Sierra Leone Police

2023 Report on Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment

This research was funded by the Elsie Initiative Fund
Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors from Cornell GSS Lab and UN Women based on the best available information they have. The report does not necessarily reflect the views of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), UN Women, the EIF, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations. The (SLP) have provided corrections or clarifications during the validation workshop. The present report has been validated by the SLP and integrates the feedback and insights of a representative group of the SLP.

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIG</td>
<td>Assistant Inspector Generals</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATMIS</td>
<td>African Transition Mission in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDIID</td>
<td>Complaint, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIMIC</td>
<td>Civil Military Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCAF</td>
<td>Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>Deputy Superintendent of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIG</td>
<td>Deputy Inspector General of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMB</td>
<td>Executive Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFF</td>
<td>Fact-Finding Form (See section 3 on methodology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGP</td>
<td>Inspector General of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUC</td>
<td>Local Unit Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINUSMA</td>
<td>United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINUSTAH</td>
<td>United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOWIP</td>
<td>Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSLAF</td>
<td>Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SILEA</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLP</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCG</td>
<td>Tasking Coordinating Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPCCs</td>
<td>Troop- and Police- Contributing Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMSIL</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMID</td>
<td>United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISFA</td>
<td>United Nations Interim Security Forces for Abyei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITAMS</td>
<td>UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMISS</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in South Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
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1) Executive summary

The Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) assessment for the police examines the SLP’s ability to deploy women to, and ensure their meaningful participation in, United Nations (UN) peace operations through ten issue areas. It uses three data collection tools: a fact-finding form (FFF), key decision-maker interviews, and a survey. The assessment team undertook the data collection for this project from December 2022 to May 2023. A validation workshop was completed in June 2023, after which revisions were made to the final version of the report.

According to our results, the four issue areas are among the ten issue areas discussed in this report. That are the highest priority and present the most significant barriers to women are social exclusion; household constraints; peacekeeping infrastructure; and the eligible pool. Three medium-priority areas are deployment selection; deployment criteria; and peacekeeping experiences. Finally, the areas where the SLP are excelling and for which there were few barriers to women’s participation were top-down leadership; gender roles; and career value. The full table breakdown of issue area results can be found on page 18.

a) Top good practices that can be shared and replicated elsewhere

- Men and women can serve in equal roles in the SLP. Women can serve in combat or special operational units alongside men, and men and women have served in combat/tactical roles at equal rates. Women can also serve in leadership roles, and there is representation of women in higher ranks, which creates positive role models for female officers and contributes to a positive culture of gender equality.

- Physical fitness test requirements are adjusted to allow women to participate at equal levels. Additionally, there are programs in place that help women achieve physical fitness standards. There are also special training sessions to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT) and driver’s test.

- There is a standardized application and selection process for UN deployment. There are special efforts to recruit women into peace operations. These include special classes designed to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT).

- There is family and community support for women to deploy. It is socially accepted and encouraged for women to participate in peacekeeping. Further, pregnant women are allowed to serve and may take paid maternity leave.

- There has been a gendered needs assessment for peace operations deployments. The gendered needs assessment was well received by the police and led to the establishment of a gender department to oversee implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy and SEA policy at the national level.

- Peace operations deployment is nearly universally seen as positive for advancing officers’ careers.

- Peace operations are part of Sierra Leone’s national security strategy. Gender is also mentioned in the Sierra Leone national security strategy, and Sierra Leone has adopted multiple National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325.

- The SLP has an official sexual harassment policy, internal complaint system, national framework for addressing SEA, and a national ombudsman to provide oversight.

- Men and women work and socialize together and feel a strong sense of family.

b) Top barriers to women’s meaningful participation in UN deployments

- While 88% of men surveyed had served in higher commanding positions only 70% of the women have served at least in one commanding position.

- 60% of respondents believe that UN peace operations recruitment is fair, but nearly a quarter believe that the process is unfair. There was also a general lack of awareness about the requirements for deployment. Most respondents were not aware of the requirements related to the small arms/tactical test; communication, listening, and interpersonal skills; conflict resolution and negotiation skills; the gender sensitivity requirement; and the disciplinary record review.

- There is a high rate of failing the selection assessment test (SAT). One of the key decision-maker interviews mentioned insufficient time provided during the exam as one of the main barriers for participation. Validation
workshop participants also noted the English language barrier. Though English is not a minimum required skill, the exam is in English and since it is the second language of many applicants, this poses a barrier.

- Many respondents indicated dissatisfaction with equipment available to the SLP. Respondents were dissatisfied with sleeping quarters, health facilities, and other equipment.
- Women were more likely to be dissatisfied with healthcare. This is likely because women’s health services are limited. Beyond condoms, birth control was not accessible on peace operations. Sanitary products are also not provided.
- Gender norms place a greater burden on women to provide childcare. Further, there are limited childcare options for police officers. There are no childcare facilities or subsidies available through the SLP or the Sierra Leone government.
- Most respondents were not aware that women could take maternity leave, and only 16% were aware that maternity leave is paid. Further, there are not adequate breastfeeding/pumping arrangements for women. There is no paternity leave.
- Family and sick leave is unpaid. There is also a lack of clarity regarding vacation policies, and no vacation subsidies.
- Women were significantly more likely to perform additional work such as cooking and cleaning outside of their regular work duties while on mission.
- No assistance is available for pre- and post-deployment transitions. Validation workshop participants indicated that financial and psychological issues may also significantly affect officers. There is not currently a counseling unit accessible to all officers and officers may not feel comfortable approaching senior leaders about personal issues.
- Misconduct is present, with a majority (58%) of officers reporting having witnessed or experienced discrimination. Most officers were aware of the seriousness of sexual misconduct with local populations, but there were sizeable minorities who may not report these issues. Male officers may engage in inappropriate behavior outside of work.

### c) Top recommendations to overcome the barriers

- Improve education about the requirements for deployment. If officers are not aware of the requirements, or believe that the requirements are beyond their capabilities, they may be reluctant to volunteer. Senior officers should talk openly about deployment and training opportunities with personnel and encourage both men and women to participate.
- Increase recruitment efforts to train eligible officers in required components such as computer skills; small arms/tactical skills; interpersonal and communication skills; English speaking, reading, and writing; and conflict resolution and negotiation skills.
- Increase efforts to disseminate information about peacekeeping opportunities via internal channels, such as internal job boards, emails, newsletters, and professional organizations. Decentralize advertisement and information so that opportunities are known to officers in rural areas.
- Explore ways to offer support to officers taking the selection exam. Solutions discussed during the validation workshop included offering accommodations to officers who travel to take the exam; helping with transportation; reimbursing officers for food or other small expenses; or exploring other creative ways to lower the cost of taking the selection exam.
- Though it is difficult to change gender norms, increasing awareness about women’s unique experiences and contributions to the SLP may encourage all officers to view women more as equal contributors to peace and security. We also encourage leaders to speak openly about the equal contributions that men and women make to the family and childcare to counter prevailing traditional gender norms. As one officer noted in the validation workshop, the responsibility for taking care of a child is primarily placed on women, and “we [in the SLP] need to change that thinking” by talking more openly about men’s and women’s equal contributions to the home and the workplace.
• Make in-service training available, especially training to pass the selection exam. Encourage officers to consider repeating trainings to keep skills up to date. Periodically review training curriculum to ensure materials remain up to date with exam content.

• Explore low-cost ways to improve women’s healthcare. This means making available more low-cost birth control options such as the pill; increasing availability and quality of health supplies such as sanitary pads and tampons; and improving gender sensitivity of healthcare staff, perhaps by hiring female physicians.

• Increase training regarding official misconduct policies, gender sensitivity, and sexual exploitation and abuse for all officers—both men and women—so that all officers are aware of official rules surrounding misconducts and feel prepared to address these issues.

• Validation workshop participants suggested establishing a counseling unit in each police locality so that all officers have access to counseling to process personal and interpersonal issues. Counseling should cover transitional processes such as pre-deployment preparation and post-deployment processing and reintegration. Validation workshop participants also recommended including financial management in counseling services.

• Allow officers to return home (for national or personal emergencies) or increase transparency and education around leave policies. Assuring officers of flexibility will encourage those with families at home to deploy.

• Encourage leadership to be accommodating and open to candid discussions and listen intently to junior officers, especially female officers, about personal/familial and other issues.

• Increase education around official misconduct policies. Officers should be aware that sexual misconduct with local populations is a serious offense and officers should be willing to report such misconduct.

• Make sure that officers are aware of the existence of an independent unit to report misconduct. Encourage officers to come forward and report misconduct by assuring officers will not face repercussions for doing so.

• Expand gender directorate and deployment of gender focal points following gender sensitivity training. Validation workshop participants suggested establishing gender focal points at the regional or local level. These gender focal point positions could be established on an application basis so that officers with a background in gender sensitivity can apply to take on the role. Once established, make sure officers are aware of and able to contact gender focal points.

• Continue the efforts of drafting, implementing, disseminating, and evaluating policies to ensure women access to training and leadership opportunities.

• Target recruitment campaigns to increase the enlistment of women police officers in the SLP.

• Increased opportunities and resources for professional organizations within the force.
2) Introduction

a) Rationale

This MOWIP methodology fits within the broader goals of Sierra Leone’s Women, Peace and Security agenda. Sierra Leone was the 4th country in West Africa to develop a comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP) for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325, 7th in Africa, and 17th globally. There is a second generation of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan (S/L NAP II) which is geared towards the full implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820. S/L NAP II has six priority themes all geared towards facilitating the effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Sierra Leone. The core values of the themes include prevention, protection, participation, and recovery, which are enshrined in UNSCRs 1325 and 1820.

The Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), 2019-2023, (the fourth in the country’s series of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers - PRSP) developed under the New Direction Agenda, to which Sierra Leone NAP II is also aligned, has also given credence to the UNSCR 1325.

In 2019, there were a total of 10,052 personnel in the SLP, 2,457 of whom were women (24.4 percent). In 2023, the statistics of the current female strength in the SLP is 24.5 percent. The total number of women who have deployed for peacekeeping missions is 449.

To show commitment in the restructuring and reforming of the SLP, as part of its post-war reform process, the Sierra Leone police (SLP) introduced some policies and schemes that are geared towards making the institution more gender responsive. These include the adoption in 2008 of the Gender Mainstreaming and the Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policies (also known as the twin Policies), the introduction of the accelerated promotion scheme and concerted efforts at recruiting more female personnel. Between May and October 2011, the Sierra Leone police with the support of the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) through a national Gender Consultant, conducted a self-assessment survey of the gender responsiveness of the organization that included an assignment of the twin gender Policies. Findings and recommendations of the self-assessment survey led to the creation in March 2012, of a Gender Unit tasked with making the institution more gender-responsive through Mainstreaming of gender in all Policies, programs and projects. It was also recommended that the twin policies be revised to reflect current developments in the Sierra Leone Police.

The staff strength before the development of Gender Mainstreaming policy stood at 88% male personnel and 12% female personnel with a slight increase in the number of female personnel since the policy came into effect in 2008. In 2014, personnel strength stood at 82% male personnel and 18% female personnel. Even though the SLP yet to have 30% female representation, they have in the years introduced a special measure, the accelerated promotion scheme which targets the recruitment of female personnel, the accelerated promotion scheme, which targets the recruitment of female graduates into the police service. Irrespective of these measures, effective and full gender mainstreaming is yet to take place mainly because of the weak implementation and monitoring strategy of the 2008 policy due to lack of funds and donor fatigue.

However, the above-named policies (the Gender Mainstreaming and the Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policies) were re-popularized in 2014 by the Gender Directorate. Its life span has become obsolete as it should be reviewed every five years. In the past years, the Gender Directorate has been engaging in Monitoring and Evaluating Exercise force wide to see the compliance of police personnel in the said Policies, but it is still a problem as there is low number of women in the provinces as well as those in the Tasking and Coordinating Group (TCG) during their weekly security meetings.

b) The Sierra Leone Police: Profile and national characteristics

The SLP is the primary state police force responsible for the internal security of the country. The Sierra Leone Police is an establishment of the Sierra Leone constitution pursuant to Section 155(1) of Act No. 6 of the 1991 Constitution. The prime responsibilities of the Sierra Leone Police include but not limited to crime prevention, protection of lives and properties, detection, investigation, and prosecution of those who offend the law, maintain peace and public order, ensure safety and internal security of the state and boost access to justice. The Sierra Leone Police is headed by the Inspection General of Police who is appointed by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone acting on the advice of the Police Council and subject to approval of Parliament. The SLP is under the supervision, administration, direction and Control of the Police Council with the Vice President as Chair and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Secretary. Considering its core mandate to maintain internal security, supervision of SLP is done by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Sierra Leone Police has a national character. This is currently the case as recruitment of Police Personnel into the SLP is taken from every nook and cranny of the country: every
sex, tribe, district, and province are being represented in the Sierra Leone Police. Citizens who wish to be recruited as Police personnel have a fair chance of being recruited without any intimidation. The requirements for anyone to be recruited into the Sierra Police include being a Sierra Leone citizen; education at least until the fourth grade; ability to pass written examinations in English, Mathematics and General Studies. The intended recruit must have zero criminal record; stable mental and physical fitness (which involves passing a medical that includes an HIV test) should be between the ages of 18 and 25. The process begins by the Police sending advertisement to the whole country through both print and electronic media. Suitably qualified persons who apply are being selected and go through various examinations and trainings.

The contemporary structure and/or line of command of the Sierra Leone Police begins with the inspector General of Police (IGP) as the Executive Head and he is assisted by the Deputy Inspector General of police (DIG). In addition, there are AIGs charged with various responsibilities ranging from Operations, Human Resources; Training; Medical Services; Crime Services; Support Services; Professional Standards; Corporate Affairs; Peacekeeping; Gender Affairs; Community Affairs; Traffic Management; Intelligence; Presidential Guard; Infrastructure and the Operational Support Division (OSD) (the armed wing of the SLP). Regional commanders, also known as Regpols, who are also AIGs carry regional responsibilities for the Freetown West Area, Freetown East Area, Northeast Area, Northwest Area, Southern Province and Eastern Province. All these AIGs assist the IGP and the DIG in the running of the day-to-day affairs of the SLP. This is done through a joined-up leadership approach into an Executive Management Board (EMB) being the highest policy making body within the organization; this management body meets once every week under the chairmanship of the IGP. In instances where the IGP is absent and that of the DIG, the most senior AIG chairs. Each one of Sierra Leone’s 14 administrative districts has its own District Police Unit, which is a sub-department of each Regional Police Command. Each one of Sierra Leone’s sixteen administrative districts is headed by a Local Unit Commander, who are subordinates to the Regional Police Commanders. The EMB model is replicated at the divisional level, with each LUC heading a Tasking Coordination Group (TCG), which they are expected to convene regularly to review and plan policing within their divisions. This chain is supplemented by Force Orders (internal memoranda), and a lot of information is disseminated by being read at morning parades and so forth, ensuring that decisions flow from top to bottom. The capital Freetown is part of the Western Area police division but is split into two, each being led by an Assistant Inspector General.

The Sierra Leone Police is further compartmentalized into various departments to help with the smooth and effective operation of the police. At present, it is divided into the following departments:

- **Criminal Investigation Department (CID):** Primarily responsible for investigating major crimes.
- **Operational Support Division (OSD):** The OSD is the armed Unit of the Sierra Leone police. This unit supports the general duties police and is trained to perform high-risk duties including to control riots, and violence protest. OSD had an establishment of seven rifle companies and was described as ‘in many ways’ [the OSD is infantry], like the army.
- **Traffic Police Unit:** This unit is primarily responsible for enforcing traffic safety and control the movement of traffic in all highways and major traffic crossings across Sierra Leone.
- **Media and Public Relations Unit:** The Media and Public Relation is responsible for the collection and release of police activities to the public and media.
- **Legal and Justice Department:** Responsible for prosecuting civil and criminal cases to court.
- **Human Resource Department:** Deals with the welfare, salaries, employments, promotions, benefits and transfers of police officers.
- **Community Relations Department (CRD):** Established to build a working relationship between the police and the public.
- **Complaint Discipline Internal Investigation Department (CDIID):** Receives confidential complaints from the public and police personnel on police activities and investigates police misconduct. CDIID also investigates stories of potential misconduct reported in newspapers.
- **Precious Mineral Department:** Responsible for protecting and investigating all acts related to the country’s mineral resources. They work closely with the Sierra Leone ministry of mines and natural resources.
- **Interpol Department:** Investigate criminal affairs links to other countries.
- **Family Support Unit (FSU):** Handles domestic violence issues, sexual abuse and exploitation and related family issues.
- **Training Directorate:** Responsible to facilitate all trainings including local and international.
- **Medical Service:** In charge of all medical related functions within the organization.
- **Communications:** Dealing with communication related function including that of ICT in all Directorates, Departments and Units in the police.
❖ **Peace Keeping Department**: As the name implies deals with all peacekeeping related functions by all partners including the UN, ATMIS.

❖ **Marine Department**: Responsible to coordinate all marine related functions and trace crime boosters using the SEA.

❖ **Transport**: In charge of all vehicles and other mobilities owned and used by the police. It also repairs them and advice on strategic procurement around same.

❖ **Infrastructure**: Handles all constructions by the police and those funded by partners.

Female police personnel have had unique challenges, and, in many instances, they have been victims of sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation within the police force. Over the years, however, radical reforms have taken place to curb improve the situation by establishing the aforesaid structures. In 2014, Dr. Isha Fofanah formulated the twin gender Policies. The twin Gender Policies of the police are the Sexual exploitation, abuse and Harassment Policy (SEAH) and the Gender Mainstreaming Policy. The Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and harassment Policy protects both sexes (especially women who are predominantly victims), while the Gender Mainstreaming Policy aims at promoting and accelerating progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Hence, the policy makes it a policy that there should be 30% of women when it comes to recruiting police officers. It further makes provision for women to be involved and represented police and police related activities including detection of crimes, investigation, prosecution of offenses to name but a few. The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Act of 2022 also provides as its cardinal objective for 30% of female representation and participation in all Government and Government related institutions. With all these policies, challenges remain with regards to the implementation of the policies. Now, there are no gender focal persons throughout the country.

c) **External Oversight**

A variety of systems and procedures were also put in place to maintain good relations between the Police and the public. A very proactive Community Relations Department works with communities. An example of its work is outreach at schools, where it collaborates with student-led committees such as anti-violence groups, which are active in collaborating with the police to help reduce street violence.

Community members are regularly engaged to identify any problems they have with the police, and the force regularly investigates how best the police can improve its service delivery. Findings are reported to management and discussed during EMB meetings. A Human Rights Unit and Media and Public Relations Department ensure that the public is both provided with timely information about police activities and supported to provide inputs to the Police Strategy and activities; and a Complaints Division ensures that anyone with a grievance against the police can report it. Members of the public also have recourse to the Ombudsman in the event that person views an act of the personnel to be unjust, unfair or intimidating.¹

While this has informed policing from the bottom-up, top-down oversight of the police was also reformed, with the re-institution of a Police Council headed by the country’s Vice President. Its functions include advising the president on all major matters of policy relating to internal security, and (with the president’s approval) make regulations for the performance of the SLP.

Additionally, the Parliamentary Oversight Committee oversees the activities of the SLP and has the power to question its operations. Parliament also has the powers to summon SLP management to give justifications for certain actions or demands.² Human rights and other civil society groups/NGOs also play a key role in providing oversight and providing checks and balances to the Police.

d) **Sierra Leone’s contribution to peace operations**

The Republic of Sierra Leone joined the United Nations as its 100th member State on 27 September 1961, following the attainment of independence on 27 April 1961. One of the core mandates of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small (see the Preamble of the United Nations Charter). Sierra Leone has been committed and dedicated to upholding the sacred and discrete values and principles of the United Nations Charter. One of

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² Ibid., 115.
the ways Sierra Leone has positively maintained and strengthened these foundational principles is by participating in UN Peacekeeping operations.

Sierra Leone’s contribution and participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Missions began in the early 1960s when it deployed peacekeepers to the United Nations Operation in Congo (ONUC). Owing to the country’s protracted lethal civil war, Sierra Leone ceased deploying peacekeeping personnel on UN Peacekeeping operations. However, it revamped and rejoined peacekeeping operations sometime in 2004 by deploying peacekeeping police personnel to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). This was the deliberate and conscious effort of the UK Government to booster the prestige, integrity and reputation of the Sierra Leone Police as one the citizens and international community can have trust and confidence to maintain peace and order and reinforce security. Sierra Leone, up to October 2022 provides 67 uniformed Personnel, including 43 women, to 9 UN peace operations.


Furthermore, and as part of Sierra Leone’s commitment to augment its contribution and participation to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, the country has enacted the Sierra Leone Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement Academy Act No. 7 of 2017. One of the main functions of the Act is to train police personnel on UN peacekeeping activities. It offers a diploma in related security diploma courses. Sierra Leone, also, endorses the Secretary-General’s ‘Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)’ initiative which aims to strengthen peacekeeping through more targeted mandates, stronger and safer operations, better equipped and trained forces, and by mobilizing support for political solutions.

