The Elsie Initiative: Barriers to Deployment

The proportion of female police and military peacekeepers remains well below UN targets. Research suggests that the reasons for this relate to a variety of challenges and barriers to uniformed women deploying to PKOs.

In the Baseline Study published in 2018, DCAF identified a set of 14 barriers. Further research reduced and combined those barriers into ten, which have been highlighted as the main challenges to the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations:

The Ten Barriers

1. **Eligible Pool:** Are there enough women in national institutions to meet deployment targets?
2. **Deployment Selection:** Do women know about deployment opportunities? Is selection unbiased?
3. **Deployment Criteria:** Can women meet deployment criteria? Do criteria match the skills needed?
4. **Household Constraints:** Are arrangements made to meet deployed women's family considerations?
5. **Top Down Leadership:** Do leaders at every level support and promote the deployment of women?
6. **Accommodation and Equipment:** Do accommodation and equipment meet deployed women's needs?
7. **Negative Experiences:** Are women adequately trained for their deployments? Do deployed women face discrimination and harassment? Do they encourage – or discourage – other women to apply for deployments?

8. **Redeployment:** Do women benefit from redeployment or will their careers opportunities suffer?

9. **Gender Roles:** Are women limited to stereotypical feminine roles irrespective of their qualifications?

10. **Social Exclusion:** Are women treated as equal members of the team when deployed?

The Elsie Initiative Barrier Assessment Methodology

The Elsie Initiative aims to develop innovative measures in order to incentivize transformational change regarding women's meaningful participation in peace operations. DCAF, in partnership with Cornell University, has designed a Barrier Assessment Methodology to allow researchers and institutions in Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries (TPCCs) to identify the barriers in their specific contexts and prioritize those that have the largest negative impact on the deployment of women in peace operations. The assessment is designed to provide TPCCs with actionable recommendations to improve the selection and deployment process with the aim of increasing the impact of uniformed women deployed.

The Barrier Assessment Methodology Components

The Barrier Assessment is conducted by an assessment team of internal or external experts with full access to information about the selection and deployment process, and to military or police personnel.

Institutional Factsheet

Answering a pre-designed, 200-question template, the assessment team will prepare an institutional fact sheet about peacekeeping deployment seeking qualitative and quantitative data from various national sources in the country.

Expert Interviews

The assessment team will conduct interviews with 40-50 key decision-makers for peacekeeping in the institution and the government, as well as and other persons of interest, to complete the fact sheet.

Representative Survey

The assessment team, with a group of trained enumerators, will conduct at least 380 (1 hour-long) surveys with 190 women and 190 men in the institution. The survey sample needs to

be carefully designed so that it is representative and includes personnel of different ranks with and without deployment experience.

The Barrier Assessment Report

The assessment team will analyze the findings and produce recommendations in an internal report. At an internal workshop, the institution will validate the findings and recommendations. The assessment team will produce a publicly available report from which sensitive/personally identifiable data will be removed.

From Report to Action

The report will provide a series of actionable recommendations for the institution to consider. DCAF suggests that the institution develop a time-bound action plan to implement those recommendations.