meetings section for further elaboration on incorporating films into substantive workshops.

126. Video screenings are frequently organized for pillar groups on the night preceding a forum, after the pillar workshops have concluded. The audience that remains for these screenings is extremely limited. If such screenings are continued as part of the forum agenda, additional efforts should be made to retain or attract a larger audience. Consideration should be given to the timing of the screenings, and the incentives for workshop participants to stay after many hours of discussion. Screenings may be better timed as parts of other meetings with the same pillar groups or civil society organizations, as suggested above.

Web

127. The website is professionally produced and maintained, and is of a high quality in content, organization and timeliness of information. Its value lies largely in its service to the international community, member states, and to UN and UNOCI staff. With its service as an information source for the population of Côte d'Ivoire, its impact is minimal as the Internet is

⁹⁹ As the influence of President Gbagbo is likely to be significant in this matter, the mission may consider appealing directly for his intervention.

¹⁰⁰ The video unit is not a news organization, and as it has no guaranteed immediate outlet and its coverage is limited to the SRSG's movements and UNOCI events, its value as a real news producer is minimal. That said, UNOCI footage of SRSG meetings and UNOCI activities is valuable for presentation of the mission's work to the UN member states and donors, and it is sometimes of interest to local and international broadcasters.

not widespread, and is available and accessible mainly to the educated and elite.¹⁰¹ Yet even with the current local limitations, it is important for UNOCI to have a web presence for its international audience of interested parties, member states, politicians and diplomats, and for national users, as well.

128. UNOCI.org is actively promoted on ONUCI-FM and in other venues, and is aiming to attract a wider local audience through more interactive and participatory content. As such, it is linked to the ONUCI-FM website, integrating the radio station with an online audience and thus expanding its own audience to capitalize on the radio station's popularity. On the ONUCI-FM site, programme schedules and synopses and streaming audio of select emissions are available.¹⁰²

Recommendations

129. The information presented is updated regularly and is timely and relevant to local developments. Although PIO administers and populates the site, the contributions of other UNOCI sections should be encouraged to enrich content and relevance to cover the many issues UNOCI is addressing in Côte d'Ivoire thoroughly and accurately. To this end, chiefs of sections would be aided if they were to receive a tutorial on the website as part of an overall media training (as recommended in Trainings section) or separately. Familiarity with the UNOCI website would encourage their participation, and by extension, their expectations of their own staff's contribution to the site. They would understand that exposure on the website serves to publicize and enhance their sections' work with important international and local constituents.

130. Efforts have been made and are continuing to encourage local participation through on-line competitions, discussions and the introduction of an ONUCI-FM website. These initiatives are to be commended and supported, as they engage the local population in an open but moderated dialogue on critical issues. With time, technological and economic advancement in Côte d'Ivoire, and with continued efforts by PIO to make the website attractive and relevant to ordinary Ivorians, UNOCI.org is very likely to increase its local audience.

¹⁰¹ It is rare for most Ivorians to have Internet access at work, and rarer still to have it at home. Even in places where there is Internet access such as at Internet cafes in urban centres, the Internet is used primarily for e-mail, sports and news.

¹⁰² <http://www.UNOCI.org/UNOCIfm/>

Publications

131. UNOCI produces an array of publications in support of the mission as a whole and of individual sections. Publications include a monthly newsletter, leaflets, cartoons, informational pamphlets and posters, as well as specialty items such as calendars and cards.

Newsletter

132. The newsletter, *La Force de la Paix*, is a glossy, magazine layout publication that informs readership about UNOCI activities with short articles accompanied by photographs. Its value lies less in its “news” quality and, rather, more in the general information it provides about what UNOCI is doing on a practical level for the population of Côte d’Ivoire. Distribution of the newsletter is ad hoc. It tends to be handed out at public events such as at forums, and at other PIO events. Copies in unspecified numbers are made available to other UNOCI components in Abidjan and in the field offices if they are available and usually, upon request. How these components use the newsletter and to whom they are distributed is unclear as there is no reporting mechanism in place.

