

A Global Review of the Development of Military Gender Advisor Capabilities



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ENDORSEMENT

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOSEPH OSTERMAN, UNITED STATES MARINE CORP (RET)

This is a superb analysis of Women, Peace, and Security implementation for both strategic leaders and operational commanders. In today's security environment spanning deterrence, competition, crisis, and conflict, it is imperative to account for all-domain operations. Those all-domain operations cannot be fully accomplished without inclusion of the political, legal, economic, and informational aspects, all of which are affected by gender related dynamics. This study clearly identifies what all staffs and commanders understand about functional battlespace areas – you need subject matter expertise with competent advisors; the functional area needs to be woven into all other aspects of the planning and execution; and the importance of the function must be recognized by the commander. It cannot be a “boutique”, adjacent function. In traditional military parlance, the study captures the Ways, Ends and Means to inculcate gender exceptionally well. From my experience, to not include gender in mission analysis means that you are probably making assumptions that will eventually prove wrong, requiring the rewrite of the concept of operations. I applaud the authors for clearly and succinctly capturing the salient issues required to ensure that WPS moves from strategic direction and UN/ NATO guidance, to mainstream operational employment. Failure to incorporate it at the tactical/operational level means that a significant arrow will be missing from the quiver of capabilities that every commander relies on to, if possible, avoid conflict, and if not, prevail over adversaries.



Lieutenant General Osterman, U.S. Marine Corps (retired) is a career infantry officer who commanded at every level from platoon to Marine Expeditionary Force (Corps-level). He served multiple tours in Somalia, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Iraq, and Afghanistan, with his last tour in Afghanistan in 2013 as DCOS, OPS ISAF Joint Force.

ENDORSEMENT

MAJOR GENERAL PATRICK CAMMAERT, ROYAL NETHERLANDS MARINE CORPS (RET)

Since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000, progress on awareness of the need of increasing gender equality within armed forces and ensuring gender-responsive operational and organisational planning, policy, and practice, have been made. However, there is still a long way to go. The lack of awareness is often not with women, it is with men. To have a more professional and effective military, one needs women at every branch, at every level and above all, in leadership positions. Integration of a gender perspective in everything we do is not a women's issue. Women and men's voices are equal. This awareness is a mindset. This mindset must change. That process starts at the top. In a national forum or internationally in the UN or NATO, at the highest level there should be a Gender Champion; the Chief of Defense Staff or the UN Secretary General. Nationally, this change of mindset should be embedded in National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security. Internationally, gender perspectives should be included in all mandates for military operations. Decisionmakers must make sure that women are sitting at the table to discuss peace agreements and take part in mediation efforts. In the field, Gender Advisors at UN missions should be part of the battalion and brigade commanders and Force Commander's staff. So, I endorse one of the main objectives of the report which is to get men on board. Gender Advisors are playing a very important role in making the troops and the leaders aware that they also need to listen to the women and enable them to sit at the tables where decisions are made. This review will go a long way to help with that awareness and building understanding.



Major General Patrick Cammaert, Royal Netherlands Marine Corps (retired) is a distinguished military officer with significant UN service in Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo and New York. He is an expert and advocate for international peace and security, security sector reform and protection of civilians.

FOREWORD

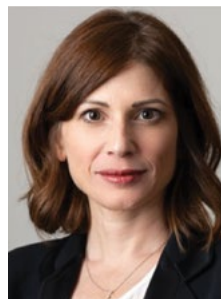
MS. IRENE FELLIN, NATO SECRETARY GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

I started my mandate as NATO's Secretary General Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in January 2022 and I am particularly happy to write the first Forward in my new capacity for a research report published by the Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre. The Centre's work to advance gender-inclusive research evidence to deliver peace and security is globally recognised. So when my friend Jennifer Wittwer told me about the report she was writing together with her colleagues Sarah Brown, Eleanor Gordon and Katrina Lee-Koo on Gender Advisors (GENAD's) capabilities, I became immediately very interested.

I have been working in the field of Gender Equality and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security for the past 15 years. If there is one thing I have learned, it is how challenging the role of the Gender Advisor can be. Whether you are acting in a civilian or a military capacity the main cultural and institutional barriers remain the same. It is time to unpack them and find the right ways to make the role of GENADs more effective.

With the increasing presence of military GENADs across national armed forces and the growing commitment of military organisations to progress the WPS agenda, this report is both intriguing and timely. It uses existing knowledge and the experiences of GENADs to capture best practices for developing GENAD policy frameworks, identify challenges and opportunities within military organisational structures, and explains the role of organisational culture for the effectiveness of GENAD capabilities.

I found the most captivating part of this report to be the key debates surrounding the Human Security approach. Specifically, what it means for WPS and how it could impact the role of the GENAD. It brings valid and important questions to the surface that deserve critical thought, not least because of the cross-cutting issues. NATO's approach is to progress together the WPS agenda and the Human Security agenda, recognising both the overlapping similarities and important distinctions. Through keeping the two agendas separate, we are able to both leverage WPS to empower women and use human security to mitigate risks and threats to the civilian populations where NATO operates. Nonetheless, this debate will and should continue.



For more than 15 years as a WPS expert and peacebuilder, Irene Fellin has worked as a Senior Gender Advisor with the Women In International Security (WIIS), the International Affairs Institute (IAI) and NATO HQ. Serving as an international consultant for UN agencies and other national institutes has also broadened her worldview on the value of WPS and gender equality. She was instrumental in establishing and coordinating the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN). Her passion for WPS and peacebuilding has led to her current appointment as NATO Secretary General's Special Representative (SGSR) for Women, Peace and Security in January 2022. In her current role, she acts as the principal Focal point for the implementation of the WPS agenda across NATO. In her work, Ms. Fellin is supported by a Unit that covers both gender and human security issues.

The report offers a valuable contribution to the existing body of research through its particular analysis of the GENAD capabilities that seek to strengthen military organisations, as well as improve peace operations and mission outcomes. Its compelling and diverse collection of interviews tap into the experiences of experts either who have conducted GENAD work or who have engaged with military GENAD capabilities. These experiences reveal prominent challenges that GENADs face at the global, national and organisational levels. To address these challenges, this report also serves as a resource guide for military leaders and outlines recommendations for how military organisations can both improve their GENAD capabilities and better leverage them to achieve peacekeeping and security objectives.

