

IOI Training Initiatives

Since 2010 the IOI has hosted and/or supported the following training initiatives for its members. These training courses were offered free of charge to all IOI members and enable them to practice their effective investigation and complaint handling techniques.

IOI Training 2010

NOVEMBER 2010 - Vienna

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

This educational programme for staff members of ombudsman institutions is based on a format successfully established by Ontario Ombudsman André Marin, which focuses on systematic investigations. In total, 38 staff members of ombudsman institutions from 17 countries participated in this educational programme and the IOI was funded five scholarships to enable the attendance of staff members from institutions with limited financial resources.

“The course was interesting, inspiring and raised my awareness of new tools and methods one can use to reach out to the public and be an effective Office”.

(comment from a participant)

“It was very helpful not only for working purposes but also my personal qualities have been enriched.”

(comment from a participant)

IOI Training 2011

JUNE 2011 - Vienna

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

“Rest assured that I left Vienna with raised awareness regarding the task, powers and tools available to the Ombudsman to execute the job.”

(comment from a participant)

“The course was an eye opener and a motivation to do the best in every day execution of one’s duties!”

(comment from a participant)

Following the successful first SYT training course in Vienna, the IOI decided to offer another SYT training in Vienna in June 2011. Again, the three-day course dealt with various topics of everyday investigative work, such as effective interviewing methods, retrieval of relevant documentation, assessment of evidence, report writing and use of social media networks. The training course attracted 37 participants from 23 different countries and the IOI – in conjunction with the City of Vienna – could fund nine scholarships to enable the attendance of staff members from institutions with limited financial resources.

OCTOBER 2011 - Florida, USA

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

Another SYT training was held as part of the US Ombudsman Association’s 32nd Annual Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, USA in October 2011. The course attracted 23 attendees from Antigua, Bermuda, Grenada, the Northwest Territories of Australia, Pakistan, and the USA and IOI members attended the training free of charge. The North American Region expressed its gratitude to the IOI for the subvention that made this SYT training possible.

MAY 2012 - Hong Kong & Macao

“Unreasonable complainants & effective complaint management” by NSW Ombudsman (Australia)

The IOI provided financial support for training workshops jointly hosted by the Office of the Ombudsman of Hong Kong and the Commission against Corruption, Macao, in May 2012.

The training comprised four workshops held by New South Wales Ombudsman Bruce Barbour, and New South Wales Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler. It dealt with coping strategies and verbal skills for the handling of unreasonable complainants as well as the essential elements and best practices of an effective complaint management and attracted a total of 41 participants from a number of jurisdictions including China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Macao, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Thailand.

SEPTEMBER 2012 - Vienna

“Complaint handling practices” by Queen Margaret University (UK)

*“Events such as these are invaluable!
They offer an opportunity to share
experience and learn from colleagues,
thus enabling us to improve on the already
comprehensive service we provide.”*

(comment from a participant)

A first alternative training seminar was offered when the IOI established its cooperation with the Edinburgh-based Queen Margaret University (QMU), which has an excellent reputation as trainer of ombudsmen staff in complaint handling practices.

A three-day programme tailor-made for the IOI, covered complaint assessment, effective investigation, acting on findings, effective communication and reporting and attracted 36 participants from 23 different countries.

Once again the IOI together with the City of Vienna funded five scholarships to enable the attendance of staff members from institutions with limited financial resources.

NOVEMBER 2012 - New Zealand

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

A “Sharpening your Teeth” training was held by André Marin in association with the 10th IOI World Conference held in Wellington, New Zealand in November 2012 and attracted a total of 76 participants.

“Unreasonable complainants conduct” by NSW Ombudsman (Australia)

An additional training on unreasonable complainant conduct was presented by the New South Wales Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler, which attracted another 65 participants, who took the opportunity of their conference attendance to also widen their knowledge on this specific topic.

APRIL 2013 - Bangkok, Thailand

“Complaint handling practices” by Queen Margaret University (UK)

A second QMU complaint-handling seminar was organised in April 2013 in Bangkok as a joint event between the IOI, the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) and in close cooperation with the Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand, which hosted the event on the occasion of the 13th anniversary of its establishment.

The course attracted approx. 70 participants from all over the world and once again gave participants the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in respect of investigative procedures, as well as to share knowledge and build networks with their counterparts from diverse cultural and legal backgrounds.

SEPTEMBER 2013 - Vienna

“Anti-corruption training” by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)

For the first time, the IOI organised a training course in cooperation with the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), an Austria-based international organisation providing anti-corruption education and research.

