

Incorporating Gender into UN Senior Leadership Training

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IPI Scenario-Based Learning Project

The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) described leadership as “one of the most crucial factors in the success or failure of UN peace operations.”¹ In 2015, however, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services found that, “despite the many positive aspects of the training offered [for leaders of peace operations], current leadership feels underprepared in the field.”²

In line with this, IPI, with support from the Government of Canada, developed a series of scenario-based modules for UN leadership teams in field missions and for tabletop exercises in UN headquarters and capitals. The modules factor in real-world challenges from “new environments” as well as persisting challenges that confront senior UN leadership teams in most missions and address the main leadership skills required for managing complex multidimensional missions.

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The views expressed in this publication represent those of the authors and not necessarily those of the International Peace Institute. IPI welcomes consideration of a wide range of perspectives in the pursuit of a well-informed debate on critical policies and issues in international affairs.

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Introduction

Comprehensive leadership training is necessary to ensure that peace operations are effective and that senior leaders are prepared for both the daily challenges and the inevitable crises of peacekeeping.³ A gender perspective is of central importance to such training.⁴ However, gender considerations—from gendered conflict analysis to recognition of who is in the room when decisions are made—remain poorly understood from a practical level, including among senior mission leaders.

To date, there have tended to be two approaches to gender in the context of UN peace operations: increasing the numbers of women at every level of peace operations—including in leadership roles—and applying a gender perspective to everything a mission does, from conducting gendered conflict analysis to embedding gender components in a mission’s obligations. Primarily through the women, peace, and security agenda, these two approaches have been increasingly included in both country-specific resolutions and thematic resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council.⁵ They are also stressed in the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the 2015 global study on women, peace, and security.⁶ As concerns related to women, peace, and security are increasingly understood as vital to a mission’s success, mission leaders need training to evolve beyond traditionally male-dominated models of decision making.

The first section of this issue brief discusses what it means to apply a “gender perspective” and the importance of such a perspective for senior leaders to effectively implement mission mandates.⁷ It then provides an overview of existing gender-related training and preparation techniques for senior leaders, including gaps. Finally, the paper provides a series of recommendations on how trainings and approaches to senior leadership training can better reflect these considerations.

1 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace—Politics, Partnership and People: Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015.

2 UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, *Evaluation of the Senior Leadership Training of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS)*, report no. IED-15-010, December 29, 2015.

3 Kevin S. Kennedy and Laura Powers, “Senior Leadership Training in UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, February 2019.

4 Senior leaders in this case refer to the mission leadership team: special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG), deputy SRSG (DSRSG) for political affairs, DSRSG/resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator (RC/HC), force commander, political commissioner, and chief of staff.

5 To date, thematic UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security include: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015).

6 See in particular UN Security Council Resolutions 2242 (2015) and 2122 (2013).

7 This paper is limited to discussion of senior leaders for UN field operations.

Gender Perspectives in Peace and Security: Why Are They Important?

For close to twenty years, the UN's peace and security entities—building on the work of civil society—have recognized that there is a gender dimension to their work.⁸ The UN's formal women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda was institutionalized in 2000 with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for gender considerations to be placed at the center of all aspects of the UN's work.⁹

The resolution brought to the fore a number of issues that women and girls face in situations of armed conflict, covering “human rights violations, gender-specific humanitarian concerns, prevention of conflict, protection and assistance during conflict, accountability for crimes committed during war, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.”¹⁰ Later resolutions adopted by the council not only lay out the specificities of “representation of women at all decision-making levels” in peace and security matters but also clarify directives on how to incorporate an understanding of gender into efforts to create and maintain international peace and security.¹¹ Broadly understood, the agenda also encompasses recognition of a complex understanding of gender, including constructions of femininity and masculinity; support for LGBTQ communities targeted in conflict; the specific needs of women with disabilities and of women widowed by conflict; and the intersectional dynamics of race, ethnicity, and gender in armed conflict.¹²

The normative WPS agenda provides an architecture to operationalize relevant aspects of

women's leadership, gendered conflict analysis, and steps that peace operations can take to incorporate gender perspectives into their work. This architecture encompasses protection considerations, including the prevention of and response to sexual violence in conflict, which can include sexual exploitation and abuse, and support to women's participation, including in electoral processes and in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) efforts. The multidimensional nature of this agenda is illustrative of the complexity of contemporary peace operations, which face an increasing array of challenges due to the changing nature of conflict, the complexity of mandates, and the sheer number of tasks they are expected to undertake.