The United Nations Under Secretary General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix has recognized and appreciated Sierra Leone’s solid support to United Nations Peacekeeping and for the service and sacrifice of its military and police personnel deployed in different parts of the world. Delivering his statement on October 19, 2022 in New York he said as follows:

“The UN appreciates the service of the Sierra Leonean peacekeepers who work in some of the world’s most fragile political and security environments. We also pay tribute to 41 of their colleagues who have lost their lives while serving the cause of peace under the UN flag. In addition, we thank Sierra Leone for its efforts to increase the number of women within our ranks through the UN’s Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy.”

He also praised Sierra Leone for being one of the countries that once hosted UN Peacekeeping Operations and now proud to contribute Peacekeepers in peacekeeping missions. The statement reads as follows: “Sierra Leone is one of a few countries that once hosted UN Peacekeeping operations (1998-2005) and that now proudly deploys its peacekeepers to other countries in need of international support.” In conclusion, Sierra Leone’s contribution to UN Peacekeeping Operations is laudable and one to be proud of. Sierra Leone has benefited greatly but it has also suffered the loss of lives of its police personnel.

3) Methodology

The MOWIP methodology is a unique tool to assess and improve women’s meaningful participation in peace operations. It provides a systematic and comprehensive framework for identifying both a security institution’s existing good practices and improvements in each of the ten issue areas identified as central to women’s meaningful participation. Many relevant factors are not limited, however, to the specific context of women’s participation in UN deployments. Rather, they reflect how women and men are treated in the security institution.

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4 Ibid.
more broadly. While the MOWIP methodology has a specific focus on UN peace operations, the good practices, and possible improvements it identifies can benefit the security institution in a much wider sense.

The ten issue areas discussed below include all the factors that shape the numbers and nature of women’s participation in peace operations from initial recruitment into the RSLP to deployment on mission. These factors can be either positive (good practices at the institutional level that contribute to women’s meaningful participation) or negative (barriers to women’s meaningful participation at the institutional level). For each issue area, the MOWIP methodology uncovers whether and to what extent it constitutes a barrier or an opportunity. Its main objectives are to:

- Provide a comprehensive set of issue areas within a given security institution that could be improved to increase women’s meaningful participation in UN peace operations.
- Identify the good practices within the security institution that can be leveraged, scaled up, and/or disseminated more broadly.
- Apply a set of tools and a comprehensive list of indicators to measure the importance of each issue area for increasing women’s meaningful participation in the security institution.
- Determine the differential impact of each issue area in the security institution.

The MOWIP methodology comprises three components. The fact-finding form (FFF) contains approximately 200 questions designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data from official sources about deployment to UN peace operations from the country and institution being assessed.

Once the first draft of the fact-finding form was completed, remaining data gaps were filled through 25 interviews with key decision makers from within the institution as well as relevant ministries.

The last component of the methodology is an hour-long survey. Each issue area is ranked based on the color coding in section 4. Red indicates the issue areas that constitute the most significant barriers and green indicates areas of opportunity. Issue areas are presented for recruitment and deployment in general (👨‍👩‍👧‍👦) and specifically for women (👩‍👧‍👦). The survey data is compared to the data from the FFF to look for inconsistencies between institutional reforms and policies and armed forces personnel’s actual experiences and perceptions. The results of the analysis were presented and vetted during the validation process with the security institution.

For each issue area, based on the results in the survey, the authors note any statistically significant differences between the responses from men and women. This means that the differences between responses given by men and women were large enough that we can state with confidence that the differences resulted from true differences in the experiences of men and women and are not an anomaly within the survey. Further, these differences still exist after considering differences in rank and deployment experience.

The MOWIP methodology therefore produces robust and evidence-based findings drawing on perspectives from within the institution, the knowledge acquired by the assessment team as well as from national and international experts who have an academic background in gender and peace operations. It can be used to provide transformative, evidence-based recommendations that effectively target the root causes that prevent uniformed personnel, particularly women, from deploying to peace operations. Using a common methodology across many TPCCs also allows for the identification of universal barriers that need to be addressed at the UN level; and highlights good practices that can be shared and adapted to other contexts.

a) Implementing the MOWIP in the Republic of Sierra Leone Police

The timeline for the MOWIP methodology took place between September 2022 and June 2023. UN Women completed preparation for the survey in November and began surveying SLP personnel in December. Interviews and the Fact-Finding Form were completed between January and May 2023.

The survey was completed between January and April of 2023. The survey includes roughly 200 questions designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data from official sources about deployment to UN peace operations in the country and institution being assessed. Within Sierra Leone, the survey of SLP personnel oversampled women and deployed personnel but was not fully geographically representative of all regions. The survey was conducted in English, but the enumerator team explained key terms in Krio as necessary. Several adaptations were made to the survey to ensure it was suitable for Sierra Leone’s specific contexts, and specific answers were tailored to the country. For example, several questions about ethnic identity, region of birth, and religion, were replaced with a question on whether respondents identified as being part of a minority group. Several questions on gender and
Masculinity were sensitized to local contexts. The Sierra Leone sample included 400 total personnel, of which 42.3% were women. 37% of the sample have deployed to a mission. Of the total women in the sample, 39.1% have deployed. The final survey sample details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sierra Leone Police survey sample demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deployed</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not deployed</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>169</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews with key decision-makers were done in May 2023, the survey was conducted with both men and women across a wide variety of positions and with different experiences within both strategic positions, policy decisions, and individuals, as well as with police officers who would be part of the nomination process for peacekeepers operations. 10 female and 15 male senior officers were interviewed.

Finally, in June of 2023 we held a validation workshop with over 20 key decision-makers and senior members of the Sierra Leone Police Force to present the findings of the MOWIP barrier assessment. We presented data, explained the main barriers identified, and proposed recommendations to implement to address barriers and improve and build on opportunities to enhance women’s meaningful participation to peace operations. Following the Validation Workshop, we revised the report to reflect the feedback, experiences, and suggestions of the SLP officers.
4) The ten issue areas shaping women's participation in peace operations in the SLP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-deployment stage: including factors that affect force generation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Cross-cutting issue areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Eligible pool</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there enough women in national institutions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Deployment criteria</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do criteria match the skills needed in operation?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Deployment selection</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does everyone have a fair chance to deploy?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Household constraints</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there arrangements for families of deployed women?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Deployment stage: including difficulties for women during operations |
|---|---|---|
| **5** Peace operations infrastructure | High | | 
| Is accommodation and equipment designed to meet women's needs? | | |
| **6** Peace operations experiences | Low | | |
| Do positive and negative experiences in operations affect women’s deployment decisions? | | |

| Post-deployment stage: including factors that affect redeployment |
|---|---|---|
| **7** Career Value | Low | | |
| Do deployments advance women’s careers? | | |
| **8** Top-down leadership | Low | | |
| Do leaders at all levels support women’s deployment? | | |

| All Stages |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | High | | |

Significance levels: High, Medium, Low.
The eligible pool issue area explores whether there are enough women in the RSLP to meet the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy targets for 2028 based on the number of women in the Police Force and their distribution across rank and role.

**Summary Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Women make up nearly 25% of the SLP personnel.
- Men and women can serve in equal roles in the SLP. Women can serve in combat or special operational units alongside men, and women can serve in leadership roles. Men and women have served in combat/tactical roles at equal rates.
- There is representation of women in higher ranks, which creates positive role models for female officers and contributes to a positive culture of gender equality.

**Main Barriers:**
- There have not been specific recruitment drives to recruit women to join the police force. Further, most respondents did not hear about the SLP through public means, indicating that information about how to join the police force is not publicly available or advertised.
- Many respondents indicated dissatisfaction with equipment available to the SLP. Respondents were dissatisfied with sleeping quarters, health facilities, and other equipment.
- There are occasional delays of payment.
- Uniforms do not accommodate religious or traditional clothing.

**Differences in Perception and Experience:**
- Men serve in commanding positions at higher rates than women. 88% of men but only 70% of women surveyed had served in at least one commanding position.
- Women were more likely to say that uniforms did not fit.

**Key Recommendations:**
- Continue efforts of policies to ensure women access to training and leadership opportunities.
- Improve recruitment campaigns to increase the enlistment of women police officers in the SLP.
- Improve SLP infrastructure to meet the needs of women (e.g., uniforms).
- Inclusion of women within promotion boards, selection/nomination committees, and recruitment committees.
- Increased opportunities and resources for professional organizations within the force.

**Detailed Results**

In total, in 2019, we found that there was a total of 10,052 officers who worked for the police force, 2,457 of whom were women. This represents 24% of the total police force.

**Good practices**

**SLP deploys both individuals and formed units**

In 2019, 132 men and 28 women deployed as part of formed police units. In this year, 214 officers in the SLP were part of formed police units. 47 of those officers were female. There are no all-female units in the police force. There was no statistically significant difference between men and women in terms of deploying individually versus with a formed unit.
According to interviews with key stakeholders, the SLP makes decisions about whether to deploy UNPOL or FPUs. If the operation faces specific, serious threats such as organized crime, terrorism, and corruption, which entail the need for special task forces, the SLP will deploy UNPOL. In contrast, “other missions which do not need special forces can have the FPU deployment to ensure compliance with UN Peace Charters.”

**Representation of women in higher ranks**

Though the FFF estimated that only 10% of women in the police force were of median rank or higher, in our survey results, 39 percent of women surveyed were in a rank above the median. The FFF also indicated that it is “very likely” that women will be commissioned as officers. However, while women do serve in supervisory roles (see more below), there are fewer women in higher-level commanding positions.

**Men and women equally likely to deploy**

Men and women who deploy typically do so at an equal number of deployments. The average number of deployments for women is 1.15 and the average number of deployments for men is 1.2. The plurality of respondents has been deployed for one year (31.1 percent); many respondents were deployed for 1.5 years (10.1 percent) or two years (24.3 percent).

**Men and women both serve in combat roles**

Both men and women can serve in combat or special operations units. The SLP started allowing women to participate in combat and special operations units in 2000 when the UN started allocating a higher percentage of women to peace operations. The SLP has a total of three operational/tactical units. In 2019, there were 47 female officers in these units. The units are the Operational Support Division; Peacekeeping Operations Department; and the Directorate of Operations.

Of survey respondents, 45% of men and 46% of women have engaged in combat or tactical operations.

**Men and women both serve in leadership roles**

Both men and women can serve in leadership positions. This is possible because of the successful implementation of the Twin Policies of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment and Gender Mainstreaming that were passed in 2014. Prior to the passage of these policies, there were reports of sexual exploitation in exchange for promotions. However, our qualitative research indicates that these reports were well received after they were implemented within the police force—and the presence of women in leadership and supervisory positions indicates that efforts to enhance promotion of women have been somewhat successful.

There are a total of 21 leadership positions available within the police force in Sierra Leone. In 2019, 26 men served in a managerial/leadership role in the police force and 3 women served in such a role. Of survey respondents, 70.3 percent of women and 88.2 percent of men have served in at least one commanding position. Though it is positive that both men and women can serve in these roles, there is still a significant disparity between men and women.

As it was indicated in multiple key decision-maker interviews, women may shy away from assuming leadership positions. One interviewee stated that women are “coy from taking leadership positions,” and another noted that “most women do not make themselves readily available for leadership position[s] in [the] police force.” Whether for lack of confidence or lack of support, this might explain the lower number of women in management roles. The issue can be resolved by addressing the concerns that women have about taking on leadership positions and increasing efforts to promote women to these roles.

**Equipment**

Some SLP facilities have gender segregated bathrooms, while others only have unisex bathrooms. 61.8 percent of respondents stated that SLP facilities offer both male and female bathrooms, while 23.8 percent stated that unisex bathrooms were available. 74.6 percent of respondents stated that they had access to their preferred bathroom near their workspace, but 23.5 percent stated that they do not. Men were slightly more likely to state that they did not have access to their preferred bathroom, but this difference was not statistically significant. The fact that nearly a quarter of officers do not have access to their preferred bathroom indicates a significant lack of resources that could affect morale.

The SLP does have police barracks. The barracks are not designed to accommodate women; they are shared by men and women, but there are separate rooms for men and women. 32.3 percent of respondents stated that the SLP offered same sex sleeping facilities only, 23.1 percent stated that the SLP offered unisex facilities only, and 37.2 percent stated that both same sex and unisex facilities were available.

**Few consider leaving the SLP**
Most respondents (64.4%) have never considered leaving the SLP. 28.8 percent have considered leaving the SLP at some point. Though this is a minority, it may indicate some insecurities within the SLP that lowers morale. Women (27 percent) were slightly less likely than men (30 percent) to say they considered leaving at some point.

**Main barriers**

**Lack of public information about joining police force**

Based on views from respondents, most did not hear about the opportunity to join the police force through public means. 18.8 percent learned about the police through the newspaper; 11.5 percent through TV; 30.8 percent through the radio; and 12 percent through social media. This suggests that a more public recruitment campaign could help improve female recruitment efforts.

**No recruitment drives for women**

There have been no specific recruitment drive targeting 100% female recruitment which would have served to encourage women to join the SLP. Available positions within the SLP are advertised via a vacancy announcement. Though as multiple key decision-maker interviews indicate, there are strategies in place to address any cultural or institutional barriers that may preclude women from joining the police forces or peacekeeping operations. To increase the effectiveness of existing strategies, it is necessary to develop improved recruitment campaigns.

One key decision-maker interviewed did state that there is a desire to “actively recruit and train more women police officers/gendarmes” into peace operations. The goal of this is to address “any cultural or institutional barriers that may prevent women from joining the police force or participating in peace operations.” We would encourage the SLP to expand recruitment efforts targeted specifically to women to join the SLP in the first place to increase the eligible pool of officers who could be deployed to peace operations.

**Few opportunities to join professional organizations**

There are several professional organizations in the SLP, including the newly formed SLP Female Leaders (SLPFL) and the SLP Female Staff Association (SLPFSA). The goal of the SLPFL is to create a networking forum for women to learn from each other, and to mentor women in lower ranks. There are also extracurricular organizations including the SLP Brass Band and SLP Football Associations.

Nevertheless, few police officers report being a member of professional organizations within the police force. 54 percent of the sample responded that they belong to zero professional organizations and 14.4 percent refused to respond or said they did not know. The remaining 31.6 respond to at least one professional organization. There was no significant difference between men’s and women’s responses to this question. Having more professional organizations could introduce opportunities to improve group cohesion and increase participation of women within the police force.

**Occasional issues with pay**

A significant proportion of respondents indicated that their pay was “sometimes” delayed (43.5 percent). 30.4 percent of respondents stated that pay was never delayed. Even if officers only experience occasional delays in payment, this potential instability could deter officers with families from joining the police forces.

**Equipment disparities**

Officers have the choice of male or female uniforms. However, uniforms were not designed to accommodate various women’s bodies regarding female-specific experiences such as pregnancy. 85.9 percent of respondents stated that uniforms provided by the SLP are unisex; 38.3 percent stated that female-specific uniforms were provided; and 31.5 percent stated that male-specific uniforms were provided.

Most respondents reported some issues with how uniforms fit. 25.5 percent of respondents stated that their uniforms “always” fit, but most respondents (54.4 percent) stated that uniforms only fit “sometimes.” 18.2 percent said that uniforms “never” fit. Women were more likely to say that uniforms never fit (21.1 percent of women, 16 percent of men).

Uniforms were not designed to accommodate religious and traditional clothing. 44.8 percent of respondents also noted that uniforms only “sometimes” accommodate religious and/or cultural traditional clothing, though 34.5 percent believed that uniforms “always” accommodate these needs.

There is not a gender disparity in satisfaction with equipment, but a high proportion of the sample reports being dissatisfied with equipment provided. Only 58 percent of men and 56 percent of women responded that the SLP provides access to the equipment needed to do their job. Officers of higher rank were less likely to report
dissatisfaction. Though this does meet a majority, it indicates that a significant proportion of respondents do not feel that they are equipped to do their job. Further, it suggests that lower-ranked officers may have less equipment access which could contribute to lower morale.

Respondents also stated that they found much of the equipment inadequate. Only 8.7 percent of the sample responded that no facilities or equipment were inadequate. Respondents were most dissatisfied with sleeping quarters (61%), health facilities (58%), and uniforms (57%). Women were more likely than men to say that their office spaces were inadequate, with 39% of women and 49% of men saying their office spaces were inadequate.

**Perception that there are not enough eligible/qualified women to deploy**

There is a perception that one of the biggest challenges to increasing women’s participation in UN peace operations is that there are not enough eligible women in the SLP. 43.6 percent of respondents stated that this was one of the three main challenges for increasing women’s participation.
The deployment criteria issue area examines whether women can meet the requirements for deployment to the same extent as men.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Physical fitness test requirements are adjusted to allow women to participate at equal levels. Additionally, there are programs in place that help women achieve physical fitness standards.
- There are also special training sessions to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT) and driver’s test.
- Training is available to help officers meet skills and fitness requirements.
- Gender sensitivity is considered in the test and selection process.

**Main Barriers:**
- Lack of driving skills and necessary documents may prevent officers from volunteering to deploy.
- Family deployments are not allowed, which may make women or men with children less likely to volunteer to deploy.
- There was a general lack of awareness about the requirements for deployment. Most respondents were not aware of the requirements related to the small arms/tactical test; communication, listening, and interpersonal skills; conflict resolution and negotiation skills; the gender sensitivity requirement; and the disciplinary record review. Further, many respondents mistakenly believed that there is a minimum level of English required.

**Differences in Perception and Experience:**
- Women were significantly less likely to have a driver’s license (39% of women and 51% of men have a license). Women were also less likely to say they could drive a manual car (28% of women and 34% of men).
- Women were also less likely to be confident in their ability to pass the physical fitness test (47% of women and 54% of men believed they could pass).

**Key Recommendations:**
- Improve education about the requirements for deployment. If officers are not aware of the requirements, or believe that the requirements are beyond their capabilities, they may be reluctant to volunteer. Senior officers should talk openly about deployment and training opportunities with personnel and encourage both men and women to participate.
- Increase recruitment efforts to train eligible officers in required components such as computer skills; small arms/tactical skills; interpersonal and communication skills; English speaking, reading, and writing; and conflict resolution and negotiation skills.
- Continue programs adapted to address women’s specific needs for training. Encourage women to participate in these specialized training opportunities.
- If family deployments are not possible, consider increasing vacation or leave opportunities.
- Encourage and fund officers to participate in international training.
- Encourage UN recruitment office to reconsider age limitations and redeployment wait periods in collaboration with local security forces so that they are country specific. For Sierra Leone, SLP officers recommend increasing the maximum age from 55 to 60.
Detailed Results

Criteria for deployment are mostly the same for individuals deploying as individuals and those deploying as part of formed police units, with some minor differences. Criteria are largely the same for men and women, though there are some differences to accommodate physical differences between male and female officers.

Requirements for Individual Police Officers

- Driver’s test
- Written test for comprehension and report writing
- Computer test, including knowledge of MS Word and Excel
- Communication/listening/interpersonal skills
- Conflict resolution/negotiation skills
- Questions about gender sensitivity are asked in the test and selection process
- Physical fitness test
- Medical test
- Small arms/tactical test: 8/10 mark required
- 5-7 years of experience
- Good disciplinary record
- Minimum age 20, maximum age 55
- No minimum rank
- No minimum knowledge of English required
- No minimum knowledge of French required

Requirements for Formed Police Units (FPUs) and Secondment

- Driver’s test
- Written test for comprehension and report writing
- Computer test, including knowledge of MS Word and Excel
- Communication/listening/interpersonal skills
- Conflict resolution/negotiation skills
- Questions about gender sensitivity are asked in the test and selection process
- Physical fitness test
- Medical test
- Small arms/tactical test: 8/10 mark required
- 5-7 years of experience
- Good disciplinary record
- Minimum age 25, maximum age 55
- Minimum rank P5, P4, P11
- No minimum knowledge of English required
- No minimum knowledge of French required

The Makeup of Exams and Tests

Exams and tests for deployment are largely standard. The physical fitness test includes a run of roughly 1.5 km to be completed in 8 to 10 minutes; a push-up test; and a squat test. Both men and women must complete the physical fitness tests, but the time limit to complete the course may be less for male officers than female officers in order to be inclusive to women.

Officers must also pass a written test and computer test. In the computer test, officers must demonstrate familiarity with Microsoft Word and Excel. Both the police academy and the peacekeeping training center in Sierra Leone teach the required skills.

Officers must also demonstrate communication, listening, and interpersonal skills to be selected. Specifically, the police seek officers who have demonstrated leadership skills or taken on leadership roles; who demonstrate professionalism; and who demonstrate comprehension. In addition to these interpersonal skills, officers must also demonstrate conflict resolution and negotiation skills. Training is available for all these interpersonal and negotiation skills at the police academy and peacekeeping training centers.

A minimum working knowledge of English or French is not required for deployment, but the police academy and peacekeeping training center still provide instruction in these languages to support police.
Personnel engage in international training and in-service training within Sierra Leone. Training for sensitivity around gender issues is offered at pre-deployment training.

**Good practices**

**Physical fitness tests are same, but adjusted to be inclusive towards women**

Both male and female officers must pass the same physical fitness test, which includes running, push-ups, and squats. However, the time limit for the test is adjusted to be longer for women. Additionally, there are programs in place that help women achieve the same standards as men.

