Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace operations (MOWIP) Methodology

An assessment methodology for the Elsie Initiative

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Meaningful participation refers not only to the numbers or proportions of women deployed. The MOWIP methodology measures women’s meaningful participation in peace operations from the perspective of the TPCCs by looking at five key factors shaping meaningful participation: Needs, Access, Participation, Resources, and Impact (NAPRI).

In this framework, meaningful participation occurs when:

• women’s pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment needs are met;
• women have access to the rights, benefits and resources allocated for the pre-deployment process, deployment opportunities, and post-deployment transitions;
• women participate equitably in decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation of all peace operations-related activities;
• resources at the national and organizational level are allocated to create equitable work environments; and
• women have a measurable impact on how peace operations are conducted and when the impact of deployment on the lives of uniformed women is positive.
To illustrate some of the barriers women face when it comes to peacekeeping, we’ve compiled some of the more common findings we’ve found across MOWIP reports into a single story.

Let’s imagine a woman called Sara. After graduating from the academy at 21, she was ready to go on a UN peace mission. But it didn’t happen at first. She didn’t know any other women who had deployed and none of the instructors she was close to knew anything about peacekeeping – it wasn’t something women did in the past.
This changed, however, when she attended a networking event organised by the female veteran’s association. The stories that some of the first women to deploy from the country in peacekeeping missions shared inspired her – it seems that they learnt so much from their experience and made some lifelong friends.

She also learnt, however, that because she served in an administrative role, she didn’t have the skills required to meet the minimum criteria to deploy. She pleaded with her commanding officer to get a transfer to a unit that was trained in combat skills, as knowing how to use a firearm was a minimum requirement. She was teased quite a lot by the guys in her unit, because she was one of the only women. The equipment didn’t really fit her properly and she had to walk a long way to find a women’s bathroom in the barracks. Over time, she was able to prove herself and move up to the necessary rank for her to deploy.
By this point Sara had met and married her partner and had a child. Balancing work and family was a challenge – she missed a few training opportunities during her maternity leave and there were no childcare facilities near her workplace. In addition, her partner wasn’t able to take much parental leave or adopt flexible working hours in order to better share the childcare responsibilities.

Knowing that deploying to a UN mission had always been her dream, her partner along with her extended family, agreed to find a way to manage the childcare if she deployed. When the opportunity to deploy arose, she put her name forward only to be told that her commanding officer thought it was too dangerous, and that he didn’t want to be responsible for her child losing its mother. After much perseverance, she eventually persuaded him to change his mind, and was finally sent on mission.
When she arrived, Sara’s initial excitement gradually turned to disillusionment. Despite being trained for combat, she was not allowed to go on patrol, and was instead expected to do administrative work. Occasionally she was taken to meet survivors of sexual violence, but she initially felt helpless because she had no idea how to help them. Over time, however, she was given in-mission training in responding to victims of trauma by an expert from another country. She felt that she really developed her skills in cross-cultural communications during the mission – and she was eager to share her expertise with the next cohort of peacekeepers in their pre-deployment training.
Back on the base, it was sometimes lonely. The guys used to go out to bars at night and play soccer together, but she didn’t feel welcome around them. She missed her family, and her relationship with her partner became difficult. Their child wasn’t adjusting well to her being away, and her partner was beginning to believe the rumours that women cheat when they deploy. She did go back once to visit during her vacation, but the flight was expensive so she could only afford to do it once. In addition, she didn’t always feel accepted in the mission; one day she found sexist graffiti in the women’s bathroom but she felt too embarrassed to report it. Getting hold of sanitary products involved asking to be escorted to the nearest town and searching around from shop to shop. Things got a little easier after four or five months when she made friends with a few other female peacekeepers who added her to a WhatsApp group connecting female peacekeepers across the host country. They exchanged funny stories, tips and advice – it really kept her sane.
When she finally came back from her mission, she was satisfied that she had learnt a lot and was thanking for the opportunity to travel and discover a new culture. It took a long time before things went back to normal with her child and her partner though – her civilian friends didn’t really understand what she had experienced, and she didn’t feel very supported by her institution. She felt that the new skills she had learnt made her better at her job, but it didn’t really help her advance in her career.

One day, when a junior staff member contacted her to ask her if she’d recommend going on a UN mission, she recounted the great experiences she had. But she also warned her that peacekeeping carries a heavy toll on your family relations and mental health. You have to expect some tough times dealing with all the sexism on the base and you shouldn’t expect much recognition for your sacrifice when you return.