In order to respond to these political and security challenges, the UN needs to pursue a multidimensional approach to leadership, bringing in diverse expertise and experiences.¹³ Effective leadership requires a clear understanding of host-community power structures and the role of gender in those structures.¹⁴ Conflict analysis that places a gender perspective at its center is therefore central to understanding and responding to situations the UN confronts.¹⁵ Without a gendered conflict analysis, mission leadership will make decisions based on incomplete information, which undermines operational effectiveness.¹⁶

The UN system already has a number of tools for embedding a gender perspective in peace operations. The HIPPO report and the 2015 global study on Resolution 1325, for example, both stress the importance of engaging senior leaders in implementing the WPS agenda, the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has a gender policy, and compacts with special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) include language on

8 For an overview of the development of the WPS agenda, see Sarah Taylor, “Why Women, Peace, and Security? Why Now?” *IPI Global Observatory*, October 31, 2018.

9 Fionnuala D. Ni Aolain and Nahla Valji, “Scholarly Debates and Contested Meanings of WPS” in *The Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, eds. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019).

10 Sarah Taylor, “Advocacy and the WPS Agenda,” in *The Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, p. 67.

11 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 31, 2000), UN Doc. S/RES/1325, para. 1.

12 Taylor “Why Women, Peace, and Security? Why Now?”

13 Kevin S. Kennedy and Laura Powers, “Senior Leadership Training in UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, February 2019.

14 Chris Coulter, *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives through War and Peace in Sierra Leone* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, “Whose Security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations,” February 2015.

15 For more on gendered conflict analysis, see Conciliation Resources, “Gender and Conflict Analysis Toolkit for Peacebuilders,” December 2015, available at www.c-r.org/resources/gender-and-conflict-analysis-toolkit-peacebuilders; and Saferworld, “Gender Analysis of Conflict Toolkit,” July 2016, available at www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1076-gender-analysis-of-conflict.

16 What Works to Prevent Violence, “No Safe Place: A Lifetime of Violence for Conflict-Affected Women and Girls in South Sudan,” 2017; “Intersections of Violence against Women and Girls with State-Building and Peace-Building: Lessons from Nepal, Sierra Leone and South Sudan,” 2018.

gender. Senior leaders are expected to lead by example and champion policies and strategies both within the mission and in all dealings with national and local authorities.¹⁷

Without buy-in from leadership, however, the incorporation of a gender perspective at a strategic level—including in decision making at every level of the chain of command—will not take place. This buy-in is difficult to achieve, as many senior leaders do not understand either the WPS agenda or how missions are obligated to address it. Moreover, gender considerations are different for each peacekeeping operation, depending on its mandate and context, including everything from which members of a population are most vulnerable to sexual violence to the social structures that prevent women from participating in peace processes. Even so, training can equip senior mission leaders to understand how to assess and address gender in their specific context.¹⁸

It is important to distinguish between the number of women in leadership and gender expertise. Multiple studies show that women being in leadership positions matters to other women, as well as to the wider community, as a sign of women's right to participate at the highest levels of decision making.¹⁹ In peace operations, having women in leadership can be an important signal both within the mission and to the host community. However, not all women are experts in—or interested in being champions of—gender mainstreaming or the implementation of the WPS agenda.

Yet in research, policy, and programming on peace and security, the terms “women” and “gender” are often conflated and confused. These all-too-common misunderstandings see gender analyses only applied to women, reflect primarily binary understandings of gender, and promote the misconception that women have an innate ability

to dismantle structural gender inequalities. The WPS agenda has long grappled with and sought to challenge assumptions that women's leadership is synonymous with a gender perspective and that women have a particular (and unitary) approach to leadership and to peacebuilding. Senior leaders should be able to recognize how this conflation can have a concrete impact on gender dynamics in a mission workplace. For example, it can result in the de facto assigning of responsibility for “gender issues” to women—implicitly or explicitly, intentionally or not—regardless of their expertise or position within the mission.