Leaflets

133. UNOCI PIO produces leaflets, cartoons, informational pamphlets and posters on a number of issues in support of UN goals and of the work of discrete sections, such as human rights or HIV/AIDS. These publications are used to publicize issues and educate the public, and are quite popular with local NGOs who use them to assist their own work. Cartoons and posters are especially well suited to illiterate populations who can understand the messaging even without reading the words. Posters are very popular with local NGOs and are displayed in their offices and are distributed to their constituents whenever available. Several UNOCI sections expressed a desire to be more involved in the design and production process of the leaflets and posters focused on their mandate to ensure that the message they wished to emphasize and the quality they desired would be reflected in the final product.

134. Calendars and cards are popular items, used by UNOCI as “gifts” to local partners, event participants and local authorities.

Additional items

135. Billboards have been used successfully around the country to reinforce the UNOCI presence and identity with “la route de la paix” branding along with UNOCI messaging relating to the identification process, children’s education, DDR, etc.
136. Newspaper ads/inserts are used on occasion to publicize events and transmit vital information to the population. This method of communication is an excellent use of established local forms of communication and information distribution, using local resources and reaching a recognized and existing reading audience.

Recommendations

137. *Timeliness:* The timely production of materials is a problem readily acknowledged by PIO. Frequently, the publication and distribution of the newsletter is months later than the date printed on the newsletter.¹⁰³ Although the information in the newsletter may be argued to have a long shelf life and still be of interest to its readership months later, it does not excuse the fact that timely print information is not available. At the very least, it does not reflect well on the UN or the mission’s professionalism or sense of responsibility to the Ivorian public to provide up-to-date topical information. The production and delivery of other informational materials and promotional items as well, including those produced for special events, have been excessively delayed.¹⁰⁴
138. Some fault may be found within PIO itself, with a lack of responsiveness or attention by individuals to the material needs of other UNOCI sections, and a laxness when it comes to following up on agreed upon requests or orders. The PIO leadership may address this personnel issue by clearly delegating responsibility and authority and then holding PIO officers to account on the fulfilment of their responsibilities. Benchmarks and timelines should be set, and officers who are designated as focal points for specific UNOCI sections should be made

¹⁰³ At several forums, the date on the Newsletter handed out was 5 months prior to the actual date. At a forum in Oumé on 30 January 2009, the newsletter distributed to those assembled was dated July 2008. In early February 2009, the latest Newsletter available in the PIO office in Daloa, the HQ of sector West, was dated August 2008.

¹⁰⁴ i.e. t-shirt production for UNOCI event celebrating 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 2008) was excessively delayed, with fewer numbers produced than requested, and final quality being poor; a requested video production was edited the night prior to the requested date; the process of drafting content for informational leaflets for “16 days of activism” to raise awareness about violence against women (25 November-10 December 2008) was slow and cumbersome, resulting in delays.

aware of the budgets allocated to their work and put in charge of managing the budget¹⁰⁵ and the relationship with their “client”. Giving clear ownership of the process to the PIO officer may help those officers feel a personal responsibility and investment in a positive outcome.

139. A major obstacle to the timely production of print materials and availability of gadgets, however, seems to be the UN bureaucracy itself. The UN system of procurement is lengthy and unnecessarily cumbersome, with greater weight given to the price of a product rather than its quality. PIO cites the procurement process as the major impediment to producing materials on time, yet after years of experience working with the procurement office, it seems that some systems of operation could have been put in place or agreements reached between PIO, Procurement and regular vendors to facilitate the process and produce items with regularity. Monthly newsletters should be available for distribution the same month as their header date indicates. Yearly events such as International Day of Human Rights or International Day of Women should have leaflets or pamphlets or t-shirts, whatever has been requested and agreed to, available in the numbers specified days before the event itself. While special events may be more difficult to plan for, a 1-2 month turn-around time should be adequate to procure and provide materials.
140. *Quality*: The quality of some items, such as the paper on which the newsletters are printed on, is extremely high, whereas other materials, such as rubber flip-flops and some t-shirts, is extremely low or of an inconsistent quality. A balance between cost saving and quality must be struck, keeping the *raison d’être* of the product foremost in mind. Thus, while glossy production may make the newsletter more attractive and durable a product for the intended readership, perhaps a lesser quality paper will suffice and with the savings in cost, allow the print run to double.
141. Although some UNOCI billboards that were erected as part of a publicity campaign in 2007 can still be seen today, albeit faded, many billboards fell down shortly after they were put up because they were of a poor structural quality. As with all other materials procured for informational use, quality must be a priority to best fulfil the products’ use.