As I continue leading NATO's work on WPS and Human Security, I will take into account the considerations from this body of research and the concerns raised. I also encourage policy-makers to consider the findings of this report when deciding the way forward on GENAD capabilities. I encourage military leaders to use this report as a guide to addressing these challenges and strengthening our military organisations. I encourage GENADs to build upon the voices within this report by continuing to be vocal about opportunities to improve the way we approach the WPS agenda. Finally, I encourage scholars to continue capturing the experiences of GENADs, bringing key challenges to the forefront, recommending effective solutions, and promoting discourse on key debates surrounding the future of WPS.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A military Gender Advisor (GENAD) capability is increasingly a feature of armed forces, military deployments and peace operations around the world. Tasked with the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the GENAD capability strengthens organisations and operations with its focus on increasing gender equality within armed forces and ensuring gender responsive operational and organisational planning, policy and practice.

This research examines the policies, structures and cultures that enable and constrain the effectiveness of military GENAD capabilities around the world. Drawing on open-source research and interviews with current and former GENADs and relevant stakeholders, the review identifies integrated findings and recommendations, which inform a tripartite proposal for military organisations to enhance their military GENAD capability:

1. Institutionalise the WPS agenda into military organisations

The organisational foundations of military GENAD capabilities are often fragile. This is because the WPS agenda has yet to be consistently implemented and integrated within military organisations in a manner that is clear, consistent and accountable. The research therefore finds that:

- the purpose, function and intended impact of GENAD capabilities must be clearly and consistently communicated in strategic level policy, guidance and directives
- accountability mechanisms for armed forces should be built into WPS implementation policies at the national and organisational levels
- GENAD capabilities should have a sustainable structure that aligns with a well-articulated purpose, scope and intended impact
- GENAD capabilities are most successful when they are supported by robust and vocal leadership within military organisations and when they align with organisational commitments to gender equality and gender responsiveness.

2. Treat the GENADs as a military capability

GENADs perform similar functions to other senior advisory roles, such as Legal Advisors (LEGADs) and Political Advisors (POLADs). These roles provide useful models for how the GENAD capability might be developed. Such an alignment would recognise the need for:

- deep and dedicated knowledge and technical expertise on the WPS agenda and broader relevant issues of gendered social relations in conflict and crisis scenarios
- specific leadership and interpersonal skills that enable GENADs to work within (at times hostile) cultures and contexts as well as with external actors and crisis-affected populations
- financial and personnel resourcing that can build, sustain and entrench the capability within the organisation
- training across the organisation on the substance and value of the WPS agenda and the importance of gender equality and gender responsiveness.

3. Build global GENAD networks and evidence

GENAD capabilities are well established in some parts of the world, while nascent in others. Now is the time to systematically capture and evaluate the work of GENADs to evidence their impact and support their global development. This can be achieved by:

- establishing routine processes for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)
- building a formal and global network of GENADs and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) to share lessons learned, best practice and other resources and to support emerging capabilities
- supporting field research to develop an evidence base that can assess the impact of GENAD capabilities on the organisations they operate within and the conflict- and crisis-affected communities they seek to support.

FINDINGS

The tripartite proposal outlined in the executive summary draws from the key findings of the research, which are presented here by section.

I Global and national policies for GENAD capabilities

1. GENADs are committed to the UN's WPS agenda as the foundation and guide for their work, though they seek more robust policy framing at the global level.
2. GENADs report that national and organisational level policy regarding the GENAD capability is rarely sufficient but is critical for the success of the GENAD capability.
3. The functional location of GENAD capabilities varies across military organisations, however the rationale for the location is often unclear.

II Organisational structures

The GENAD capability

4. GENADs rarely have clear, specific and widely understood job descriptions for their roles.
5. There is a general absence of strategic directives on the purpose and responsibilities of the GENAD capability and its intended impact.
6. There is generally no career structure for GENADs within military organisations. Appointments are routinely for the duration of one posting only. GENADs are often appointed without relevant knowledge, experience or training.
7. Greater diversity in personnel will likely strengthen the GENAD capability.

Resourcing

8. Inadequate resources compromise the effectiveness of GENADs and the implementation of the WPS agenda. This is often reflective of weak political will or institutional support.
9. GENADs demonstrate a depth of knowledge and commitment to the WPS agenda, constituting the bedrock upon which substantial progress can be made.
10. GENADs are often appointed from junior levels and lack the rank and military experience to effect change in the organisation and shape institutional leadership commitment.

Training

11. GENAD training programs provide a foundation for network building, information sharing and international cooperation.
12. Despite an increase in the number and quality of courses, training is considered insufficient for GENADs to effectively carry out their duties.
13. The lack of institution-wide gender training for military staff across ranks and functions limits the effectiveness of GENAD capabilities and WPS implementation.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

14. There are few formalised MEL structures, tools or systems related to GENAD work. This compromises the ability to ascertain the effectiveness of their efforts.
15. There are few global platforms, hubs or systems for sharing GENAD best practice, lessons learned and other resources.

III Organisational culture

Leadership

16. Strong, senior military leadership support is inconsistent across organisations due to various levels of buy-in to the WPS agenda but is essential to the effectiveness of the GENAD capability.

Communication

17. Clear and consistent communication around the purpose and value of a GENAD capability is essential to raising organisational awareness of, and commitment to, this nascent area of military effort.

Workplace cultures

18. Harmful cultures continue to operate within military organisations that are antithetical to the work of GENADs and the implementation of the WPS agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MILITARY ORGANISATIONS

Drawing from the findings outlined above, the following recommendations are made for military organisations to advance the development of their military GENAD capability.

I Global and national policies for GENAD capabilities

1. Design a robust, clear and justified policy framework for the development of GENAD capabilities at the organisational, national and global levels.
2. Develop the GENAD capability in a manner consistent with existing policy frameworks, including but not restricted to gender equality policies, at the organisational, national and global policy levels.
3. Align the functional location of the GENAD capability with its purpose and intended impact.

II Organisational structures

The GENAD capability

4. Develop clear, concise job descriptions for GENADs and GFPs.
5. Issue a strategic directive to outline obligations to the WPS agenda, the role of GENADs and organisation-wide expectations to adopt gender responsive practices.
6. Develop appointment criteria, training requirements and career structure for GENADs.

Resources

7. Allocate specific funding to the GENAD capability.
8. Adequately staff the GENAD capability with personnel who have appropriate rank, experience and training.

Training

9. Invest in training for GENADs and GFPs, expanding its substance, scope, duration and availability.
10. Establish a strategic training framework on gender and WPS to be integrated into the professional military education and training continuum. This might draw upon existing internationally available training and resources.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

11. Establish formalised, robust and resourced MEL frameworks and processes to evaluate the impact and outcomes of GENAD capabilities, as well as identify barriers to, and opportunities for, improved effectiveness.
12. Establish an accessible and adequately resourced global hub for the sharing of information, lessons learned and best practices on gender, GENAD work and the WPS agenda.
13. Invest in evidence-based research to improve knowledge and practice.