Respondents expressed concern about their ability to pass the necessary physical fitness test to qualify to deploy to a UN peace operation. Only 50.5 percent believed that they had the necessary physical fitness. There was a slight gender disparity: while 53.5 percent of men believed they had the necessary physical fitness, only 47 percent of women did. Efforts to increase training opportunities for women and create gender appropriate standards in testing may help address this disparity.

Respondents also express some concern about their ability to pass a basic medical test. Only 49.7 percent of respondents believe they could pass the necessary medical test. There was no gender difference in men’s and women’s beliefs about their ability to pass this test.

**Training is available for the required tests**

Training is available at both the police academy and the peacekeeping training center for many of the required tests, including tests on computer skills; small arms/tactical skills; interpersonal and communication skills; and conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

Conflict resolution and negotiation training programs focus on resolving conflicts between clans and stakeholders and negotiating with heads of rebel groups.

**Selection process includes questions about gender sensitivity**

The test for UNPOL deployment and deployment with a FPU include questions about gender sensitivity. Questions about gender sensitivity are also asked during the selection process interview. These questions focus on ethics and the SLP code of conduct, and the quota percentage for women.

**Disciplinary record considered for deployment**

Candidates’ disciplinary records are taken into consideration when making decisions regarding peacekeeping deployment. Officers can be disqualified from the opportunity to deploy if they have disobeyed a lawful order given by authorities; if they have engaged in conspiracy; or if they have demonstrated bad conduct. During the validation workshop, attendees noted that there is no specific conduct that can prevent officers from being deployed, but all conduct is taken into consideration. Officers that are under investigation are not eligible to apply.

**Language training is available**

Though English and French are not required for deployment, the police academy and peacekeeping training center do provide instruction in English and French. This is a good practice to support peacekeepers and enhance their capacity to communicate and effectively contribute to peace operations.

**Multiple training centers are available**

Personnel can attend international training or in-service peacekeeping training within Sierra Leone. Training for sensitivity on gender issues is offered at pre-deployment training.

**Police officers do not need to give up their jobs**

Police officers do not need to give up their jobs with the police in order to deploy as an individual, with a formed police unit, or for secondment into a UN position. This means that individuals can choose to deploy without fear of losing their source of income. This is a positive practice which may allow the police to be more welcoming to individuals with children or families to provide for.

**Main barriers**

**Family deployments are not allowed**

Family deployments are not allowed for either individual UNPOL deployments; FPUs; or in secondment. Even though individuals with children may deploy, not allowing family deployments may deter both men and women
with young children from deploying. This barrier is likely to disproportionately affect women who are mothers, since women often bear a greater proportion of the responsibility of childrearing.

As discussed in the validation workshop, some deployment locations may not be safe to allow family deployments. In these situations, officers remarked that increasing opportunities for leave or short vacations to visit family would be a positive solution to enhance morale.

Officer do not engage in international training

Most officers who have been deployed did not engage in international training. Only 22.7 percent of the sample attended training at a peacekeeping training center outside of Sierra Leone, and 22.7 percent received training by the UN within Sierra Leone.

Lack of driving skills, necessary documents

54.5 percent of survey respondents do not have a valid driver’s license. Further, 69 percent of respondents stated that they do not know how to drive a manual car. This is a major barrier for all police officers’ ability to participate in UN peacekeeping missions since a driver’s test is required for deployment. Further, there is a statistically significant gender disparity in driver’s licenses: While 51 percent of male respondents do have a driver’s license, only 38.9 percent of female respondents have one. Only 27.8 percent of women and 34 percent of men stated that they believe that they possess the “ability to drive a manual car” to deploy to a peace operation. This is a major barrier for women’s ability to participate in peace operations and may prevent women from participating in other aspects of policing. On a positive note, according to our FFF the SLP does offer training to help women in the acquisition of a driver’s license.

Only 53.2 percent of respondents have a valid passport. Officers may be reluctant to volunteer or gain the skills to deploy on peace operations if they do not have the correct documentation or if they have never left the country. There is not a gender disparity in this measure; in fact, 57 percent of women and 49 percent of men have a valid passport.

Lack of computer skills

Only 46.7 percent of respondents believe that they have the necessary computer skills to qualify for deployment. Increased opportunities for training may help address this issue.

Lack of awareness about some of the necessary skills for deployment

Most respondents were not aware that there was a small arms/tactical test for deployment (57.9 percent for UNPOL deployment and 62.5 percent for deployment with FPUs). Perhaps owing to the lack of awareness about this skill, most respondents (56.3 percent) did not feel that they had the necessary small arms/tactical skills to deploy. There was not a significant gender disparity in officers’ perceptions of their small arms/tactical skills; both men and women were evenly likely to say that they did not have the necessary skills.

Most respondents also stated that communication/listening/interpersonal skills were not required for deployment (55.2 percent for UNPOL deployment and 54.6 percent for deployment with FPUs). However, respondents were not as concerned about their ability to meet this requirement; 84 percent stated that they believed they had the necessary communications skills to deploy.

Similarly, most respondents stated that conflict resolution/negotiation skills were not required for deployment (64.1 percent for UNPOL deployment and 64.7 percent for deployment with FPUs). There was slightly more concern about having the necessary conflict resolution skills for deployment as well: only 59.2 percent of respondents believed they had the necessary skills for deployment.

Most respondents did not know that there is a gender sensitivity requirement for deployment (74.2 percent for UNPOL deployment and 72 percent for deployment with FPUs). Further, only 24.2 percent of respondents believed that they had the necessary gender sensitivity skills required to deploy.

Most respondents did not know that disciplinary record is included (66.9 percent for UNPOL deployment and 72.8 percent for FPUs). Further, many respondents did not feel that their own disciplinary records would qualify them for deployment; only 30.4 percent believed that they had the appropriate disciplinary record.

Finally, many respondents believed that there was a minimum required level of English (42.7 for UNPOL and 39.9 for FPUs). There was also a statistically significant difference between men’s and women’s awareness of this requirement—47% of men but only 37% of women believed that there was an English requirement for UNPOL deployment. Correcting this misperception could encourage more officers who may be nervous about their English-speaking skills to volunteer.
89.7% said there was no French requirement for deploying with UNPOL and 90.5% said there was no French requirement for deploying with an FPU. 95.7 percent of survey respondents stated they do not have the necessary French skills to deploy. Again, clarifying that this is not a requirement that could increase interest in deploying.

**Ability to work with local population not seen as a top skill**

Only three respondents—0.8 percent of the sample—believe that the ability to speak the local host country’s language is one of the most important skills or attributes for the success of a peace operation. 21.7 percent of respondents believe that the “ability to work with the population in the host country” is one of the most important skills. Table 2 displays the percentage of respondents who viewed skills as important for the success of a UN peace operation. Table 3 displays the percentages of respondents who believe they have each skill.

When it came to competencies, 23 respondents - 6.25% of the sample- said that they can speak the language of the host country. Moreover, 47.55% of the respondents said that they have necessary skills to work with the host country population.
**Table 2: Skills viewed as important for peace operations deployment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/attribute</th>
<th>n (%) who believe this is one of the three most important skills/attributes/abilities for the success of a UN peace operation</th>
<th>n (%) of WOMEN who believe this is one of the three most important skills</th>
<th>n (%) of MEN who believe this is one of the three most important skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication/listening/interpersonal skills</td>
<td>298 (81%)</td>
<td>129 (77.71%)</td>
<td>167 (83.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution/negotiation skills</td>
<td>195 (53%)</td>
<td>91 (54.82%)</td>
<td>102 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat/tactical skills</td>
<td>114 (31%)</td>
<td>50 (30.12%)</td>
<td>64 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work with the host country population</td>
<td>80 (21.7%)</td>
<td>38 (22.89%)</td>
<td>40 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical fitness</td>
<td>75 (20.4%)</td>
<td>40 (24.10%)</td>
<td>35 (17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fitness</td>
<td>68 (18.5%)</td>
<td>28 (16.87%)</td>
<td>40 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>62 (16.9%)</td>
<td>26 (15.66%)</td>
<td>36 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work with personnel from other countries</td>
<td>57 (15.5%)</td>
<td>24 (14.46%)</td>
<td>33 (16.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean disciplinary record</td>
<td>36 (9.8%)</td>
<td>20 (12.05%)</td>
<td>16 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate personality/character</td>
<td>31 (8.4%)</td>
<td>12 (7.23%)</td>
<td>19 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to drive a manual car</td>
<td>29 (7.9%)</td>
<td>13 (7.83%)</td>
<td>16 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak English</td>
<td>26 (7.1%)</td>
<td>12 (7.23%)</td>
<td>14 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with the Sierra Leone Police Forces</td>
<td>12 (3.3%)</td>
<td>5 (3.01%)</td>
<td>7 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender sensitivity</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>4 (2.41%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate age</td>
<td>4 (1.1%)</td>
<td>1 (.6%)</td>
<td>3 (1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak host country language</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>1 (.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak French</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
<td>1 (.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum rank</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>1 (.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having no family commitments back home</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>1 (.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having supervisor's permission</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Skills for peace operations that officers believe they possess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/attribute</th>
<th>n (%) who believe they possess the skill</th>
<th>n (%) of WOMEN who believe they possess the skill</th>
<th>n (%) of MEN who believe they possess the skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication/listening/interpersonal skills</td>
<td>309 (83.97%)</td>
<td>140 (84.34%)</td>
<td>167 (83.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution/negotiation skills</td>
<td>218 (59.24%)</td>
<td>100 (60.24%)</td>
<td>116 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat/tactical skills</td>
<td>161 (43.75)</td>
<td>71 (42.77%)</td>
<td>90 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work with the host country population</td>
<td>175 (47.55%)</td>
<td>74 (44.58%)</td>
<td>99 (49.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical fitness</td>
<td>183 (49.73%)</td>
<td>84 (50.6%)</td>
<td>99 (49.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical fitness</td>
<td>186 (50.54%)</td>
<td>78 (46.99%)</td>
<td>107 (53.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills</td>
<td>172 (46.74%)</td>
<td>76 (45.78%)</td>
<td>96 (47.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work with personnel from other countries</td>
<td>162 (44.02%)</td>
<td>7 (45.18%)</td>
<td>87 (43.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean disciplinary record</td>
<td>112 (30.43%)</td>
<td>47 (28.31%)</td>
<td>65 (32.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate personality/character</td>
<td>69 (18.75%)</td>
<td>31 (18.67%)</td>
<td>38 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to drive a manual car</td>
<td>114 (30.98%)</td>
<td>46 (27.71%)</td>
<td>68 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak English</td>
<td>148 (40.22%)</td>
<td>73 (43.98%)</td>
<td>74 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with the Sierra Leone Police Forces</td>
<td>89 (24.18%)</td>
<td>42 (25.30%)</td>
<td>47 (23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender sensitivity</td>
<td>89 (24.18%)</td>
<td>40 (24.10%)</td>
<td>49 (24.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate age</td>
<td>23 (6.25%)</td>
<td>14 (7.23%)</td>
<td>11 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak host country language</td>
<td>23 (6.25%)</td>
<td>9 (5.42%)</td>
<td>14 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to speak French</td>
<td>16 (4.35%)</td>
<td>8 (4.82%)</td>
<td>8 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum rank</td>
<td>25 (6.79%)</td>
<td>13 (7.83%)</td>
<td>12 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having no family commitments back home</td>
<td>5 (1.36%)</td>
<td>4 (2.41%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having supervisor's permission</td>
<td>13 (3.53%)</td>
<td>8 (4.82%)</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The deployment selection issue area explores whether women are prevented or not from deploying through a lack of information, a lack of connections to influential decision makers and/or because of biases in superiors decision-making processes.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**

- There is a standardized application and selection process for UN deployment.
- UN exams are administered locally by the SLP at the Sierra Leone Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement Academy (SILEA).
- Officers do not report feeling social pressure while taking the test.
- There are special efforts to recruit women into peace operations. These include special classes designed to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT).

**Main Barriers:**

- A slight majority of respondents believe that UN peace operations recruitment is fair, but nearly a quarter believe that the process is unfair.
- Deployment opportunities are not advertised widely enough. 45% of respondents heard about peacekeeping opportunities through word of mouth, but only 25% heard from their supervisor and 29% heard from an internal job board. Even though SLP makes efforts to share opportunities, the information is not being disseminated widely enough.
- High rate of failing the selection assessment test (SAT). One of the key decision-maker interviews mentioned insufficient time provided during the exam as one of the main barriers for participation. Validation workshop participants also noted the English language barrier.
- Officers must personally pay for travel, passports and immigration documents, room and board, and other personal costs during the pre-deployment training and testing phase.

**Differences in Perception and Experience:**

- Officers living in rural areas were more likely to hear about opportunities through word of mouth, while officers in urban areas were more likely to hear from an internal job board.
- Female officers were slightly more likely to say that they did not have enough time to take the test, but they were not more likely to say that the test was too difficult.

**Key Recommendations:**

- Increase transparency around UN peacekeeping selection processes to demonstrate the fairness of the standardized process to officers and encourage more officers to apply.
- Increase efforts to disseminate information about peacekeeping opportunities via internal channels, such as internal job boards, emails, newsletters, and professional organizations. Decentralize advertisement and information so that opportunities are known to officers in rural areas.
- Encourage officers to engage in training prior to the selection exam to improve pass rates. In addition to formal training opportunities, we recommend encouraging officers who are preparing for the selection exam to form study groups to discuss exam content and practice speaking, reading, and writing in English.
- Explore ways to offer support to officers taking the selection exam. Solutions discussed during the validation workshop included offering accommodations to officers who travel to take the exam; helping with transportation; reimbursing officers for food or other small expenses; or exploring other creative ways to lower the cost of taking the selection exam.
Detailed Results

Good practices

Standardized process for deployment

There is a standardized process for deployment into UN operations. Individuals can apply for peacekeeping deployments. They are not individually selected by superiors. This is a positive practice that makes selection transparent and avoids implicit bias or favoritism. SLP deploys both formed police units and individuals to UNPOL.

First, SLP will receive information about a slot from the UN or AU mission through the peacekeeping desk. Second, through the peacekeeping desk, SLP will advertise vacant positions via internal memo to AIGs and LUCs. Third, SLP processes the applications and publishes a list of personnel who meet the minimum requirements. Fourth, applicants take the necessary tests. These include a medical examination, physical fitness test, small arms/tactical shooting test, written exam, driving test, and any other necessary exams. Finally, the final selection assessment test (SAT) is administered and supervised by an external police body.

Fewer than 10 percent of respondents were individually selected by their superiors for deployment. 72.4 percent of respondents voluntarily applied. Overall, most respondents believe that the recruitment process into UN peace operations by the SLP is “far” or “very fair.” However, 24.4 percent of respondents believed that the process is unfair. Table 4 shows responses to the question, “How fair do you think the recruitment process into UN peace operations conducted by the Sierra Leone Police Forces is in your country?”

Table 4: Perceived fairness of UN peace operations recruitment process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How fair do you think the recruitment process into UN peace operations is?</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
<th>n (%) of WOMEN</th>
<th>n (%) of MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very fair</td>
<td>72 (19.6%)</td>
<td>29 (17.47%)</td>
<td>43 (21.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>121 (32.9%)</td>
<td>58 (34.94%)</td>
<td>62 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>52 (14.1%)</td>
<td>31 (18.67%)</td>
<td>21 (10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>63 (17.1%)</td>
<td>26 (15.66%)</td>
<td>37 (18.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfair</td>
<td>27 (7.3%)</td>
<td>9 (5.42%)</td>
<td>18 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment is not done by the SLP</td>
<td>9 (2.5%)</td>
<td>2 (1.20%)</td>
<td>7 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>16 (4.4%)</td>
<td>8 (4.82%)</td>
<td>7 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>3 (1.81%)</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training support

SLP receives Mobile Training Support Teams (MTSTs), Selection Assistance Teams (SATs), and Mobile Training Teams (MTTs). SLP receives SATs not more than once per year and MTTs once every two years.

UN exams administered by SLP

Exams for UN peacekeeping eligibility are administered at the SILEA. Exams are administered at least once per year. SILEA administers exams for writing; reading and comprehension; audio listening; report writing, computer practical skills; driving; and the small arms and tactical test. Interviews are also conducted at SILEA.

Most respondents did not report feeling any social pressure while taking the test. 25.4 percent noted that the test was implemented with people of all rank (19.7% of men and 33.3% of women). 26.1 percent stated that they did not have enough time to complete the test (22.3% of men and 29.8% of women). 22.4 percent stated that they did not have any concerns while taking the test (22.3% of men and 22.8% of women). 15.7 percent said that the test was too difficult (17.1% of men and 14% of women).

Special efforts to recruit women into peace operations

There are special efforts to recruit women into peacekeeping opportunities. Women are offered special classes to help them pass the selection assessment test (SAT). Women may also be offered help in the acquisition of the
driving license. Finally, there are preferential slots accorded to female personnel. According to a key decision-maker interviewed, gender-related policies prioritize women because they are often victims and have a significant role to play in promoting peacebuilding. In multiple other interviews though, key decision-makers emphasized that equal opportunities should be granted based on merit rather than gender.

**Main barriers**

**Deployment opportunities are advertised internally, but not widely enough**

Opportunities to apply for UN or AU deployment are advertised through multiple forms of communication internally within the police. Positions are advertised via mass email, internal job boards, word of mouth communication, and formal professional associations and training academies. Positions advertised via email are sent to directors, regional commanders, LUCs and administrative officers.

All UN positions are posted in all regions of the country.

The police training academy provides information about UN deployments via word of mouth, memos, and mass email. There are also organized classes for personnel at SILEA.

Despite the internal posting of opportunities, many survey respondents did not recall receiving information about opportunities to volunteer or apply for deployment. 45.4 percent of respondents heard about opportunities and experiences in UN peacekeeping missions through word of mouth (42% of men and 49% of women), and 24.5 percent from their immediate supervisor (25% of men and 24% of women). In contrast, 28.5 percent received information from an internal job board; 22.8 percent in a SLP organization-wide email; and 15.2 percent from a SLP organizational newsletter. These low numbers suggest that, even though the SLP advertises opportunities for deployment, this information is not being disseminated sufficiently.

While only 14.4 and 15.2 percent of respondents heard about opportunities to apply through TV and radio, respectively, 32.6 percent heard about opportunities to apply through social media. This was the second largest response group, indicating that social media is an important way that officers receive information about opportunities.

If informal communication such as word of mouth, social media, and discussions with immediate superiors is the primary way that individuals learn about opportunities to deploy, this could indicate a barrier for individuals who do not benefit from close informal relationships in the SLP.

Our survey data suggests that there are significant differences in the way that officers in different areas of the country learn about opportunities to deploy. Respondents living in rural areas are more likely to hear about opportunities through word of mouth than their urban counterparts (64.1 percent of rural and 36.5 percent of urban heard about opportunities through word of mouth). Rural individuals were also more likely to hear about opportunities through social media (53 percent of rural individuals and 20.2 percent of urban). In contrast, individuals living in urban areas were more likely than their rural counterparts to hear about opportunities through an internal job board (38.9 percent of urban and 23.2 percent of rural). The differences in ways that these populations learn about opportunities may indicate a disparity in available information.

However, individuals who chose not to apply for positions responded that lack of information or awareness about opportunities to apply was not a reason that they chose not to apply. Among individuals who did apply but were not selected—of which there were very few, only 12 in our sample—respondents did not know why this was the case, but several believed it was a merit-based decision. No respondents believed that gender was a reason to not be selected.

**High rate of failing UN exam**

According to our FFF, in 2019, 55 police officers passed the UN exam and 245 failed. 67.2 percent of respondents (68.4% of men and 66.7 percent of women) stated that they or someone they knew had failed the test at least once.

During the validation workshop, many officers commented on the difficulty of the selection exam. The exam is difficult not only for its content, but also because it is conducted in English. Though this is the official language of instruction and business in Sierra Leone, it is not always used daily in casual contexts, so some officers struggle to complete the language in English on time. Several officers commented that there is a great deal of tension around the exams, and that many good quality officers who would positively contribute to peace operations may be losing an opportunity since the exam is so difficult. However, some validation workshop attendees expressed that the time limit of the exam is not necessarily unfair: “If they are ready to go through these hardships and this [selection
exam] process, they might be better suited for a peacekeeping operation.” Further, an officer noted that the SLP “need[s] to meet UN standards,” and that the force might be punished if they do not follow the standard exam process.

We recommend encouraging officers to take advantage of formal training opportunities prior to attempting the selection exam. In addition, we recommend encouraging officers to form informal study groups to discuss exam material and practice English language speaking, reading, and writing skills.

**Personal expenses incurred during pre-deployment phase**

Officers who are applying for UN peacekeeping incur personal costs while applying and attending tests at SILEA. These costs include food, transportation, driver’s license fees, medical tests, and passport fees. These fees may discourage individuals of lower income or lower rank from applying to deploy. It is possible that this deterrent could disproportionately affect women who may not have control over their family finances.