Understanding the various gender dimensions of conflict requires specialization, which both men and women can develop.²⁰ Training for senior leaders should clarify the benefits of having staff with these specific competencies feed into a mission's decision making. Training should aim to contribute to long-term progress as leaders enhance their capabilities both to create demand for change and to use the capacity provided by gender advisers most effectively.²¹ In many ways, it can alter the mindsets of leaders and equip them with the tools and the ability to make a practical difference, which is not a simple task.²²

The WPS agenda is, at its core, a political agenda that is everyone's responsibility: “There is a prevailing erroneous notion that women and peace and security is ‘a woman's issue’ that can be addressed only by women, instead of being understood as a peace and security issue for men and women and for society as a whole.”²³ Just having more women at the table is not enough to achieve a gender-sensitive approach. Equipping senior mission leadership with training that requires complex gender analyses of all the challenges they will face can help improve understanding of—and action to address—this differentiation.

17 International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, “Considerations for Mission Leadership in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations,” 2010.

18 Louise Olsson, “Leading the Way to a More Equal Peace: Senior Management and Gender Mainstreaming,” International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, 2016.

19 Rosa Linda T. Miranda, “Impact of Women's Participation in Decision-Making,” UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Doc. EGM/EPWD/2005/EP/7, December 2005.

20 UN Peacekeeping, “Promoting Women, Peace and Security,” available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/promoting-women-peace-and-security>.

21 Anna Björsson, “The Swedish Gender Coach Program,” in *IHL and Gender: Swedish Experiences*, Cecilia Tengroth and Kristina Lindvall, eds. (Stockholm: Swedish Red Cross, 2016).

22 Louise Olsson and Anna Björsson, “Gender Training for Leaders: The Swedish Gender Coach Program,” Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2017.

23 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, p. 67.

Senior Leaders and Women, Peace, and Security

The 2015 global study on Resolution 1325 mentions the importance of senior leaders receiving training on gender equality and WPS, arguing that senior leaders are central to instituting organizational change.²⁴ Leaders need to understand the various components of the agenda and structural gender-related issues in societies so they can prioritize, plan, respond to crises, and use resources in a way that addresses them.²⁵ Training leaders in this area can assist them in setting goals, clarifying responsibilities, and upholding accountability. This, in turn, can help advance gender equality in decision making, make all staff aware of gender considerations, increase demand for gender expertise, and increase support and training to meet this demand.²⁶

For senior leaders, there are three fundamental considerations. First, they need to understand the gender dynamics of structural barriers and power relations in peacekeeping operations. Second, they need knowledge of the WPS agenda, policies, and frameworks and how these apply to peacekeeping operations and can be integrated into mission planning and decision making. Lastly, they need to ensure gender balance within their missions, beginning with mission leadership teams.

UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS WITHIN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

There has been some progress in incorporating the WPS agenda into mission leadership structures. Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009) established the position of a special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) on sexual violence in conflict in UN headquarters to convey information and analysis of sexual violence in conflict to the Security Council. It also provided for the appointment of women's protection advisers to

address the issue at the mission level.²⁷

Women's protection advisers work closely with the civilian gender advisers that DPO (previously the Department of Peacekeeping Operations or DPKO) has placed in peacekeeping missions since 2006. There are currently ten gender units (staffed by between one and seventeen people, depending on the mission) across the fourteen UN peacekeeping missions. These units provide strategic advice and guidance to senior leaders and managers; offer technical and policy guidance to ensure gender is fully integrated into missions' civil, military, and police components; prioritize targeted efforts to reach out to women in civil society to ensure that their voices are central to peace and security decisions across mission functions; and strengthen the capacity of staff and partners to guide implementation. Together with the women's protection advisers, gender advisers can play a key role in shaping mission strategies and providing a gender lens for all conflict analysis.²⁸ At the headquarters level, the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS works to mainstream the WPS agenda throughout the work of the UN Security Council by providing information to the council on countries on its agenda and working to systematically integrate gender analyses into the council's discussions, decisions, and resolutions.²⁹

