

51st International Forum for Diplomatic Training (IFDT)
“Navigating Change in a Complex world: Innovation in Diplomatic Training”
Hotel Tambo del Inka, Urubamba, Cuzco
11th to 14th - November 2025

Overview:

The Diplomatic Academy of Peru “Javier Pérez de Cuéllar” (ADP) organized and conducted the 51st International Forum for Diplomatic Training (IFDT), held in Urubamba, Peru, from November 11 to 14, 2025. The event was carried out with the support of the General Directorate of State Protocol and Ceremonial, the Logistics Office, the Events Office, the Information Technology Office, the Welfare Office of the General Office of Human Resources, the Security Office, the General Office of Communications, and the General Services Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru.

The forum brought together 77 delegates from 51 institutions representing 42 countries, including 40 government diplomatic academies, 7 universities, and 4 international organizations (see Appendix 1 for the complete list of attendees). Participating institutions included the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, the University of Oxford, the Clingendael Academy of the Netherlands, the College of Europe, the National Institute of Public Service of France, as well as diplomatic academies from Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

The event convened directors, rectors, senior officials, and academics responsible for diplomatic training, with the aim of analyzing trends, reviewing educational practices, and exploring approaches to strengthen the preparation of diplomats to address contemporary challenges.

Content:

The program was structured around high-level panel discussions, interactive workshops, and complementary activities designed to promote institutional exchange among diplomatic academies, universities, and international organizations. The agenda was fully implemented as planned, bringing together directors, senior officials, academics, and practitioners involved in diplomatic training.

The Forum commenced on 11 November with the registration of participants and a welcome reception, during which Ambassador Silvia Alfaro, Director of the Diplomatic Academy of Peru, delivered opening remarks (see Appendix 2 for the complete discourse). On 12 November, the formal program began with opening statements by the IFDT Co-Chairs, Ambassador Martin Eichinger of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien and Barbara Bodine of Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. This was followed by a keynote session delivered by Ambassador (ret.) Joan Polaschik, former Director of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute, who addressed the human dimension of diplomatic training. The session was complemented by remarks from Ambassador Gonzalo Gutiérrez, General Secretary of the Andean Community, who provided commentary on the keynote presentation.

Subsequently, Panel 1 was conducted, focusing on the question of what diplomats of the twenty-first century need to know and how diplomatic education must evolve accordingly. The panel was moderated by Ambassador Gustavo Meza Cuadra, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Perú, and included senior representatives from leading diplomatic training institutions such as the College of Europe, the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (India), the Diplomatic Academy of Singapore, the Diplomatic Academy of South Africa, and the Diplomatic College of the United Kingdom. In the afternoon, participants engaged in Workshop 1, facilitated by Mr. Ron Ton of the Clingendael Academy, which examined the design of diplomatic curricula through group work, institutional presentations, and roundtable discussions.

On 13 November, the program continued with Panel 2, moderated by Ms. Barbara Bodine, which addressed the expanding role of diplomatic training institutions beyond traditional classroom settings. The panel brought together representatives from Ghana, the University of Oxford, DePaul University, Qatar, and Brazil, who discussed the evolving responsibilities of training institutions in a complex international environment. Parallel and complementary activities were also conducted, including the *IFDT Bazaar, where Peru, Spain and UNITAR presented innovative training tools and methodologies, and institutional meetings such as the Steering Group session and regional exchanges among diplomatic academies.

In the afternoon, Workshop 2 was conducted under a **World Café format, focusing on recruitment strategies and the attraction of new generations to diplomatic careers. Facilitated by Mr. Ron Ton of the Clingendael Academy, this session enabled participants to exchange perspectives on admission processes, outreach strategies, and institutional challenges related to talent acquisition. The formal program concluded with closing remarks delivered by the organizers and co-chairs, as well as the transfer of the IFDT presidency to the next host country, Qatar.

The final day, 14 November, included a study tour in Cusco, providing participants with an opportunity for informal exchange and cultural engagement.

*IFDT Bazaar: interactive institutional exchange space where the Diplomatic Academy of Spain, UNITAR and the Diplomatic of Peru presented innovative training methodologies, educational tools, programs, and best practices related to diplomatic training.