Respondents report having to spend their personal money to take UN pre-deployment tests. This is a serious barrier that could discourage individuals from investing time and money in the testing process. 54.5 percent of respondents had to spend their own money on travel; 41.8 percent spent on passports and immigration documents; 37.3 percent spent on food; 31.34 percent spent on personal documents; and 25.4 percent spent on clothing or uniforms. Only 29.9 percent of respondents did not spend any of their personal money in the pre-deployment application, selection, and training process. Especially considering the high rate of failure, many officers may consider the costs they have to incur and choose not to attempt the testing process at all.

During the validation workshop, officers cautioned that there might not be funds available to reimburse officers for their expenses. Recognizing this constraint, we encourage the SLP to explore creative options to offset the costs of the selection exam. This may include offering accommodations to officers who are taking the exam; helping coordinate transportation; feeding or reimbursing for small expenses such as food; and exploring funding options to offset the costs of personal documents or other larger expenses.
The household constraints issue area explores the impact of having young children, elderly parents, or other family obligations on women’s ability to deploy to peace operations, as compared to men. It also assesses whether there is community and social pressure towards women who might deploy.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Officers believe UN payment is sufficient for managing their households.
- Families of peacekeepers are entitled to healthcare benefits.
- Many officers have family members who can take care of children while they are deployed.
- There is family and community support for women to deploy. It is socially accepted and encouraged for women to participate in peacekeeping. Further, pregnant women are allowed to serve and may take paid maternity leave.

**Main Barriers:**
- SLP pay is insufficient for managing households.
- There are limited childcare options for police officers. There are no childcare facilities or subsidies available through the SLP or the Sierra Leone government.
- Gender norms place a greater burden on women to provide childcare.
- Most respondents were not aware that women could take maternity leave, and only 16% were aware that maternity leave is paid. Further, there are not adequate breastfeeding/pumping arrangements for women.
- Family and sick leave is unpaid.
- Lack of clarity regarding vacation policies, and no vacation subsidies.

**Differences in Perception and Experience:**
- 51% of men stated that they were the primary childcare provider in their household, while only 15% of women responded this way. Women were more likely to say that the mother (34%) or both parents (38%) are the primary providers. Validation workshop participants noted that men likely interpreted this question as meaning the primary financial provider.
- There are not sufficient arrangements for mothers who are officers, including breastfeeding arrangements and on-site childcare options.

**Key Recommendations:**
- Though it is difficult to change gender norms, increasing awareness about women’s unique experiences and contributions to the SLP may encourage all officers to view women more as equal contributors to peace and security. We also encourage leaders to speak openly about the equal contributions that men and women make to the family and childcare to counter prevailing traditional gender norms. As one officer noted in the validation workshop, the responsibility for taking care of a child is primarily placed on women, and “we [in the SLP] need to change that thinking” by talking more openly about men’s and women’s equal contributions to the home and the workplace.
- On-site childcare facilities or subsidies for childcare would encourage more women and male officers with children to join.
- Ensure women have access to a private area for breastfeeding and/or pumping upon return from maternity leave.
- Increase transparency and information around family leave policies. Make sure that men and women officers are aware of paid maternity leave policies.
● We also recommend paid family and sick leave, as well as increased clarity regarding vacation policies. Further, we recommend considering creating a paternity leave policy.

Detailed Results

Ideal age of deployment and of children

The average ideal age for one’s first deployment was 24.5 years of age for male respondents and 23.6 years of age for female respondents. However, most respondents were much older than this when they deployed for the first time. Male respondents were on average 34.9 years of age and female respondents were on average 34.8 years of age when they deployed for the first time.

Respondents were also asked how old they believe children should be when their mother or father deploys to a UN operation. Respondents stated that children should be a mean of 7 years old when their mother deploys, and a mean of 6.6 years old when their father deploys. There was no significant difference between male and female responses to these questions.

Family situations

There was a statistically significant difference between the number of children that men and women officers have. Men in the sample on average had 2.8 children, while women had on average 2.2 children. This suggests that the lack of family deployment or childcare options could be discouraging women from having children or having additional children in the force. It may also indicate that women who have additional children are choosing not to return to work.

Children were older when their parents deployed for the first time. The mean age of officers’ youngest child when they were first deployed was 8.9 years of age. Among male respondents, the youngest child was a mean of 9.1 years, and among female respondents, the youngest child was a mean of 8.7 years.

Overall, respondents with children are statistically significantly less likely to deploy than respondents without children. There was no significant difference between the likelihood of deploying for men and women with children. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the number of children that men and women officers have in the SLP overall. If female officers generally have fewer children, this may suggest that they have fewer familial constraints, but it may also suggest that the lack of family deployment and childcare options discourage women from having children or from returning to work after having children.

Deployment lengths

According to validation workshop attendees, the average deployment length is one year. According to our survey results, the average length of time deployed to a UN or AU peacekeeping mission was 7.7 months. However, there was considerable variation in length of deployments. Most individuals—73.7 percent—deployed for five months or less. 46 individuals were deployed for one month; 36 were deployed for two; 13 were deployed for three. In contrast, 11 individuals were deployed for 18 months and six were deployed for 24 months.

The modal response for the ideal length of deployment for women was 24 months (45 respondents out of 166); followed by 12 months (29 respondents) and six months (20 respondents). Male respondents had a similar pattern, with 65 individuals preferring 24 months; 34 preferring 12 months; and 22 preferring 6 months out of 200 respondents’ total. The fact that most individuals’ deployment lengths were shorter than the ideal length suggests that individuals could feel like they are not given enough time to acclimate to the mission and make an impact. However, on the other hand, the fact that deployments are shorter than expected could be positive, since it could encourage participation by officers who are worried about being away from families or other obligations for too long.

Good practices

Officers believe UN peacekeeping payment is sufficient

70.9 percent of officers believe that payment from the UN for peacekeeping deployments is sufficient for managing their households. Of these, 28.5 percent “strongly agree” that payment is sufficient. Only 12 percent of respondents stated that payment is insufficient for managing their households, while 8.2 percent responded that they “don’t know.”
54.2 percent stated that they spent the money on land; 46.5 percent spent the money on their household; 45.8 percent spent on their children; 29.9 percent gave money to family members; 28.5 percent spent on a car; 20.8 percent spent on other household items; and 18.1 percent spent the money on their own education.

23.6 percent of officers surveyed stated that they saved the money that they received from working on a UN peace operation. However, there was a statistically significant difference between men and women: 31.3 percent of men but only 14.3 percent of women saved their UN peacekeeping payments. Women were not more likely to have spent their payment on children or other family members; in contrast, women were more likely to say that they spent their peacekeeping payment on starting a new business (15.9 percent of women and 5 percent of men).

**Officers have support for childcare, but may not be able to pay for childcare**

75.8 percent of respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement: “I have family/extended family (including children, elders, etc.) who can take care of my household while I deploy on a UN peace operation.” Only 8.2 percent disagreed, and 5.7 percent strongly disagreed. This is a positive finding in that it indicates a strong level of family and community support that enables officers to pursue their careers and participate in peacekeeping.

After conducting interviews and researching written sources to complete the FFF, we found that it is common for middle and lower ranking police officers to pay for household support such as nannies and maids. However, according to our survey results, very few officers do have hired help at home. 83.2 percent of respondents stated that they do not employ anybody to help them at home. Only 8.5 percent employed “house help”; 0.27 percent employed a security guard; 1.1 percent employed a driver; and 1.1 percent employed a cook. In terms of childcare, only seven respondents or 2.1 percent stated that a nanny was the primary provider of childcare in the home.

**It is socially acceptable for women to deploy**

Within their families and communities, it is socially acceptable for women to deploy. Among families, deployment changed the financial standing of women and families. According to the FFF, this led families to accept the culture of sending women on peacekeeping missions. Further, this allows women to gain exposure and experiences like their male counterparts while serving on missions. Indeed, 86.7 percent of the women in our sample said that they are unafraid or feel neutral about their family’s judgment if they participate in a peace operation. This compared to 86 percent of men who felt unafraid or neutral about their family’s judgment.

According to the FFF, communities in Sierra Leone see women who participate in peacekeeping as successful, especially when they return home to a change in their financial standing and development because of their mission service. However, there was slightly less agreement in survey results. 41.3 percent of respondents stated that women face “no stigma” to deploy, 8.2 percent stated that women face “very little stigma,” and 10.9 percent of respondents were neutral. 23.4 percent stated that women face at least “some stigma.” There was no significant difference between men’s and women’s responses to this question.

**Pregnant women are allowed to serve and take paid maternity leave**

Pregnant women are allowed to stay in the police force. When they give birth, female officers may take paid maternity leave for 90 days. However, there is no paternity leave. Upon returning to the force there are no breastfeeding arrangements available for nursing female officers.

60.9 percent of respondents stated that the SLP does not provide adequate breastfeeding/pumping arrangements for women. Only 7.3 percent stated that the SLP does provide adequate arrangements. 59.2 percent of respondents stated that they do not think that women in the SLP feel comfortable breastfeeding/pumping at work. 13.3 said that women do feel comfortable, and 20.9 percent stated that they do not know if women feel comfortable. The FFF results also found that breastfeeding at work is not seen as acceptable in the SLP. This is problematic because leading health authorities encourage women to breastfeed newborns for six to twelve months, and women who are working full-time will therefore need to pump several times during the workday to maintain a milk supply. We therefore encourage the SLP to make lactation rooms available for officers returning from maternity leave.

**Families of peacekeepers are entitled to healthcare benefits**

Peacekeepers’ family members are entitled to healthcare benefits. The immediate family may receive free medical services and treatments. It is the responsibility of the SLP to ensure that medical services are given to the families of officers. However, families of peacekeepers are not entitled to pension benefits.
Work conditions are somewhat flexible

According to interviews and written research completed for the FFF, the work conditions and hours within the police force are not flexible. Officers work 12-hour shifts on base, therefore they do not have much time or the ability to take time off for their families. Further, officers cannot take annual leave during festive seasons when there is a high demand for officers to work.

However, survey responses indicate that there is at least some flexibility. 53.3 percent of officers stated that they can leave the office for an emergency if needed. 32.8 percent stated that they can have meetings and group activities online; 26.2 percent stated that they can work hours to accommodate family or personal needs; and 13.6 percent stated that they can work from home. Only 1.3 percent stated that they can bring their child to work, and overall 21.2 percent stated that they could not use any flexible work options. Overall, there may be a lack of clarity around who is able to access flexible work conditions. We recommend improving the transparency around who can access what options, and we recommend increasing the flexibility options to reduce the barriers to participation and improve the ability of individuals with families to participate in peace operations.

Another positive sign is that survey respondents were willing to approach superior officers to discuss family or other issues. 75 percent stated that they would be willing or very willing to approach a superior officer to discuss family issues that might affect their ability to fulfill their duties. Only 14.9 percent stated that they would be unwilling. However, men were statistically significantly more likely to state that they would approach a senior officer with a personal issue: 80.5 percent of men but only 68.7 percent of women would be willing to do so.

The fact that most men and women would feel comfortable approaching a supervisor about a family issue suggests that there is open communication, which is a positive outcome. However, the significant difference between men’s and women’s responses suggests that women still face some barriers in communicating and feeling valued by their superiors. We recommend continuing efforts to foster open communication, particularly among women.

Peacekeepers can return home if there is an emergency

If there is a family emergency, especially with immediate family members, officers are given a three-week vacation to return home and deal with the emergency.

It is a norm for officers to take leave

It is a norm for officers to take official leave as needed. 66.9 percent of surveyed officers have taken annual leave; 36.4 percent have taken sick leave. Only 17.9 percent stated that they have never taken leave at all. However, many officers appear unaware of their options for family, eldercare, and disability leave, discussed in greater depth below.

Main barriers

SLP payment insufficient for managing households

78.3 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Payment from the Sierra Leone Police Forces is sufficient for managing my household." Only 8.6 percent of respondents agreed that payment is sufficient. There was no significant gender difference in respondents’ satisfaction with their payment. Further, senior officers were not more likely to indicate satisfaction with payment. This indicates widespread dissatisfaction with pay rates.

Limited childcare options for police officers

There are no childcare facilities specifically for police officers or within the police forces for officers with children. The only facilities available are outside of the police force, and there are no subsidies available from the SLP or the government, though there are tax exemptions for childcare. Further, in Sierra Leone, it is not common for extended families to provide childcare. This means that individuals do not secure childcare through their personal networks, and therefore must pay for childcare.

Indeed, many survey respondents stated that they do not have childcare options—43.5 percent of officers stated that there are no options available, and 26.1 percent stated that private options are available. Fewer than ten percent of officers stated that there are childcare facilities and/or subsidies available from the national government or the police. This could pose a significant barrier for the many officers with children who do not have family or community support to rely on for childcare. This is particularly concerning for women’s participation since women are more likely to provide childcare and stay home if they cannot find other options for caring for their children. Even if the police force or government cannot directly provide childcare facilities, subsidizing childcare options for officers could be a way to address this barrier.
Gender norms place greater burden on women to provide childcare

In addition to the lack of family options for childcare, gender norms pose a cultural barrier. According to the FFF, it is not culturally acceptable for men to be stay-at-home fathers in Sierra Leone. According to interviews and written sources, men are expected to be the breadwinner and provide for their families, and therefore to be seen as responsible they are expected to work and not stay at home. Further, the SLP does not have a paternal leave policy because it is not seen as acceptable for men to provide childcare. 92.4 percent of survey respondents stated that there is no official paternal leave. Interestingly, 9.6 percent of women and 5 percent of men thought that there was an official paternal leave policy.

There is paid maternal leave, but the lack of paternal leave means that male officers may have more opportunities than female officers to work and advance in their careers. Further, many respondents were unaware of the policies regarding maternal leave: only 45.9 percent stated that women can take official maternal leave, and only 16 percent stated that women could take paid maternal leave. There was a statistically significant difference between men’s and women’s awareness regarding this issue: 59 percent of women but only 34.5 percent of men knew that there was an official maternal leave policy.

A lack of information that could both discourage women from joining the police forces and could discourage women police officers from continuing in their career or seeking out deployment opportunities if they have or want to have children.

In contrast to what we learned from the FFF, 34.3 percent of respondents stated that the father is the primary provider of childcare and only 23.5 percent stated that the mother is the primary provider of childcare in the home. 33.7 percent stated that “both parents” are the primary provider. Table 5 provides the responses for this question broken down by gender. After discussing these results in the validation workshop, we concluded that men responded this way because they view themselves as the primary financial provider, whereas women interpreted the question as asking about the primary care provider.

**Table 5: Primary childcare provider in the household.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the primary childcare provider in your household?</th>
<th>Male respondents</th>
<th>Female respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n (%)</td>
<td>n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>92 (50.8%)</td>
<td>23 (14.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>26 (14.4%)</td>
<td>54 (34.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents</td>
<td>55 (30.4%)</td>
<td>60 (38.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny/Au Pair</td>
<td>3 (1.7%)</td>
<td>4 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family member</td>
<td>3 (1.7%)</td>
<td>9 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable / Prefer not to say</td>
<td>2 (1.1%)</td>
<td>8 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the existence of gender norms that put greater responsibility on women for childcare, survey respondents by and large believe that women who deploy on UN peace operations can be good mothers. 88.6 percent of respondents “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that women who deploy cannot be good mothers. Only 5.5 percent agreed with this statement. Similarly, 89.9 percent of respondents “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that men who deploy on UN peace operations cannot be good fathers. 4.6 percent agreed with the statement.

Reliable childcare can be prohibitively expensive which is a barrier for both men and women. However, the lack of childcare options within the SLP is likely to disproportionately affect women and be a barrier for women to join peacekeeping efforts, because women cannot rely on their male partners to stay home and provide childcare. Since men are expected to be breadwinners, and women bear a greater burden in childrearing, the lack of childcare options is a significant barrier for women.
Lack of clarity regarding vacations

All vacation policies are designed by the UN, the SLP do not have their own vacation policy. Therefore, officers deployed through individual UNPOL deployment or through secondment are permitted to take vacations in line with the UN vacation policy. However, officers deployed with a formed police unit are not permitted to take vacations.

This may make officers reluctant to deploy as part of a formed police unit. However, according to our survey, only 54.9% of respondents stated that deployed personnel are allowed to take vacations or holidays. However, there was a statistically significant difference between men’s and women’s responses: 57.9% of men and 48.6% of women stated that they could take vacations. 10.1% stated that this depends on the mission or operation (9.5% of men and 10.2% of women).

This is a positive finding—since vacations can improve morale and allowing officers this flexibility is a positive way to reduce reluctance to join the police forces and deploy. However, individuals deployed with UNPOL, and individuals deployed with FPUs should both be allowed to take vacations. We recommend implementing a more egalitarian policy, allowing all officers to take a (reasonable) vacation, and increasing transparency and education efforts so that officers know policies.

No subsidizes for vacations

Vacations are not subsidized by the SLP or the Sierra Leone government. The costs of vacations are individual officers’ responsibility. 61.1 percent of officers surveyed confirmed this, though 21.8 percent stated that they did not know whether vacations were subsidized.

Family and sick leave is unpaid

Though SLP does allow officers to take eldercare/family leave and sick/disability leave, it is unpaid. Further, many officers were unaware of their options for leave. Though 55.4 percent stated that they can take official sick leave, only 4.1 percent stated that they could take official disability leave. Most respondents were aware that sick and disability leave were unpaid.

Additionally, few officers were aware that they can take official leave for family care or elder care: only 20.9 percent stated that they could take official leave for family care, and 2.2 percent stated that they could take leave for elder care. This prevents officers from being able to provide support to their family members. This is likely to disproportionately affect women, who often hold a disproportionate share of the responsibility to care for children and family members.

No training opportunities while on leave

Personnel do not have the option to engage in in-service training while on any leave. 53.3 percent of respondents stated that in-service training while on leave was not offered. However, 29.8 percent stated that in-service training was offered while on leave. Increasing opportunities for training while on leave could improve officers’ preparedness for deployment. Fortunately, most respondents (58.9 percent) stated that they do not feel that they missed out on career advancing opportunities while on leave. Only 17.6 percent feel that they missed out on opportunities and 16.6 percent feel that they missed out on opportunities “to some extent.”

No compensation for deceased peacekeepers

If peacekeepers pass away while deployed, there is no compensation for their families. This is potentially a barrier for individuals who do not want to deploy to a risky situation because their family depends on their income.
The peace operations infrastructure issue area assesses whether the lack of adequate equipment, services, and infrastructure prevents women from deploying to peace operations.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Pre-deployment training is made accessible in-country and online. International training is also available for those who are interested and able to attend.
- Training centers accommodate women, with same sex sleeping facilities and bathrooms available.
- Gear and equipment are provided to officers.
- There has been a gendered needs assessment for peace operations deployments.
- General, mental, and reproductive healthcare is provided.

**Main Barriers:**
- Equipment and facilities are viewed as inadequate by many respondents. Respondents are dissatisfied with sleeping quarters; health facilities; uniforms; and other equipment.
- Training is not offered in-service.
- Women’s health services are limited. Beyond condoms, birth control was not accessible on peace operations. Sanitary products may also be scarce.

**Differences in Perceptions and Experiences:**
- Very few officers use online training, with men more likely to do so.
- Women were more likely to say that healthcare was inadequate. This is particularly alarming given women’s special health needs regarding reproductive health and birth control.

**Key Recommendations:**
- Make in-service training available, especially training to pass the selection exam. Encourage officers to consider repeating trainings to keep skills up to date.
- Periodically review training curriculum to ensure materials remain up to date with exam content.
- Improve equipment and infrastructure, particularly equipment, sleeping quarters, bathrooms, office spaces, health facilities, uniforms, and equipment.
- Explore low-cost ways to improve women’s healthcare. This means making available more low-cost birth control options such as the pill; increasing availability and quality of health supplies such as sanitary pads and tampons; and improving gender sensitivity of healthcare staff, perhaps by hiring female physicians.
- During the validation workshop, officers noted that funding constraints make it difficult to provide improved equipment and healthcare. With this constraint in mind, we encourage the SLP to explore funding options and external assistance that may be available to purchase resources for officers such as computers, books, and other materials needed for training.
- Consider encouraging the government to establish a diplomatic presence such as a consulate in deployment zones so that officers are supported by their national government while abroad.

**Detailed Results**

**Good practices**

**Pre-deployment peacekeeping training is available in Sierra Leone**

The SLP conducts pre-deployment training. Training may be conducted either by expert police officers from the SLP who themselves are trained to provide peacekeeping training, or it may be provided by experts from the Kofi
Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana. Courses offer training in mission-specific materials such as the UN System, Code of Conduct, and the AU System; the Women, Peace and Security agenda; humanitarian assistance and human rights; protection of children and vulnerable persons; mentoring and advising; health issues such as hygiene, HIV/AIDS and malaria; administrative and practical skills, such as map reading, radio communications, and report writing, vehicle handling; mine awareness; and community based policing.

There is a peacekeeping training center, the Sierra Leone Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement Academy (SILEA) in Freetown. 48.3 percent of respondents who have deployed were trained at the SILEA. 37.5 percent of respondents were trained at another training academy in Sierra Leone, 38.1 percent were trained in in-service training in Sierra Leone, 22.7 percent were trained at a peacekeeping training center outside of Sierra Leone, and 22.7 percent were trained by the UN in Sierra Leone.