However, while certain aspects of the WPS agenda—particularly sexual exploitation and abuse—have recently received attention, efforts to incorporate gender expertise in missions' structures face significant challenges. UN peacekeeping missions are facing budget cuts that affect all components and staff positions, and gender expertise appears to be particularly vulnerable.³⁰ While the majority of gender advisers are now in SRSG offices, having gender advisers present in missions can result in other mission staff assuming that the assigned expert will take care of gender considerations. In addition to potentially

24 UN Women, "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council 1325," 2015.

25 Olsson and Björsson, "Gender Training for Leaders."

26 European Institute for Gender Equality, "Effective Gender Equality Training: Analysing the Preconditions and Success Factors," 2014.

27 Aissata Athie and Sarah Taylor, "UN Peacekeeping: Where Is the Gender Expertise?" *IPI Global Observatory*, October 27, 2017.

28 Ibid.

29 UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 22 December 2016 from the Permanent Representatives of Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the UNited Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2016/1106, December 27, 2016.

30 Athie and Taylor, "UN Peacekeeping: Where Is the Gender Expertise?"

creating the perception that other staff are not responsible for embedding WPS in their own work, it has the potential to exaggerate existing silos of work, in which WPS is isolated and potentially marginalized.³¹

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: THE WPS AGENDA, POLICIES, AND FRAMEWORKS

The primary task for a senior manager is to implement the mandate of a mission. Mission leaders therefore need to understand the WPS agenda and its associated policies and frameworks in a way that is practical and implementable. This is a challenge, as the WPS agenda is vast and applies, however broadly, to everything a mission does. Given this sometimes overwhelming task, there is a tendency to approach gender as an “add-on” feature or to use template language that lumps “women and girls” together as a single group of victims. Such broad statements and approaches do not lend themselves to practical implementation or offer guidance on how to approach specific tasks in a gender-sensitive way.

Addressing this challenge requires clearly interpreting a mission’s mandate and translating it into operational documents. If the mission lacks the capacity to understand how gender perspectives are already part of existing mandate objectives, senior leaders should clearly guide the translation of theories of gender-sensitive implementation into explicit, actionable plans.³²

GENDER BALANCE

Gender also needs to be considered in the context of mission staffing, both in terms of the sheer number of women and in terms of their seniority. Gender representation—especially in leadership teams—diversifies perspectives, which can in turn improve operational effectiveness. As of December 2018, women make up 40 percent of staff at all levels, with the lowest percentage at the D1 level (34 percent) and the highest at the P1 level (70 percent).³³

With women still accounting for well under 50 percent of staff, efforts are being made within the UN to achieve gender parity. Over the past twelve years, the number of women serving as head of mission or deputy head of mission has increased from 2 percent of the sixty serving in 2006 to 41 percent of the fifty serving as of December 2018. In 2018, five women were appointed head of mission and six as deputy head of mission, representing 65 percent of the total. This is the largest percentage appointed to such positions in a single calendar year (up from 54 percent in 2017).³⁴ The secretary-general’s System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity and the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy are some of the most recent efforts to redress the historical gender imbalance in mission staffing, both for civilian and military components.³⁵

How Is Gender Currently Incorporated into Senior Leadership Support and Training?

There is a significant body of training resources, techniques, and methodologies addressing the ongoing barriers to “translating the principles into operational action” and supporting gender-sensitive leadership.³⁶ This section provides an overview of current approaches to gender in training, as well as ongoing institutional efforts to address gender-related issues through training.

INCORPORATING GENDER INTO TRAINING

The aim of gender training for senior leaders as it currently exists is to build awareness, knowledge, and practical skills. Traditionally, the primary training for senior leaders is a one-off training: a dedicated one-and-a-half-hour session with gender as the primary focus for a case study. This means focusing on the basics, including ensuring familiarity with the WPS components of mission mandates, communicating the SRSG’s expectations

31 Ibid.

32 Olsson, “Leading the Way to a More Equal Peace.”

33 Data from the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity dashboard, available at www.un.org/gender/content/un-secretariat-gender-parity-dashboard. In 2017, the percentage of women in international staff positions in UN peace operations by level were: 28 percent overall, 16 percent at D2, 25 percent at D1, 34 percent at P5, 29 percent at P4, 32 percent at P3, 41 percent at P2, 18 percent at FS6, 30 percent at FS5, and 28 percent at FS4.