¹⁰⁵ Understanding that all budgetary spending must have oversight by the PIO budget officer and conform to the annual budget spending plan.

142. *Quantity:* The production runs of some print materials are too low, whereas others are produced in overabundance. Newsletters and issue-specific leaflets are distributed during PIO events and by UNOCI sections, and shared with local partners. These items seem to be in high demand, but quickly run out. Other items, such as posters, are produced in large numbers that seem not necessarily associated with a need and therefore may dominate events in an inappropriate or misplaced manner,¹⁰⁶ or sit stacked in offices unused. Needs should dictate the numbers produced, and distribution mechanisms, too, should be taken into account before setting a print quantity.
143. *Distribution:* Distribution of print materials would be vastly improved upon if set procedures and agreements for distribution were put in place in an official manner. Currently, the arrangement with other UNOCI sections who have regular interaction with the local population and the capacity and incentive to assist in distribution, is ad hoc. UNPOL, MILOBs, UNOCI electoral officers, and the military contingents¹⁰⁷—all of whom spend a great deal of time in the field interacting with the local population—currently receive UNOCI publications on an irregular basis and in undetermined quantities, frequently at their own request or drop-in to check what is available at the PIO office. These UNOCI sections and personnel are excellent resources to PIO and could be capitalized upon to a far greater extent. They could be tasked with the distribution of a set number of publications each month, and these publications would, of course, need to be provided to them on time and with regularity. Doing so would assist PIO in distribution, allow PIO to know exactly what communities are receiving what information and in what numbers, give PIO an opportunity to selectively provide specific information that is relevant to particular communities,¹⁰⁸ plus aid these UNOCI representatives in their direct relationships with the local population. Thus, information is effectively and simultaneously used as an educating tool and a public relations tool. Local partner organizations, too, that are supported by UNOCI print information on

¹⁰⁶ Posters raising awareness about violence against women were prevalent at a forum held in Kouibly in February 2009, giving the impression that the region was plagued by this single overarching problem. These posters were displayed in abundance around the meeting hall, with not a single other issue-based poster appearing with them, ostensibly, because no other issue-based posters were available to the organizing PIO office in Man.

¹⁰⁷ The UNOCI military contingents currently distribute approximately 5,000 newsletters per month.

¹⁰⁸ For example, Bondoukou may benefit from information applicable to social cohesion, while in Duékoué, awareness raising and education on violence against women is of primary concern, and in Oumé, the population requires information on registration of IDPs.

specific issues, would be enhanced if provision of materials to them was regularized with a set number to be distributed by them to their constituents each month.

144. The newsletter publication may benefit from submissions by “guest contributors” who may be experts from other sections in UNOCI, NGOs, or local journalists. The former would bring expertise on certain issues to the publication, while the latter would provide exposure to important issues from a local perspective plus reward good journalism with publication in a widely distributed format. This idea is elaborated on in recommendations for UNOCI’s Media Development programme.
145. The use of existing channels of distribution such as inserting UNOCI produced print material in local newspapers, available regionally or throughout the country, should be considered on a larger scale than that employed by UNOCI presently. Although this use may depend upon a good relationship with the newspaper, its cooperation may be encouraged if the newspaper is offered a subsidy to help cover distribution costs.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, a quid pro quo arrangement may be reached by offering, instead of monetary compensation, professional trainings to journalists and management in exchange for distribution. The cost to the paper is no greater, as the paper would be distributed with or without the UNOCI insert, and the benefits may be substantial. Furthermore, with this channel of distribution, UNOCI can channel messaging to intended audiences and reach a readership that may otherwise not be accessible to it.¹¹⁰ UNOCI must exercise caution, however, to ensure that papers aligned with different political, regional or ethnic groups are used in this manner so as not to give the appearance that UNOCI is affiliating itself with one group over another.

