



D47 Providing Forensics Training and Mentorship to the International Community

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of some of the challenges, pitfalls, and potential successes of providing forensic science training/mentorship programs in less-than-traditional laboratory environments under sometimes extremely austere conditions.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by detailing "lessons learned" from early forensic outreach efforts that began with support from U.S. and other government forensic agencies in military theaters of operation. These efforts went beyond traditional "government-to-government" services, providing private industry with the opportunity to rapidly respond to an emerging need for improved forensic and biometric technologies outside the United States and North America.

These training and mentoring programs provide instruction in the latest standard operating procedures, protocols, technologies, and methodologies as they are applied to the various forensic disciplines and can be tailored to the needs of the host nation and its societal and jurisprudential requirements. As rule of law is becoming more of a focus across the world, it is imperative to provide support to countries who are striving to establish standard practices and procedures. Programs of instruction/mentorship can also be geared toward direct training or discipline-specific "shepherding" of select host nation laboratory personnel depending on the wishes of the host government. Programs of instruction/mentorship are designed to meet the needs of the host country's existing forensic capabilities and not to burden those countries with limited resources and/or infrastructure. By providing them technologies and methodologies within their economic and educational limits, these programs provide a sustainable foundation for continued operational success.

As the host nation personnel become more proficient in the forensic techniques and analysis, the goal is for the instruction to evolve into a train-the-trainer scenario so they can continue to educate their own colleagues. The goal is for each nation to maintain their own laboratories without the assistance of an outside entity. Recent successful forensic and biometric training efforts in the Middle East and South America will be highlighted as well as ongoing outreach efforts in Africa and other non-traditional forensic support regions. As there is an effort within the international law enforcement community to strive toward the highest levels of professionalism and precision in criminal investigation, it is incumbent upon the forensic science disciplines to provide assistance when possible. Given the limited resources available in the realm of "government-to-government" service, the recent rise in private-sector forensic service providers is a viable alternative to provide these training/mentorship programs. Designing these programs to be economical, practical, and interactive with the host nation participants has led to increased awareness and demand for such services.

Forensics, Training, Mentorship