This training format was specifically directed towards investigative ombudsman staff of institutions with an anti-corruption mandate and brought around 30 participants from 21 different countries to Austria.

Renowned trainers led the group during the three-day seminar and developed a way forward in the fight against corruption. Participants benefited from sharing best practices with both their international co-participants and the lecturers in the effort to promote transparency, accountability and good governance in public administration on a regional, national and international level.

“I am extremely pleased to have been a part of a program that was productive and provided a platform for so many ombudsman representatives to come together and tackle the issue of corrupt practices in all aspects of their professional lives.”

(comment from an instructor)

NOVEMBER 2013 - Lusaka, Zambia

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

For the first time the IOI was able to present a „Sharpening Your Teeth“ training course tailor-made according to the specific needs of the African Region. Upon invitation of the IOI and the African Ombudsman and Mediator Association (AOMA), Ontario Ombudsman André Marin delivered his training course on how to conduct systemic investigations first in French and then in English. Hosted by the Commission for Investigations in Zambia and sponsored by the IOI, the AOMA and the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC), the training brought together more than 80 English- and French-speaking participants from over 20 countries across Africa.

“When you work in an ombudsman office, your teeth can sometimes get blunt. Training like this reminds us that we need to review our practices and sharpen our teeth. A watchdog without teeth is not very good security.”

(Ms Caroline Sokoni, Investigator General, Zambia)

“The African continent is one – we have broken the language barrier and we are convinced that this training will not end here.”

(Mme Traore, Médiateur du Faso, Burkina Faso)

APRIL 2014 - Webinar

“Ombudsman and Open Government“ (English version)

„Very informative! I'm looking forward to future webinars - thank you!“

(comment from a participant)

In April 2014, a webinar co-sponsored by the World Bank Institute, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the IOI was held. On behalf of the IOI, Peter Tyndall (Ombudsman of Ireland) presented his office's involvement in the Open Government Partnership and referred to potential entry points for Ombudsman offices to engage with the initiative.

The webinar was attended by representatives from Ombudsman offices, civil society organizations and academia. After each presentation the speakers answered numerous questions posed by the participants. More than 80 people from all regions followed the webinar and engaged actively in the debates.

MAY 2014 - Webinar

“Ombudsman and Open Government“ (Spanish version)

Following the success of the English language webinar, another webinar on the role of Ombudsman institutions in advancing open government took place in Spanish (“*Rol de Defensorías del Pueblo para avanzar el gobierno abierto*”) in May 2014.

„Very good webinar. I look forward to new activities like this in order to increase our knowledge about this matter.“

(comment from a participant)

The webinar was once again sponsored by the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the World Bank Institute and aimed at discussing opportunities for Ombudsman offices to engage in their countries' OGP processes. Presenter included representatives from the office of the Ombudsman of Peru, from the office of the Ombudsman of Costa Rica as well as from the *Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia* of Argentina.

MARCH 2015 - Bangkok, Thailand

“Complaint Handling” by New South Wales Ombudsman (Australia)

In March 2015, the Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand hosted an IOI co-funded high-level complaint handling training programme, which was the core of the 2nd IOI/AOA training cooperation and held by the Office of the New South Wales Ombudsman. The courses focused on the importance of continuous improvement in

complaint handling and investigation, as well as managing unreasonable conduct by complainants. The training course brought 31 international participants, ranging from frontline complaint handlers to Ombudsmen, to Thailand. The feedback from attendees following the training was very positive, with a high level of satisfaction with the course content and facilitation.

MAY 2015 - Curacao

“Anti-corruption training” by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)

Organised by the IOI in partnership with the Curacao Ombudsman office, an anti-corruption training course took place in Willemstad, Curacao in May 2015. This course served as a follow-up to the first training in this field (Vienna, September 2013) and was custom-designed in response to the unique procurement- and integrity-related challenges that ombudsman institutions are facing in the Caribbean. Participants benefitted from sharing best practices. Forty government officials and academics from around the world took part in this training seminar as well.

JUNE 2015 - Riga, Latvia

“NPM Training” by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)

The first IOI training specifically designed for ombudsman institutions functioning as a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) was hosted by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia in June 2015. In close cooperation with the renowned Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), the IOI developed a training format focusing on the implementation of a preventive mandate.

„This workshop offered a great deal of new and valuable expertise in the challenging field of preventive monitoring“

(comment from a participant)

Case studies, group discussions and mapping exercises were used to jointly elaborate on how to ensure a maximum impact of the NPM. The two and a half day learning experience brought together 31 Ombudsmen and top-level staff from 22 different IOI member institutions from Europe, Africa and Asia.