Online training opportunities

There are online training opportunities that are voluntary. These online training opportunities are not only for deployment, but also other UN/AU mission trainings. However, very few survey respondents used online training opportunities; only 4 individuals or 2.3 percent of those who were deployed. Creating opportunities for officers to conduct this training (e.g., offering computer facilities) could help encourage more individuals to train and pursue peacekeeping, as well as increasing awareness about online training opportunities.

International training opportunities

Some officers may travel to peacekeeping training centers in other countries to receive training. Officers have traveled to the Kof Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana, and the Swedish Armed Forces International Training Centre (SWEDINT) in Sweden. 22.7 percent of survey respondents who have participated in peacekeeping stated that they were trained at peacekeeping training centers outside of Sierra Leone. 5.1 percent of respondents stated that they were trained outside of Sierra Leone at a location other than a peacekeeping training center.

Facilities for women in training centers

There are women’s bathrooms in all peace operations facilities when deployed. Further, the peacekeeping training center in Sierra Leone has men’s and women’s bathrooms and gender-neutral bathrooms. 91.7 percent of survey respondents stated that they had access to their preferred bathroom near their workspace in the most recent UN peace operation to which they were deployed. There are also barracks designated specifically for women in peace operations facilities, and there are men’s and women’s dormitories at the national peacekeeping training center. 42.8 percent of respondents preferred same sex sleeping facilities and 22.8 percent preferred having both same sex and unisex facilities. Most survey respondents (85.6 percent) stated that they had access to their preferred sleeping arrangements while on mission.

Uniforms accommodate women’s bodies

The uniforms provided during UN peace operations fit most respondents, though they are not designed for women’s bodies specifically and do not accommodate pregnancy. 74.5 percent of survey respondents said that uniforms provided during UN peace operations were unisex; 27.6 percent said that male-specific uniforms were provided; and 22.8 percent said that female-specific uniforms were provided. 77.2 percent of survey respondents stated that the uniforms provided fit them on their most recent UN deployment, while 20.7 percent stated that uniforms did not fit. Men were more likely to experience fit issues with uniforms: 22.2 percent of men but only 19 percent of women stated that their uniforms did not fit.

Uniforms may not accommodate religious and/or cultural traditional clothing. Only 34.5 percent of survey respondents stated that uniforms “always” accommodate traditional clothing; 44.8 percent stated that they “sometimes” do; and 10.3 percent stated that they “never” do.

No height restrictions for driving UN vehicles

There is no height requirement for driving a UN 4x4 vehicle. As such, there are no accommodations for shorter personnel. Though it is positive that there is no height restriction for driving a UN vehicle, the lack of accommodations may make it difficult for shorter officers, particularly women, to drive.

Gendered needs assessment for peace operations deployments

There has been a gendered needs assessment for peace operations deployments to understand the needs of women while on peace operation. In 2011, the SLP undertook a gender self-assessment with support from DCAF and a local external consultant, Dr. Aisha Fofana Ibrahim. The goal of the self-assessment was to assess
achievements implemented since the SLP began a reform process in 1997 which aims to remove corruption, inefficiency, and human rights abuses and create a “friendly organization which the people can trust” by increasing the number of and support for female officers, among other goals.\(^5\)

The gendered needs assessment focused on the following areas: the impacts of conflict on men and women; rule of law and human rights violations; culture and human rights; gender, sex, gender roles and relationships; the influence of race, age, and class on gender roles; social vulnerability and gender discrimination; sexual exploitation and abuse; and gender issues related to peacekeeping.

According to validation workshop participants, the gendered needs assessment was well received by the SLP. Following the assessment, the SLP established a gender department to oversee implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy and SEA policy.

**General, mental, and reproductive healthcare is provided**

Peacekeepers have access to general healthcare free of cost. There are provisions for non-terminal illnesses. If illness persists, personnel are repatriated to their countries. Mental healthcare is also available free of cost. This includes free psychosocial guidance and counseling, and stress management mechanisms. Finally, reproductive healthcare is also available in peace operations, but it is not discussed as openly. There is a supply of condoms available for peacekeepers. Researchers noted that reproductive healthcare is “very personal” and typically “kept in confidence with the other party” involved. Birth control is legal in Sierra Leone, but peacekeepers do not have access to birth control in peace operations.

Most respondents found all these healthcare services to be adequate. Only 23.5 percent found general healthcare inadequate; 19.3 percent found sanitary products inadequate; 15.9 percent found mental healthcare inadequate; 14.5 percent found birth control inadequate; and 11 percent found reproductive healthcare inadequate. 48.3 percent said that all health services were adequate. However, there was a gender disparity.

Women were statistically significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with mental healthcare (22.2 percent of women, 11.1 percent of men) and reproductive healthcare (17.5 percent of women, 6.2 percent of men). Men were statistically significantly more likely to say that no health services were inadequate (36.5 percent of women, 56.8 percent of men).

**SLP has the equipment and infrastructure to send contingents**

The SLP has all the equipment and infrastructure necessary to send formed police units. There are enough personnel for both formed police units and individual police officers.

**Main barriers**

**Equipment and facilities are inadequate**

Although most survey respondents (57.3 percent) agreed that the SLP provides access to the equipment needed to do their job, many respondents were not satisfied with the facilities and equipment provided. In free response answers, many respondents noted that they needed computers or laptops, hard drives, and radios, but that these were not provided. Respondents reported significant issues with the facilities and equipment provided by the SLP. Table 6 reports these results.

**Table 6: Inadequate infrastructure and services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What types of facilities/equipment provided by the Sierra Leone Police Forces, if any, do you find INEQUATE?</th>
<th>n (%) (N = 366)</th>
<th>n (%) of WOMEN (N =166)</th>
<th>n (%) of MEN (N = 200)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms</td>
<td>167 (45.4%)</td>
<td>80 (48.19%)</td>
<td>87 (43.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping quarters</td>
<td>226 (61.4%)</td>
<td>104 (62.65%)</td>
<td>121 (60.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                        | SLP | UN | SLP/UN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
<td>167 (45.4%)</td>
<td>68 (40.96%)</td>
<td>99 (49.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining areas</td>
<td>93 (25.3%)</td>
<td>35 (21.08%)</td>
<td>58 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational space</td>
<td>128 (34.8%)</td>
<td>53 (31.93%)</td>
<td>73 (36.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms</td>
<td>210 (57.1%)</td>
<td>91 (54.82%)</td>
<td>117 (58.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health facilities</td>
<td>215 (58.4%)</td>
<td>96 (57.83%)</td>
<td>119 (59.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>183 (49.7%)</td>
<td>80 (48.19%)</td>
<td>103 (51.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None/all were adequate</td>
<td>32 (8.7%)</td>
<td>14 (8.43%)</td>
<td>18 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Peacekeeping training is not offered in-service**

Though there is a peacekeeping training center, and training is available within the country, training is not offered in-service. However, 38.1 percent of survey respondents stated that they received in-service training in Sierra Leone. Validation workshop participants explained that officers misconstrue in-country training that takes place at the international peacekeeping training center with in-service training for international peacekeeping. We recommend increasing opportunities for in-service peacekeeping training to enhance officers’ preparedness for the selection exam and recruitment process.

**Gear and equipment provided to officers**

When they deploy to peace operations, officers receive basic gear and equipment that they need to succeed. This includes protective gear such as helmets, boots and bulletproof vests. Officers also receive basic materials such as bedding. 57.3 percent of survey respondents stated that the SLP provided access to the equipment needed to do their job while deployed, but 32.1 percent of respondents stated that they did not have the equipment needed.

**Women may need special gear**

During the validation workshop, officers noted that women may have specialized needs when deployed to certain destinations. For example, in Somalia, women may need to cover their hair. Officers indicated that there is a process of considering local conditions. We recommend providing female officers with information about gender norms in deployment location and, if needed, providing special equipment such as a scarf for covering hair.

Our FFF indicated that feminine hygiene products are part of the standard UN peace operations deployment kit, which also includes detergent, bathing soap, and chlorine. However, data collected in the FFF did not specify what kinds of products are provided. Further, our survey results indicate that most officers were not provided these products. In our validation workshop, officers confirmed that women are not provided sanitary products when they deploy. We recommend including a variety of sanitary products such as tampons and sanitary pads in the standard equipment provided by the SLP and in the peace operations deployment kit for women. These are basic sanitary needs that all women have a right to access.

**Women’s health services are limited**

Female doctors only rarely deploy with formed police units. While doctors always deploy with formed police units, it is rare for that doctor to be a woman. This is potentially a barrier and negative experience for women since female officers may prefer to discuss health issues with a female officer. However, many survey respondents have received care from a female physician while deployed. Most of them saw a female physician in the UN healthcare facilities. 37.2 percent of all respondents stated that they saw a female physician in UN healthcare facilities during their most recent deployment; 7.6 percent saw a female physician in the SLP healthcare facilities; 7.6 percent saw female physicians in both; and 40.7 percent stated that they did not see a female physician. 50.8 percent of women saw a female physician and 53.1 percent of men did.

Regarding women’s health, 47.6 percent of survey respondents stated that the UN provided sanitary products on their most recent UN operation; 9.7 percent stated that the SLP provided sanitary products; and 6.9 percent stated
that both did. 35.9 percent of respondents either did not know if these products were provided or stated that they were not. The variety in responses to this question indicates a lack of transparency about this issue. Increasing awareness of the availability of these products would be a good way to improve women peacekeepers’ experiences.

Although overall survey respondents were satisfied with healthcare provided, women were slightly more likely to say that healthcare was not adequate 23.8 percent of women stated that sanitary products provided for them were inadequate; 19 percent found birth control inadequate; and 17.5 percent found reproductive healthcare inadequate. Because women have reproductive health needs and face a greater possibility of having their career disrupted as a result of sexual or reproductive health issues, this disparity could be a significant barrier for female officers who deploy or want to deploy.

**Birth control not available on peace operations**

Though birth control is legal in Sierra Leone, peacekeepers do not have access to birth control while deployed on peace operations. Condoms are available, but condoms are not the most reliable source of birth control. Though reproductive healthcare is available, the lack of options and transparency regarding contraception may present a barrier to women who need to control their fertility.

**Sierra Leone does not have consulates in countries of deployment**

Sierra Leone does not have a consulate in all the peace operations countries to which personnel deploy. This could be a barrier since it creates concerns about the Sierra Leonean government’s ability to respond to potential crises that peacekeepers may face.
The peace operations experiences issue area assesses the impact of (positive and negative) experiences during deployment, including experiences of meaningful participation, on women’s decision to redeploy or not, and to encourage or discourage others from deploying.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Both men and women have opportunities for networking and mentorship.
- Officers report few negative experiences and few problems upon returning home from deployments.

**Main Barriers:**
- Misconduct is present, with a majority (58%) of officers reporting having witnessed or experienced discrimination.
- Women perform additional work outside of their regular work duties.
- Officers face personal and interpersonal problems while deployed.
- No assistance is available for post-deployment transitions.
- There is a lack of a counseling unit in each locality where police are present.

**Differences in Perception and Experience:**
- Women are more likely to engage in additional “domestic” labor in addition to their regular work duties.
- Women were significantly more likely to have received gender training.
- Women were more likely to have hardships with observing their religious and cultural traditions than men.

**Key Recommendations:**
- Increase training regarding official misconduct policies, gender sensitivity, and sexual exploitation and abuse for all officers—both men and women—so that all officers are aware of official rules surrounding misconducts and feel prepared to address these issues.
- Encourage deployed units to adopt gender-equitable work systems so that women are not burdened with additional domestic labor. This means that male and female officers should equally split tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry while deployed.
- Validation workshop participants suggested establishing a counseling unit in each police locality so that all officers have access to counseling to process personal and interpersonal issues. Counseling should cover transitional processes such as pre-deployment preparation and post-deployment processing and reintegration. Validation workshop participants also recommended including financial management in counseling services.

**Detailed Results**

**Good practices**

**Both men and women participate in social activities**

Most of both men and women engage in social activities while on peace operations. All female peacekeepers, including Sierra Leoneans and women of other nationalities, share a social media group to coordinate activities.

Most personnel also participate in community outreach such as Quick Impact Projects. Police officers help to raise awareness of the host community regarding how they can be protected regarding their safety. UN missions also have UN radio which police officers may become involved in and support.
Both men and women have opportunities for mentorship and networking

Both men and women engage in mentorship relationships while on peace operations and are mentored by their senior officers. Officers also have networking opportunities. When they are deployed, they have social media created by themselves and the mission provides access to Microsoft and Google for sharing information. There are also opportunities to network in-person, for example by playing football at the gyms. 90% of the respondents reported that they were a part of a networking/mentorship program during their deployment.

Both men and women engaged with the locals regularly

94% of the deployed personnel (both men and women) reported engaging with the locals regularly. 64% of men and women interacted with the locals daily, while 30% of deployed men and women engaged with the locals on a weekly basis.

88.28% of the respondents reported interacting with local women directly. 51.72% of the personnel indicated that these interactions were taking place daily.

Officers feel prepared for deployment

Most officers stated that they felt prepared for deployment, and that they received adequate training. 88.3% of the surveyed personnel felt that they were prepared for the mission, and 7.59% responded that they were somewhat prepared. 98.6% of the respondents said that their roles in the mission matched their skills.

Few negative experiences while deployed

Most respondents felt fulfilled and did not experience significant problems while deployed. 84.7% of respondents who had been deployed said that they felt a high sense of fulfillment while on the mission. Most of the respondents said that they either received or think they will receive some benefits from taking part in a mission. 16.9% of respondents said that they decided to join the mission because of the positive experience their colleagues had while being deployed. However, men were statistically significantly more likely to volunteer for this reason: 22.5% of men but only 9.4% of women said they volunteered because they heard about a positive experience from their colleagues.

Very few respondents reported problems in the country of their deployment. No respondents experienced issues with crime while being deployed, but 17.4% of the respondents felt unsafe due to violence in the host country. Only 6.3% of the personnel felt discomfort with their jobs while on the mission. 17.4% of the survey respondents had difficulties adjusting to the local culture. 6.3% of the personnel reported experiencing problems with observing their religious obligations as well as cultural and traditional norms. There was a statistically significant gap between men’s and women’s experiences in observing their religious and cultural traditions: 11.1% of women but only 2.5% of men had problems.

Personal issues were not a significant problem for many respondents as well. 16.7% of the deployed personnel indicated that they experienced health problems during the mission. Less than 10% of the respondents said that they faced relationship problems while on the mission and at home. 9.7% reported being criticized for not fulfilling family duties while on a mission.

Problems with equipment and support were also minimal. Only 8.3% of the deployed faced issues with payments while on the mission. More than 50% of the respondents said that they had no financial issues during the deployment, and 70% of the respondents haven’t heard of anybody experiencing financial issues during the mission. 25% of the respondents indicated that they had issues with food. This is a high rate and suggests a potential problem with food availability and options. Though only 7% of the deployed personnel experienced issues with lodging and/or hygiene, there was a statistically significant difference: 3.8% of men and 11.1% of women had a problem with lodging and/or hygiene.

Officers feel they are treated with respect

77% of survey respondents said that everyone is treated with respect in UN peacekeeping operations. This is a majority, but it is concerning that 23 percent of respondents do not feel that everyone is treated with respect. However, only 1% of the respondents think that women are treated with less respect during peacekeeping missions, suggesting that gender discrimination is not a significant issue. 100% of the respondents said that people from developing countries are treated with respect.
Few officers report problems after returning home

Most officers did not report experiencing problems transitioning after returning home from peace operations. Only 17.6% of the surveyed personnel said that they will face problems with family members after returning from a mission. 6.3% of the respondents said that they face problems with friends upon return from the mission. 3% of the respondents said they had mental health problems after return, while 3.8% reported physical health issues. Men were statistically significantly more likely to report physical health issues (5.5% of men and 1.8% of women). Less than 5% of the respondents experienced issues with rumors and stigma after being deployed and less than 1% of the respondent’s reported issues with boredom.

Personnel also reported few problems in their financial situation and careers. Only 10.6% of the surveyed personnel said that they face financial problems upon return. Less than 1% of the personnel said that they faced problems with demotion or felt like they missed career opportunities due to deployment. These figures are impressive considering that 6.3% of the respondents reported receiving no help from the SLP in transitioning back. However, 84% of the respondents reported receiving help from the UN with regards to transition back from the mission. This help in transitioning could be a reason why return outcomes are so positive for peacekeepers.

Main barriers

Misconduct and discrimination is present

There were reports of misconduct by fellow peacekeepers. 58.3% of the respondents indicated that they have never experienced or witnessed discrimination. This is a majority, but not a large one. If close to 42 percent of officers have experienced or witnessed discrimination, this indicates a significant and visible problem that could seriously deter female officers from volunteering to join peace operations.

11% of the surveyed respondents reported receiving unwanted texts from their colleagues. Close to 16% of the surveyed said that they witnessed a colleague referring to someone other than their proper names. 6.25% of the surveyed personnel reported that they either experienced firsthand or heard of cases when pictures were posted online without their consent.

9.2% of the personnel said that they heard jokes being made about women while being deployed. 13.3% heard jokes about physical appearances, and 3.3% about sexual orientation. 77.8% of the personnel said that they have never been criticized by a colleague for things like being overly emotional, being aggressive, or level of knowledge.

Many personnel engaged in extra work outside of their duties

About 89% of all respondents (90% men and 87.3% women) reported that they did engage in extra activities such as cleaning, cooking, driving, community outreach, teaching the local population and mentoring outside of their regular duties. Women were more likely to engage in cooking and healthcare provision than men whereas men were more likely to engage in driving than women.

Table 7 shows the breakdown of extra top 5 activities by engagement.

Table 7: Additional domestic labor activities outside of official tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>56.3%*</td>
<td>71.4%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>70%***</td>
<td>47.6%***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community outreach</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching local population</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare provision</td>
<td>10%*</td>
<td>20.6%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peacekeepers don’t spend time socializing with one another

Only 16% of men and 14% of women reported that they go out socially with their peace operations colleagues daily. 50% of the respondents indicated that they went out with their peacekeeper colleagues at least once during the deployment.

More training in handling rape cases needed

Most officers stated that they felt prepared to handle difficult situations with locals while on mission, but there are still gaps in preparedness that indicate a potential weakness. 77.2% of the respondents felt prepared to handle cases of rape when the perpetrator is a peacekeeper. 66.2% of the respondents reported that they are prepared to handle marital rape situations, while 74.5% of the respondents indicated that they feel prepared to handle rape cases when the offender is a local police officer. There were no significant differences between men’s and women’s responses to these questions. It is important for all peacekeepers to be able to handle such sensitive situations—such as, we recommend increasing training for these kinds of issues. Further, increasing women’s participation is vital since local women often feel more comfortable talking to other women about these kinds of crimes.

Officers report personal and interpersonal problems while deployed

77% of the deployed experienced some sort of problems during the deployment. Every second respondent in the survey said that they felt homesick while being deployed. This is a significant problem that affects peacekeepers’ morale, effectiveness, and willingness to complete deployment assignments and re-deploy. 11.8% of the surveyed personnel indicated being involved in a driving accident.

Officers also reported problems working with peacekeepers from other countries while deployed. 11% of the surveyed personnel agreed with the statement that peacekeepers from other countries created problems for them. Close to 16% of the respondents indicated that peacekeepers from other countries create obstacles for the success of the mission.

No assistance for post-deployment transitioning

Personnel do not receive assistance from the police force when transitioning back from deployment from either the SLP or the UN. 38% of the respondents said that they faced some problem upon returning from a mission. 17.7% reported family problems, 12.5% of the personnel reported facing problems with cheating, and 9.5% reported facing problems with divorce and separation after their return.

Respondents reported receiving no support from the supervisors or mentors with regards to transitioning back. Less than 3% of the respondents said that they have received help in transitioning from family and friends. 6.9% of the deployed personnel received support from their own government with regards to transition. Less than 5% reported receiving support from their colleagues, though women were statistically significantly more likely to report receiving help from colleagues (7.9% of women and 1.3% of men). This suggests women may feel more comfortable reaching out and asking for help. Encouraging men to reach out, or creating support networks for returning officers, could ameliorate this disparity and provide more support.

During the validation workshop, participants stated that a counseling unit existed for the SLP in the past but that it no longer exists. Officers discussed the importance of establishing a counseling unit to give officers someone to talk to. One participant explained the urgency of psychological issues: “There are times you have issues in your home or family, financial issues, and you need to have someone to talk to. People are dying of these health problems, of psychological issues… these people don’t have money or somewhere to go. Our bosses don’t have [training] in personnel issues. Where do they go?”

Officers present stated that there should be a counseling unit in each locality where police are so that if police have a problem, they don’t have to travel a long distance, and can access someone who is specially trained to deal with psychological and personal issues. Counseling should be part of the services available for officers.
66% of the surveyed personnel reported hearing women complain about their experience during the UN peacekeeping mission, though only 9.8% of them said that those stories affected their decision to deploy or re-deploy for a mission. 66.3% of the respondents reported hearing about men having negative experiences during the mission, but less than 10% said that it affected their decision to join the mission. Men were more likely than women to report hearing complaints for both women and men (69% of men and 62% of women heard complaints from women while 70.5% of men and 60.8% of women heard complaints from men). These differences were not statistically significant.
The career value issue area measures whether peace operations help the careers of military personnel. This, in turn, affects whether men and women are likely to deploy and redeploy. Women who have deployed may choose not to redeploy if it is not advantageous to their career prospects.