34 Kennedy and Powers, “Senior Leadership Training in UN Peace Operations.”

35 United Nations, “Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028,” January 2019; System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, October 2017.

36 Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, “Guidance Note: Integrating Gender in Military Exercises,” February 2015.

for delivering those mandates, and identifying indicators to measure progress. Much of this happens by sharing information on, experiences with, and tools for implementing gender-based approaches and the WPS agenda. Follow-up and accountability on the existing training is limited.

There has been nascent work on providing senior mission leaders with training on their unconscious biases.³⁷ The central goal of these trainings is to enable participants to “understand the different roles and needs of both women and men in society, to challenge gender-biases and discriminatory behaviors, structures and socially-constructed inequalities, and to apply this new knowledge to their day-to-day work.”³⁸

Gender modules are included in the Senior Mission Leaders (SML) course, Mission Advanced Staff Training (MAST), and Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training (SMART). In addition to specific modules within both the UN’s senior leadership program and SML course—both of which train current and prospective senior leaders—a list of core questions has been developed for participants to reflect on when answering and completing training exercises, as well as to consider

when responding to real-life crises in their mission. This list encourages participants to consider and identify the resources they have available in the mission to respond to a crisis, including having the necessary staff around the table and ensuring that senior gender experts are present for all discussions.

Scenarios are a common tool used in training courses to prepare leaders for challenging deployments. Scenarios that provide clear examples on, for example, the impact of unexploded ordnance on women and children, the need to communicate with women in local communities, and the impact of gender expertise on operational effectiveness can be eye-opening for senior leaders. They can help fill the gap between the WPS agenda and current decision-making processes and work streams. As recently developed training modules from IPI demonstrate, scenarios can be gender-specific or have gender analysis woven throughout (see Box 1).

One model that peace operations could replicate is the initiative by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA, formerly the Department of Political Affairs, or DPA) is the creation of high-level UN seminars on gender and

Box 1. IPI’s scenario-based training project

In 2019, IPI’s Scenario-Based Training for Senior Leadership in Peace Operations project produced eight training scenarios, covering a range of issues that senior leaders will likely face during their deployment.³⁹ These scenarios are based on complex crises that require responses beyond typical mission operations. They encourage team building, leadership, and critical thinking in responding to the contemporary challenges leaders are likely to face. Each of these scenarios encourages senior leaders to consider the gender dimensions of a given crisis and pushes for including a diverse group of people around the table. The scenarios ask participants to consider issues such as:

- How to engage women community leaders and NGOs that focus on women’s rights to adequately implement the mission mandate;
- How responses to civilian attacks may differ depending on victims’ gender;
- How to respond to violence against women and intimidation of women voters in communities; and
- How to address the gender-specific risks faced by internally displaced women, who often make up the majority of internal displacement camps’ populations.

One of the scenarios is dedicated to sexual exploitation and abuse and addresses considerations for leaders facing this problem within their mission.

37 Interview with UN official, New York, February 2019.

38 Minna Lyytikäinen, “Gender Training for Peacekeepers: Preliminary Overview of United Nations Peace Support Operations,” UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2007.

39 The scenarios are available at www.ipinst.org/programs/scenario-based-training-for-senior-leadership-in-peace-operations.

inclusive mediation processes.⁴⁰ Thus far, DPPA has held nine seminars, bringing together more than 200 envoys, senior mediators, and mediation experts from the UN, member states, regional organizations, and NGOs since 2013.⁴¹ The overall objective is to generate more inclusive peace processes by promoting women's effective participation and building inclusive, gender-sensitive mediation capacity at the international, regional, and national levels. The seminar offers practical "how-to" strategies and tools for designing mediation processes in a more inclusive way and for including gender-relevant provisions in peace agreements. To overcome some of the stereotypes associated with both training in general and gender-related training in particular—which act as disincentives for senior leaders to attend seminars—DPPA has designated the seminar as "high-level." The focus is thus on peer-to-peer exchange of opportunities and challenges confronting mediators rather than "training" or "gender."⁴²

