



Reducing Barriers for Uniformed
Women in UN Peace Operations: **DCAF's**
contribution to the Elsie Initiative

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is committed to making people more secure through accountable and effective security and justice. We help national and international entities to deliver security that respects human rights, upholds the rule of law, and is democratically controlled by:



Helping to improve the way national security sectors are governed



Guiding the development of sound, sustainable security governance policy



Promoting locally owned reforms that are inclusive, participatory, and gender responsive



Providing technical expertise to nationally led SSG/R processes



Capacity building for state and non-state actors



Publishing research and knowledge products



Promoting internationally recommended good governance practices



Advising on security sector-related legal and policy questions

What is the Elsie Initiative?

› WOMEN IN PEACE OPERATIONS

The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations was launched by Canada in 2017. Named after pioneering Canadian aeronautical engineer Elsie MacGill, the initiative seeks to overcome barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peace operations by:

- Developing a comprehensive methodology to assess universal and country-specific barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations.
- Researching, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a combination of approaches to help overcome the barriers identified.
- Providing specific technical assistance and training to troop and police-contributing countries as well as assistance to select UN missions.
- Launching a multi-partner UN fund to support the increased deployment of uniformed women.
- Building political momentum through a Contact Group comprising:
 - » Argentina
 - » Canada
 - » France
 - » Ghana
 - » The Netherlands
 - » Norway
 - » Senegal
 - » South Africa
 - » South Korea
 - » Sweden
 - » United Kingdom
 - » Uruguay

Increasing the meaningful participation of women in peace operations is seen as the right thing and the smart thing to do. Women should have equal access to the economic and career opportunities peace operations bring. Evidence also demonstrates that including women has important benefits for effective operations, especially when assisting civilian communities.



Elsie Highlights

DCAF is supporting the implementation of the Elsie Initiative with the support of Canada and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

› **BASELINE STUDY**

Commissioned by Global Affairs Canada, this study describes the current situation concerning women's participation in military and police roles in UN peace operations. Drawing on existing research and data, it documents international good practice and identifies challenges and barriers to the recruitment, training, retention, deployment and promotion of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations. The purpose of the study is to provide a baseline at the outset of the project and to inform the design of future activities.

› **MEASURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN PEACE OPERATIONS (MOWIP) BARRIER ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

Developed in partnership with Cornell University and practitioners in eight partner countries (Bangladesh, Ghana, Jordan, Mongolia, Norway, Senegal, Uruguay and Zambia), the MOWIP methodology is a tool to assess which of ten common barriers to women's participation in UN peace operations are present in a given police or military institution. The methodology involves a 200-question institutional fact-finding form, an hour-long representative survey of at least 380 serving personnel and over 40 interviews with key governmental and institutional decision-makers. MOWIP aims to provide institutions with the evidence base necessary to design effective interventions which substantially increase the number of women who deploy. It is the standard methodology for barrier assessments required for applications to the Elsie Initiative Fund.

› **MOWIP BARRIER ASSESSMENT REPORT**

This report compiles the results of the MOWIP barrier assessment methodology with chapters on each of the eight partner countries where it was piloted. It will highlight good practices with the potential to be replicated elsewhere as well as both country-specific and global recommendations on how to increase the meaningful participation of women in peace operations. The report is designed to facilitate the identification of areas of international cooperation for both donor countries and troop- and police-contributing countries in the Global South wishing to share their expertise regionally and internationally.

› **POLICY BRIEFS**

A series of six policy briefs explore specific measures to address frequently recurring barriers identified in the MOWIP Barrier Assessment Report.

› **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO GHANA AND ZAMBIA**

A dedicated subject matter expert is supporting the Ghanaian Armed Forces and the Zambia Police Service in translating their findings from the MOWIP barrier assessment report into a detailed plan of action.



Context

Women have historically been severely underrepresented in peace operations: in 2015, men still held 95.8% of all peacekeeping positions. Those women who do serve are often limited to stereotypical roles such as nursing, community engagement and administration, irrespective of the skills and experience they have.

Despite numerous commitments by the UN and its member states within the framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, progress on improving the proportion of women has been slow. As of 2019, only 5% of UN military personnel and 15% of police are women. The UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy sets a target of having women comprise 15% of military contingents and 20% of formed police units by 2028. Achieving this will require some major changes.

National institutions need to ensure that there are enough deployable women to begin with. Member states and the UN need to address structural barriers such as how personnel are selected for deployment and whether provisions are made to address the needs of both women and men, including those with caregiving roles. This must be accompanied by changes in institutional culture to ensure that female personnel are treated equally and have the necessary working conditions to achieve their full potential.

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