Gadgets

146. PIO includes in its budget the provision of a variety of promotional items featuring the UNOCI logo and/or slogan, such as t-shirts, pens, key chains, caps, flip-flops, etc. Such gift items have enormous value in Côte d’Ivoire where gift giving is a cultural norm whenever one

¹⁰⁹ PIO’s annual budget includes the cost of putting inserts into newspapers. The practice falls under UNOCI advertising. Given this practice, it seems logical, also, to consider offering payment to local radio stations to play UNOCI programming if the issue of payment is a major obstacle. (The practice is currently prohibited.) Doing so would effectively broaden the audience receiving UNOCI information, and function as a media development tool (albeit short-term) giving much-needed support to small local stations.

¹¹⁰ For example, in parts of the country where support for the presidential party is strong and where there has recently been or still is hostility towards UNOCI, an insert in *Fraternité Matin*, the national paper, may garner legitimacy and be read whereas if UNOCI were to distribute the print material directly, the local readers, already suspicious of UNOCI, would ignore or dismiss it.

person visits another. As a tool to promote good will and build a positive relationship between the recipient and UNOCI, the importance of these small items is noteworthy.

147. In addition to traditional gadgets, PIO gives cloth especially designed and produced for UNOCI¹¹¹ to local civil society organizations to distribute to their members. Recipients come to UNOCI events dressed in clothing fashioned from the fabric, which creates a powerful visual impression of UNOCI's place and acceptance in the community. This clever promotion of UNOCI using a marketing brand technique and the local custom of tailoring clothes illustrates the creativity and initiative PIO regularly displays in its outreach to the public.

148. PIO also produced an UNOCI board game "La route de la paix" in two versions for children 7-11 and 12 and up. The board game is colourful, attractive and produced with attention to detail and quality. It is a clever promotional item, and carefully targeted to reach a defined target audience. The game has players travel on the road to peace with cartoons and educative text along the way with the winner arriving to the end of the road, where peace, happiness, joy and prosperity await.

Recommendations

149. It is recommended that PIO prioritise the production of t-shirts in higher numbers.¹¹² T-shirts are the most popular UNOCI promotional item, and UNOCI t-shirts are worn with pride. They are an excellent public relations tool and should be produced in greater numbers and with high quality for durability and long-term use. Their value as "walking billboards" and as personal endorsement of the mission is enormous. The quality of t-shirts, however, is reportedly uneven, with some batches being of such poor quality that in at least one case, the recipient UNOCI section was reluctant to distribute them.¹¹³

150. PIO should continue promoting UNOCI by distributing the UNOCI brand textile to local partners. Like t-shirts, this is a popular and successful technique of visibly promoting the mission and the public's support for its presence in Côte d'Ivoire.

¹¹¹ The fabric is imprinted with the UNOCI brand "La route de la Paix" logo of green and orange arrows (reflecting the colours of the Ivorian national flag).

¹¹² 30,000 t-shirts were budgeted for by PIO in 2008.

¹¹³ The t-shirts produced for Human Rights Day celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 2008.