**Summary of Results**

**Main Opportunities:**
- Peace operations deployment is nearly universally seen as positive for advancing officers’ careers.
- Peace operations are part of Sierra Leone’s national security strategy. Further, stories about peace operations are featured in SLP recruitment documents.
- Peacekeepers are recognized positively for their efforts by their families, communities, and the SLP institution.

**Main Barriers:**
- Peacekeepers may not be able to return home during times of national emergency.
- There are no public memorials to peacekeepers.

**Key Recommendations:**
- Allow officers to return home (for national or personal emergencies), or increase transparency and education around leave policies. Assuring officers of flexibility will encourage those with families at home to deploy.
- Continue rewarding officers for participation in peace operations experiences by promoting these officers and increasing their salary commensurate with new skills learned while deployed.
- Public memorials of peacekeepers are a valuable and visible way to encourage officers to participate.

**Detailed Results**

**Good practices**

**Peace operations deployment good for officers’ careers**

Peace operations deployment advances police officers’ careers and helps them rise in rank in the police force. Peace operations deployment is considered in decisions regarding promotions within the police force. Deployment gives officers advantages because it exposes them to different forms of policing and teaches officers to work as a team with personnel from different cultural backgrounds. 84% of the surveyed personnel said that deployment helps in career advancement. Interestingly, 36% of women but only 28% of men believe that one of the benefits of their peacekeeping experience was “rising in rank” upon return—suggesting that peacekeeping may be more valuable for women, who may have fewer informal inroads to promotion.

81.25% of the respondents said that deployment adds to their salary and 71.47% of the surveyed personnel said that deployment improves their CV/resume. 86.41% of survey participants said they learn new skills on a peacekeeping mission. Only less than 1% of the surveyed personnel said that deployment delays career promotions. Every third respondent said that experience in peacekeeping is considered when promotion decisions are made. Women were statistically significantly more likely to say that deployment helped their career: 35.5% of women and 27.5% of men stated that deployment helped them get a promotion. This suggests that peacekeeping deployment itself is a positive way to improve gender equity.

Upon returning home from peacekeeping, officers return to their old jobs. Individuals return to the same department that they worked in prior to deployment. 89.5% of the deployed personnel said that they have returned to their old jobs upon their return.
Peace operations are mentioned in Sierra Leone’s national security strategy

Peace operations are mentioned in the country’s national security strategy because it is a commitment by the state that police officers should serve as peacekeepers. This has led to the establishment of a peace enforcement and training academy in Sierra Leone.

Stories about peace operations are featured in internal communications

Internal communications sent to police officers across the country feature stories about peace operations. These stories highlight women’s contributions to peace operations. This bolsters the SLP’s policy to increase recruitment of women.

Peacekeepers are recognized by the government, police, media, and community

Upon returning to the country, officers who have been deployed are addressed by the Minister of Internal Affairs and other authorities. Officers are also recognized for their deployment by the SLP. The media also recognizes peacekeepers for their deployment, since the media is called to cover all recognition activities carried out by the government and the SLP. Finally, peacekeepers are recognized for their deployment by their community. Deployment typically entails a change in financial status which community members recognize.

20.14% of the respondents said that they were recognized by their governments for the work that they have done during the peacekeeping operation. 82.64% said they were recognized by the Sierra Leone Police Forces. 18.06% of the surveyed personnel said that they were mentioned in the media. 23.6% of the respondents said they were recognized by their communities.

Main barriers

Peacekeepers may not return home during elections or times of national emergency

Peacekeepers must stay in the host country during times of national emergency or during elections in Sierra Leone. This may be a barrier for individuals who do not want to leave their families behind in case of emergency. If there is an emergency in the host country, it is determined by the UN and AU experts in the mission to assess the disaster. However, if there is a peacekeeper death on the operation, peacekeepers do return home. This is regardless of whether peacekeepers die of natural causes or during action.

There are no memorials of peacekeepers or medals awarded to peacekeepers

There are no memorials and/or statues of peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. Further, there is no medal awarded to peacekeepers when they return home. Medals are issued only on the grounds of the UN mission. However, there is a National Peacekeeping Day that was recently established. Further, stories related to peace operations are circulated in internal communications within the police force. These stories are featured in a circular and in memos that are sent to all police officers across the country.

UN assessments are not integrated into SLP promotion system

UN assessments are not integrated into the national promotion system of the SLP. Although the SLP does value deployment, not including UN assessments may lower officers’ willingness to perform well on UN assessments.
The top-down leadership issue area explores the impact of political will among those in influential positions (or lack thereof) on women’s deployment and meaningful participation in peace operations.

Summary of Results

Main Opportunities:

- Gender trainings are offered, with a majority or plurality of respondents having taken gender training at some point.
- National frameworks and institutions to address gender mainstreaming, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other gender equality issues.
- Gender is mentioned in the Sierra Leone national security strategy. Sierra Leone has also adopted multiple National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325.
- Male allies advance women’s participation and opportunities in the SLP.

Main Barriers:

- Gender training is not required for senior leaders.
- While there are female supervisors, there are few higher-level female commanders.
- There is a lack of awareness among officers of existing institutions and resources for gender equality.
- Officers may not feel comfortable approaching senior leaders about personal or familial issues.

Differences in Perception and Experience:

- Women were more likely to know of men who had made efforts to promote women.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase education efforts to raise awareness among officers regarding institutions and resources available related to gender equality (such as the gender focal point and counseling services).
- Encourage formation of and/or increased participation in formal women’s associations.
- Encourage leadership to be accommodating and open to candid discussions and listen intently to junior officers, especially female officers, about personal/familial and other issues.
- Increase presence and visibility of women in leadership roles.

Detailed Results

Good practices

Female trailblazer well known

Fatmata K. Kamara was the first female trailblazer within the field of peacekeeping operations. She joined the SLP on December 4, 1989. She studied both at national and international level and holds a PhD. Through the rank and file, she rose to the rank of superintendent. During the validation workshop, officers also discussed Kadie Fakondo and Elizabeth Turay, both former AIGs.

Gender training offered

Gender training is offered at the basic academy, and the gender course is required for all new police recruits. Gender training is offered as in-service training. The training department is tasked with ensuring that the needs of all male and female officers are met. To this end, the SLP ensures that training is decentralized to enable equal access to training opportunities. All SLP personnel receive training on equal opportunity and gender equality in the workplace. All new recruits receive gender responsiveness training and information on the gender mainstreaming policy. The gender awareness and equality courses are taught as standalone courses.
The Department ensures that at least 30% of officers participating in any training organized by and for the SLP are women. The Department may also facilitate a special training for men or women if there is an imbalance in specific skills. Further, there are scholarships available for female personnel to acquire further educational qualifications to bridge gaps between men and women in leadership. Finally, the Gender Directorate also established a mentoring program to support the personal and professional development of junior male and female personnel on an equitable basis.

**Many officers receive gender training**

85.4% of the respondents reported that they received some form of gender training during deployment. 54% of the respondents received general gender training at the Sierra Leone Police Academy, and close to 60% of the respondents received general gender training during the deployment. 31.37% of low to mid-rank personnel and 35.48% of the high rank personnel said that they received general gender training while in-service.

Most respondents received general gender training (59 percent) and training on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (58.3 percent). Many officers also received specialized gender training, such as sexual violence or civilian protection (47.2 percent). Women were statistically significantly more likely to receive general gender training (68.3% of women and 52.5% of men).

58.15% of the respondents said that their superiors reached out to them regarding training in gender. 48.10% of the surveyed personnel indicated that their superiors promoted peacekeeping training. 95.65% of the sample responded that they are willing to approach the leadership with regards to additional job-related training. 77.42% of mid to high rank personnel are interested in taking gender training in the future.

We recommend continuing to encourage officers to take gender training at the SLP and during deployment. We also recommend encouraging early, mid, and late career officers all to take gender training, since this will both increase uptake and enable senior officers to lead by example.

**Majority of mid-career officers have taken a gender course**

The vast majority (92.2 percent) of mid-career officers have taken at least one training course on gender. 61 percent have taken general gender training courses and 68.8 percent have taken training on the prevention of SEA. Further, multiple mid-career officers interviewed noted that “no matter the mission,” “women have their own role to play” in peace operations. One mid-level officer noted that “Women should participate in all peacekeeping activities because they have great roles to perform as they are the primary victims of conflicts and wars; they should be integral in finding lasting peace to the entire process.” Officers may take HeForShe training or courses on gender mainstreaming or sexual exploitation.

However, even though qualitative analysis suggests that mid-career men are supportive of women’s deployment to UN peacekeeping missions, statistical analysis shows that gender and rank are not significant predictors of gender awareness. Hence, these anecdotal findings might not be generalizable across a larger sample.

**National framework to address sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)**

There is a national framework for addressing SEA that adheres to international, regional, and national laws and protocols. The goal of the policy is to ensure that the work environment of the SLP is free from any form of SEA. The guiding principle of this policy is zero tolerance of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This policy represents a commitment by the SLP to protect its officers and the people they serve from SEA.

If an officer engages in SEA, a report is sent to the Gender Unit or focal person. Then, the focal person submits a full report for investigation. The alleged perpetrator is cautioned, and an interview is conducted to determine guilt. Though there is a formal policy in place to deal with SEA, senior leaders in the SLP do not speak publicly against SEA.

87.5% of the respondents said that they are willing to approach a superior officer to report misconduct by their peers. This is a good practice that reflects officers’ faith in the existing policies to handle misconduct.

**Gender mainstreaming in SLP**

The SLP has an official gender mainstreaming policy, created in collaboration with the UNDP and adopted in April 2008. This policy is a long-term process that aims to achieve gender equality through recognizing at all stages of planning and analysis that women and men have needs and potential that are equally valued regardless of their gender or sex. This means “provisions for gender equality and support for women employees of the SLP in
recruitment, training, deployment/transfers, promotions, [and] representation/leadership.” Equality does not mean the same treatment, but fair treatment. At SLP, gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that men and women have equal opportunities to develop and use their skills in all aspects of policing.

Violation of the mainstreaming policy shall be a disciplinary offense. Victims of all forms of discrimination may report complaints to the Gender Focal Person in their LUC, who then submits a report to the Regional Gender Desk Officer for further submission to the Gender Directorate and CDIID for further action.

Senior leaders speak publicly about the importance of gender mainstreaming. The SLP speak about these issues and increase awareness through community engagement in marketplaces and community centers.

**Institutions within Sierra Leone and the SLP to address gender issues**

The SLP has an official gender division, the Gender Affairs Directorate, which was established soon after the SLP completed its gender needs self-assessment in 2011. In 2023 it was made up of three women and five men. The SLP also has an official Gender Focal Person who receives complaints regarding gender issues, addresses complaints, and reports to senior officers. Senior leaders within the SLP also have the Director of Gender who serves as a gender advisor. Finally, the SLP also has a gender report that was created based on a survey conducted among women in the SLP. The report focuses in part on the incidence of rape and sexual exploitation.

The SLP also has the Sierra Leone Police Female Staff Association (SLPFSA), which was established in 2007 and is open to all female police personnel. According to the gender self-assessment in 2011, the organization served “mainly as a welfare advocacy body” and membership was automatic, but paid membership is voluntary. The SLPFSA’s executive has no decision-making authority and “depends on the goodwill of the EMB [Executive Management Board, the SLP’s highest policy-making body] for the association’s existence.”

The SLPFSA exists to unite female police officers and give women a space to support each other. The organization also lobbies decision-making bodies in the SLP to advance women’s interests: for example, in 2011, the association lobbied for women to receive 30% of total promotions. The quota was not made into policy, but there were multiple high-profile promotions of women following this effort. Money paid in dues is used as donations for any group members who are going through significant life events such as getting married or losing a family member.

At the national level, Sierra Leone has a ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs which addresses gender issues. There is also the Policewomen’s Association within the Ministry of Defense to address gender issues, though in recent years it has declined. Recently, women in the SLP established the SLP Female Leaders to build a mentorship network of women.

There was generally a high level of awareness about institutions within the SLP to address gender issues, but we recommend increasing educational efforts so that all officers are aware of the institutions and resources available. 57.8% of the surveyed personnel said that they are aware of an institutional gender equality policy. 51.63% of the respondents are aware that there is a gender division in their institution.

50.82% of the surveyed personnel said that they know that there is a gender focal point in the Sierra Leone Police Forces. 39.13% of the respondents are aware that there is a gender coach in the Sierra Leone Police. 18.48% of the respondents are aware of the gender toolkit.

**Gender is mentioned in national security strategy**

Gender is mentioned in Sierra Leone’s national security strategy. This national security strategy was created through a dialogue that sought to increase citizen input to the planning process and institutionalize a transitional justice framework. The national security coordinator (NSCOORD) Retired Brigadier Mustapha M. K. Dumbaya has said that gender equality is a high priority within the security sector. He called on women in the security sector to “to capacitate and position themselves, in order to occupy strategic positions in the sector.”

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6 Ibrahim, Integration of a Gender Perspective, 38.  
7 Ibrahim, Integration of a Gender Perspective, 30.  
**UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP)**

Senior officers in the SLP receive training and demonstrated knowledge about UNSCR 1325. This training has to do with increasing women’s participation in peacekeeping.

Sierra Leone first adopted a NAP to address UNSCR 1325 in 2010 for the period 2010-2014. The second NAP was adopted for the period of 2019-2023. This plan was developed by a collaborative process undertaken by a task force comprised of both government and civil society representatives. 69.35% of the respondents in the leadership positions said that they have heard about the UN SC Resolution 1325.

The implementation of the NAP as well as commitments to the Women, Peace and Security agenda are in Sierra Leone’s national reporting for Beijing+25 and the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64), both in 2020. Reporting indicated that implementation of the first NAP was hampered by the Ebola outbreak of 2015. In November of 2015, UN Women in Sierra Leone hired a consultant to carry out an evaluation of the 2010-2014 NAP. This consultation was carried out throughout the country and in collaboration with the national steering committee members, and it provided recommendations for the second NAP which was adopted in 2019.

The NAP does mention increasing the proportion of female peacekeepers among the SLP. All recruitment panels should have no less than 30 percent of female personnel, including a gender officer. All panel members should be familiar with the gender mainstreaming policy and there should be special efforts to recruit women through targeted recruitment activities.

**National commitment to increase the number of female peacekeepers**

There is a national commitment within the SLP to increase the number of female peacekeepers. The policy was established on October 3, 2012. This is an inclusive policy that “will leverage national capacities and existing efforts to respond to gender issues through the SLP Gender Unit and Peacekeeping Operations Department” (ReliefWeb). The policy has given many women the opportunity to take part in peacekeeping efforts.

**Male allies advance women’s rights**

There are male allies within Sierra Leone who have sought to advance women’s rights within the SLP. The Inspector General of the Police, Fayia Sellu, sent more women on peacekeeping missions and has tried to open doors to increase opportunities. Retired Brigadier Mustapha M. K. Dumbuya also made gender equality a high priority in the SLP.

More than 80% of respondents know of men in the SLP who have supported or advanced women in some way. 45.4% of respondents stated that they knew of a man who “stood up for women who were being discriminated against.” 37.2% know men who “helped promote women in rank.” 40.5% know a man who “promoted policies that help women,” with women significantly more likely to know a man who promoted pro-women policies (42.8% of women, 33% of men).

Close to 80% of the respondents said they have at least one mentor within the Sierra Leone Police Forces.

**Main barriers**

**Gender training not required for senior leaders**

There are nine senior leaders in the SLP. Though our research suggested that upper-level men in the police force understand the importance of women in peace operations, senior leaders are not required to take at least one gender course. Courses available include a gender mainstreaming course, HeForShe training, and a training to prevent sexual exploitation. Requiring officers to take these courses would increase sensitivity towards gender issues.

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Few female commanders

80% of the respondents said that they work under male supervisors, while 19.25% respondents indicated that they have female supervisors. Having positive female role models in the workplace is vital to encouraging women to increase their participation and engagement at work. We encourage continuing or heightening efforts to put women in leadership positions, particularly positions where women can serve as examples and lead teams and of fellow officers.

Lack of awareness of some gender institutions

Every 3rd respondent in the survey said that he/she has heard about the UN SC Resolution 1325. Though Sierra Leone adopted UNSCR 1325 in 2010, there is still a low level of awareness of this resolution among officers. We recommend increasing education on this issue.

Less than 60% of the surveyed personnel have heard about formal women’s associations in their institution. We recommend encouraging women to formal associations, since this is a way to improve morale and encourage participation by women. We also recommend increasing advertisement of formal women’s associations to increase engagement.

Officers may not be willing to discuss serious matters with leaders

95.7% of survey respondents stated that they would be willing or very willing to approach a supervisor to ask for more training to better fulfill their stated duties. 94.6% would approach a senior officer about issues related to peacekeeping deployment. 87.5% would be willing to approach a senior officer to discuss inappropriate behavior by their colleagues. These high rates suggest that officers do feel comfortable approaching leaders about professional matters.

On the other hand, 75% of the sample are willing to approach their supervisors with regards to personal matters. This high number indicates a good baseline of transparency and open communication in the SLP. However, there was a statistically significant difference between men and women. 68.7% of women and 80.5% of men were willing to approach leadership about personal matters. This suggests that women may not feel comfortable speaking candidly with leadership or may expect that leadership will not take personal concerns seriously.

Further, half of the respondents agreed with the statement that senior leaders of the Sierra Leone Police Forces do not listen to members of junior rank. This is a serious issue and indicates that junior officers may not feel valued. This could lead to significant communication issues which could hamper police effectiveness.

Senior leaders do not speak publicly against SEA

Though there is a formal policy in place for dealing with SEA, senior leaders in the SLP have not spoken out publicly against SEA. It is important to have formal policies in place to deal with perpetrators and victims of SEA, but it is also important to publicly denounce any actions of SEA and make it clear that these activities are not tolerated. This sends an important signal to officers and the community that the SLP values women and stands with victims of SEA.
Issue area 9 Gender roles

The gender roles cross-cutting issue area explores whether the prevalence of gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes influences the number of women deploying and their ability to meaningfully participate in peace operations. We assess this by looking at the degree to which women and men hold traditional roles and views about the roles that men and women play in society. We also assess the degree to which a gender protection norm exists in the institution. This means we assess whether men and women continue to feel that women must be protected from danger.

Summary of Results

Main Opportunities:
- Men and women can serve equally in all roles, combat/tactical and otherwise, and can serve as leaders.
- Personnel believe women officers are equally capable of carrying out tasks.

Main Barriers:
- Women provide additional “domestic” labor at a higher rate.
- Depending on the type and location of the mission, personnel may not be permitted to leave the compound. This depends largely on safety concerns.
- There are still beliefs that men and women are better at their respective gendered work.

Differences in Perception and Experience:
- Women are more likely to engage in additional unpaid “domestic” labor including cooking, healthcare provision, and childcare. Men were more likely to drive.

Key Recommendations:
- Make efforts to create an equal division of labor in additional unpaid labor while deployed. Validation workshop participants noted that “no one wants to do manual labor” and that decisions about tasks such as cooking and cleaning both depend on the mission and are up to individual capabilities. However, reducing the expectation that women ought to provide “domestic” tasks such as cooking, and cleaning will both reduce gender disparities and help women feel valued as members of the police institution.
- While recognizing the imperative of keeping officers safe, we recommend allowing officers to leave the compound and move freely where possible.

Detailed Results

Good practices

Men and women deploy to the same peace operations

Men and women deploy to the same peace operations, and to the same kinds of missions. Both are expected and able to deploy to dangerous missions if needed. Though some key decision-makers interviewed stated that men were more likely to be sent to more dangerous missions, others disagreed: “No matter how lethal the mission is, women have their own role to play.”

Women may deploy to new peace operations when they start for a new country. In 2019, the SLP sent men and women to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). According to our survey results, a representative number of men and women were deployed to AMISOM, UNMISS (South Sudan), UNITAMS (Sudan), UNAMID (Darfur), AMISOM (Somalia), and UNISFA (Abuye). According to our survey results, only five men and no women were deployed to MINUSTAH in Haiti. Table 8 shows troop deployment totals. The very small number of male-only officers deployed to Haiti may reflect a preference for men in this mission, or it may reflect the very small demand for officers. However, only two officers were deployed to UNISFA, and one was a woman—so it seems there could be something specific to MINUSTAH that is contributing to decreased women’s participation there.
### Table 8: Troop deployment to peace operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Men (% of total)</th>
<th>Women (% of total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATMIS - Somalia</td>
<td>24 (55.8%)</td>
<td>19 (44.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMISS - South Sudan</td>
<td>10 (55.6%)</td>
<td>8 (44.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITAMS - Sudan</td>
<td>7 (58.3%)</td>
<td>5 (41.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINUSTAH - Haiti</td>
<td>5 (100%) **</td>
<td>0 (0%) **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMID - Darfur</td>
<td>33 (60%)</td>
<td>22 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMISOM - Somalia</td>
<td>12 (44.4%)</td>
<td>15 (55.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISFA - Abuyeit</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically significant difference between men and women
*P<0.1
**P<0.05
***P<0.01

**Women can serve in all roles**

Women can serve in all roles. There are no bans on women engaging in traditionally male roles in the police force. Women and men can equally serve in combat/operational roles. In fact, an equal number of men and women stated that they engaged in operational activities “every day” while deployed. 76.5 percent of men and 82.5 percent of women engaged in operational activities at least once a week. Further, 88.3 percent of respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that women are capable of special tactical operations.