III Organisational culture

Leadership

14. Military commanders should engage in gender responsive leadership.
15. Military commanders should demonstrate active and visible support for the GENAD capability.

Communication

16. Develop communication strategies that articulate the purpose and impact of the GENAD capability.

Workplace culture

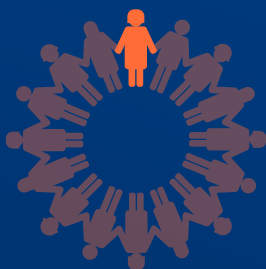
17. Engage in open dialogue to raise awareness of the work of GENADs and their contribution to organisational and operational effectiveness. This may begin to address the barriers to the work of GENADs created by persistent harmful workplace cultures within military organisations or resistance by personnel to organisational gender equality strategies.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS: DEVELOPING MILITARY GENAD CAPABILITIES

The recommendations outlined in the report are the shared responsibility of stakeholders at the individual, organisational, national and global level.

Individual GENADs

require



- GENAD Training
- Requisite rank, skills, military experience and gravitas
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Developed career structure
- Diversity within the GENAD capability

Military organisations

should ensure



- Clearly defined WPS implementation policies that align with national commitments
- WPS and gender equality training for all staff
- Investment in specialised training for GENADs
- Adequate and sustained resourcing for the GENAD capability
- Recognition of shared organisational responsibility for WPS
- A clear rationale for the functional locations of the capability
- Senior military leadership and vocal support for GENADs
- Recognition of GENAD work as a military capability
- Communication of the purpose, impact and value of the capability
- Robust monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks
- A conducive organisational culture for the implementation of WPS

Nations

should ensure



- Clear, comprehensive, and robust national policies on WPS
- A commitment to sustained and dedicated WPS resourcing
- Partnerships across government and with external stakeholders

Global

opportunities exist to
consolidate



- Global partnerships including through civil-military cooperation (CIMIC)
- GENAD global knowledge exchange and support networks for capacity development
- Global and shared training practices
- Norms surrounding gender inclusion and responsiveness, including WPS, gender equality and inclusive peacebuilding
- Policy directives and guidance

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Child Protection Advisor
CEDAW	Committee for the Elimination of the Discrimination against Women
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
COVID-19	Coronavirus
CRSV	Conflict-related Sexual Violence
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GBA+	Gender-based Analysis Plus
GENAD	Gender Advisor
GFP	Gender Focal Point
LEGAD	Legal Advisor
LOE	lines of effort
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MGPA	Military Gender and Protection Advisor
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCGM	Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations
POC	Protection of Civilians
POLAD	Political Advisor
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UNPOL	UN Police
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States (of America)
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of Gender Advisor (GENAD) capabilities in armed forces around the world.

The data in this report draws from 56 interviews with current and former GENADs who have served in or with armed forces, and global experts on gender and military organisations. The report also uses existing open-source reporting and analysis on military GENAD capabilities.

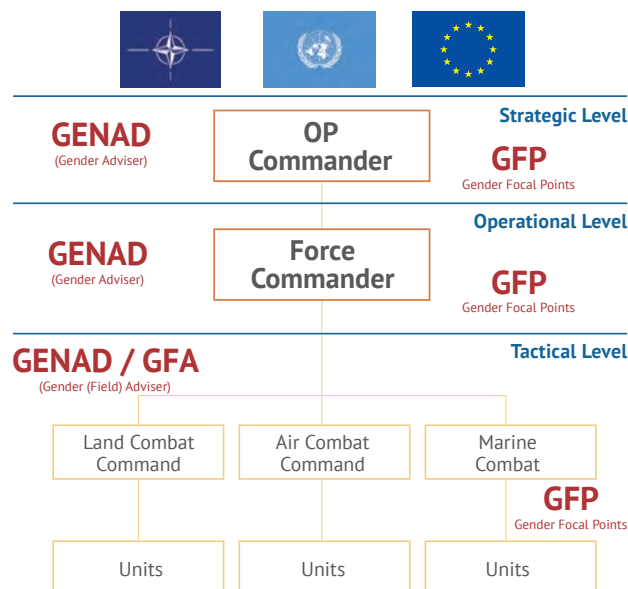
This report is a resource for military leaders, GENADs and advocates of the United Nations (UN) Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. It captures how issues related to gender are understood and practised within armed forces, and how understanding might be strengthened to advance organisational and operational effectiveness.

Terminology around GENADs differs across organisations. Role designations can include GENADs, Gender Focal Points (GFPs), Gender Field Advisors, Staff Officers (Gender), Military Gender and Protection Advisors (MGPA) and Gender Units, among others, and may reflect different roles or be focused on specific areas of effort within each organisation. For the purposes of this research, where the work conducted by these roles seeks to implement some or all the WPS agenda, it is seen to constitute part of a military's GENAD capability.

The terminology we use throughout the report aligns with that established by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In short, we describe GENADs as those who work at the strategic level of a military organisation, while GFPs work at the operational and tactical levels (see Figure 1).

GENADs (recommended by NATO to be OF-4/Lieutenant Colonel rank and above) provide support and advice to the Senior Commander to mainstream gender across the planning, implementation and evaluation of military lines of effort (LOE) and operations. In most military organisations, GFPs (routinely OR-5 to OF-3/ Sergeant to Major) are dual-hatted positions that work at the division or unit level. Their role is to support the implementation of directives and procedures relating to gender and the WPS agenda. GFPs' responsibilities differ across organisations and may include education and training of personnel, monitoring and reporting, and identifying and managing professional networks with partners (including non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and civilian actors and authorities).¹

Figure 1: The generic GENAD structure in NATO²



BACKGROUND

The primary role of military GENADs is to operationalise the UN WPS agenda (see Box 1) within their organisational LOE and in their operational planning and practices.

While civilian GENADS have a longer history in international peacebuilding and crisis response efforts, the evolution of a *military* GENAD capability is recent. Military GENADS are well placed to shape the strategic thinking of military organisations from inside. They have unique opportunities to inform the day-to-day functioning, structures and cultures of the organisation, as well as the operational and tactical practices in crisis and conflict-affected settings.

1 NATO (2021). *Bi-Strategic Command Directive 040-001 (Public Version). Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into the NATO Command Structure*. (Brussels: NATO) Chapter 2, 7-10.

