Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning Cheat Sheet

Based on the 2020 DPO and DPPA Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning

Organizational learning, the identification of best practices and knowledge sharing are critical to strengthening the effectiveness and collective impact of the UN peace and security pillar.

⚑ Core principles:

- **Knowledge management is <u>everyone's responsibility</u>**. All personnel should contribute to organizational learning. Managers shall create an enabling environment for knowledge-sharing and integrate lessons learned into their activities.
- **An honest reflection on failures** is part of the learning process.
- **Innovation, technology, and peer-to-peer learning**: To allow us to learn from each other and continuously improve our effectiveness, personnel should leverage innovations and tools for lessons learning and actively share their knowledge with colleagues.
- **From lessons learned to lessons applied:** A lesson is only fully *learned* once a change has been implemented or a successful practice has been adopted.
- **Nothing happens in isolation!** Learning in partnership with other organizations is encouraged and should factor in cross-cutting issues and priorities (e.g. gender and women, peace & security, human rights and protection, youth).
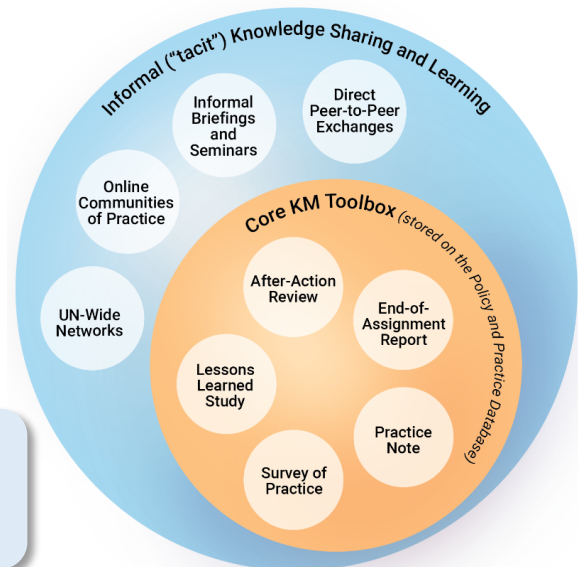
"Our most crucial resource is our staff, who carry the vision into action. We will rely on and invest in them to build a culture of mutual learning, creativity, growth, and ownership." USGs DiCarlo and Lacroix

⚙ The Organizational Learning Process:

- **When to capture lessons**: Any significant activity, incident or event must be followed by a timely exercise to capture good practices, identify opportunities for improvements and recommend actions.
- **What to do with identified lessons:** Once completed, senior management should validate the findings and ensure follow-through to implement lessons in a time-bound manner. Lessons learned documents are, in most cases, made available UN-internally.
- **Regular review of priority lessons by field missions and by DPO and DPPA at Headquarters**: Senior management must do this regularly to inform operations, guidance development, training curricula and business and planning processes.

✕ What are the core tools for knowledge management?

- **End of Assignment Reports (EoARs)** are personal, analytial accounts by senior personnel, capturing lessons, best practices, and recommendations for how to address any gaps going forward. EoARs are mandatory for all senior personnel.
- **An After-Action Review (AAR)** is often conducted through a group discussion, allowing personnel to reflect on what went well, areas of improvement, and recommendations.
- **Practice Notes** range from short descriptive accounts to broader documents describing established practices in a variety of business areas.
- **Surveys of Practice** are comparative descriptive snapshots of a certain function or activity across sections within a mission/office or across different missions/offices.
- **A lessons learned study** is an in-depth analysis aimed at drawing lessons to improve relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of subsequent processes or efforts.

Informal ("tacit") Knowledge Sharing and Learning — Informal Briefings and Seminars, Direct Peer-to-Peer Exchanges, Online Communities of Practice, UN-Wide Networks, Core KM Toolbox *(stored on the Policy and Practice Database)*: After-Action Review, End-of-Assignment Report, Lessons Learned Study, Practice Note, Survey of Practice

☁ The Policy and Practice Database (PPDB.un.org) is DPO's and DPPA's repository for all guidance and lessons learned products as well as templates and tools. Key resources are consolidated on dedicated thematic pages – including on Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning and Guidance Development

👥 Who does what in organizational learning?

- **Mission leaders** create a conducive environment for knowledge sharing in the mission, review key lessons learned and oversee follow up actions.
- **Policy and Best Practices Officers (PBPOs)** are key knowledge brokers in the mission, responsible for training personnel on knowledge management tools and platforms, and supporting the production and sharing of mission guidance and lessons learned.
- **All personnel, including managers** integrate lessons and best practices into their daily work, share their specialized knowledge with peers and may participate in the drafting of best practices reports and guidance. Managers encourage their personnel to participate in organizational learning.
- At HQ, **DPO and DPPA senior managers** promote organizational learning and review and if appropriate, ensuring follow-up to lessons learning exercises.
- **DPO/DPET and DPPA/PMD** support knowledge management and organizational learning through guidance, tools and training.
- The **Guidance Development and Learning Steering Committee** sets priorities on lessons learning, evaluations and guidance for the UN peace and security pillar.

👥 Who can help?
The Knowledge Management and Guidance Team (DPO/DPET) (peacekeeping-bestpractices@un.org) and the Guidance and Learning Unit (DPPA/PMD) (dppa-policy@un.org) support KM and OL in the UN peace and security pillar.