Men and women can also serve equally in leadership roles. However, male survey respondents were much more likely to have held a leadership role than women. Only 13.2 percent of men had never held a commanding position, while 29.7 percent of women had never held a commanding position. 71.6 percent of men but only 49.7 percent of women had held more than one commanding position. These differences were statistically significant.

Both men and women served as gender focal points or gender advisors while deployed to peace operations—48.8 percent of men and 65.1 percent of women had held a gender focal point or gender advisory role while deployed. The high levels of participation in these roles, particularly among men, is a good practice that indicates a high level of interest in improving gender parity outcomes. Having men in these roles is important to demonstrating commitment and solidarity with women officers.

**Personnel believe all-female units are equally capable of carrying out important tasks**

Respondents were asked if they believe that all-female units would be equally capable of handling certain situations compared to all-male units, in Mali and in Cyprus. Respondents were asked if these units would be capable of addressing sexual and gender-based violence; contributing to peace and security; responding to refugees; and overseeing a protest. There was no significant difference between survey respondents’ beliefs about the capability of all-female or all-male units, suggesting that respondents believe that both male and female officers can respond to a variety of security situations.

**Low score on gender roles scale**

In a scale of beliefs about traditional gender roles, the mean response was below the median value, meaning that most respondents do not hold rigid beliefs about traditional gender roles. There was also no difference between men’s and women’s responses to questions about traditional gender roles.
Although overall beliefs about gender roles were not dominated by traditional beliefs, respondents do still hold some traditional beliefs. For example, officers were asked whether “a woman should ask permission from her father/husband before deploying on a UN peace operation.” 47.4 percent of respondents agreed with this statement; 23.7 percent felt neutral; and 22.9 percent disagreed. Though it is not a majority, this is still a significantly large proportion of the population who believes that women should have to ask permission from their male family members before making decisions about their career and deployment opportunities. Interestingly, there is no significant difference between male and female responses to this question. 48.5 percent of men and 45.5 percent of women agreed; 23 percent of men 23 percent of women disagreed.

Men were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree that “a good wife should listen to her husband despite disagreeing with him” (70.8% of men, 61.1% of women) and that “a woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together” (10.4% of men, 4% of women). Men were also more likely to agree that “changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and cooking for the kids are only the mother’s responsibility” (10.4% of men, 4% of women), though very few men agreed with this statement.

Personnel can drive a vehicle

Personnel who want to drive a vehicle may do so. 68.8 percent of respondents stated that they could access a vehicle whenever they wanted; 11.8 percent said they could not; and 15.3 percent stated that it depended on the operation.

Safety issues not a concern

None of the officers surveyed who did not apply for deployment stated that they decided not to apply because of safety concerns.

Main barriers

Women more likely to do additional “domestic” labor

Women are more likely to engage in additional labor beyond the scope of their operational roles. While 56.3 percent of male survey respondents reported that they also helped to cook meals while deployed, 71.4 percent of women did. This was a statistically significant difference. Likewise, 58.8 percent of men and 65.1 percent of women engaged in cleaning in addition to their regular professional duties. Women were also more likely to engage in healthcare provision (20.6 percent of women and 10 percent of men, statistically significant) and to provide childcare (14.5 percent of women and 5 percent of men).

In contrast, men were more likely to report driving in addition to their regular professional duties— 70 percent of men and 47.6 percent of women drove. There was little to no gender difference in mentoring (32.5 percent of men 30.2 percent of women); teaching the local population (36.5 percent of women and 30 percent of men); and community outreach (46 percent of women and 42.5 percent of men).

Overall, officers report engaging in additional activities beyond their regular professional duties at high rates. This additional labor may reduce morale and make officers reluctant to re-deploy. This effect is likely especially strong among women, who are more likely than men to engage in additional labor. The fact that women report engaging in traditionally domestic labor at higher rates than men while deployed could indicate the presence of harmful gender roles that might result in a reduced appreciation for women’s contributions and therefore a reduced capacity for women to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

During the validation workshop, officers noted that the performance of these tasks depends both on the mission and on the individual officers. In some missions, food is provided by a separate UN labor force, so officers do not have to perform this additional labor. In other missions, it is up to individual officers. Validation workshop participants noted that the performance of these tasks is very much individualized: “some women are pleased to eat food prepared by men, some men don’t know how to cook. It’s a matter of choice.” Recognizing that each mission is different, within peace operations were deployed personnel do have to perform domestic tasks, we encourage supervisors to work with personnel to establish an equitable distribution of labor so that all officers are equally contributing to both the unpaid, “domestic” support labor in addition to performing their required security tasks. This ensures that all officers are not burdened by excessive additional responsibilities and are therefore able to complete their required security tasks.
Personnel believe men and women make gendered contributions

Survey respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least competent and 10 being the most competent, how competent they believe a peacekeeper would be in performing a variety of tasks. Respondents were asked about a female peacekeeper (“Fatmata”) and a male officer (“Mohamed”).

Respondents rated the female officer as being more competent at engaging with women and children in a conflict zone. The mean level of competency for women was 7.16, and men’s mean competence was 6.57, suggesting that respondents believe that women are better equipped to deal with the local population of women and children. Respondents also believed that women were better equipped to engage with refugees in a camp (7.12 for women, 6.69 for men).

On the other hand, respondents rated the male officer as being more competent at responding to a suspected terrorist attack after intelligence about a possible bomb. The mean level of competency for the male officer was 6.98, and the mean level for the female officer was 6.09. This suggests that officers may perceive men as more capable of handling dangerous missions than women. Respondents also stated that the male officer was more capable of training local police forces (6.59 for women, 7.04 for men).

There was no significant difference in the mean values of perceived confidence of the male and female officer for the tasks of gathering information (6.43 for women, 6.30 for men) and typing situation reports (7.16 for women, 7.07 for men). However, there was a significant difference in that women responded that the female officer would be more competent in typing situation reports (women rated the female officer 7.68 and the male officer 6.90) but men responded that the male officer would be more competent at this task (men rated the female officer 6.76 and the male officer 7.36).

Respondents were also equally likely to agree that the presence of male and female peacekeepers improved the relationship between the host country’s government and civilians. There was no difference between men’s and women’s responses to this question.

Personnel cannot leave compound

Personnel who want to leave the peace operations compound are not able to do so freely. Only 12.4 percent of respondents stated that they could freely leave the compound whenever they want; 68.3 percent said they couldn’t; and 12.4 percent stated that it depended on the mission.

Officers also stated that they needed an escort to leave the compound. 64.6 percent of officers stated that they needed an escort to leave the compound, and 22.2 percent stated that it depended on the mission. Interestingly, there was a gender disparity in responses to this question. While only 56.3 percent of men stated that they needed an escort to leave campus, 74.6 percent of women stated that they did. This suggests a higher level of restrictions on women’s movement, which could deter women from wanting to participate in peace operations—even if the intention is to keep women safe. Validation workshop participants noted that security concerns are the reason for restrictions on movement. Recognizing the importance of keeping all officers safe, we recommend adopting gender-neutral policies on movement and allowing officers to leave compounds freely where possible.
The social exclusion issue area explores whether in-group/out-group mentalities cause women to be marginalized, ostracized, denigrated, harassed, or attacked thus preventing them from deploying or participating meaningfully in peace operations. It also explores the ways in which male group cohesion forms. We assess this by looking at the levels of harassment and violence in the institutions and sanctions against them, as well as healthy and unhealthy ways of creating cohesion.

Summary of Results

Main Opportunities:

- The SLP has an official sexual harassment policy, internal complaint system, national framework for addressing SEA, and a national ombudsman to provide oversight.
- Negative experiences involving hazing are uncommon.
- Personnel recognize the seriousness of misconduct and are willing to report misconduct at high rates.
- Men and women work and socialize together and feel a strong sense of family.

Main Barriers:

- Most officers were aware of the seriousness of sexual misconduct with local populations, but there were sizeable minorities who may not report these issues.
- Male officers may engage in inappropriate behavior outside of work.
- Several key decision-makers noted that sexual exploitation and abuse may be a significant barrier for men’s participation in peacekeeping.
- There is significant stigma against LGBT individuals.

Differences in Perception and Experience:

- Male officers were significantly more likely to hold negative masculine views about gender roles.
- There are no co-ed sports to allow for bonding.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase education around official misconduct policies. Officers should be aware that sexual misconduct with local populations is a serious offense and officers should be willing to report such misconduct.
- Make sure that officers are aware of the existence of an independent unit to report misconduct. Encourage officers to come forward and report misconduct by assuring officers will not face repercussions for doing so.
- Expand gender directorate and deployment of gender focal points following gender sensitivity training. Validation workshop participants suggested establishing gender focal points at the regional or local level. These gender focal point positions could be established on an application basis so that officers with a background in gender sensitivity can apply to take on the role. Once established, make sure officers are aware of and able to contact gender focal points.
- Provide resources for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse such as counseling and health services.

Detailed Results

Good practices

SLP official sexual harassment policy

The SLP has an official sexual harassment policy, which was adopted in April 2008 “to ensure the SLP has a work environment free of sexual exploitation and sexual harassment and their behavior towards the population is consistent with the high standards of conduct expected of them at all times on and off duty.” The policy

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15 Ibrahim, The Integration of a Gender Perspective, 39.
guidelines on sexual harassment were the first in the region, and they were drafted by the conduct and discipline office, the Gender Advisor and the UN policy section of the UN integrated office in Sierra Leone.\textsuperscript{16}

The official definition of sexual harassment is (but is not limited to) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favor and other verbal conduct of a sexual nature, touching and grabbing of a sexual nature, and repeatedly making sexual suggestive gestures. The policy covers not only SLP personnel but also contractors and volunteers. Personnel are accountable for reporting harassment incidents to the AIG of professional standards, who then reports to the EMB. The policy also protects complainants from retaliation and discrimination.\textsuperscript{17}

74.9 percent of surveyed officers were aware of the official harassment policy.

\textbf{SLP internal complaint system}

There is an internal complaint system for the SLP that is administered through the Complaint Discipline and Internal Investigation Department (CDIID). The CDIID was founded in 2000. In a 2011 gendered needs self-assessment, 85\% of personnel reported that they believed the CDIID was “effective in addressing complaints made by internal or external aggrieved persons against security sector personnel.”\textsuperscript{18}

CDIID is comprised of SLP officers. Recruitment to the CDIID is based on secondment of officers with competencies in arbitration and negotiation, planning, resource management, decision-making, leadership skills, and legal and operational knowledge. In 2011, most officers appointed to the CDIID were men.

In addition to the existing complaint system, validation workshop participants suggested establishing a gender focal point position at the regional and local level so that all SLP officers have access to a local gender focal point. The position should be on an application basis.

\textbf{National framework for addressing SEA}

The national framework for addressing SEA was established under the Sierra Leone National Action Plan (SILNAP II) for 2015-2019. This document takes into perspective the UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and it is in line with the Convention on the Eradication of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

\textbf{Domestic violence is considered a violation of disciplinary conduct}

Any officer found guilty or suspected of domestic violence of any nature will be charged and treated as required by law. Domestic violence is considered a violation of conduct by the SLP. 66.2 percent of officers surveyed were aware of this fact, accounting for 62.4 percent of women 69 percent of men.

\textbf{Disciplinary board rulings cannot be overturned}

Rulings by the disciplinary board of the SLP cannot be overturned by commanding officers within the SLP. Investigations are rigorous and systematic and are completed before reaching the Gender and Community Affairs Directorate. Any further action beyond this point is outside the police force—for instance, in the case of an assistant Superintendent of Police charged with misconduct, disciplinary proceedings are formulated under the supervision of a law officer.

\textbf{National oversight of SLP}

Sierra Leone has a national Ombudsman, which was established via the Ombudsman Act of 1997.\textsuperscript{19} However, there is not an ombudsman within the police, or a national ombudsman focused on the police, specifically. The Ombudsman is an institution for hearing national public complaints related to maladministration, discrimination, corruption, or negligence. The national Ombudsman is independent from the government and has legal immunity.

There is a legislative oversight committee for the police, the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs.\textsuperscript{20} The Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone oversees the legislative oversight committee for the police force. There is also an internal professional standards division within the SLP headed by the AIG of Professional Standards.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibrahim, The Integration of a Gender Perspective, 39-41.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 51.


\textsuperscript{20} Ibrahim, The Integration of a Gender Perspective, 54.
**Hazing is uncommon**

Hazing is uncommon in the SLP, though enumerators noted that “if it has happened, it has not been reported” and it is possible that negative bonding experiences go underreported. Officers who are found to have engaged in hazing are treated accordingly if they go beyond their boundaries. Any act that resembles hazing an officer is against the police code of conduct.

**Personnel are likely to report most forms of misconduct, and view misconduct as serious**

When asked about a variety of hypothetical scenarios that can occur on peacekeeping missions, many personnel said they would report their colleagues who had engaged in misconduct and viewed these behaviors as very serious or serious. However, for some scenarios, there was a significant number of respondents who would not report or who did not view misconduct as serious. These forms of misconduct are widely understood to be a violation of policy while on UN missions. Respondents answered as follows:

- **92%** would report a colleague who drove drunk and hit someone with their car (90% of men and 95% of women). 96% believe driving drunk and hitting someone is serious or very serious (95% men and 96% women). 96% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (97% of men and 95% of women).
- **80%** would report a colleague who hit someone with a baton and permanently injured them (80% of men and 81% of women). 86% believe hitting someone with a baton and permanently injuring them is serious or very serious (85% of men and 87% of women). 81% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (81% of men and 82% of women).
- **89%** would report a colleague for receiving cash in exchange for not reporting a crime (93% of men and 85% of women). 92% believe receiving cash for not reporting a crime is serious or very serious (93% of men and 90% of women). 94% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (95% of men and 92% of women).
- **79%** would report a colleague for refusing to go on patrol until they received backpay (80% of men and 77% of women). 85% believe refusing to patrol until receiving backpay is serious or very serious (85% of men and 84% of women). 84% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (86% of men and 82% of women).

**Men and women work and train together**

There are joint training sessions for men and women. 88.9 percent of survey respondents believe that mixed gender training is the appropriate way to conduct training in the SLP. Further, 94.8 percent of survey respondents that they work with colleagues of the opposite sex daily. Women were slightly more likely to say that they work with members of the opposite sex. This is a positive result that indicates that workspaces in the SLP are gender inclusive enough to allow men and women to work side-by-side.

**Men and women share living spaces**

Men and women have joint barracks in the police force. There are no unisex/gender neutral bathrooms in the police, all are gendered.

**Respondents socialize outside of work**

87.5 percent of respondents stated that “members of the Sierra Leone Police Forces socialize with other members of the Sierra Leone Police Forces outside of work,” and 96.3 percent of respondents stated that they themselves socialize with other members of the SLP outside of work. High rates of socialization outside of work is a good practice that indicates high group cohesion and morale.

Most bonding activities available are related to physical activity or training. 71.1 percent of respondents were aware of bonding activities involving training exercises; 59.4 percent of respondents were aware of bonding opportunities involving extra physical activity; and 51 percent were aware of bonding involving orientation programs. In contrast, only 37.6 percent of respondents were aware of non-athletic co-ed bonding activities such as prayer groups, choir, or band. Increasing non-athletic opportunities for bonding activities could be a way to increase participation of men and women in co-ed groups together.

Respondents believe that bonding activities are necessary because they create group cohesion (58.6 percent); put new recruits in their place (57.8 percent); and remove weakness (54.5 percent).

Very few respondents have witnessed or experienced a colleague in the SLP making jokes about inappropriate topics or being made the target of inappropriate jokes. 9.2 percent have witnessed or experienced someone make jokes about women; 13.3 percent witnessed or experienced jokes about physical appearance; and 3.3 percent witnessed or experienced jokes about sexual orientation.
Strong sense of family

There is a strong sense of family among the SLP. 78 percent of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, "We in the Sierra Leone Police Forces, are more of a family than ordinary people." This is a strong result and suggests a positive, cohesive internal culture which is conducive to equal and active participation by men and women.

Further, 75.8 percent of respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, "If I am having trouble fulfilling a difficult task, other members of my unit will willingly help me.” Only 7.3 percent disagreed. This shows a positive culture of collaboration and cooperation in the workplace.

On the other hand, 51.9 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement, “Most of my friends in the police/armed forces are in my unit.” Only 25.3 percent agreed with this. This could be because police officers have friendships outside of work. On one hand this could indicate lower levels of cohesion within units, but it could also mean that relationships are professional rather than social.

Main barriers

No SLP official whistleblower policy

There is no official policy in place to protect whistleblowers. However, 30.4 percent of survey respondents believed that there was a whistleblower policy in place. The police force handles misconduct through the Complaint Discipline and Internal Investigation Department (CDIID). There is an internal whistle blowing mechanism regarding sensitive issues pertaining to the police force are reported as in-house. This indicates that officers are unlikely to know what whistleblowing means.

Lack of awareness about official misconduct policies

The majority of respondents were aware of policies in place to guard against misconduct, but there were still significant gaps in knowledge. Only 75 percent of survey respondents were aware of the sexual harassment policy. Only 63.9 percent of survey respondents were aware of the internal complaint system. Only 66.2 percent were aware that domestic violence is a violation of disciplinary conduct in the SLP. Finally, although there is no official whistleblower policy, 30.4 percent of respondents believed that there was. We recommend increasing transparency and educational efforts to officers about these misconduct policies so that officers feel can utilize these pathways should they ever need them.

Most respondents view sexual misconduct as serious, but gaps are concerning

72% would report a female colleague for engaging in a sexual relationship with a local boy (74% of men and 70% of women). 78% believe a female from their team engaging in a sexual relationship with a local boy is serious or very serious (77% of men and 79% of women). 75% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (76% of men and 73% of women).

78% would report a male colleague for engaging in a sexual relationship with a local girl (79% of men and 76% of women). 83% believe a male from their team engaging in a sexual relationship with a local girl is serious or very serious (83% of men and 83% of women). 80% knew this was a violation of official SLP policy (80% of men and 80% of women).

Respondents’ willingness to report most forms of misconduct is a good practice, but there is still a sizeable minority who would not report misconduct, particularly sexual misconduct. More than a quarter of respondents would not report a female colleague for engaging in a sexual relationship with a local boy. Almost a quarter of respondents would not report a male colleague for engaging in a sexual relationship with a local girl. This may indicate a compromised ability of the SLP to protect local populations. We recommend increasing education around misconduct, particularly sexual misconduct, and encouraging officers to report any misconduct that could result in putting local civilians in danger.

Negative experiences

20.1 percent of all respondents (18.1 percent of women and 22 percent of men) have witnessed or experienced receiving unwanted texts or messages from colleagues. 24.5 percent of respondents (26.5 percent of women and 23 percent of men) have witnessed or experienced a colleague criticizing themselves or another colleague for not fulfilling their family obligations (e.g., not being a good mother/father/spouse). 26.4 percent of respondents (27.7 percent of women and 25.5 percent of men) have witnessed or experienced a colleague calling themselves or another colleague something other than their name or title (e.g., “honey,” “baby,” “boy,” “girl,” etc.). Finally, a slightly better result, 17.9 percent of respondents (17.5 percent of women and 18.5 percent of men) have
experienced or witnessed pictures of themselves, or a colleague being posted on the internet without their consent.

53.4 percent of respondents (52.7 percent of women and 53.5 percent of men) stated that members of the SLP spend time engaging in adult entertainment such as bars and strip clubs outside of work.

13.9 percent of respondents (12.7 percent of women and 15 percent of men) have heard other members of the SLP brag to their colleagues about sex. Women were significantly more likely to say either “don’t know” or “prefer not to say” to this question. 13.9 percent (13.3 percent of women and 14.5 percent of men) responded that members of the SLP exchange videos or pictures of attractive women with each other.

23.4 percent of survey respondents say that they avoid socializing with the opposite sex because they are worried about sexual harassment complaints being filed against them. 20 percent of women and 26.5 percent of men worry about being accused of sexual harassment.

Possible sexual exploitation and abuse of men

Four different key decision-makers interviewed mentioned that sexual exploitation and abuse is a main barrier for men’s participation in peace operations. Sexual exploitation and abuse of men is woefully underreported and overlooked, but it does occur, particularly in conflict settings. We recommend that the SLP make resources available to officers who may have been victims of SEA, such as counseling and reproductive health services.

Negative masculine beliefs

Overall, negative masculine beliefs do exist, with men statistically significantly more likely to hold negative masculine beliefs.

Men were more likely to agree that “women often lie about being raped” (38.6% of men, 25.1% of women). The rate of agreement with this question on both sides is alarmingly high. We recommend increased training regarding sexual exploitation and abuse to reduce the misconception that women lie about sexual assault.

