

Face to face with transnational crime

Police forces worldwide are having to find new ways to fight increasingly complex transnational organised crime syndicates. But the challenge has provided an impetus for the AFP to help reinvigorate a United Nations computer-based training program which uses innovative computer modules incorporating high quality graphics, animation and videos.

The AFP's Senior Law Enforcement Adviser to the United Nations Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific is passionate about a program developed by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). From his Bangkok office Rod Curtis heads the Global Computer-Based Training Program, an international program which helps to train police and boost their understanding of transnational crime law enforcement.

Having worked with the AFP for nearly three decades, particularly in areas dealing with organised crime and international liaison, Mr Curtis said the training, which is conducted by experts from the World Customs Organisation, UK Customs and the AFP, will lead to more informed, vigilant and motivated law enforcement agencies.

"The program is now in its second phase of operations," he said.

"There are 52 member countries and 300 training centres delivering computer-based training to law

enforcement officials in 18 different languages. This is a major achievement and helps to ensure a consistency of approach across the board."

The AFP is the UNDOC's primary partner in the Asia-Pacific region. It uses the program to further strengthen Australia's ability to support governments across the region in their efforts to fight transnational crime.

Mr Curtis said transnational crime is a major challenge for law enforcement agencies

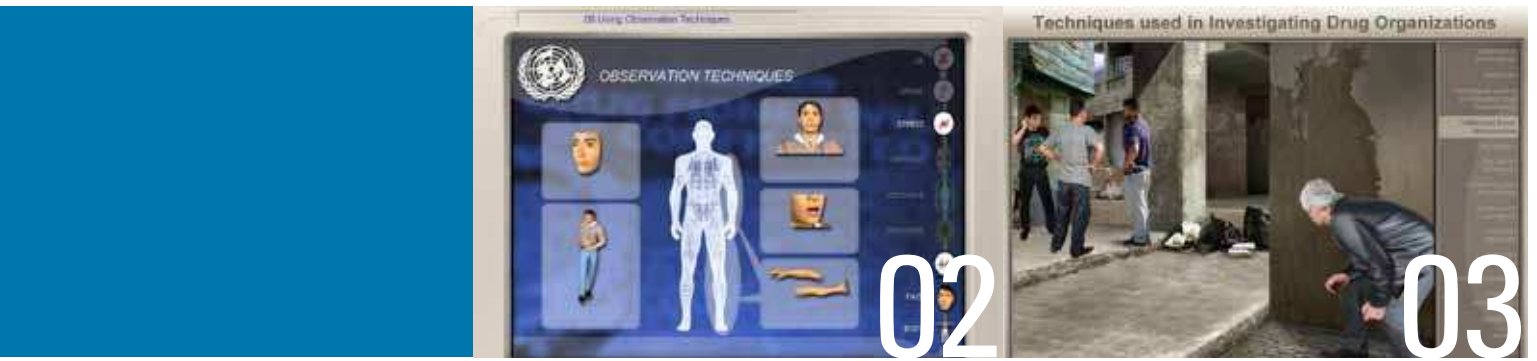
around the world, particularly as the internet, globalised travel and emerging technologies have created an environment which in some ways makes it easier for criminals to operate. However, he said the same factors mean there is now more capacity than ever for a coordinated international approach to combat illegal operations and for inter-agency cooperation.

"The agility with which transnational criminal networks switch countries



01: Delegates at the Global CBT Expert Group Workshop.

01



02 - 03: Police cover a wide variety of topics during the computer modules, from surveillance and digital evidence to organised crime and observation techniques. **04:** Students look on during a demonstration of the computer based learning course.

// Ultimately, the best practice guidelines for computer-based training will have a direct impact on the development of better informed, vigilant and motivated law enforcement agencies in developing countries. //



and commodities means that traditional reactive approaches to law enforcement will have limited success in disrupting more globalised and complex networks," he said.

"The challenge for the international law enforcement community is to develop the capability to be as adaptive, responsive and agile as the most sophisticated transnational criminal."

