

More Than a Mandate?

Making
Gender Training in
Security Institutions
Matter







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Executive Summary

Gender training and capacity building for security personnel have become some of the key approaches to promoting gender equality and implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in security sector institutions.

Gender training also forms an integral part of the responses to the findings of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) assessments¹, conducted in 20 countries as part of the Canadian-led multistakeholder Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations² (henceforth: the Elsie Initiative).

Gender training is often expected to support a variety of objectives related to gender equality: it is change, policy development, increased contextual awareness, specific security needs. At the same time, it is adapted to fit into traditionally masculine norms.

This paper provides an overview of literature on gender training in peace operations and security institutions. The main goal of the Elsie Initiative is to increase the meaningful participation of women in UN peace operations. Therefore, while the review addresses literature on the security sector in general, it

gender training.

The authors conclude that gender training needs a clear scope and objectives which are embedded in the institutional context. It needs to be included in a wider plan for integrating gender equality across the institution and build on a plan for follow-up in the short and long term. We find a general lack of long term, systematic evaluation

emphasizes training for personnel

and police contributing countries

(TPCCs). The need for the paper

arose from the questions: how,

and when does gender training

it to? What are the mechanisms

an impact? How can we bridge

the evidence-based knowledge

of what works, with the limitations

of our everyday working context?

gender training as a practice, but

to bring critical perspectives from

academic literature together with

best practices from practitioners,

and to offer recommendations

audience is practitioners who

for ensuring gender training has

the intended impact. The primary

conduct gender training for security

sector personnel, particularly in the

context of the Elsie Initiative. We

also add practitioner perspectives

to the academic conversation on

The purpose is not to criticize

contribute to the results we expect

that enable gender training to have

in peace operations and troop

of the effects of gender training, which risks undermining its quality, sustainability, and overall impact. Furthermore, drawing on analyses from 18 MOWIP reports, our review reveals that gender training and gender equality in peacekeeping and security institutions is often seen as a women's issue. It is relegated to female staff, creating a paradoxical overrepresentation of women in gender training and in gender advisor and gender focal point roles, in contrast to their overall reduced access to training opportunities and professional development in the organization. We further find that, when gender training is framed as a solution to a problem in the operational context, it may miss opportunities to address security personnel's personal gender biases. Finally, we acknowledge the political nature of gender training and the compromises and adaptations it can imply to operate within the context of security sector institutions. DCAF recommends more research and lessons learned based on participants' experiences of the impact of gender training, as a complement to existing knowledge based on trainers and researchers' experiences. As a last step, we provide some recommendations and a checklist to plan gender trainings to be more strategic and purposeful and enable long term follow-up on the impact of gender training.

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expected to contribute to institutional and capacity to respond to genderinstitutions that are often maledominated and influenced by

¹ The Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Methodology is a rigorous and innovative tool to measure the degree to which women can meaningfully participate in peace operations from the perspectives of the troop- and police-contributing countries (TPCCs). It develops ten issue areas and measures the degree to which the issue areas constitute a barrier or create opportunities for women's meaningful participation.

² Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations.

Recommendations

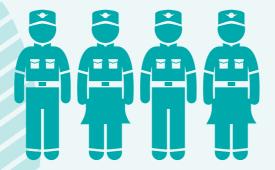
Purpose and objectives

Ensure that the purpose of a training is aligned with institutional objectives

Training objectives must be tied to the mission mandate and anchored in the organization's purpose. This includes an objective, plan for follow up, and accountability mechanisms. Leadership should integrate a gender perspective into all training for all levels of all staff and make it an ongoing process.

2 Clarify the training's objectives and scope

Define clearly the scope, purpose and relevance of each training, ensure that it meets the required objectives and that results can be followed up. Tailor training tracks or modules to specific goals, such as operational gender analysis, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) or gender responsive leadership, and ensure these are delivered consistently across institutions and missions.



Practical implications

3 Choose the best training format, prioritize continuity over length

The continuity of the training is more important than the length of the individual training activities. Implement a sequence of short sessions over a longer time span, ideally in 3–6 month intervals, to make direct connections between the training and participants' everyday work duties and learning.

Foster emotional engagement and experiential learning in gender training

Incorporate real life examples, personal experiences, storytelling, and interactive activities that evoke empathy and reflection. Encourage participants to share their own experiences.

5 Emphasize cultural reflection for participants

Incorporate reflection on cultural biases and power dynamics, to help security sector personnel develop a more nuanced understanding of how gender biases manifest in different contexts, including their own working context.

6 Emphasize trainers' self-reflection

The overall quality and impact of gender training programs can be significantly improved when trainers continuously reflect on and recognize how their personal experiences, biases, and social positions influence their perspectives and training approach.

Accountability and monitoring

Adopt a monitoring approach that includes long-term follow-up

This should include ongoing feedback mechanisms, self-reflection exercises for participants, and regular evaluations to measure changes in attitudes, behaviours and institutional practices.

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