



Cooperation with the South African Police Service

By opening the world to the influence of unified, commonly shared values and responsibilities, diplomacy has become an active hopefully positive, power. In modern contemporary society, multilateral organisations should create an irresistible impetus to consensual problem solving

It was a great honour for our University in general, and for our Faculty of Health and Social Sciences in particular, that we were inspired by the former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to The Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Dr. Pavel Vošalík, now Deputy-Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to cooperate directly with African people, and African Universities. Under the auspices of Dr. Vošalík, and with his help and advice, we have started a programme called Health Related Quality of Life Assessment, by which the quality of life in a variety of situations is compared in Europe and Africa.

Within the framework of an Agreement on Scientific cooperation with the Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education, We were invited to the university and enjoyed the atmosphere of academic liberty there. At the same time we were given the support of the community as represented by the Hon. Satish Roopa, Executive Mayor of the City of Potchefstroom, Dr. Theuns Eloff, Rector of the PU, Prof. Jacques van der Elst, vice-Rector of the said University, and Brig. gen. L. Beetha, Provincial Commissioner, SAPC, North-West province, RSA.

Through cooperation with the South African Police Service, as well as with the Police of the Czech

Republic we learned how crucial is the role of Health Related Quality of Life in the area of maintenance of Law and Order. The level and quality of arms and weapons has become a material factor having a direct influence on the biological, psychological and social quality of life of arms-bearers. It has become a topic of great scientific and social importance, with inevitable linkages to politics.

In this small area of study we corroborated the SF-36 questionnaire in 7 languages, i.e. Russian, German, French, Czech, Afrikaans, Tswana, Oshiwambo and started pilot studies in which it was used. These questionnaires are based on the standard version of the UK SF-36, as published by Crispin Jenkinson and co-workers in March 1996, in Great Britain. The Afrikaans and Tswana versions are just now being used in South Africa, by a working group led by Prof. Paul Möller from Potchefstroom University, the Czech, German, French and Russian versions are used by our group in Europe, the Oshiwambo version should serve for Czech and Namibian researchers in rural districts of Namibia, and last but not least, the source English version is widely used all over the world.

I would like to express my hope that, by learning about our respective problems we will learn soon how similar we are. This should be the pivotal point for any activity not just for scientists, but for all of us through better understanding of our human nature and its fragility.

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