

## ***Recruitment and Vetting of National Staff***

Where national recruitment is anticipated, early national recruitment should be encouraged since there can be competing agencies seeking recruits from a limited pool of qualified applicants *e.g. police, armed forces*. Secondly, earlier recruitment offers a longer period of support from the field mission prison component to these national staff. It can also be a useful strategy to recruit more staff than is actually needed in the day-to-day operation of the prisons at the time the staff are recruited in order to allow for staff training and turnover. If this is done, it is important that training is continuously available to avoid excess staffing at the institutions, and an attitude developed whereby, these additional staff numbers come to be regarded as essential positions. Development of a mindset amongst national staff concerning *greater numbers of staff = greater security* when it is unlikely that the host-country can support this larger workforce in the long-term inevitably leads to major industrial issues in the longer term.

It is often the case that there is no central public service recruitment policy or system in the early stages of a mission, however, it is important that recruitment strategies developed by prison components for national staff are transparent, equitable, accountable, non discriminatory and efficient. They must seek to recruit individuals whose behaviour and values are consistent with the professional standards required of a Prison Service, which adheres to international instruments relating to the detention of prisoners. Vetting tools developed by OHCHR and UNDP, the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and by UNMIL (Annex 9) should be considered tools for such use. Application procedures will likely include:

- Application pro-forma
- Background questionnaires
- Interview forms for documenting background information on applicants from third parties
- Interview process and questions
- Physical test requirements
- Medical test
- Written examination
- Waiver and Indemnity Forms
- Police, military, public security background check
- In some missions, review by a War Crimes Tribunal

Where no staffing and personnel systems and structures exist, the central administrative entities of the host-country administration (such as a civil service commission or ministry of finance) are likely to provide guidance relating to indicative salary levels and conditions of temporary contracts, however recruitment processes, in the short term, may be the responsibility of individual agencies, and thus need to be carefully considered to prevent the emergence of longer term industrial issues. A re-alignment of the initial recruitment strategy may be necessary in the event that a central civil service agency develops a recruitment strategy applicable to all civil servants. It is probable that this will provide the opportunity to assess all existing staff to ascertain if they meet specified criteria for transfer from temporary to permanent contracts.

There is a range of methods of attracting personnel in the early phase of a mission: listings of previous prison system staff may be available in records and a register of previous prison staff could be developed. Advertising could be placed on local notice boards, the prison gates or key community agencies may be useful sources through which to advertise the recruitment programme in the short term. More formal advertising of vacancies through local media should be adopted when these media are functioning effectively. All applicants should be given equal treatment by recruiters, even if they have previous experience and feel they have a *right* to a job. Staff should also be screened to the extent possible to check for good character consistent with any transitional authority position concerning previous office holders.

It is not uncommon that low numbers of applicants who meet the education qualifications apply. Implementing a competency-based recruitment assessment process can assist the selection process when insufficient

numbers of individuals, who possess the minimum education criterion, apply. Though priority should be given to literate applicants, strategies for addressing poor literacy levels among current and recruited officers may also be developed. These may include identifying international or national educational services who are able to provide literacy training. A basic literacy module might be included in the initial prison training programme. Training approaches and tools must take into account the literacy level of participants and be adjusted accordingly.

Experience indicates that special attention should be given to ensure the host territory ethnic profile is reflected in recruitment outcomes and that the recruitment of women is actively encouraged. In situations in which women or certain groups have been denied educational and work opportunities in previous regimes, differing recruitment qualifications may be necessary. Cultures that do not have a tradition of women working in prison systems will benefit from the development of targeted strategies. Effective strategies may include:

Identification, by international and national women's organisations, of appropriate methods to target women applicants in the host-country

- Ensuring recruitment personnel have a good knowledge of gender equity principles and strategies for promoting these within the national environment<sup>1</sup>
- Seeking from the mission Gender Unit strategies and materials to assist recruitment efforts *e.g. materials developed for recruitment for other mission components, background information on local culture and customs as relates to women working in the security sector*
- Engaging the mission Public Information Office in designing and implementing a public information programme
- Liaising with the mission DDR team in relation to recruitment of demobilized women

Retention may be enhanced by establishing support groups for female recruits and current staff. It is also likely that the national staff will be poorly paid, and therefore mission prison experts should be able to provide national staff with consistent information concerning the relationship between the host-country economy and funding arrangements in the context of sustainable nation building and their salaries. Having the central agency responsible for setting public sector salaries address staff meetings can also be useful strategy.

## **(b) Code of Conduct**

The development of a code of conduct is an important initiative in developing a professional national service. It is probable that the host territory's central public sector agency will develop a code of conduct in due course, however, it is not necessary to wait for such a development before developing an interim instrument for prison staff. Prison components should give priority to encouraging the national authority to authorise the development of such a code. Changes can be made to this, if necessary, when the central policy is established. Consideration should be given to making agreement to a code of conduct a condition of recruitment and vetting.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations*, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, New York, USA accessible at: [www.un.org/depts/dpko/lessons/](http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/lessons/)