**World Café: participatory discussion methodology in which participants rotate through small-group conversations focused on specific topics in order to exchange ideas, identify common challenges, and generate collective insights.

Session 1

Keynote: “The Human Dimension of Diplomatic Training: Building Resilience, Empathy and Emotional Intelligence”

The keynote session by Dr. Polaschik (see Appendix 2 for the complete discourse) examined structural transformations in diplomatic training within the context of global systemic change. It highlighted the inadequacy of traditional training models in addressing contemporary diplomatic challenges, particularly those arising from technological disruption and complex multilateral environments. The discussion framed training reform as an institutional necessity rather than an optional adaptation.

The analysis emphasized the integration of human-centered competencies into diplomatic education. Resilience, emotional intelligence, and empathy were identified as essential capacities that enable diplomats to operate effectively in high-pressure and uncertain environments. These competencies were positioned as core elements of professional diplomatic performance.

The session also identified structural gaps in current training systems, particularly in strategic thinking, communication, and adaptability. These deficiencies were linked to insufficient alignment between training and operational realities. Addressing these gaps requires systemic redesign of training **methodologies**. In this sense, the keynote highlighted the importance of aligning training with real-world diplomatic practice. Complex negotiation environments and multi-actor engagement demand experiential and practice-oriented learning frameworks. This reinforces the need for **simulation-based and applied methodologies**.

The discussion examined generational shifts within diplomatic services. Emerging cohorts demonstrate different learning preferences, including digital, interactive, and flexible formats. These trends require institutional adaptation in pedagogy and delivery mechanisms.

It was also highlighted that several leadership qualities often associated with women in diplomacy -such as humility, collaboration, empowerment, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness- are increasingly recognized as important attributes for effective diplomatic leadership.

The session concluded that diplomatic training must evolve through integration of human competencies, continuous learning systems, and institutional flexibility. It emphasized that effective reform requires both strategic direction and sustained implementation mechanisms.

Key Takeaways

- Integrate human-centered competencies.
- Address structural gaps in training systems.
- Align training with operational practice.
- Promote experiential learning.
- Adapt to generational learning changes.
- Women’s leadership skills are increasingly valued in diplomatic practice.
- Ensure institutional commitment to reform.

Session 2

Panel 1: “What Do 21st-Century Diplomats Need to Know? Rethinking Diplomatic Education”

Panel 1 examined the evolution of diplomatic education in response to contemporary international challenges. It focused on defining the core knowledge base required for diplomats operating in complex and rapidly changing environments. The discussion emphasized the need to update traditional training frameworks.

A central issue was the balance between generalist and specialist training. Generalist approaches provide foundational knowledge, while specialization enables engagement with specific policy domains. The panel highlighted the need for dynamic integration of both.

The discussion underscored the importance of interdisciplinary approaches. Diplomatic work increasingly intersects with economic, technological, and environmental domains. Training systems must reflect this complexity.

Digital literacy (technological domain) was identified as a core competency. The growing role of digital tools and emerging technologies requires diplomats to develop new analytical and operational skills. This represents a structural shift in diplomatic practice.

The panel also highlighted the influence of national and institutional contexts on training models. Variations in priorities reflect differences in development levels and strategic interests. Training systems must remain adaptable.

Participants discussed the increasing participation of women in diplomatic services and training institutions. It was noted that female representation in recent diplomatic cohorts in India had increased to approximately 40%, compared to 19% in earlier assessments. It was highlighted that the three highest distinctions in the most recent training cycle had been awarded to women diplomats.

The session concluded by emphasizing the role of structured competency frameworks in guiding curriculum design and evaluation. These frameworks provide coherence and support systematic skill development.

Key Takeaways

- Balance generalist and specialist training.
- Promote interdisciplinary education.
- Integrate digital competencies.
- Adapt to national contexts.
- Women representation in diplomacy is increasing.
- Use competency frameworks.
- Support continuous learning.

Session 3

Panel 2: “Beyond the Classroom: The Expanding Role of Diplomatic Training Institutions”

Panel 2 focused on the evolution of diplomatic competencies in response to changing global dynamics. It examined how professional roles are expanding beyond traditional diplomatic functions. The discussion highlighted increasing complexity in diplomatic practice.