151. As gift items are heavily used by PIO and other UNOCI sections, and relied upon to engender good will in outreach work, the quantity of production of small items such as pens and key-chains should also be increased. An emphasis should be placed on promotional items that are high in quality and utility and can be produced at a low price. The durability of the item in light of the price of production should be emphasized. High quality, small usable items such as pins, pens and caps are of good value and function.¹¹⁴

Media Development

152. UNOCI PIO's mandate includes the development and support of the media sector. This focus takes into account the role Ivorian media have played and continue to play in fostering animosity, divisiveness and violence amongst the ethnic, religious and national groups that comprise the Ivorian population. UNOCI's mandate includes monitoring of the Ivorian media and the issuance of a monthly report on the media to a Sanctions Committee, under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council. As such, UNOCI PIO's role in media development to address the failures or deficiencies of the local media is somewhat different from most DPKO missions, and has a stronger development mandate as a result.

153. Journalist trainings have been motivated by the need to raise the level of professionalism of Ivorian journalists, and thus to work against factors that are detrimental to the peace process including those specifically mentioned by the Security Council, hate media and incendiary media content. Trainings have focused primarily on print and radio journalists. The media in Côte d'Ivoire has played a seminal role in inciting conflict and fueling tensions between communities, and, given adequate attention and support—it is believed by the United Nations and other invested actors—the media can play an equally powerful role in supporting the peace process and reconciliation between conflicting groups.

¹¹⁴ An example of a poor promotional item choice is the lanyard, which is of limited discernable use to most people. Flip-flops, in contrast, are an excellent idea playing upon the UNOCI brand “la route de la paix/the road to peace” and being functional and commonly worn in Côte d'Ivoire. As for quality, however, flip-flops are deficient for their UNOCI branding fades after a single wearing and virtually disappears after several wearings. Their value as promotional items is therefore lessened.

Although small items pens and sturdy key-chains are recommended because they can be produced in high volume, larger items like umbrellas, notebooks and the board games, well made and strategically distributed, may be considered a better investment than small, unused or quickly broken items.

154. Trainings have aimed to strengthen overall journalistic skills and investigative reporting within the context of Côte d'Ivoire's delicate political situation. Trainings have also addressed more specific issues arising in the context of elections and the campaigning period. The instructors conducting the trainings are seasoned professionals from the international community, some African, others from elsewhere in the world.
155. A question that plagues all journalist trainings worldwide is whether or not the impact of the trainings is severely limited unless other critical issues involved in the media environment are not also, simultaneously, addressed. These issues include institutional structures, financial structures, media law and right to information, and technical and material needs.

Benefits

156. Journalists trainings address a critical need in Côte d'Ivoire to raise the level of professionalism amongst the ranks of journalists. Many people who take the title of journalist have little or no education or training to inform them of standard journalistic practice. Consequently, their performance as professionals is often found wanting, and they may be more easily susceptible to manipulation and abuse than a professional who has developed the skills and understanding of journalism's standards of professionalism and role in society. Thus, by providing professional training to journalists, UNOCI PIO is performing a needed service that may, indeed, be a mitigating factor in conflict prevention. With knowledge of their power and their role in providing accurate, reliable and unbiased information to the public, and with improved reporting skills, journalists are empowered and may be less likely to be used for political interests to foment conflict and divisiveness.

Recommendations

157. It is important to note that training journalists will have limited impact unless other issues that pertain to the media environment, including legal framework, institutions, and economic structures, are addressed as well.
158. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, most of the newspapers, and especially those with the widest circulation, are affiliated with political parties. Thus, a political bias to news coverage is implicit if not overt. Journalists may be under extreme pressure to cover certain stories in a particular way in order to serve a political imperative, thus minimizing damage to the political party, or

maximizing damage to another. This factor applies more generally to ownership issues, which may in some cases be an individual rather than a party. This points to the need for training not only for journalists, but also for editors, upper level management and owners. Normally excluded from media trainings, owners of media outlets should be acknowledged for the important contribution to a peaceful, stable and informed society, and how to fulfil their role within international standards of professionalism and responsibility.