GENDER COACHING AND MENTORING

Beyond formal training, an important element of supporting and better preparing UN leaders of all genders is coaching and mentoring. For example, the Leadership Support Section (formerly the Senior Leadership Appointments Section, or SLAS) manages a leadership support program called the Leadership Partnering Initiative. This initiative aims to provide newly appointed heads and deputy heads of mission the opportunity to collaborate with a veteran mission leader to serve as a mentor or "sounding board."⁴³

While this peer-to-peer learning is important for all leaders, dedicated systems that support women leaders are especially important. This is not because

women have more deficits or deficiencies; it is because they face unique challenges working and advancing in traditionally male-dominated and male-defined environments. In March 2017, the Leadership Support Section organized the first "Female Heads and Deputy Heads of Mission Retreat" to bring together the growing community of women leaders of peace operations and provide them with a platform to engage on issues unique to their positions. The retreat included peer-to-peer consultations on redefining leadership beyond preconceived, male-oriented notions; achieving meaningful gender parity; and exploring further avenues for leadership support. In order to maintain the momentum, SLAS launched a forum for women heads and deputy heads of mission following the retreat, which enables informal communication and exchanges within this community.⁴⁴

Relatedly, to increase the number of women appointed to senior positions, the UN created a Senior Women Talent Pipeline in 2013. This is a pool of highly qualified women candidates who are potentially able to serve in UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions at the director level. This program aims to attract women with relevant work experience and university degrees (e.g., law, political science, communications) who aspire to civilian leadership roles in UN peace operations and then supports them through the application process. The initial call yielded applications from all over the world, with 100 women selected to be part of the program in 2017.⁴⁵ In 2018, the UN partnered with the Folke Bernadotte Academy to train participants in the program on the UN code of conduct, protection of civilians, mediation, strategic leadership, and strategic communication, among other topics.⁴⁶

40 These seminars were supported by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Norway and their respective implementing partners, the Chr. Michelsen Institute and the Peace Research Institute Oslo.

41 UN Department of Political Affairs, "No Durable Peace without Inclusion: Promoting the Effective Participation of Women in Peace Processes," 2017.

42 Interview with representative of Gender, Peace and Security Unit, Policy and Mediation Division, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), New York, March 2019.

43 Olsson and Björsson, "Gender Training for Leaders."

44 Kennedy and Powers, "Senior Leadership Training in UN Peace Operations."

45 Folke Bernadotte Academy, "Mission: More Female Leaders in the UN," February 26, 2018, available at <https://fba.se/en/newspress/nyhetsarkiv/2018/mission-more-female-leaders-in-the-un/>.

46 Ibid.

Box 2. Genderforce and the Gender Coach Program

One model the UN could consider implementing is the Genderforce initiative. Genderforce was launched in 2004 as an initiative to advance gender mainstreaming in Swedish government agencies. Developed by the Swedish Armed Forces, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the Swedish Police, and various NGOs, it focuses on strengthening women's participation in work related to international peace and security. As part of Genderforce, the Gender Coach Program was developed in 2006 and has been through four cycles thus far. The Folke Bernadotte Academy organized the fourth program (2016-2017) for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Gender Coach Program aims to strengthen the ability of both male and female leaders to understand and enforce WPS and gender equality through their leadership roles and in their missions' core objectives. Leaders attend a series of seminars, and each is provided a personal gender coach for twelve months. The program focuses on both broad knowledge and concrete skills and practices. Once the formal element of the program ends, participants continue to work on exercises on their own for the following ten to twelve months, meaning it is a two-year commitment in total. The actual training session (seminars and coaching) during this twenty-four-month period is only two and a half weeks.

Within this program, the "gender coach" plays an important role. Coaching takes place for between two and three hours a month. Because senior leaders maintain busy schedules, this allows them to develop a calendar that works for them. The coaches are not the same as leadership coaches; rather, a gender coach is a specialist chosen for expertise in WPS and gender equality. Connecting the gender coach to the training program allows for deeper discussion of topics and closer examination of different contexts.

