

NPM Workshop on “Women and LGBTI+ persons in the first moments of detention” Mexico City (Mexico), May 2023

The IOI continued its successful cooperation with the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) and the training series that caters to the specific needs of Ombudsman offices, which also hold a mandate as National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). For the first time, an NPM workshop was held in Spanish and offered to Latin-American members free of charge. The training put a specific focus on the matter of “Strengthening strategies for effective monitoring: the case of women and LGBTI+ persons in the first moments of detention”. It addressed the

fact that women and LGBTI+ persons are most at risk of torture and violations of their rights when deprived of liberty – especially in the early stages of detention – and therefore have additional needs that require the attention of monitoring bodies. Participants from different NPMs in the region came together to exchange their practical experiences in relation to the inclusion of a gender perspective in the monitoring process. They discussed strategies for positive changes in practice, especially with regard to the implementation of safeguards.

Media Training „Crisis communication skills” Online Webinar, March 2023

the IOI continued the good cooperation with the UK-based training provider Media First and offered an online training on “Crisis communications skills” to its members free of charge. The sessions were taught by crisis communication experts with longstanding experience in journalism and media training. Participants improved their theoretical know-how on crisis communication strategies by analysing interviews of different spokespersons and talking about essential components of successful crisis communication. Using a hypothetical case scenario, participants were then divided into two groups and asked to draft their own statements. The afternoon session put a focus on practical exercises, such as simulated radio and TV interviews, which the trainers analysed together with the participants afterwards. Feedback from the participants showed that they particularly appreciated the practical activities, the exchange with colleagues, and the detailed illustration of different crisis communications strategies.

„The practical activities, the experienced trainers and the exchange with fellow participants were the main benefit of this workshop.“

(comment from a participant)

Webinar cooperation with AORC

The IOI continued the successful cooperation with the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) - the research and training branch of the African Ombudsman and Mediator Association (AOMA) - to provide facilitated online discussions on topics that are of interest for our members.

In 2023, this webinar cooperation once again dealt with a broad variety of topics, such as the UN Resolution on Ombudsman and Mediator Institutions, the Venice Principle and the OR Tambo Declaration as helpful tools to strengthen, protect and promote the institution of the Ombudsman. In another edition colleagues showcased the work of sectorial Ombudsman, specifically Municipal, Police and Military Ombudsman institutions. Dealing with the challenging behaviour of complainants and fostering mediation as an alternative dispute resolution were other topics discussed by Ombudsmen from around the world in this series in 2023.

Media Training „Presenting with impact” Online Webinar, March 2022

This was an immensely helpful training and such a great learning opportunity.

(comment from a participant)

In the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings and presenting in a virtual environment has quickly become the “new normal”. Being able to present the work of the Ombudsman office with impact in this new setting can be challenging. An online trainer-led workshop, which was offered in three different time zones, aimed at bringing the virtual presentation skills of the participants to the next level. The workshop was designed as a combination of self-guided learning prior to the day of the training and a practical

online training session led by experienced trainers, with practical exercises and individual feedback in one-on-one coaching segments. This training continued the successful cooperation with the UK-based company Media First and participants from all six world regions were able to benefit from this free of charge training.

Media Training „Media skills” Online Webinar, November 2020 / January 2021

The IOI held its first online training in November 2020 with a focus on media skills to help participants approach any media interview with confidence and focus. The training was delivered by the UK-based company Media First and designed for Ombudsman office holders and their media spokespersons. The training was offered for different groups in different time zones and participants came from all six IOI regions.

Media skills are essential to bring across our core messages. I now have the tools to control our stories.

(comment from a participant)

A first module, which was completed by participants in their own time prior to the training day, dealt with theoretical basics. On the day of the training itself, participants discussed important elements of successful media strategies, such as preparing for interviews or bringing across the main messages of the office, with experienced BBC journalists. After this, each participant had simulated interviews with the trainers, which were recorded and analysed afterwards for a maximum learning experience.

Due to the great success of the first media training, the IOI offered a second training on media skills and interviewing techniques. The training once again attracted participants from all IOI regions. This second training also considered the specific situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and included advice and tips on how to best set-up the camera and background for remote video interviews.