159. Another critical component of the Ivorian media environment that must be addressed by any serious efforts at media development are the financial structures that support journalists and media. Business management skills and exposure to different financial models to support media outlets should be offered to owners and media authorities, including leaders of professional associations. The economic conditions under which most Ivorian journalists work are poor, and frequently supplemented by a tradition of payment for coverage. Such a payment may come from an individual or an institution. The payment is not explicitly a bribe, and is not overtly given in exchange for positive reporting, but is offered in the form of a “gift” or “compensation for travel” and is part of a tradition of compensation for reporting. Without this additional compensation, which can make up a significant portion of a journalist’s earnings, regular journalist wages rarely make a living salary. UNOCI itself has been subject to pressure to compensate journalists for their time and travel expenses to come to press conferences. UNOCI rules prevent such compensation, but it is significant to note that other organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross do pay local journalists attending their press conferences with a “transportation fee” to subsidize their costs.
160. In the interest of supporting transparency and access to information, it may be useful, too, to include government authorities in trainings along with journalists to establish channels of communication and trust between the two. Often, there is misunderstanding of motives and interests and the two entities are antagonistic. It need not be the case. With greater understanding of the role of journalists to accurately inform the public of news and events that affect their lives, government officials may be more responsive to journalist inquiries and supportive of transparency. Both can be united in seeking to best serve the public, and that service includes information so that their constituencies may make well-informed decisions. Viewed in this context, and within the framework of supporting the peace process and a

culture of peace, UNOCI is well-situated to advocate and support media and information trainings that promote transparency and open communication.

161. PIO has organized several successful trainings over the years that have been of value¹¹⁵ to the participants. Many reported that the level of their work rose considerably as a result of the training, and that additional trainings would be welcomed to improve general performance and on specific issues such as media coverage during elections and ethics in journalism. While the overall quality of instructors was praised, special attention was drawn to the application of theory to practice in Côte d'Ivoire—that is, specific to the political and media environment of Côte d'Ivoire. Instructors with a good working knowledge of Ivorian politics, social values, specific issues of sensitivity or conflict, economic factors and working conditions for media actors in Côte d'Ivoire are strongly recommended, as those without a deep knowledge of these issues may offer impractical and seemingly irrelevant instruction. Côte d'Ivoire has a solid base of experienced journalists who are qualified to lead trainings, and the neighbouring countries of West Africa may, too, offer excellent instructors who share an understanding of the history and contemporary pressures that impact Ivorian journalists' professional lives. Utilizing local talent makes professional sense, and additionally builds local capacity, strengthens a constructive and positive relationship between UNOCI and the local media, and is furthermore an economically sound policy for UNOCI to follow.
162. Every journalist training that is of sufficient duration (2 days or more) should include a practical component or follow-up that allows for instructor and/or peer review of journalistic works. With a practical opportunity for critique, the level of journalist performance can be directly addressed and improved immediately. When trainings are longer, a production day or days may be introduced to give an immediate hands-on experience to the participants, allowing them to put into practice what they have learned with immediate feedback on the result. Production teams may strategically include members of competing groups, such as newspapers from opposing political parties, or journalists from geographic or ethnic groups in conflict. This type of experiential learning works on several levels, not only putting professional journalistic skills into practice with research and production, but also working on elements of

¹¹⁵ The value attested to is anecdotal, but significant nonetheless. Most if not all journalists spoken with were grateful for the opportunity to participate in an UNOCI journalist training, and claimed to derive some benefit and professional improvement from it. Many journalists expressed the wish and need for more professional training.

objectivity and cooperation needed for good, unbiased reporting. In this way, journalist trainings may play an important role as components of conflict resolution and social cohesion.

163. For results-based professional development trainings for journalists, it may be useful, also, to provide tangible incentives for improved performance. Journalistic competitions judged by an impartial panel with specific themes or criteria identified could be instituted for as a follow-up to each training or at a specified time, such as every 3 months. The winners of the competition could have their print, audio or video piece featured on the UNOCI website. For print journalism, the winning article could be published in the UNOCI newsletter as the contribution of a featured guest, and could be instituted on a more regular, even monthly basis, to provide impetus for journalists to apply their learnings with immediate recognition. Such exposure would serve UNOCI on several levels: it would demonstrate results from a PIO initiative, reward local journalists for good work, promote the peace process and UNOCI's contribution to it; and improve UNOCI's image as a collaborative and supportive entity in Côte d'Ivoire.

