Training Police in the Field

Local Solutions to Local Problems

- Using Western police trainers whose experience is vastly different to that of local law enforcement is not helpful, unless those trainers have considerable overseas field experience.

- Where possible seek to identify suitable trainers from near Peer institutions (although admittedly language differences and local tensions can be difficult barriers to overcome).

- Don't train to a standard that cannot be replicated locally.

- Not every solution has to be high tech – especially in places where power and connectivity are unreliable utilities - think carefully about potential analog fixes that might have worked elsewhere in the past.

Trust but Verify

- Trainers need a granular understanding of the needs and circumstances of local stakeholders.

- Local stakeholders, out of pride or embarrassment, may exaggerate their actual capabilities.

- Trainers should try to go out with police units, and visit crime scenes, police stations, evidence units, and laboratories to establish ground truth.

- Think deductively about what is seen – what items of evidence are actually being seized. What is missing? What does this tell you about actual police practices.

Think Holistically

Gears labeled: Evidence Collection, Evidence Storage, Evidence Exploitation, Case Construction, Court Presentation

- There is no point focusing on just one node of the criminal justice system. You have to unseize all the gears or the system won't work.

Think Long-term

- Donors typically think in 18-month or 3-year cycles. Systemic and cultural change takes much longer.

- Poorly designed M&E measures and an obsession with quantitative data – which is often either deeply flawed or a very poor proxy for the actual variable - can be incredibly damaging to successful projects.

- In failing and failed states the rush for sustainability often leads to unrealistic expectations and thus repetitive and cyclical failure.

- Look for incremental improvement in the aggregate, there will be reversals. Everything is relationship driven and changes in senior personnel on both sides can set projects back significantly.

Keep it simple!