2 DCAF (2016). *Teaching Gender in the Military: A Handbook* (Geneva: DCAF), 68.

Box 1: The United Nations Security Council's WPS agenda

The United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) WPS agenda draws on the foundational UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (adopted in 2000) and its subsequent nine resolutions.³

The agenda seeks to mainstream a gender perspective across all areas of peace and security. It does so by recognising that women and girls are uniquely affected by armed conflict — because of their gender — and that this has been routinely overlooked or misunderstood in efforts to achieve peace and security. The agenda seeks to redress the harms done to women and girls in conflict through the promotion of four pillars:

1. Women's **meaningful participation** in all areas of peace and security decision-making and action
2. The **prevention of gender-based violence** against women and girls
3. Supporting women's roles in the **prevention of armed conflict**
4. Implementing a **gender perspective in relief and recovery operations**

Implementation of the WPS agenda is the responsibility of all actors — state and non-state, military, police and civilian — associated with global efforts to promote peace and security. Implementation should occur within the structure and culture of organisations, as well as in areas of operation.

Military GENADs can work internally to advance gender equality and ensure gender responsive policy and approaches within the organisation (see Box 2). Their role is to support the Commander in implementing a gender responsive approach across all organisational LOE and decision-making processes. GENADs may, for example, support measures to advance women's participation, retention and leadership in the organisation, particularly in areas where there is unequal representation. As discussed further in the report, this may involve the GENAD working in and across strategic levels of an organisation and in non-operational divisions such as policy, education and training, human resources, and logistics.

GENADs also work on operations and missions. Over the past decade GENADs have been deployed as part of national military and multinational efforts, including in response to conflict, humanitarian crises and natural disasters.⁴ In this role, GENADs work with Force Commanders to ensure a gender responsive approach to operational doctrine, strategic planning and capability development. This may involve developing partnerships with civilian actors and local communities and working collaboratively across the mission. For instance, in response to the 2019-22 coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, GENADs have been deployed in domestic settings to support quarantine efforts, contact tracing, COVID-19 testing and logistical support (see Case Study 2).

GENADs are also a growing fixture in global peace operations and peacebuilding efforts coordinated by the UN and other international and regional organisations. Through the WPS resolutions, the UNSC routinely encourages the Secretary-General to deploy GENADs to peace operations, political missions and humanitarian assistance efforts. Currently, military GENADs are deployed to nine of the 12 UN missions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Current UN Missions with a deployed military GENAD capability⁵

DATE ESTABLISHED	OPERATION	COUNTRY
April 2013	MINUSMA	Mali
March 1964	UNFICYP	Cyprus
March 1978	UNIFIL	Lebanon
2014	MINUSCA	Central African Republic (CAR)
July 2010	MONUSCO	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
April 1991	MINURSO	Western Sahara
January 1949	UNMOGIP	India and Pakistan
July 2011	UNMISS	South Sudan
May 2018	UNISFA	Abyei (Sudan)

3 Correct at the time of publication. The WPS resolutions are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

4 See the Australian National Action Plan for a case study on the deployment of military GENADs in humanitarian response missions across Asia and the Pacific. Australian Government (2021). *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021-31*. Available from: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security-2021-2031.pdf>, 44-45.

5 This information was received from the Office of Military Affairs, UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) October (2021). Data on dates and personnel statistics was retrieved from UNDP, Where We Operate. Available from: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>. Figures were accurate as of November 2021.

Box 2: Undertaking gender responsive work in peace operations

Military organisations routinely identify **gender mainstreaming** as a core element of GENAD work.⁶ As outlined in the UN's definitions below, gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that gender is considered across all an organisation's activities. This recognises that people — based on their gender identity — have different needs and are differently impacted by decisions.

In the context of armed forces, gender mainstreaming requires military leaders to understand how their work impacts gender identities and gender relations (either within their organisation or on operations) and to seek measures that address discrimination and the harmful effects that can arise when gender is not considered.

Recent research and policy call for military and other leaders in peace and security efforts to engage in **gender responsive** peacebuilding practices.⁷ While closely related to gender mainstreaming, gender responsiveness focuses on the situational outcomes that can be achieved by paying attention to the way conflict and peacebuilding practices differently impact people with different gender identities.

Gender responsiveness recognises that people with different gender identities need to be meaningfully engaged in efforts to build peace and advance gender equality.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission defines gender responsiveness as paying:

attention to the specific ways conflicts affect people differently depending on their sex, age, ethnicity, etc., and addresses gender-specific implications and concerns, as well as particular recovery and protection needs if any. It aims among other things at enhancing women's participation and leadership in all peacebuilding activities, *noting the substantial link between women's full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts' effectiveness and long-term sustainability* (emphasis original).⁸

Gender responsiveness requires military personnel who are engaged in developing and implementing policies, plans and operations to consider the impact of all decisions that are taken – and not taken – on people with different gender identities. It also requires military leaders to understand and consider the gendered norms that undermine gender equality and have negative impacts on both organisational effectiveness and peace.⁹

The UN defines these terms as follows:¹⁰

Gender inclusive: Gender inclusiveness is a process and refers to how well women and men are included as equally valued players in initiatives. Gender-inclusive projects, programmes, political processes and government services are those which have protocols in place to ensure women and men (and boys and girls, where appropriate) are included and have their voices heard and opinions equally valued.

Gender mainstreaming: This is the process of assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to ensure women's and men's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of all development efforts. The goal of gender mainstreaming is gender equality.

Gender responsiveness: Gender responsiveness refers to outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and which make an effort to encourage equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits. Gender responsiveness is accomplished through gender analysis and gender inclusiveness.

6 See NATO (2021). *Bi-Strategic Command Directive 040-001* (Public Version).

7 See UNDP (2018). *Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. (New York: UN) Available from: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/gender-responsive-un-peacekeeping-operations-policy-en_0.pdf. D1. See also UNPBC (2016), *UN Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy*. Available at: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/07092016- pbc_gender_strategy_final_1.pdf.

8 See also UNPBC (2016). *UN Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy*.

9 Sarah Smith (2022). 'Gender-Responsive Peace in UN Peace Operations: The Path to a Transformative Approach?' *International Peace Institute*. Available from: <https://www.ipinst.org/2022/02/gender-responsive-leadership-in-un-peace-ops>.

10 UNDP (2015). *Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit*. (New York: UNDP). Available from: <https://www.undp.org/publications/gender-responsive-national-communications>.