164. ONUCI-FM is a model of professionalism for local radio stations and other journalists as well. Thought on the ways in which ONUCI-FM may be brought into PIO's overall journalist development strategy is advised, as ONUCI-FM is a tremendous resource to the mission and Côte d'Ivoire. One idea already mentioned in the ONUCI-FM section of this report is that qualified ONUCI-FM producers who have a propensity for teaching, and who, because of their working experience in the Ivorian media, have a deep understanding for Ivorian dynamics within the profession and overall, should be used trainers. Another is that a follow up to PIO journalist trainings could be a short-term internship with ONUCI-FM. This could be at the journalist, editor or management level. How, in fact, such an internship programme could be instituted within the bureaucratic guidelines of the mission is not known and may be too cumbersome to implement, but it should be considered as a direct and effective method of providing high quality training and increasing local capacity and professionalism.

165. When working with the government on issues that may benefit from the inclusion of other UNOCI sections and/or other bodies, PIO is advised to bring them in. For example, in working with the Ministry of Information on freedom of information issues, PIO would be wise to include UNOCI's Human Rights section and other organizations with expertise and

familiarity with the issue from the legal and institutional perspective to contribute to more effective and informed collaboration. Correspondingly, there have been instances where UNOCI sections, notably the Electoral Section and Human Rights, have conducted specialized trainings on their respective areas for Ivorian journalists. UNOCI sponsored journalist trainings on any issue are best planned and conducted with PIO involvement, as PIO's expertise in the field and familiarity with journalists' professional needs and institutional limitations are critical to developing and delivering successful trainings.

Evaluation

166. PIO is widely hailed as being one of the most dynamic and innovative of UNOCI sections. It is certainly the most visible. PIO has initiated a varied and ambitious work plan based on a broadly defined mandate of information and service to UNOCI and to the Ivorian population. While the effort and sheer scope of activity is to be commended, an important question remains about the efficacy and impact of PIO's work. Is the work achieving the desired results?
167. PIO has recognized the value of formalized assessments by conducting public opinion polls to measure whether, how and what the public is learning about the UNOCI mission. The first survey was conducted in November 2005 and the second in March-April 2006, with the third planned for April 2009. Polls emphasize the didactic value of PIO's work, testing the population's knowledge about the mission in an effort to know if PIO's educational initiatives are effective. Assessing the difficult to measure, but perhaps more meaningful, attitudinal changes and changes in behaviour that accompany learning is a more difficult task.¹¹⁶

Recommendations

168. In evaluating the work of PIO, this best practices report is an important and positive step towards identifying UNOCI PIO initiatives that work and should be expanded, emulated, altered and improved upon. It does not, however, preclude the necessity of regular monitoring and a rigorous evaluation protocol that, ideally, is put into place at the very start of every PIO initiative. Such a protocol would identify clear objectives and outputs from the outset (during

¹¹⁶ The most recent poll is planned for implementation in April 2009 to 8,000 respondents throughout the country. The 2009 poll includes questions about the vehicles by which respondents are exposed to UNOCI information to determine what methods and media tools are most effective. It also asks questions assessing the level of credibility of ONUCI-FM with the population. This question is an important addition to what, in the previously conducted poll in 2006 focused more exclusively on whether the station was listened to, and begs the question of the trust in and value of its informational programming.

the planning phase) and the manner in which their achievement will be monitored and assessed over time. All PIO initiatives should have clearly articulated goals, desired results and outputs, and a strategy of measuring the results and outcomes with qualitative and quantitative methods.¹¹⁷ Evaluations should be considered as a process that begins before an activity is launched and continues throughout the life of a project.

