



## GAP MID-TERM CONFERENCE—AN OVERVIEW FROM THE PI/COORDINATOR

Thanks to the University of Laurea for hosting our mid-term conference and for ongoing dissemination of the Gaming for Peace (GAP) project. GAP is addressing a gap in training for peacekeeping personnel. We are developing a curriculum in soft skills that are needed in peacebuilding and conflict prevention (CPPB) missions. GAP is embedding a selection of these soft skills in a digital role-playing game, which will include assessment of the benchmarked against international standards learning objectives through playing the game.

GAP addresses the training needs arising from the complex nature of peacekeeping missions. Diverse organizations (militaries, police, civilian) with

their own structures, cultures and mandates have to work together, and with the local populations, to achieve the mission goals. Effective communication and cooperation, gender awareness and cultural competency are essential in such a diverse environment, yet there is almost no training in the soft skills that facilitate this. GAP is filling that gap.

GAP has a diverse consortium, comprising academic subject matter experts, end users, and SMEs, each playing a clear and critical role in achieving the generation of a curriculum, benchmarked learning objectives, a digital role playing game, and in- and out-game assessment. Each step that I describe below involved several partners and GAP is truly a collaborative process. There are frequent in person and skype meetings with sever-

al partners and this has facilitated optimal performance and achievement of the goals of each stage of the process. It is a 30 month project and we are almost at the half way point.

To date, we have mapped the state of the art in peacekeeping training, relevant soft skills, and serious games (games for educational as well as entertainment), and identified a gap in experiential (role-playing) training of CPPB relevant soft skills. Currently, delivery of the limited amount of training available is in-person and hence, expensive, logistically difficult to organize, and available to only a few personnel.

The second step was interviewing 168 peacekeeping personnel from Ireland, UK, Poland, Finland, Portugal and Bulgaria. Their experiences in the field identified

*Continues on page 2*



*“GAP addresses the training needs arising from the complex nature of peacekeeping missions”*



*Prof. Anne Holohan, Principal Investigator & Coordinator, GAP*

### Inside this issue:

*Gap Mid-Term Conference—an Overview* 1-2  
*from the PI/Coordinator*

*Soft Skills Training Needs in Peacekeeping Missions* 2-3

*Gaps in Gender Awareness and Cultural Competence in Peacekeeping Missions* 3-4

*Benchmarking GAP Learning Outcomes, Producing a Skills Passport* 4

*Designing a Game that Delivers Effective Training in Building Trust, Communication, Cooperation, Gender and Cultural Awareness, and Stress Management* 5



*Continues from page 1*

*“The games company has now started work on developing possible game designs...”*

the soft skills necessary for optimal interaction with other peacekeepers and the local population in a complex, diverse environment.

The soft skills identified in the SOTA review and interviews were communication, cooperation, gender awareness, cultural competency, decision-making/leadership and stress management. We developed learning objectives that were standardized against existing learning objectives internationally. The learning objectives were also achieved through workshops held with peacekeepers where experienced personnel were given scenarios from the interviews and asked to identify key soft skills needed and to rate the behaviours associated with those soft

skills as outstanding, competent or poor.

The games company has now started work on developing possible game designs and we are in the process of finalizing the decision on which design to develop. This is in conjunction with working on the assessment in and out of the game, as the design is shaped by the necessity of including behaviours that we have shown to be demonstrative of different levels of soft skill attainment. This again is a continuously collaborative process and the contribution of all academic partners, the

end-users who have advised at every step and shared their experiences, and the SMEs who are developing the game and ensuring international standardization, and last but not least the feedback from our Expert Advisory Board particularly Julian Harston, Irene-Maria Eich and Denny Lane, are all inextricably invaluable. I look forward to continuing the collaboration and producing a curriculum and game that makes training in soft skills accessible and affordable to all personnel in peacekeeping.