MARCH 2016 - Tokyo, Japan

“Systematic Investigations Training” by former Ontario Ombudsman (Canada)

The Japanese IOI Member and the Administrative Administration Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, held a training workshop for Asian Ombudsman institutions in Tokyo in March 2016. The workshop titled “Wachdogs Bark – Systematic Investigations for Ombudsman” was partly financed through the IOI’s Regional Subsidies Programme and provided an ideal platform to exchange experiences and to learn from international colleagues. The training was conducted by former Ontario Ombudsman André Marin, Prof. Hisao Tsukamoto (Waseda University) and Prof. Kimiyoshi Toyama (Rikkyo University).

JUNE 2016 - Rosario, Argentina

“Complaints Handling Training” by Queen Margarete University (UK)

A first training course for a Spanish-speaking audience was hosted by the Defensoría del Pueblo de la Provincia de Santa Fe and held in Rosario (Argentina) in June 2016. The IOI brought a training programme designed by the Scottish Queen Margaret University (QMU), which is specialised in ombudsman and complaint handling practice,

to the Latin-American Ombudsman community. The training tackled complex topics such as the planning of investigations, the evaluation of evidence or the conducting of systemic investigations and was guided by renowned trainers from Latin America in collaboration with expert from QMU.

JUNE 2016 - Vilnius, Lithuania

“Follow-up NPM Workshop” by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)

„It is encouraging to exchange expertise on the monitoring of so-called less traditional places of detention, as they really need to come into the focus of every NPM’s attention“

(comment from a participant)

The IOI was pleased to continue the very successful cooperation with the APT by offering a follow-up workshop designed for Ombudsman institutions which function as National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). In June 2016 a three-day workshop, which focused on the monitoring of psychiatric facilities, brought representatives of European NPMs from 17 different countries to the Office of the Seimas Ombudsman, who hosted this event.

Once again, renowned experts from the APT led through this workshop and helped participants in exploring issues of common concern and developing skills to handle the specific challenges related to psychiatric institutions. For the first time, medical and psychiatric experts as well as an expert from the SPT, joined in to provide their knowledge and to bring their vast experience to the discussion with the participants.

February 2017 - Grand Bassam, Ivory Coast

„Ombudsman and prevention of torture“

A training seminar on “Ombudsman and prevention of torture” was hosted by the Office of the Médiateur of Ivory Coast in Grand Bassam in February 2017. The training was presented by the renowned Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) in both English and French. Organised by the African Ombudsman and Mediator Association (AOMA), the IOI and the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC), the two-day workshop provided an ideal platform for participants to share good practices on ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) and the role that their institutions can play as part of a coherent national strategy.

June 2017 - Bonaire

„Complaints management and investigation techniques training“

In June 2017 the IOI funded a training seminar on complaints management and investigation skills, which was presented by the Queen Margaret University (QMU) and hosted on the occasion of the annual conference of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) in Bonaire.

The complaint handling training took one and a half day and was led by the Edinburgh-based Queen Margaret University (QMU), which has an excellent reputation as trainer in complaint handling practices. The training put a special focus on further developing the skills of Ombudsman staff and building capacity of the Caribbean Ombudsman institutions.

„Training such as this has a sustainable effect for the region, since the knowledge gained is afterwards brought back to the various institutions.“

(Nilda Arduin, Ombudsman Sint Maarten and CAROA President)

CAROA President Nilda Arduin stressed how important training initiatives, such as the one in Bonaire, are for colleagues in the region, as they enable them to bring the know how back to the everyday work of their offices.

September 2017 - Vienna, Austria

„NPM Workshop on communication skills & techniques“

After two very successful workshops with an NPM focus in Latvia (2015) and Lithuania (2016), this follow-up workshop in Vienna will put a special focus on developing skills to optimise interaction and communication with challenging conversation partners, e.g. during visits of places of detention but also in the everyday work with difficult complainants. With this innovative training seminar, the IOI created a format that enables participants to learn through a practical approach while at the same time upholding the “do-no-harm” principle, which is so essential when monitoring places of detention.

During this 3-day-training workshop participants were able to try out and improve their communication skills and techniques in role plays with trained actors, who were familiar with individualized psychiatric clinical patterns of patients and therefore simulated the patients’ characteristics in the interview situation. After each interview, the actors were able to provide feedback on how they experienced the situation in their role as patients.

Participants were also able to observe real-life monitoring visits by the Austrian NPM via a livestream. This way the training absolutely abided by the “do-no-harm” principle as the clients or patients only had to deal with an already familiar situation and were not disturbed by a larger group of training participants.

„Working with actors can be an extremely powerful training and learning tool.“

(comment from a participant)