Webinar cooperation with AORC

In the years of the COVID-19 pandemic in-person training and workshops became impossible. The Ombudsman community had to adapt and the IOI was pleased to join forces with the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) - the research and training branch of the African Ombudsman and Mediator Association (AOMA) - to provide facilitated online discussions on topics that are of interest for our members. Webinars in the period 2020 - 2022 included topics such as: Ombudsman under threat; effective tools to strengthen independent Ombudsman institutions; how to deal with challenging behaviour from complainants; mediation and alternative dispute resolution; AOMA and the IOI - values and benefits of being a member; or how to handle systemic investigations.

„EU Data Protection Regulation“ Riga (Latvia), October 2019

The Office of the Ombudsman of Latvia organized a training on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union in Riga in October 2019. In three different sessions a specific focus was put on the different aspects to be considered by human rights institutions in their work: GDPR and supervision, GDPR at national level and GDPR and the individual. Ombudsmen from all over Europe discussed the role of Ombudsman institution in data protection, the Ombudsman's right to access information, the Ombudsman's obligation to properly inform the data subject under Art. 14 of GDPR, data processing of the Ombudsman office's case files and the protection of people's data, archiving the person's data and "the right to be forgotten".

„Advancing Ombudsman impact, service and performance“ Bermuda, May 2019

The 10th Biennial CAROA conference was hosted by the Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda and included a two-day training workshop on "Advancing the Ombudsman's Impact, Role, Service and Performance". The training was led by Victor Ayeni, who was a proponent of establishing CAROA. The sessions were interactive and facilitated through a combination of

presentations, case studies and practical exercises. The training was brought to members in the Caribbean region with the financial support of the IOI and free of charge.

„Ombudsman investigator training“ Fiji, July 2019

Fourteen representatives from seven Pacific countries undertook Ombudsman investigator training in Fiji in May 2019, which was co-sponsored by the IOI. The Office of the New Zealand Ombudsman led the training which took a typical complaint through the whole investigation process from incoming communication right through to the conclusion, whether that is an agreed outcome or a formal report. Representatives from the Victorian, Western Australian and Australian Commonwealth Ombudsman's offices will assist in presenting the material.

„Mediation training“ Durban (South Africa), March 2019

A mediation training for African Ombudsmen was hosted by the Office of the Public Protector in Durban, South Africa in March 2019. In collaboration with the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC), the IOI had organized a program, tailor-made for the needs of African Ombudsman institutions.

*„It was a good methodology to learn.
It seemed like we were playing,
when actually, we were learning.“*

(training participant)

The interactive mediation training was provided by Dr. McQuoid-Mason a leading Africa-centric mediation trainer and scholar based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Law. The training was made available in both English and French and made possible due to the fruitful cooperation between the IOI, AOMA, AORC, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

NPM Workshop on “Effective NPM recommendations” Copenhagen (Denmark), November 2018

An IOI Workshop for NPMs took place in Copenhagen in November 2018. The training was hosted by the Office of the Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman and facilitated by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT). It brought 35 participants from 23 different countries together to discuss the topic of an effective follow-up process to NPM recommendations.

During the Copenhagen workshop, participants exchanged experiences on how to maximize the impact of NPMs through refinement and improvement of recommendations, the establishment of an effective follow-up methodology and possibilities to track the implementation status of NPM recommendations in a systematic and efficient way. Representatives from the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), the UN Committee against Torture (CAT), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and the Austrian Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights contributed their expertise in discussions and group sessions.

„OPCAT Training“ New Zealand , November 2018

The 30th Australasian and Pacific Region (APOR) Ombudsman Conference was hosted by the Office of the Ombudsman of New Zealand in November 2018. The second day of the conference was dedicated to training regarding the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) and the setting up of National Preventive Mechanisms (NPM) to monitor places of detention and deprivation of liberty.

„Poldershop on data protection“ The Hague, November 2018

The Dutch Ombudsman introduced the concept of so-called “poldershops”. This type of meeting refers to the way Dutch people tend to ensure that diverse personalities with diverse background can talk to each other. The first Poldershop discussed the new EU data protection regulations, the practical challenges it brings about and the aspects which are critical for the daily work of Ombudsman offices. The second Poldershop put a focus on communication issues and how to reach out effectively to the public.