Since the mid-2000s, military GENAD capabilities have been expanding around the world. The first military GENAD was appointed to a European Union (EU) multilateral operation in 2006, followed by the development of GENAD capabilities in NATO.¹¹ In NATO's most recent report on gender in armed forces, 32 NATO member and partner countries reported having GENAD or GFP capabilities in their ministries of defence, general staff and/or national armed forces. Further, within NATO's member states, there are 359 GENADs and 603 GFPs, the overwhelming majority within national armed forces.¹² Within the African Union, at least seven nations have engaged in efforts to develop a GENAD capability;¹³ in Asia and the Pacific, the Philippines and Malaysian defence forces have a GENAD capability;¹⁴ and in South America, Colombia is reported to be developing one.¹⁵

Figure 2: Countries with known military GENAD capabilities¹⁶



METHODOLOGY

This research draws from 56 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders associated with military GENAD capabilities around the world. This includes current and former GENADs from state militaries, current and retired senior military leaders, scholars, WPS advocates, civil society actors, and security analysts and scholars. All interviews were conducted in English, using online video-call technology as planned research trips were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interviewees were contacted through existing professional networks and, using the snowball sampling technique, introductions to further research participants were made by existing interviewees. We sought to gather a range of views, paying attention to those who had worked or do work as a military GENAD/GFP or alongside them within a military organisation; civilians who have engaged in the development, review or analysis of GENAD capabilities;

and civil society actors who have worked alongside a military GENAD capability. We sought to engage a diverse range of interviewees, paying attention to rank, gender, role, deployment experience and nationality.

Interviewees reflected on their experiences of working in or with national and multilateral missions in the Pacific, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya and elsewhere. At the time of the interview, interviewees were from (in the case of civilians) or represented the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Bosnia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Germany, India, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tonga, United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) of America.

11 Megan Bastick and Claire Duncanson (2018). 'Agents of Change? Gender Advisors in NATO Militaries', *International Peacekeeping* 25(4): 561-2.

12 NATO (2020). *Summary of the National Reports of the NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, 2019*, (New York: UNDP) p. 112.

13 Bastick and Duncanson (2018). *op. cit.* p. 555.

14 ASEAN (2021). *ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security*. (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat) Available from: <https://asean.org/book/asean-regional-study-on-women-peace-and-security/>

15 As discussed in interviews.

16 To our knowledge, there is no collated list of military GENADs worldwide. This data has been collected from existing reporting and interviews. We therefore acknowledge that it may be incomplete. Data draws from NATO (2020) 106-111; Bastick and Duncanson (2018); ASEAN (2021).

Figure 3: Location of research respondents



Depending on their expertise and experience, interviewees were asked questions about their understanding and experience of working in or with a military GENAD capability, its role within military organisations, examples of good practice, challenges they or the capability had faced, and ways in which the capability can be strengthened.

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Research ethics

This research was granted Human Research Ethics approval by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project ID: 26819; 2021).

Limitations of data

To our knowledge, there is no collated list of military GENADs worldwide. We therefore acknowledge that our data as represented in Figure 2 may be incomplete. Our access to current and former GENADs, as well as other interviewees, relied on our own professional networks. Although these networks are extensive, this has limited the range of GENADs and others we interviewed, particularly outside the English-speaking community. Furthermore, some organisations require internal permissions for personnel to be interviewed by external researchers, although nearly all organisations granted us this permission. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic limited travel and created unanticipated care and work burdens for potential interviewees, which may have negatively impacted recruitment and the ability of potential interviewees to participate.

Finally, this report draws only from open-source documents and those made available to the researchers; it therefore does not include guidance on, and analyses of, military GENAD capabilities that are internal to military organisations.

I. POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR GENAD CAPABILITIES

Global level policies

GENAD capabilities in civilian and uniformed contexts are guided at the global level by the WPS framework (see Box 1). After all, the primary role of a GENAD is to support the implementation of the WPS agenda, which was inaugurated with the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000.

The WPS agenda was the culmination of decades of advocacy by women's civil society groups to ensure that the unique harms facing women and girls during conflict, and the under-representation of women in all levels and areas of peace and security decision-making, were highlighted and addressed at the global level. In adopting the foundational resolution in 2000, the UNSC acknowledged the link between these issues and global peace and security. Indeed, there is growing research demonstrating that gender inequality increases the likelihood of conflict, exacerbates the impact of crises and conflict, and undermines efforts towards peace and security.¹⁷

WPS is now a well-established thematic agenda in the UNSC, consisting of ten resolutions that are reviewed annually via UNSC open debates and UN Secretary-General reports.¹⁸ Collectively, nations, regional organisations, civil society and UN agencies work towards the implementation and advancement of the WPS agenda through policy frameworks such as national action plans (NAPs).¹⁹

The WPS resolutions reference GENADs as a capability that can support the implementation of the WPS agenda in peace and security efforts. While the resolutions do not distinguish between civilian and military GENADs, they describe the overall GENAD role as the promotion of gender equality in conflict and crisis contexts. Their specific task, as outlined in the resolutions (see Table 2), is to support gender responsive practices across UN missions. For example, UNSCR 2106 (2013) "recognizes the distinct role of Gender Advisors in ensuring that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in policies, planning and implementation by all mission elements" while UNSCR 2122 (2013) "reiterates its intentions when establishing and renewing its mandates of United Nations missions, to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, including through the appointment of Gender Advisers".

The importance of providing skilled personnel and expertise for the implementation of the WPS agenda is further referenced in thematic UNSCRs on peacekeeping. For example, UNSCR 2594 (2021) "Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise are included throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate implementation and review..."²⁰ This creates a culture of naming GENAD roles in mission-specific UNSC mandates. For instance, in its 2020 resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic, the UNSC outlines the scope of GENAD work in its request that:

17 See, for example, Valerie Hudson et al. (2014). *Sex and World Peace* (Columbia: Columbia University Press); Carol Cohn ed. (2013). *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures* (Newark: Wiley).

18 See UN Documents for Women, Peace and Security, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/women-peace-and-security/>

19 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (2021). *About Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council*. Available from: <https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/WPS-in-SC-Council>.