Men were also more likely to hold traditional beliefs about men’s behavior, though the overall rate of agreement with these statements was low. Men were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they would defend their reputation with violence if they had to do so (7.9% men, 4% of women) and that “a man should be embarrassed if he cannot satisfy his wife sexually” (11.9% of men, 6.9% of women).

Men were also more likely to agree that “male soldiers should prioritize protecting female soldiers when they are in danger” (85.1% of men, 68.3% of women). Though this can be seen as benevolent, it may still indicate problematic beliefs and norms, since it suggests men see female officers and soldiers as more in need of protection and therefore perhaps less capable than their male counterparts.

These gender norms can also be seen in the fact that men were more likely to agree that “men make better political leaders than women and should be elected rather than women” (34.2% of men, 23.4% of women).

No ombudsman within the police

Though there is a national ombudsman for hearing public complaints, there is not an ombudsman specifically within the police force.

Stigma against LGBT individuals

Although there is no official law forbidding same sex relationships in Sierra Leone, our investigations found that there is significant stigma against same sex relationships that prevent LGBT individuals from participating in security operations. Our enumerators report that due to “traditional and cultural heritages,” it is “abnormal in Sierra Leone to practice same sex relationships.” Despite there being no law against such relationships, public resentment and stigmatization is “enough to segregate” and discourage LGBT individuals from publicly identifying as such. Our survey data supports these findings: 91.3 percent of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “marriage should be between a man and a woman.”


Because of this stigma, our enumerators report that LGBT individuals are not permitted to serve in the police force and that there are no such individuals in the force, though there may be some variation in this. While queer/non-binary and transgender individuals are not permitted to serve, gay and lesbian individuals may be permitted to serve.

There is no support for transgender individuals in the SLP. Transitioning services are not provided to transgender individuals at all, either while deployed or while working in Sierra Leone.

**Few co-ed activities or sports**

Many respondents stated that they do not socialize with other SLP members outside of work.

The Fact-Finding Form indicated that there is a SLP Brass Band and SLP Football Association. A high percentage of survey respondents were aware of (85 percent) or had participated in (79.2 percent) team sports. Sports are a positive bonding experience that can enhance group cohesion, so we see the existence of these sports teams as a good practice. However, according to our research, there are no non-athletic co-ed formal activities for male and female police officers to bond and socialize outside of work.

The SLP has football and volleyball teams for officers to participate that are segregated by gender. Women are only able to participate because there are women’s sports teams. There is currently a female police football team that is part of Sierra Leone’s Premiere League, which suggests that the teams are strong and therefore present a positive opportunity for socializing and bonding for women. 32.3 percent of women in our survey had played sports, compared to only 11.9 percent of men. Women were also more likely to say that bonding activities “are not serious because they are just fun and games.”

Increasing opportunities for men and women to socialize and bond together may help to reduce stigma and barriers to participation. We also encourage the SLP to increase opportunities for male officers to play sports and have positive bonding experiences.
5) Conclusions: Comparison of Top Barriers and Opportunities

The empirical results from this study show that the three main barriers to women’s meaningful participation in peace operations are 1) social exclusion (Issue Area 10), 2) household constraints (Issue Area 4), and 3) peace operations infrastructure (Issue Area 5). Also significant was the eligible pool of women in the SLP (Issue Area 1). Deployment selection (Issue Area 3) and deployment criteria (Issue Area 2) may also pose serious challenges for women in peace operations, and are ranked as “medium priority,” though they may influence other issue areas.

There is some alignment in how personnel and key decision makers view the top barriers to women’s meaningful participation, and some alignment in views of the top barriers with the results of the overall assessment (See Table 9). Across the board, personnel, decision-makers, and the empirical methodology indicated that household constraints are a significant barrier preventing women from meaningfully participating in peace operations. However, neither personnel nor key decision-makers named peace operations infrastructure as a top barrier – though it did come up more frequently than other issue areas. Further, neither personnel nor key decision-makers named social exclusion as a primary barrier. However, women were significantly more likely to name this as a barrier compared to men. In contrast to the empirical findings, surveyed personnel and key decision-makers believed that deployment criteria were a main barrier, with women not meeting certain minimum qualifications such as having required skills. Surveyed personnel also believed that the eligible pool was a barrier, with there not being enough eligible women in the armed forces. Finally, interviewed key decision-makers believed that hearing stories about negative experiences was a significant barrier preventing women from volunteering.

Personnel

Officers surveyed in the survey stated that the most significant barriers for women’s participation were that women don’t have the required skills (57 percent); women have too many home/familial obligations (39.2 percent); and the overall lack of eligible women (43.6 percent).

Officers were also asked an open-ended question about the most significant barriers. In line with the empirical results, selection criteria was a frequent answer, with officers mentioning “physical fitness,” “low education level,” and “lack of proper training,” among other things. Also frequent were issues regarding “family commitments,” such as “pregnancy,” “breastfeeding,” “home sickness,” and “childbearing.”

Many officers also mentioned facing problems related to sexual harassment, discrimination, and gender biases. For example, one officer said that “harassment from male colleagues” was a barrier, and multiple others mentioned “discrimination” and “gender stereotyping.” Although gender roles were not the top issues in the survey results, the fact that they appear so frequently in open-ended survey results suggests that these are significant issues that women and other officers are aware of.

Other open-ended responses included numerous comments regarding food, driving skills, weather conditions and climate change. Significant barriers for men included climate and weather concerns; lack of required skills; fear of theft; and concerns about selection criteria and selection processes.

In addition to these issues, multiple officers suggested that there is “bias in the selection process against some men,” or that UN deployments are “more focused on women.”

Key Decision-Makers

Key decision-makers surveyed, like respondents, differed in their views from the empirical results. Most officers interviewed stated that deployment criteria were a main barrier, with women lacking the required skills. Officers also identified household barriers as a significant barrier. Finally, officers suggested that negative experiences were a significant barrier.

The belief that negatives experiences constitute a significant barrier could reflect the reported experiences of discrimination that many officers noted in the open-ended survey results. Officers mentioned “sexual exploitation and abuse” as significant barriers for women. These comments could also reflect an awareness of the negative or inappropriate behavior of male officers discussed in Issue Area 10. Decision-makers’ recognition of this problem is a positive first step in ameliorating the issue.

Another negative experience that multiple decision-makers interviewed mentioned was potential sexual exploitation and abuse against men. This was not a problem that appeared at all in open-ended survey responses.

Validation Workshop

During the validation workshop, participants discussed the main barriers and recommendations for all ten issue areas. Throughout the workshop, participants discussed several major themes at length.
Many validation workshop participants expressed concern about officers’ ability to pass the UN selection exams for deployment. Exams are difficult because they are timed and because they are conducted in English, which is not most officers’ first language. There was a significant emphasis on individualism and the importance of officers learning the necessary skills to improve their capabilities and their eligibility for deployment. There was also concern about the ability to provide resources such as computers. We recommend encouraging officers to take advantage of existing training opportunities. We also recommend exploring low-cost options to increase opportunities for practice and training, such as informal study groups in English or other study topics. While funding limitations may prevent the SLP from being able to provide additional material resources, we recommend exploring creative ways to offset the costs of training. This may include providing accommodations or transportation for officers traveling for training or exams.

Another topic of discussion was the importance of changing gender norms to recognize men’s and women’s equal contributions to the home and the workplace. One officer said that leaders should contribute to changing the thinking that the responsibility of taking care of children is on a woman. Some ways to do this are to increase resources for childcare, adopt a paternity leave policy, and encourage officers to speak openly with subordinates about family and personal issues.

Openness of communication was another significant theme. Senior officers present talked about the importance of being “accommodating” towards subordinates and listening to emotional and psychological issues. Even if officers cannot solve such issues themselves, they said, being open and available to junior officers is important to improving relationships and morale.

During the validation workshop, the topic of a counselling unit was discussed at length. Officers stated that a counselling unit had existed in the past and should be re-established, with units available all over the country, so that officers have a resource to discuss personal issues. Counselling should not only cover pre- and post-deployment transition but also financial management; family, personal, and interpersonal issues; and emotional and psychological issues.

Officer’s presents were very receptive of the major barriers identified by this assessment. One officer present stated that, yes, misconduct and discrimination are present, as “this has been rooted in our society for years, so it will take time” to address these issues. “It is a process,” but officers present were open to making the changes needed to address barriers and improve the ability of women to meaningfully participate.

Table 9: Comparison Across different Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think are the THREE main challenges to increasing WOMEN’S participation in UN peace operations in your country?</th>
<th>MOWIP Ranking (score)</th>
<th>n (%) stating this was a main challenge N = 367</th>
<th>n (%) of MEN n = 200</th>
<th>n (%) of WOMEN n = 165</th>
<th>Mentions in interviews with elite stakeholders n = 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There are not enough eligible women in the Armed Forces</td>
<td>4 (0.60)</td>
<td>160 (43.6%)</td>
<td>91 (45.5%)</td>
<td>69 (41.8%)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Many women don’t have the right skills required to deploy</td>
<td>6 (0.67)</td>
<td>209 (57%)</td>
<td>119 (59.5%)</td>
<td>89 (53.9%)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The selection process is not fair and/or is biased against women</td>
<td>5 (0.62)</td>
<td>136 (37.1%)</td>
<td>75 (37.5%)</td>
<td>61 (37%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Women have too many obligations at home or with their families</td>
<td>2 (0.52)</td>
<td>144 (39.2%)</td>
<td>77 (38.5%)</td>
<td>66 (40%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. There are not adequate equipment and facilities for women in peace operations</td>
<td>3 (0.57)</td>
<td>118 (32.2%)</td>
<td>67 (33.5%)</td>
<td>51 (30.9%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Survey data (Questionnaires, Key decisions makers interviews, and desk review)
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. There are stories of women having negative experiences during deployment</td>
<td>7 (0.72)</td>
<td>91 (24.8%)</td>
<td>57 (28.5%) *</td>
<td>34 (20.6%) *</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. UN peace operations deployments aren’t helpful for career advancement</td>
<td>10 (0.86)</td>
<td>33 (9%)</td>
<td>16 (8%)</td>
<td>17 (10.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Leadership or supervisors don’t support increasing women’s deployment</td>
<td>8 (0.77)</td>
<td>38 (10.4%)</td>
<td>17 (8.5%)</td>
<td>21 (12.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cultural attitudes make people doubt women’s ability to deploy</td>
<td>9 (0.78)</td>
<td>126 (34.3%)</td>
<td>67 (33.5%)</td>
<td>57 (34.5%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Women are not treated as equal members of the Armed Forces</td>
<td>1 (0.52)</td>
<td>46 (12.5%)</td>
<td>14 (7%) ***</td>
<td>30 (18.2%) ***</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically significant difference between men and women
*P <0.1
**P<0.05
***P<0.01
6). Recommendations to leverage opportunities and overcome barriers

a) Opportunities and good practices to share

- Women make up nearly 25% of the SLP personnel. (1)
- Men and women can serve in equal roles in the SLP. Women can serve in combat or special operational units alongside men, and women can serve in leadership roles. Men and women have served in combat/tactical roles at equal rates. (1)
- There is representation of women in higher ranks, which creates positive role models for female officers and contributes to a positive culture of gender equality. (1)
- Physical fitness test requirements are adjusted to allow women to participate at equal levels. Additionally, there are programs in place that help women achieve physical fitness standards. (2)
- There are also special training sessions to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT) and driver’s test. (2)
- Training is available to help officers meet skills and fitness requirements. (2)
- Gender sensitivity is considered in the test and selection process. (2)
- There is a standardized application and selection process for UN deployment. (3)
- UN exams are administered locally by the SLP at the Sierra Leone Peacekeeping and Law Enforcement Academy (SILEA). (3)
- Officers do not report feeling social pressure while taking the test. (3)
- There are special efforts to recruit women into peace operations. These include special classes designed to help women pass the selection assessment test (SAT). (3)
- Officers believe UN payment is sufficient for managing their households. (4)
- Families of peacekeepers are entitled to healthcare benefits. (4)
- Many officers have family members who can take care of children while they are deployed. (4)
- There is family and community support for women to deploy. It is socially accepted and encouraged for women to participate in peacekeeping. Further, pregnant women are allowed to serve and may take paid maternity leave. (4)
- Pre-deployment training is made accessible in-country and online. International training is also available for those who are interested and able to attend. (5)
- Training centers accommodate women, with same sex sleeping facilities and bathrooms available. (5)
- Gear and equipment are provided to officers. (5)
- There has been a gendered needs assessment for peace operations deployments. (5)
- General, mental, and reproductive healthcare is provided. (5)
- Both men and women have opportunities for networking and mentorship. (6)
- Officers report few negative experiences and few problems upon returning home from deployments. (6)
- Peace operations deployment is nearly universally seen as positive for advancing officers’ careers. (7)
- Peace operations are part of Sierra Leone’s national security strategy. Further, stories about peace operations are featured in SLP recruitment documents. (7)
- Peacekeepers are recognized positively for their efforts by their families, communities, and the SLP institution. (7)
Gender trainings are offered, with a majority or plurality of respondents having taken gender training at some point. (8)

National frameworks and institutions to address gender mainstreaming, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other gender equality issues. (8)

Gender is mentioned in the Sierra Leone national security strategy. Sierra Leone has also adopted multiple National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325. (8)

Male allies advance women’s participation and opportunities in the SLP. (8)

Men and women can serve equally in all roles, combat/tactical and otherwise, and can serve as leaders. (9)

Personnel believe women officers are equally capable of carrying out tasks. (9)

The SLP has an official sexual harassment policy, internal complaint system, national framework for addressing SEA, and a national ombudsman to provide oversight. (10)

Negative experiences involving hazing are uncommon. (10)

Personnel recognize the seriousness of misconduct and are willing to report misconduct at high rates. (10)

Men and women work and socialize together and feel a strong sense of family. (10)

**b) Key recommendations to overcome barriers (Issue Areas 1-10):**

Major recommendations that were discussed at length or which originated directly from validation workshop participants are bolded.

- Continue efforts of policies to ensure women access to training and leadership opportunities.
- Improve targeted recruitment campaigns to increase the enlistment of women police officers in the SLP.
- Improve SLP infrastructure to meet the needs of women (e.g., uniforms).
- Inclusion of women within promotion boards, selection/nomination committees, and recruitment committees.
- Increased opportunities and resources for co-ed professional organizations.
- Improve education about the requirements for deployment. If officers are not aware of the requirements, or believe that the requirements are beyond their capabilities, they may be reluctant to volunteer. Senior officers should talk openly about deployment and training opportunities with personnel and encourage both men and women to participate.
- Increase recruitment efforts to train eligible officers in required components such as computer skills; small arms/tactical skills; interpersonal and communication skills; English speaking, reading, and writing; and conflict resolution and negotiation skills.
- Continue programs adapted to address women’s specific needs for training. Encourage women to participate in these specialized training opportunities.
- If family deployments are not possible, consider increasing vacation or leave opportunities.
- Encourage officers to participate in international training.
- Encourage UN recruitment office to reconsider age limitations and redeployment wait periods in collaboration with local security forces so that they are country specific. For Sierra Leone, SLP officers recommend increasing the maximum age from 55 to 60.
- Increase transparency around UN peacekeeping selection processes to demonstrate the fairness of the standardized process to officers and encourage more officers to apply.
- Increase efforts to disseminate information about peacekeeping opportunities via internal channels, such as internal job boards, emails, newsletters, and professional organizations. Decentralize advertisement and information so that opportunities are known to officers in rural areas.
• Encourage officers to engage in training prior to the selection exam to improve pass rates. In addition to formal training opportunities, we recommend encouraging officers who are preparing for the selection exam to form study groups to discuss exam content and practice speaking, reading, and writing in English.

• Explore ways to offer support to officers taking the selection exam. Solutions discussed during the validation workshop included offering accommodations to officers who travel to take the exam; helping with transportation; reimbursing officers for food or other small expenses; or exploring other creative ways to lower the cost of taking the selection exam.

• Though it is difficult to change gender norms, increasing awareness about women’s unique experiences and contributions to the SLP may encourage all officers to view women more as equal contributors to peace and security. We also encourage leaders to speak openly about the equal contributions that men and women make to the family and childcare to counter prevailing traditional gender norms. As one officer noted in the validation workshop, the responsibility for taking care of a child is primarily placed on women, and “we [in the SLP] need to change that thinking” by talking more openly about men’s and women’s equal contributions to the home and the workplace.

• On-site childcare facilities or subsidies for childcare would encourage more women and male officers with children to join.

• Ensure women have access to a private area for breastfeeding and/or pumping upon return from maternity leave.

• Increase transparency and information around family leave policies. Make sure that men and women officers are aware of paid maternity leave policies.

• We also recommend paid family and sick leave, as well as increased clarity regarding vacation policies. Further, we recommend considering creating a paternity leave policy.

• Make in-service training available, especially training to pass the selection exam. Encourage officers to consider repeating trainings to keep skills up to date.

• Periodically review training curriculum to ensure materials remain up to date with exam content.

• Improve equipment and infrastructure, particularly equipment, sleeping quarters, bathrooms, office spaces, health facilities, uniforms, and equipment.

• Explore low-cost ways to improve women’s healthcare. This means making available more low-cost birth control options such as the pill; increasing availability and quality of health supplies such as sanitary pads and tampons; and improving gender sensitivity of healthcare staff, perhaps by hiring female physicians.

• During the validation workshop, officers noted that funding constraints make it difficult to provide improved equipment and healthcare. With this constraint in mind, we encourage the SLP to explore funding options and external assistance that may be available to purchase resources for officers such as computers, books, and other materials needed for training.

• Consider encouraging the government to establish a diplomatic presence such as a consulate in deployment zones so that officers are supported by their national government while abroad.

• Increase training regarding official misconduct policies, gender sensitivity, and sexual exploitation and abuse for all officers—both men and women—so that all officers are aware of official rules surrounding misconducts and feel prepared to address these issues.

• Encourage deployed units to adopt gender-equitable work systems so that women are not burdened with additional domestic labor. This means that male and female officers should equally split tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry while deployed.

• Validation workshop participants suggested establishing a counseling unit in each police locality so that all officers have access to counseling to process personal and interpersonal issues. Counseling should cover transitional processes such as pre-deployment preparation and post-deployment processing and reintegration. Validation workshop participants also recommended including financial management in counseling services.

• Allow officers to return home (for national or personal emergencies) or increase transparency and education around leave policies. Assuring officers of flexibility will encourage those with families at home to deploy.
• Continue rewarding officers for participation in peace operations experiences by promoting these officers and increasing their salary commensurate with new skills learned while deployed.

• Public memorials of peacekeepers are a valuable and visible way to encourage officers to participate.

• Establish a counseling unit in each locality where police are present.

• Increase education efforts to raise awareness among officers regarding institutions and resources available related to gender equality (such as the gender focal point and counseling services).

• Encourage formation of and/or increased participation in formal women’s associations.

• Encourage leadership to be accommodating and open to candid discussions and listen intently to junior officers, especially female officers, about personal/familial and other issues.

• Increase presence and visibility of women in leadership roles.

• Make efforts to create an equal division of labor in additional unpaid labor while deployed. Validation workshop participants noted that “no one wants to do manual labor” and that decisions about tasks such as cooking and cleaning both depend on the mission and are up to individual capabilities. However, reducing the expectation that women ought to provide “domestic” tasks such as cooking, and cleaning will both reduce gender disparities and help women feel valued as members of the police institution.

• While recognizing the imperative of keeping officers safe, we recommend allowing officers to leave the compound and move freely where possible.

• Increase education around official misconduct policies. Officers should be aware that sexual misconduct with local populations is a serious offense and officers should be willing to report such misconduct.

• Make sure that officers are aware of the existence of an independent unit to report misconduct. Encourage officers to come forward and report misconduct by assuring officers will not face repercussions for doing so.

• Expand gender directorate and deployment of gender focal points following gender sensitivity training. Validation workshop participants suggested establishing gender focal points at the regional or local level. These gender focal point positions could be established on an application basis so that officers with a background in gender sensitivity can apply to take on the role. Once established, make sure officers are aware of and able to contact gender focal points.

• Provide resources for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse such as counseling and health services.

**c) Topics for further investigation**

• Officers present at the validation workshop expressed a great deal of concern regarding the ability of SLP personnel to perform well on the UN peacekeeping selection exam. English is not officers’ first language, so being able to comprehend and execute the exam in the provided time limit presents a significant obstacle. We recommend further research into language skills and the barrier presented by time limits. If this presents a significant problem for Sierra Leone, where the primary professional language is English, it may also be a significant problem in other potential TPCCs.

• Many of the senior officers at our validation workshop openly discussed the importance of being accommodating and listening to their subordinates’ personal and professional concerns, but nonetheless we found that a culture of silence persists. We recommend further research into norms surrounding discussion of personal and professional issues and ways to improve communication.

• Several key decision-makers interviewed mentioned sexual violence against men as a significant barrier, but this issue was not discussed by validation workshop participants, likely because of its taboo nature. We recommend further research into the prevalence of this issue, its prevention, and ways to reduce stigma around it.

• The topic of climate change and rough terrain on missions came up in open ended responses. Thus, it is worthwhile exploring how climate change is affecting personnel’s morale and effectiveness on missions.
Sierra Leone Police

2023 Report on Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment

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