Since 1997, the UN training program has provided interactive e-learning programs with over 100 hours of computer based training modules available on subjects including land border control and seaports, intelligence, anti-money laundering, interdiction at airports, and human trafficking.

As part of his plans to implement the program as part of the AFP's training activities, Mr Curtis plans to introduce it with a suite of innovative activities that have been designed to reinvigorate, strengthen and sustain the operations of individual computer-based training centres, including the Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific.

Significantly, the development of new courses will include subjects on cyber-crime, identity fraud, people smuggling, advances in transport, communication and arms trafficking, counterfeit goods, anti-corruption and human rights. These will be bolstered by the addition of new equipment, and further

supported by the development of new web activities and other initiatives to build the capacity of member countries through e-learning.

Mr Curtis says the courses will have a tangible impact.

"Ultimately, the best practice guidelines for computer-based training will have a direct impact on the development of better informed, vigilant and motivated law enforcement agencies in developing countries," he said.

"Policing agencies will have a greater capacity to identify transnational organised crime operations and respond accordingly. The training program is a high-quality and cost-effective method of ensuring front line officers can

more effectively tackle this crime type. Key target groups to receive the training include immigration, border officials and other specialised officers in the East-Asia Pacific region, as well as further afield.”

It is estimated that 200,000 law enforcement officers have taken part in the program so far. And it is likely that the program will play a key role in supporting regional and national computer-based training activities worldwide. This will include the expansion of its current operations into new member countries like Afghanistan, India, Ethiopia and Timor Leste, as well as countries in the Balkan region.

The AFP is also providing support to establish new training centres in Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam, a new course on ‘First Responders to a Crime Scene’ in Timor-Leste and the creation of a new program about people smuggling for use by law enforcement agencies in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. To date, the AFP has also funded training programs in Indonesia, Tonga, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu,

Samoa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China and Timor-Leste.

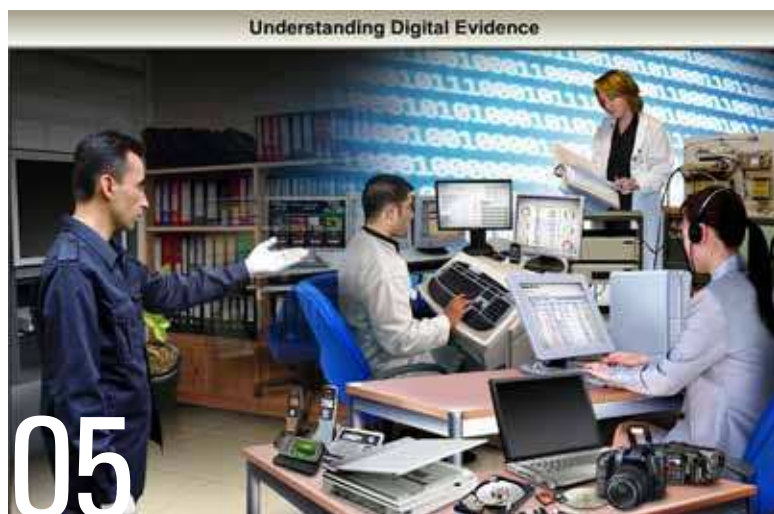
In support of the new and current initiatives, the first Global Computer-Based Training Expert Group Workshop was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in late June. More than 30 government representatives from South Asia, Southeast Asia and Pacific, Central Asia, Southeastern Europe and East Africa met with UNDOC officials to discuss ways to improve future program implementations and activities.

Mr Curtis said the forum led to constructive discussions about

training needs assessments, delivery, production and the evaluation of computer based training.

“By the end of the three-day workshop, the collective knowledge and experience of those in attendance helped to form the basis of best practice guidelines to assist in future operations,” he said.

“The guidelines will form a valuable resource that will help to maximize the benefits to member countries as well as providing a reference for new members who join the network.



05: Part of the digital evidence module available to course participants.