The last element of this program is the development of an individual development plan, which the participant produces in the last half of the program and is their focus for the following ten to twelve months. The plan is presented at the program's final seminar and allows participants to continue to learn and work systematically and follow up with Genderforce coaches when necessary.

What Are the Gaps?

While the activities highlighted above aim to incorporate gender analysis into the preparation, training, and work of senior leaders, this is not easy to do, and current capacity building for senior mission leaders on women, peace, and security is inconsistent. This section outlines three key challenges that should be taken into account when developing programs and tools to assist in enhancing the gender perspective of senior mission leaders.

THE BROAD, COMPLEX FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE

Designing effective training requires carefully analyzing the relationship between the training program and the desired organizational change. A pedagogical challenge in this regard is the sheer vastness of the WPS agenda and field of knowledge. The WPS agenda and frameworks on gender

equality encompass almost all aspects of the work of the Security Council and are relevant to almost all thematic issues and areas of operation. Translating international norms and policies into practice involves "the interpretation of often vague formulations and arguments in a continuously evolving debate filled with contestations."⁴⁷ As such, it is challenging for leaders to incorporate gender perspectives and policies not only into their everyday decision making and activities, but also into urgent decisions and responses to crises. This level of knowledge requires time and political will to digest and then systematically integrate into time-constrained trainings that rarely allow for in-depth coverage of the issue.

THE SILOED APPROACH TO GENDER

Despite the normative WPS framework detailed above, trainings for senior leaders are inconsistent in the approach they take. In some, there is no gender-specific content, often due to a belief that

⁴⁷ Olsson and Björsson, "Gender Training for Leaders," p. 10.

there is no gender dimension to the topic at hand. One example an interviewee gave was of a training on delegation of authority that did not consider gender dynamics, even though these could have a significant impact on negotiations over what authorities to delegate.⁴⁸ In other trainings, there are isolated references to the gender dimension as a standalone issue that is not relevant to the other issues being discussed. This has increasingly been the case with training on sexual exploitation and abuse, which is seen as the primary and most urgent gendered concern senior mission leaders will face. There is a need to correct the perception that this is the main gender issue that UN missions need to consider.

A LACK OF TRAINERS WITH GENDER EXPERTISE

Having trainers and facilitators who are responsive to the gender components of training modules and who understand the gender dynamics among training participants is intrinsic to ensuring effective gender analysis. Facilitators should encourage discussion on gender-related topics. If participants do not raise key gender considerations, facilitators must be prepared to follow up on them. Facilitators need to be familiar with the components of the WPS agenda that need to be highlighted to ensure that training participants are considering all aspects of the material being discussed.

Missions can also take advantage of insights on WPS from their working-level staff and ensure these are pulled into senior staff trainings. In one example provided by an interviewee, participants in a training scenario run by the UN at the local level mainstreamed gender considerations throughout their responses, in part because they were immersed in them on a daily basis. These staff worked closely with the community, particularly with local women, so the gender dimension of the training was clear. When that same training was held in mission headquarters for senior leaders, however, the gender dimension was dramatically less in terms of both analysis and the gender balance of the team participating in the training.⁴⁹

Conclusions and Recommendations

While gendered training in the UN needs to be strengthened in general, greater investment is particularly needed at the top levels of leadership. Senior mission leadership teams are not receiving the type and depth of training on gender policies and frameworks they require; they should particularly be learning how to apply those policies and frameworks in planning and field operations. Beyond investing in gender-sensitive training, the UN also needs to provide resources and support to build the capacity of senior leadership.

1. The current status of gender training for senior leaders should be assessed.

While a conscious effort is being made to inject gender perspectives into a number of training initiatives, there remains a lack of clarity regarding how and to what degree these perspectives are reflected in all training for senior leaders. A comprehensive review and assessment of the UN's training material, particularly for senior leadership, could be a useful endeavor. Accountability measures for the gender components of training would also be helpful, including through implementation of the HIPPO recommendations on gender in leadership terms of reference and performance evaluations.

2. Facilitators of trainings should ensure that their curricula address and respond to a peacekeeping workspace dominated by men.