We hope that this story has demonstrated the need to address both structural barriers like childcare provision as well as ensuring a welcoming working environment for all personnel. Indeed, we have seen how a MOWIP can benefit a security institution by providing a robust evidence base for targeted interventions and highlighting good practices to the international community as well as a tool for force generation.
Overview of the MOWIP Methodology

1. Preparation (planning and access)
2. Data Collection (fact-finding form, interviews, survey)
3. Data Analysis and Report Drafting
4. Validation Process
5. Report Launch (Follow Up, implementation of recommendations)

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There are five steps to implementing the MOWIP methodology. On average, it takes between eight and twelve months to implement, although it can be done faster if the preparatory work in stage 1 is done to secure access from the security institution before funding is dispersed.

In the second stage, a national research partner will collect the data. This involves:

Completing a 200+ question **fact-finding form**, which involves, inter alia, providing statistical data (including specific data about personnel and deployments) and institutional policies.

Conducting 30+ **Key decision-maker interviews** with leaders and experts on gender and peacekeeping from within the institution and other relevant governmental organisations;

Conducting a **representative survey** of at least 380 personnel – both men and women – serving within the institution.

In the third stage, the data is analysed by a national research team who draft a report – in partnership with the Cornell Lab if desired.

In the fourth stage, the results are presented to the security institution which has the
opportunity to review the analysis, elaborate on good practices and develop recommendations. The security institution reviews the final report to remove any sensitive information that cannot be shared before it is shared publicly in the fifth stage.
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While the MOWIP methodology can be adapted to the national and institutional context, the following criteria must be met.

On cover all issue areas: The assessment must capture data for all ten issue areas identified in the MOWIP methodology. There are 8 institutional issue areas looking at policies and structural aspects such as childcare provision; and 2 cross-cutting issue areas looking at gender roles & stereotypes and social cohesion.
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The DCAF MOWIP Helpdesk and Cornell GSS Lab currently support TPCCs in implementing the MOWIP methodology. They can be used by staff from TPCCs, organizations currently/potentially supporting the implementation of a MOWIP assessment (assessment partner / national research institution IN COUNTRY), UN Women or other Partner UN Organizations that currently/potentially support MOWIP assessments.

The DCAF MOWIP Helpdesk provides TPCCs and their partners with tools, resources and guidance needed to apply the MOWIP methodology. It can also support TPCCs in their applications to the Elsie Initiative Fund by, for example, reviewing budgets and assessment plans. It cannot, however take on project management responsibilities, undertake field research or draft MOWIP reports.

The Cornell University Gender and Security Sector Lab provides technical assistance and, upon request, training, data analysis and data storage support to TPCCs and national research partners implementing the MOWIP methodology. The GSS Lab can support TPCCs for free. In return however, TPCCs are asked to share their anonymised data with Cornell for their academic research.

The DCAF MOWIP Helpdesk and Cornell GSS Lab are offering their services to TPCCs who were funded through the first programming round at no cost thanks to generous support from Canada. We are happy to provide support to Fund applicants and Fund recipients of the second programming round until at least March 2022 if there is demand from
interested TPCCs. And we will actively be seeking funding to continue providing these services to Elsie Fund recipients post-March 2022.
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Online you can find the methodology and all the tools and templates in the MOWIP toolbox to help you implement it. We have also included in the toolbox explainers to provide additional guidance alongside the methodology. For example, one explainer provides more information on the DCAF MOWIP Helpdesk and the Cornell GSS Lab, and another provides information on applying to the Elsie Initiative Fund for support to apply the MOWIP methodology.

We also have 20-30 min YouTube videos presenting what we just discussed in more details and providing a useful short overview of the methodology and what it entails. However, we strongly recommend any interested TPCC to read the full methodology document prior to applying to the fund.

We will share a package that compile all these resources and other useful resources in regards to conducting a MOWIP methodology.

English YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnH-0mep8zU
French YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RY451foqZ5Y
Spanish YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13u-Og42-jY

If you would like to see a completed MOWIP report, you can read the one produced for the Ghana Armed Forces. Note that GAF reviewed the report, and
supported the drafting of good practices and recommendations. In addition the final report was only released once it was approved by GAF leadership. Any sensitive information has been removed from the public version of the report.
Thank you!

dcaf.ch/mowip

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