

Elsie Initiative Barrier Assessment

Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations Assessment for the Canadian Armed Forces

Executive Summary

Prepared for: Department of National Defence

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This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey of CAF members, in-depth interviews with key decision makers within the CAF, and an administrative review of organizational information conducted from January 2021 through March 2022.

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Executive Summary

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by the Department of National Defence (DND) to conduct public opinion research in support of the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations.

Research Purpose and Objectives

The participation of women and men in United Nations (UN) Peace Support Operations (PSO) has been recognized as an important contribution to operational effectiveness and equitable career opportunities for members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Women, however, have been underrepresented in UN PSO. As part of a multilateral pilot initiative (the Elsie Initiative) to increase the participation of uniformed women in PSO, the CAF participated in a barrier assessment. The primary objective of the barrier assessment was to identify impediments to uniformed women's meaningful participation in UN peace support operations.

Methodology

The following research activities were undertaken as part of the barrier assessment of the CAF: 1) secondary research of CAF policy and procedures; 2) in-depth interviews with civilian and military senior leader influencers and decision makers in the DND and the CAF; and 3) an online survey of a sample of CAF [Regular Force] members. The research was conducted following the guidelines of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) methodology developed by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).¹ This included the use of standardized MOWIP research instruments and protocols, modified in a limited way to apply to the CAF. All research activities took place between January 2021 and April 2022.

Limitations and Use of the Research Results

The barrier assessment of the CAF included both qualitative and quantitative research components, as well as primary and secondary research. The evidence from each research activity was used to identify barriers to the deployment of Canadian military women to international operations following the MOWIP methodology. The results of this barrier assessment will be used by the CAF to take steps to increase the participation of uniformed women in peace support operations.

¹ Sabrina Karim, Laura Huber, Léa Lehouck, Solène Brabant, Callum Watson and Ingrid Munch: MOWIP Methodology: Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations. (Geneva: DCAF 2020).

Key Findings

The MOWIP methodology is designed to measure the impact of 10 issue areas to the meaningful participation of women in UN PSO. According to the barrier assessment, the most significant issue areas for the CAF when it comes to increasing the meaningful participation of women in UN PSO are *deployment selection*, *peace operations infrastructure*, and *social exclusion*. Deployment selection refers to whether men and women have a fair chance to deploy. Peace support operations refers to whether accommodation and equipment is designed to meet women's needs. Social inclusion refers to whether women are treated as equal members of the team during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. The issue areas of *eligible pool* (*Are there enough women in the CAF?*) and *household constraints* (*Are there arrangements for families of deployed women?*) did not rank as significant barriers, although these areas were identified as barriers by key decision makers and CAF members who responded to the survey. The recommendations offered to the CAF for consideration to address barriers to women's meaningful participation in UN PSO focus on deployment selection, peace operations infrastructure, social exclusion, eligible pool, and household constraints.

Contract Value

The contract value was \$242,227.40, including applicable sales tax.

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