20 UNSCR 2595 (2021). Operational Clause 6.

Table 2: References to GENAD in the WPS UNSCRs

RESOLUTION	REFERENCE
UNSCR 1888 (2009) Operative Clause (OC) 12	<i>Decides</i> to include specific provisions, as appropriate, for the protection of women and children from rape and other sexual violence in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations, including, on a case-by-case basis, the identification of women's protection advisers (WPAs) among gender advisers and human rights protection units, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the need for, and the number and roles of WPAs are systematically assessed during the preparation of each United Nations peacekeeping operation;
UNSCR 1889 (2009) OC 7	<i>Expresses</i> its intention, when establishing and renewing the mandates of United Nations missions, to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in post-conflict situations, and <i>requests</i> the Secretary-General to continue, as appropriate, to appoint gender advisers and/or women protection advisers to United Nations missions and asks them, in cooperation with United Nations Country Teams, to render technical assistance and improved coordination efforts to address recovery needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations.
UNSCR 1960(2010) OC 10	<i>Welcomes</i> the work of gender advisers ; looks forward to the appointment of more women protection advisers to peacekeeping missions, in accordance with resolution 1888 (2009); notes their potential contribution in the framework of the monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements to be established pursuant to OP8 of the present resolution;
UNSCR 2106 (2013) OC 8	<i>Recognizes</i> the distinct role of Gender Advisers in ensuring that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in policies, planning and implementation by all mission elements; calls upon the Secretary-General to continue to deploy Gender Advisers to the relevant United Nations peacekeeping and political missions as well as humanitarian operations and to ensure comprehensive gender training of all relevant peacekeeping and civilian personnel;
UNSCR 2122 (2013) OC 4	<i>Reiterates</i> its intentions when establishing and renewing its mandates of United Nations missions, to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, including through the appointment of gender advisers as appropriate....
UNSCR 2242 (2015) OC 7	<i>Urges</i> DPKO and DPA to ensure the necessary gender analysis and technical gender expertise is included throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate development, implementation, review and mission drawdown, ensuring the needs and participation of women are integrated in all sequenced stages of mission mandates, welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General that Senior Gender Advisers will be located in the offices of his Special Representatives, calls for senior gender advisers and other gender officer posts to be budgeted for and speedily recruited where appointed in special political missions and multidimensional peacekeeping operations, and encourages greater cooperation between DPKO, DPA and UN-Women to enable more gender responsive United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions, including through providing field-based gender advisers and other missions' sectors with full access to the policy, substantive and technical support of these entities on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and successive resolutions, making full use of respective comparative advantages;
UNSCR 2467 (2019) OC 23	<i>Reiterates</i> its intention when establishing and renewing the mandates of United Nations missions, to include provisions on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, including through the appointment of gender advisers as appropriate, and further expresses its intention to include provisions to facilitate women's full and effective participation and protection in: election preparation and political processes, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, security sector and judicial reforms, and wider post-conflict reconstruction processes where these are mandated tasks within the mission;
UNSCR 2493 (2019) OC 10(b)	<i>Requests</i> the Secretary-General to include the following in his next annual report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions: (b) the implementation of the appointment of gender advisers and/or women protection advisers, provisions to facilitate women's full and effective participation and protection in: the election preparation and political processes, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, security sector and judicial reforms, and wider post-conflict reconstruction processes where these are mandated tasks within the UN mission;

MINUSCA ... take fully into account gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the CAR authorities in ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation, involvement and representation of women, including survivors of sexual violence, in all spheres and at all levels, including in the political and reconciliation process and the implementation of the Peace Agreement, stabilization activities, transitional justice, the work of the SCC and of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, SSR and DDDR processes, the preparation and holding of the 2020/2021 elections **through, inter alia, the provision of gender advisers; ...**²¹

Such mandates imply a senior and strategic role for GENADs in addressing issues specific to women (including their participation and protection from violence) as well as ensuring a gender responsive approach across the operation. While this is important guidance, ultimately the thematic and mission-specific resolutions offer a high-level vision and overarching policy framework for GENADs.

To support the operational work of GENADs during field missions, more specific and grounded policy is also needed. The UN Department of Peace Operations' (UNDPO) *Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* policy, released in 2018, outlines how gender equality and the WPS agenda should be operationalised by the UNDPO, including through the work of GENADs. It highlights GENADs' responsibilities for reporting WPS concerns, coordinating across cognate areas of the mission (such as human rights and protection of civilians), and providing technical advice across the mission. This policy describes the role of GENADs as follows:

The **Gender Advisers**, Gender Units and Gender Focal Points at Headquarters and in missions, are responsible for supporting and facilitating the implementation of this Policy and fostering close collaboration across components and functions in all peacekeeping operations. They shall provide strategic advice and technical and operational support on gender equality and WPS mandates.²²

In addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), the UN has produced a *Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*.²³ This handbook provides guidance for the implementation of the CRSV mandate by civilian, police and military GENADs and describes the role of the Military Gender and Protection Advisor (MGPA) as follows:

The MGPA advises the Force Commander and FHQ branches on the prevention and response to CRSV and acts as a bridge between the military, civilian, and police components. The MGPA is expected to work in close coordination with the SWPAs and other personnel working on CRSV, such as UNPOL Gender Advisor and Gender focal points, CPAs, as well as Gender and POC Advisors.²⁴

These UN policies are relatively new and respond to a call — outlined in our respondents' views below — for more specific policy around GENAD work in field missions. While this is a welcome inclusion that sets a normative standard, its guidance sits at the global level and only concerns UN operations and missions. As noted, the military GENAD capability is developed within state armed forces and can deploy to non-UN missions and work internally within its own organisation. Therefore, there is also a need for strong policy frameworks at national levels.

National level policies

GENAD capabilities (in both civilian and military capacities) are usually developed at national or regional levels where institutions have greater authority to design strategies and compel action among their members or departments.

At the national level, commitments to the military GENAD capability can take different forms in the hands of governments, ministries or departments of defence, and in the armed forces. Routinely, commitments might be outlined in a country's National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS.²⁵ While these plans vary across nations, their purpose is to detail the goals and actions that a state will take — domestically and in its foreign policy — to implement the UN WPS agenda.

Several NAPs identify the adoption of a military GENAD structure and capability. For example, the UK's fourth NAP (2018-2022) identifies the appointment of military GENADs as a key outcome of efforts to "strengthen its capability, processes and leadership to deliver against WPS commitments" (see Figure 4).²⁶ Similarly, the Jordanian NAP (2018-2021) commits to "establish a system of trained gender focal points and gender advisors within all security sector institutions" in its efforts to "achieve gender-responsiveness and meaningful participation of women in the security sector and in peace operations".²⁷ In its NAP (2018-2021), Finland also commits to "continuously develop the competence of its Gender Advisers and Focal Points".²⁸

21 UNSCR 2252 (2020). Operational Clause 44.

22 UNDPO (2018). op. cit. Paragraph 21.

23 United Nations (2020). *Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*. (New York: UN) Available from: <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.08-UN-CRSV-Handbook.pdf>. See page 62 for a discussion on the role of GENADs and pages 44-46 for a focus on Military Gender and Protection Advisors.