*Prof. Anne Holohan, PI, GAP*

### SOFT SKILLS TRAINING NEEDS IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

Considering the dramatic increase in multidimensional crisis management and peacekeeping operations in recent years, peacekeepers need more specialised training, particularly in terms of soft skills training. Soft skills are of critical importance not only to the successful implementation of strategic aims

and objectives of conflict prevention and peacebuilding missions (CPPB) but also in the harmonisation and establishment of both formal and informal relationships. This presentation identified key soft skills training needs drawn from detailed analysis of literature pertaining to current training

methods across an international paradigm, ameliorated by qualitative data from extensive interviews conducted by six regional partners as part of the Gaming for Peace (GAP) research project. Peacekeeping training, for one, is defined by the United Nations ‘as any activity which aims to enhance mandate implementation by equipping military, police or civilian personnel, both individually and collectively, with the knowledge, skills and attitude’ to enable them to perform their duties. However, gi-

*“...peacekeepers need more specialised training, particularly in terms of soft skills training...”*



*Continues on page 3*

*Dr. Róisín Smith, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention, National University of Ireland Maynooth*





*Continues from page 2*

ven the multitude of courses currently offered on CPPB, training for peacekeeping missions is extremely varied. It often consists of generic training as well as pre-deployment, mission-specific and induction training, but there are significant gaps in the training of soft skills. The interview cohort conducted under GAP, included military, police and civilian peacekeepers with direct

experience of peacekeeping missions in over 50 different nations worldwide. The significant soft skill training needs identified through the detailed mapping and analysis point to key soft skill needs in: Communicating and listening in peacekeeping; Cooperation; Leadership and decision-making; Gender and cultural awareness; Coordination and Stress management in peacekeeping. The production of the GAP training game is therefore ne-

cessary and timely given the current environment of peacekeeping and the prerequisite for efficient, effective and valuable soft skills training of personnel.

*Dr. Philip McCready, Ulster University and Dr. Róisín Smith, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention, National University of Ireland Maynooth.*



## GAPS IN GENDER AWARENESS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

The presentation delivered by Dr. Kamila Trochowska from the Polish War Studies University (WSU) and Dr. Aleksandra Nowak from the National Police Academy in Szczytno summarized the research results of the cross-cultural competence and gender issues in CPPB. Concerning 3C, the initial assessment of needs in the EU context has shown that there is a growing demand of soft skills, in particular cross-cultural competence and gender awareness in efficient management of CSDP. The specificity of CSDP activities, namely the wide portfolio of activities carried out in peacebuilding (CROs, stabilization, prevention, advisory function) that is by nature more civilian and police-oriented, multiagency and multicultural, causes major problems with not only with culturally alien mission area, but also with cultural variety within a given contingent (and in reality, interoperability is a myth).

Therefore, general recommendations for training cross-cultural competence during pre-deployment preparation and general education is that the training activities that base on web-based and transmedia learning should be synchronized, conflict-sensitive and people-centered. Moreover, universal cross-cultural competencies and flexibility provide a set of indispensable skills for

modern peacekeepers, be it uniformed or civilian.

When it comes to gender, the main objective of the investigation carried out by WSU and Trinity College Dublin, was to expedite further identification of gaps in soft skills in current curricula resulting from gender issues, and facilitate the devel-

*Continues on page 4*



*Dr. Kamila Trochowska, Polish War Studies University*

*“..EU context has shown that there is a growing demand of soft skills, in particular cross-cultural competence and gender awareness in efficient management of CSDP”*





*Continues from page 3*

*“The investigation focused on broad gender issues as they impact on personnel in peacekeeping.”*

opment of narratives, scenarios and characters in the game. A total of 168 interviews with peacekeepers in six European countries were completed, with both male and female respondents, and analysed for their content in regards to gender through qualitative analysis, supported with CAS interviews. The investigation focused on broad gender issues as they impact on personnel in peacekeeping. Following the completion of interviews and the analysis, the methodology workshops were used to further drill down into gender aspects of learning competencies and cross-cultural implications.

Those were carried out in Ireland, Finland and Poland. An intrinsic part of these workshops was to facilitate further identification of gaps in soft skills in current curricula resulting from gender issues and the development of narrative, scenarios and characters that addressed the gender, in the end product. General recommendations formulated on the basis of the performed research were: the imperative of proper recruitment, the need to increase gender & diverse sexualities awareness train-

ing, the need to promote gender diversity in mission environment and make it a norm. As to the game, along with the research guidelines, it will maintain realism and relevance of the scenarios that offer varied gender perspectives for the users, and give peacekeepers the chance to play a person of a different gender identity to their own offline identity and to reflect on the experience.