Adaptability emerged as a central competency. Diplomats must navigate uncertainty, shifting alliances, and rapidly evolving policy environments. This requires flexibility in both skills and professional roles.

Communication skills were identified as essential. Diplomats engage with diverse actors, including governments, international organizations, and non-state entities. Effective communication underpins negotiation and representation.

The panel examined the diversification of career pathways. Diplomatic careers increasingly involve mobility across sectors, including international organizations and private institutions. Training must reflect these trajectories.

The importance of diversity and inclusion in diplomatic education and leadership was discussed. It was highlighted that leadership qualities associated with women in diplomacy, such as collaboration, emotional intelligence, humility, and self-awareness, describing them as essential competencies for contemporary diplomatic practice. Incorporating more works authored by women and promoting greater female representation in institutional activities can help increase the visibility of women in academic curricula and conferences.

Experiential learning methods were highlighted as critical tools for skill development. Simulations, case studies, and scenario-based exercises help bridge theory and practice. These approaches enhance decision-making capabilities.

The session concluded that training systems must align with evolving professional demands. It emphasized adaptability, communication, and practical learning as central components of diplomatic education.

Key Takeaways

- Develop adaptability and flexibility.
- Strengthen communication skills.
- Expand career pathways.
- Engage with diverse actors.
- Promote female representation.
- Use experiential learning.
- Align training with professional demands.

Session 4

Workshop 1: “Designing 21st Century Diplomatic Curricula – Skills, Substance and Strategic Linkages”

Workshop 1 examined the design of diplomatic curricula in a context of global transformation. It emphasized the need to align training programs with evolving international realities. Curriculum design was presented as a continuous and adaptive process.

A key theme was the integration of interdisciplinary approaches. Diplomatic training must incorporate political, economic, technological, and social dimensions. This reflects the complexity of contemporary diplomacy.

The workshop highlighted the importance of linking theoretical knowledge with practical application. Experiential learning methods were identified as essential components of effective training. These approaches enhance operational readiness.

Stakeholder engagement was discussed as a critical element in curriculum development. Collaboration with governmental and academic institutions ensures relevance and coherence. It also supports institutional alignment.

The need for continuous evaluation mechanisms was emphasized. Regular assessment allows for adaptation and improvement of training programs. This ensures long-term effectiveness.

The session concluded that dynamic curriculum design is essential for maintaining relevance in diplomatic training. It highlighted interdisciplinary integration, stakeholder engagement, and continuous adaptation as key principles.

Key Takeaways

- Align curricula with global realities.
- Promote interdisciplinary design.
- Link theory and practice.
- Engage stakeholders.
- Ensure continuous evaluation.
- Maintain curriculum flexibility.

Session 5

Workshop 2- World Café: “Rethinking Recruitment – Attracting New Generations to Public Service and Diplomacy”

The World Café session focused on recruitment strategies and the attraction of new generations to diplomatic careers. It used a participatory format to facilitate institutional exchange. The discussion highlighted shared challenges across contexts.

Generational change was identified as a central factor shaping recruitment. New cohorts prioritize flexibility, purpose, and professional development. Institutions must adapt to these expectations.

The session examined challenges in attracting diverse candidates. Competition with other sectors and evolving labor markets were identified as key constraints. Diversity was emphasized as a strategic objective.

Modernization of recruitment processes was discussed. Digital tools and platforms are increasingly important for outreach and engagement. These tools enable broader access.

Transparency and competency-based selection mechanisms were highlighted as essential. Clear criteria improve fairness and institutional credibility. Participants emphasized best practices.

Gender inclusion and diversity in diplomatic recruitment processes were discussed. Structural barriers affecting women’s access to diplomatic careers and the importance of role models, targeted recruitment strategies, and inclusion policies were emphasized. Participants also noted ongoing efforts in several institutions to improve gender balance and representation within foreign services.

The session concluded that recruitment strategies must evolve to remain effective. It highlighted digitalization, inclusiveness, and institutional collaboration as central elements.

Key Takeaways

- Adapt to generational expectations.
- Promote diversity.
- Modernize recruitment processes.
- Use digital tools.
- Ensure transparency.
- Incorporate gender inclusion policies and practices.
- Share best practices.