24 United Nations (2020). op. cit. p. 44.

25 As of October 2021, 98 UN Member States (or 51 per cent) had developed National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. See: WILPF (2021). National Action Plans at a glance. <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>

26 HM Government (2018). *UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2022* (2018), (London: HMG) 26. Available from: <https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/National-Action-Plan-Women-Peace-Security-2018-2022.pdf>

27 Jordanian National Commission for Women (2018). *Jordanian National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* (2018-21). (Jordan: JNCW)

28 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (2018). *Finland's National Action Plan*. (Helsinki: MFA) Available from: [https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/03_18_Women_Peace_Security%20\(1\)%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/03_18_Women_Peace_Security%20(1)%20(2).pdf), 46.

Figure 4: Excerpt from the UK NAP, detailing a commitment to appointing military GENADs²⁹

Strategic outcome 7: UK capabilities	
HMG continues to strengthen its capability, processes and leadership to deliver against WPS commitments	
Indicator	Indicator source
Mainstreaming of gender in National Security Council country strategies	New
Integration of women, peace and security into cross-departmental operational plans and programmes at country level	New
Mainstreaming of gender where appropriate and applicable in military doctrine and training materials, and appointment military gender advisers	New
Integration of gender analysis into conflict analysis and research	New
Training and capacity building of HMG staff to implement women, peace and security commitments	New

Nations can also implement the WPS agenda through dedicated legislation. In the only example to date, the US Congress passed the *Women, Peace and Security Act* in 2017.³⁰ This Act creates legal requirements for WPS implementation by participating departments and agencies and enables Congressional oversight of these efforts through its reporting mechanisms. Of relevance to the GENAD capability, the Act requires the Department of Defense to ensure that “relevant personnel receive training” in areas appropriate to the implementation of the WPS agenda.³¹

In other cases, military organisations align their WPS policies with existing gender equality legislation. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), for example, integrated the national gender mainstreaming tool Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) (see Figure 5) within its military, which has strengthened its military GENAD capability (see Case Study 1). Similarly, the Armed Forces of the Philippines must operate within the legal infrastructure created by the 2010 Magna Carta for Women (Republic Act No. 9710). This is a comprehensive women’s human rights law that places responsibility on the government and its agencies for gender mainstreaming.³² The Magna Carta strengthens the support mechanisms and profile of its NAP to undertake actions such as to “improve the role and status of women in the security sector”.³³

Figure 5: Integration of GBA+ into the Canadian Armed Forces³⁴

Human resources	<p>The Defence Team will be supported in 2020-21 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 23 FTEs dedicated to the implementation of GBA+ within DND/CAF; • Four Canadian Armed Forces full-time (FTE) NATO-certified (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Gender Advisors (GENADs) in strategic and operational level Headquarters; • GENADs and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) deployed on all expeditionary and domestic CAF named operations; • A Network of approximately 183 DND/CAF trained GFPs at all levels; and • A Champion for Gender and Diversity for Operations, and a Champion for Women, Peace and Security.
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Specific WPS policies and implementation plans may also be developed within national ministries or departments of defence. For instance, in the Australian Department of Defence’s *Defence Gender, Peace and Security Mandate* (2021) the armed forces outline specific commitments to build, train and deploy military GENADs as part of efforts to implement their NAP.³⁵ Such plans may be part of a NAP implementation plan or may align with other gender equality infrastructure that exists within the armed forces.

29 HM Government (2018). op. cit.

30 US Congress (2017). Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017. Available from: <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ68/PLAW-115publ68.pdf>

31 ibid. Section 6(b).

32 Republic of the Philippines (2010). Republic Act No. 9710 *Magna Carta of Women*. (Manilla: Philippine Commission of Women) Available from: <https://library.pcw.gov.ph/ra-9710-magna-carta-of-women-implementing-rules-and-regulations/>

33 Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (2017). *Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2017-2022*. (Manilla: OPAPP) Available from: http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Philippines_20172022NAP.pdf. Action point 5, p. 13.

34 Government of Canada (2020). Gender-based Analysis Plus. (Ottawa: GoC) Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/departmental-plans/departmental-plan-2020-21-index/supplementary-information-index/gba-plus.html>

35 Australian Defence Force (2021). *Defence Gender, Peace and Security Mandate: From Rhetoric to Reality*. (Canberra: Department of Defence) Available from: https://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Australian_Defence_Force-Defence_Gender_Peace_and_Security_Mandate.pdf, pp. 3-4.

Regional level policies

At the regional level, the military GENAD capability can be developed through Regional Action Plans, multilateral commitments or organisational policies. For example, NATO has developed strategic policy for the implementation of WPS within its command structure and operations. This includes the 2018 *WPS Policy and Action Plan*³⁶ and the 2021 *Bi-Strategic Command Directive* on ‘Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Gender Perspective into

NATO Command Structure’, now in its fourth iteration.³⁷ This is perhaps the most comprehensive policy outlining the role, rationale and structure of GENADs within the organisation. NATO outlines “the primary job of the Gender Advisor is to provide guidance and advice to NATO commanders on how to integrate a gender perspective into operations and missions, crisis and conflict analysis, concepts, doctrine, procedures, and education and training”.³⁸

Case Study 1: Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

GBA+ is the Canadian Government’s gender mainstreaming and inclusion policy framework. In 2005, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women developed the GBA (gender-based analysis) policy to be implemented across the work of the Canadian Government. In 2011, the policy was renamed GBA+ with the ‘plus’ reflecting a consideration of other identity factors — such as race or sexuality — that may shape the experience of Canadians. The Government of Canada describes GBA+ as a whole-of-government analytical tool “used to assess how different women, men and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives”.³⁹

In 2016, the Chief of Defence Staff released a directive stating that the CAF will integrate UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions into planning and operations through the GBA+ framework. In 2017, Canada’s Defence Policy stated that the CAF must “integrate GBA+ in all defence activities across the CAF and the Department of National Defence (DND), from the design and implementation of programs and services that support our personnel, to equipment procurement and operational planning”.⁴⁰

In a military context, it is intended to inform defence policies, programs and operations, including capacity development through training and “integrating GBA+ requirements into systems and processes, and developing measurement and accountability frameworks”⁴¹ to ensure defence activities are more responsive to the specific needs and circumstances of diverse groups.⁴²

The first stage of the CAF’s implementation of GBA+ included tasking GENADs to advise commanders on how to integrate GBA+ in operations.⁴³ Awareness of GBA+ was conducted through mandatory online training developed by the organisation Women and Gender Equality Canada and GFPs were assigned to enact GBA+ within the plans, tasks and evaluations of their branches or units.⁴⁴ The CAF made use of a ‘bottom-up’ approach to implement GBA+ by assigning all military members to complete their own GBA+ assessments, with the intent to “internalize the value of GBA+ and to ensure that all staff participate actively in a cultural shift”.⁴⁵

GBA+ provides a holistic approach to, and robust understanding of gender mainstreaming in military operations. This, in turn, sets the CAF up for success in agenda-setting change in the long term.