169. A specific example of an initiative that would benefit from regular monitoring and assessment is PIO's delivery of seminars and workshops on social cohesion, conflict management and a culture of peace to the different pillar groups. (Note: this report includes the recommendation that PIO cease delivery of workshops on the subject of culture of peace, social cohesion, conflict management, etc. to all pillars except media. The examples that follow include these programmes in case PIO must or chooses to nonetheless fulfil the function of organizing and delivering these types of workshops to pillar groups as it has been, citing precedent and budgetary commitments already made for the approaching fiscal year.)

170. The desired outcomes of these sensitisation activities are only vaguely defined. Although it is hoped that seminars engender a personal transformation and/or personal commitment to peace amongst the participating individuals, and that there is a trickle down effect based upon the social influence of participants in their home communities, interviews with pillar representatives who had participated in these workshops revealed little in the form of measurable, tangible results reflecting these achievements.¹¹⁸ Monitoring and evaluation would allow PIO to know if and what its work is achieving, and to address ineffective methods by altering them to make success more likely, or terminating them to avoid wasting UNOCI resources.

Several examples of the value of monitoring and evaluation follow:

¹¹⁷ While quantitative measurements are important, their value should not overshadow qualitative indicators of success. For example, the fact that twenty traditional chiefs attend a workshop does not indicate a workshop's success, whereas an anecdote about how a participant implemented a concept or lesson from the workshop with his community does effectively demonstrate the value of the workshop in a meaningful way.

¹¹⁸ Most participants expressed an appreciation for their participation in workshops, but could not provide examples how they applied workshop concepts or skills to their daily lives. The coordinator of village chiefs in Duékoué, Francois Batai, participated in at least seven UNOCI sponsored meetings held in various regions of Côte d'Ivoire (including one forum in Duékoué) bringing together traditional chiefs from various communities, but could describe no situation where he applied the experiences to his work or personal life. In contrast, a workshop on social cohesion was noted by traditional chiefs in Korhogo to have helped the leadership of different communities, ethnic and religious, to resolve conflicts more peacefully.

171. If the goal of journalist trainings is to improve the professionalism of the written press, the articles produced by those who have attended trainings could be monitored over a period of months and compared to those they produced before, and/or compared to their colleagues who have not attended trainings, to see if there is a qualitative change in news coverage. Is the writing more accurate, more objective, does it take into account different perspectives, does it report facts or opinion, etc.? UNOCI's media monitoring unit could perhaps embrace this task.
172. In working with local civil society organizations, clear goals should be set forth such as having a youth organization hold, for example, ten meetings over a 6 month period with the explicit goal of reducing conflict and educating on the culture of peace. It could be further articulated that members of x,y, and z communities in that region be part of these youth meetings, and that three events promoting a culture of peace, developed by the local youth organization itself and supported financially by UNOCI, be delivered. These benchmarks are measurable achievements. Further goals should and could be identified and measured – what does education on a culture of peace mean? What are the tangible outcomes? After the youth-organized culture of peace events, did the level of violence between the participating communities of youth decrease? If yes, this would be a measurable outcome.
173. Using such tools as benchmarks and public polling, with questions addressing not only qualitative changes in perception, important in their own right, but also qualitative aspects are valuable tools to continually assess and adapt PIO programmes for best possible results.

Conclusion

174. PIO has developed as a dynamic and creative body of UNOCI, taking initiative and working with great flexibility to meet the mission's and the population's information needs. Based on numerous interviews and direct observation of PIO activities and programmes, and within a broader context of understanding of the role of information and communications in conflict and post-conflict environments, and with a familiarity with DPKO missions and their traditional approach to media and information, a number of UNOCI PIO practices have been highlighted in this report as "best practices." The benefits of these initiatives to UNOCI and to the Ivorian population have been described, and recommendations for their improvement offered.

175. UNOCI PIO has taken a resourceful and innovative approach to its traditional role in peacekeeping operations, and has launched programmes and initiatives that raise the bar for PIO achievements throughout the UN system. Consideration should be given to how these same activities may be adapted to other peacekeeping environments, and implemented and improved upon to fulfil a mission's goals and further enhance the its efficacy and impact.