*Dr. Kamila Trochowska, Polish War Studies University and Dr. Aleksandra Nowak, National Police Academy in Szczytno*

#### **BENCHMARKING GAP LEARNING OUTCOMES, PRODUCING A SKILLS PASSPORT**

Stephen Rice from Upskill Enterprise presented a step-by-step guide on the mapping processes completed to date, and how these impact the innovative development of the GAP Skills Passport. The mapping involved the use of international, occupational and professional standards of work from across the military, civilian and police sectors within peacekeeping and the wider justice and security arena to identify best practices, a common language, and cohesion. The mapping process provided clear performance criteria and knowledge and understanding to write evidence-based learning outcomes. This is vital in establishing reliable and valid assessment as well as a strong and credible curriculum. Following initial mapping, further research was completed to ensure incorporation of the key themes would be actionable both offline in the wider curriculum, and online within the game.

The next stage of development

from Upskill Enterprise is the production of the GAP Skills Passport in line with the principles of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) initiative. It will be a digital document validating the soft skills acquired via GAP. The peacekeeper will accumulate equivalences or 'units' which can then be accredited in their own nation/jurisdictions according to European Qualifications Framework and

National Qualification Framework principles. Both peacekeeping and ECVET experts will ensure that GAP's learning architecture meets the learning curriculum standards required. The passport will support peacekeepers career mobility, permeability with other learning and skills, ensure quality and provide transparency of achievement.

*Stephen Rice and Rowena Timms, Upskills Enterprise Ltd.*

*“The passport will support peacekeepers career mobility...”*



*Stephen Rice, Upskills Enterprise Ltd.*









## DESIGNING A GAME THAT DELIVERS EFFECTIVE TRAINING IN BUILDING TRUST, COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION, GENDER AND CULTURAL AWARENESS, AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

The Haunted Planet team led the two-hour afternoon workshop in the conference. After an initial introduction that used Project Syria (2014) as a visual reference point, four high-level game concepts were presented one at a time to the ~45 end user participants. The end users then discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each concept in small (6-person) breakout groups for about 15 minutes. The participants were asked to give feedback on how well each concept might include learning outcomes in particular related to trust building, communication, cooperation, gender awareness and cultural awareness. Each breakout group had a notetaker from one of the GAP partners assigned whose job it was to record the key points raised at each table.

The four concepts' main differences were in relation to the structuring of the game experience with two main parameters being varied: number of scenes and number of playable characters. The table on right shows the four concepts.

For example, in Concept 1, the player controls the same character through three different scenes. The different scenes could be in different game world areas across different days, but there would be a narrative continuity between the scenes. Actions performed in an earlier scene can affect the options available in later scenes. The advantage of this approach is that the

	One Scene	Multiple Scenes
One Character	 Concept 3	 Concept 1
Multiple Characters	 Concept 4	 Concept 2

player is familiarized with the character and sees the wider context in which s/he lives and works and also gets to see the effects of their actions. In response to this concept, the end-users felt that seeing the consequences of actions was extremely important, and it was good to get to know the character, see them develop over time and understand them as a result of the play experience. However, the single-character perspective was seen to be too limited in scope compared to some of the other concepts.

In addition to the concept-specific feedback, the end-users also offered overall thoughts on what is important in a game intended to facilitate the learning of soft skills. End-users emphasized the

importance of conveying the playable character's context, e.g., personal history and training as well as mission mandate and code of conduct. The context of the conflict was also seen as important, such as history, culture and religion. In terms of interaction, body language was seen as important, and in terms of realism, it was highlighted how crucial it is that characters and events are realistic, not so much in visual fidelity but in behavior and believability. The question "Could this happen in a real setting?" should always be answered in the affirmative.

*Mads Haahr, Haunted planet Studios (more info [mads@hauntedplanet.com](mailto:mads@hauntedplanet.com))*

*Mads Haahr (on right), Haunted Planet Studios*

*"...the player is familiarized with the character and sees the wider context in which s/he lives and works and also gets to see the effects of their actions."*





*GAP Consortium and honorable members of the Expert Advisory Board at General Assembly in Tikkurila on 18th September.*



<http://gap-project.eu/>



Gap Project



@gapforpeace



GAP Gaming for Peace

## GAP Consortium



This project has received funding from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation HORIZON 2020 under the agreement 700670. Agency is not responsible of any use that may be made of the information it contains.