„Accountability and Ethics“ Lilongwe (Malawi), February 2018

„This initiative once again showed, how important it is that the IOI supports training for members directly in the regions. “

(Peter Tyndall, IOI President)

The Office of the Ombudsman of Malawi hosted a training on “The Role of Ombudsman institutions in promoting and enforcing accountability ethics and transparency in the public sector”. The training, which was facilitated by Professor Ayeni, brought 100 delegates from various Ombudsman institutions to Lilongwe. The purpose of the training was to strengthen Ombudsman institutions in the promotion of transparency, ethics and accountability in the

public sector, to build and enhance competencies of staff, to discuss ways of strengthening and re-aligning the Ombudsman in a changing African environment and to forge partnerships among colleagues for the effective promotion of transparency and accountability. The workshop was co-funded by the Malawi Government, the African Ombudsman Research Center (AORC), the European Union through the Chilungamo Programme and the IOI through its regional subsidies programme.

NPM Workshop on “Communication skills & interviewing techniques“ Vienna (Austria), September 2017

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.

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

(comment from a participant)

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.

„Complaints management and investigation techniques training“ Bonaire, June 2017

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 held during the annual conference of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA) in Bonaire. The complaint handling training took one and a half day and put a special focus on further developing the skills of Ombudsman staff and building capacity of the Caribbean Ombudsman institutions. 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.

NPM Workshop on „Ombudsman and prevention of torture“ Grand Bassam (Ivory Coast), February 2017

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.

“Complaints Handling Training” by Queen Margarete University (UK) Rosario (Argentina), June 2016

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.

NPM Workshop on “Monitoring psychiatric institutions” Vilnius (Lithuania), June 2016

“It is encouraging to exchange expertise on the monitoring of so-called less traditional places of detention, as they really need to come more into the focus of the 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.

“Systematic Investigations Training” by former Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) Tokyo (Japan), March 2016

The Japanese IOI Member and the Administrative Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, held an International Forum and Training Workshop for Asian Ombudsman institutions. The international training workshop titled “Watchdogs bark: systematic investigations for Ombudsman” provided a useful possibility to exchange experiences. The training was mainly conducted by former Ontario Ombudsman André Marin, as well as Professor Hisao Tsukamoto from the Waseda University and Kimiyoshi Toyama, Professor at Rikkyo University.

NPM Workshop on “How to implement a preventive mandate” Riga (Latvia), June 2015

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.

“Anti-corruption training” by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) Curaçao, May 2015

Organised by the IOI in partnership with the Curaçao 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.

“Complaint Handling” by New South Wales Ombudsman (Australia) Bangkok (Thailand), March 2015

In March 2015, the Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand hosted an IOI co-funded highlevel 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.

“Ombudsman and Open Government“ (Spanish version) Online Webinar, May 2014

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.

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.

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

(comment from a participant)

“Ombudsman and Open Government“ (English version) Online Webinar, April 2014

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.

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

(comment from a participant)

“Sharpening your Teeth” (SYT) by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) Lusaka (Zambia), November 2013

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.

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

(Ms Traore, Médiateur du Faso, Burkina Faso)

“Anti-corruption training” by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) Vienna (Austria), September 2013

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

(comment from an instructor)

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 coparticipants and the lecturers in the effort to promote transparency, accountability and good governance in public administration on a regional, national and international level.

“Complaint handling practices” by Queen Margaret University (UK) Bangkok (Thailand), April 2013

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

“Sharpening your Teeth” by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) “Unreasonable complainants conduct” by NSW Ombudsman (Australia) Wellington (New Zealand), November 2012

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.

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.

“Unreasonable complainants & effective complaint management” by NSW Ombudsman (Australia) Hong Kong & Macao (China), May 2012

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.

“Complaint handling practices” by Queen Margaret University (UK) Vienna (Austria), September 2012

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.

*“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)

IOI Training 2011

“Sharpening your Teeth” by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) Florida (USA), October 2011

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.

“Sharpening your Teeth” by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) Vienna (Austria), June 2011

Following the successful first SYT training course in Vienna, the IOI decided to offer another SYT training in Vienna in June 2011. 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. It 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.

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

(comment from a participant)

IOI Training 2010

“Sharpening your Teeth” by Ontario Ombudsman (Canada) Vienna (Austria), November 2010

The “Sharpening your Teeth (SYT)” training programme for staff members of Ombudsman institutions is based on a format successfully established by the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman (Canada), which focuses on systematic investigations.

In total, 38 staff members of Ombudsman institutions from 17 countries participated in this educational programme and the IOI 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)