Despite ongoing efforts to redress the current gender imbalance, peacekeeping remains dominated by men. Trainings therefore need to be realistic about the current gender balance in peace operations (both across the board and at the leadership level), the political reality of leadership roles, and the limited time senior leaders have to participate in training. Facilitators should address these realities head on, working with participants to understand gender inequality in peacekeeping within the

48 Interview with UN official, New York, February 2019.

49 Interview with UN training expert, New York, September 2018.

context of gender inequality in the broader UN system.

3. Facilitators should be aware that leaders often think they do not need training.

A significant challenge to training senior leaders is their perspective that the training is not necessary. One strategy to overcome this is to emphasize that the most senior person is responsible for responding to the gender dynamics in a mission and therefore needs to be equipped with understanding of some of the technical aspects of this issue. Facilitators should highlight that WPS is not solely the responsibility of the gender adviser but falls on the entire leadership team. Another option is to follow DPPA's approach by rebranding gender trainings as peer-to-peer learning opportunities to incentivize leaders to attend. Finally, unconscious-bias training could be included in all training for senior leaders.

4. Trainings for senior leaders should be designed to reflect the complexity of implementing women, peace, and security obligations in a mission.

Gender should be embedded into all training scenarios in a way that illustrates the practical "how-to" of implementing the WPS agenda in specific work streams and decision-making processes. This means carrying out more than one session on the WPS agenda over the course of a training and using exercises that ask participants to focus on translating policy into practice. To assist with this, a series of questions should be included in all training and planning exercises to draw out gender considerations and highlight them as relevant for all members of the mission leadership team and all aspects of the mandate.

5. Strengthen efforts to ensure gender parity in senior mission leadership.

Given that diversity in training is a key element of understanding how to make effective decisions, the gender parity strategies and various human resources reforms should be fully supported in efforts to increase gender parity throughout the UN system, at all levels of

UN missions. While having women on leadership teams does not guarantee gender-sensitive approaches, bringing women into leadership helps expand discussions around decision making—outliers can shake up a system. Connecting gender parity strategies to decision making on the appointment of senior leaders should be part of the rethinking and reshaping of the UN approach to human resources in general.⁵⁰

6. Gender advisers should be included as formal members of a mission's crisis management team and play an active role in decision-making bodies.

More financial and political support is necessary for gender advisers and women's protection advisers to have the status needed to fulfill their important roles, including as member states negotiate peace operations budgets and as decisions are made in New York regarding the specific roles of these advisers in individual missions. Further, regular interactions should be arranged between the mission leadership team and gender advisers to create an environment where gender-sensitive approaches are front and center. Leadership should ensure that gender advisers are members of the mission leadership team and crisis management team to make every decision gender-sensitive. All trainings for members of these teams should reflect this approach.

7. Facilitators should understand the gender dimensions of a given training scenario and be aware of the gender balance among participants.

Having gender-sensitive mentors and facilitators is key to ensuring gender is mainstreamed in training material and incorporated into the training of current and future leaders. After-action reviews—both those that follow "real-world" incidents and those tied to scenario-based exercises—are key to teasing out issues with participants and staff and illustrating where and how a gender perspective was or should have been included in program implementation or mission activities. These exercises should routinely include an analysis of

⁵⁰ Namie Di Razza, "People before Process: Humanizing the HR System for UN Peace Operations," International Peace Institute, October 2017.

gender-related issues relevant to the incident or exercise as well as recommendations on how to address deficiencies. Facilitators and mentors should therefore be “trained as trainers” to ensure they are gender-sensitive themselves and grasp what this entails in responding to scenarios.

8. The UN should develop resources for leaders, including key documents and guidance on understanding the gender dimensions of their mission.

Since training is a continuous process, materials should be continuously developed for senior

leaders to refer to while deployed. These materials should incorporate concrete guidance on real-life challenges in the field to help mission leaders answer questions on the WPS agenda or any other gender-related issues.

Toward this end, the Gender Affairs Unit within the Department of Peace Operations has completed the first handbook for implementation of the WPS agenda at the expert level for peace operations. A resource of this nature is invaluable for senior leaders and should be included in induction and preparation packs starting immediately.

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