36 NATO (2018). *NATO/EAPC Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan*. (Brussels: NATO) Available from https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_09/180920-WPS-Action-Plan-2018.pdf.

37 NATO (2021). op. cit.

38 NATO (2020). *HQ SACT Office of the Gender Advisor*, (Brussels: NATO) Available from: <https://www.act.nato.int/gender-advisor>

39 Government of Canada (2021). op. cit.

40 ibid.

41 ibid.

42 Government of Canada (2019). Annex C: Gender-Based Analysis Plus and the Defence Policy Review, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/canada-defence-policy/annex-c.html>.

43 Rachael Johnstone and Bessma Momani (2020). ‘Gender Mainstreaming in the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence: Lessons on the Implementation of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)’. *Armed Forces & Society*, Online First, 1-27.

44 ibid. p. 8.

45 ibid. p. 16.

ATTITUDES TO THE UN'S WPS AGENDA AND ITS POLICY FRAMEWORKS

In our interviews, we explored respondents' attitudes towards the WPS agenda and the types of policy frameworks considered above. We sought their familiarity with these policies and their views on the suitability of the policies for their work. While some acknowledged the more recent efforts to develop policy at all levels, overwhelmingly, our respondents report the need for more robust policy around the specific work of military GENADs that aligns with relevant gender equality, military and peace and security policy at the national, regional and global levels.

Attitudes to the WPS agenda

The GENADs we spoke with demonstrate a passionate commitment to, and deep and complex knowledge of, the WPS agenda. For most, the agenda is the starting point for their work. When asked about the relationship between the WPS agenda and the GENAD role, one respondent notes: "It's quite paramount to GENADs' existence, it's existential, if you will". This was emphasised by another respondent: "Women, Peace and Security is the foundation. I mean: That is it. If you don't understand that and can't place that in your context of your work, then I think you're pretty doomed".

Yet, respondents were also quick to acknowledge that the agenda has limitations and silences. For some, the language of the WPS agenda is limiting. Some GENADs feel the WPS agenda lacks a commitment to intersectionality and presents women as a single identity group. One respondent argues:

the Women, Peace and Security agenda is looking at the protection of women's human rights and the prevention of conflict But I think if we really want to be applying [a gender] analysis, then you might also want to think about how military operations will affect the livelihood of different groups of women and men.

A one-dimensional approach to women or gender, many respondents suggest, undermines a sophisticated approach to understanding how women's vulnerabilities in conflict might intersect with issues of race, ethnicity, religion, age, socioeconomic status and other concerns. It can also create challenges for female military personnel. Sharland argues that when WPS language is translated in some UN mission mandates it can perpetuate gendered stereotypes that create challenges for the work of women peacekeepers.⁴⁶

Others note that the focus on *women*, peace and security obscures the need to consider gender. As noted throughout WPS research, the agenda fails to meaningfully engage with men, boys, diverse genders, issues of sexuality and gender as a set of social relations.⁴⁷ For this reason, as one respondent explains, many military organisations use the term 'Gender, Peace and Security':

Because language is important The gender perspective to me is really pivotal in Defence ... applying the gender perspective is what's going to make a difference in everyone's day to day job and ensuring we have a better product or a better operation or a better effect or any of those things. Because when I say apply a gender perspective, the language is more inclusive than when I refer to women, peace and security.

“If you really want to understand gender conflict analysis, you need to look at both women and men. For example, if you're integrating in a mission area in a way that causes mass unemployment in young men or disarms huge numbers of young men, you're essentially changing gender relations in the mission area and you're potentially creating conditions for further conflict down the line or there could be ways of doing it that you are creating better conditions for peace.”

Many acknowledge NATO's efforts to think about *gender* as opposed to *women*. As one respondent notes: "In a military context, it was NATO who formalised what the role of a *gender* advisor was" and continues to say that the policy has developed over time to include clear commitments to gender equality and the integration of a gender perspective rather than a focus on women as a group or women's protection as the primary concern.

46 Lisa Sharland (2021). 'Women, Peace and Security Mandates for UN Peacekeeping Operations: Assessing Influence and Impact'. International Peace Institute. (New York: IPI) Available from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2101_WPS-Mandates.pdf, p. 2.

47 See, for example, 'Part V: Cross Cutting Agenda? Connections and Mainstreaming' in Sara E Davies and Jacqui True, eds (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Attitudes to the UN and NATO’s policy support for GENAD roles

Key finding:

GENADs are committed to the UN’s WPS agenda as the foundation and guide for their work, though they seek more robust policy framing at the global level.

Current and former GENADs clearly feel connected to the UN as the home of the WPS agenda. However, there were mixed views on the quality and detail of UN-level GENAD policy. Some respondents argue that the resolutions are important guidance that “gives you something to hang your hat on when you need to try and sell it to command”. One respondent emphasises how this can assist with obtaining buy-in from leadership: “One of the key things that a GENAD can do is to really use the ... officially agreed language to convince leadership”. On the whole, however, GENADs describe an absence of robust, defined and enforceable policy at the UN level.

To some extent, this may have been addressed in recent years with the development of the 2018 *Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. However, some respondents appear to be unaware of the policy or found it wanting. For some respondents, the problem with the policy is structural: the WPS agenda lacks both the legal and political authority to compel UN member states into specific and consistent actions with regards to the work of military GENADs. While documents such as the *Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* clearly state that “Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all civilian (substantive and support), police and military personnel at all ranks and levels”, the reality is that mission mandates are inconsistent on this point;⁴⁸ so too are adequate resources,⁴⁹ and there are few enforcement mechanisms or accountability structures to ensure the quality implementation of the WPS agenda in UN operations.

Consequently, many see the policy more as ‘guidance’ rather than requiring concerted and compulsory action on the part of Force Commanders. This lack of enforcement or compliance mechanisms troubles a few respondents: “If we had some kind of real clear direction or strategic oversight from international bodies such as the UN, that might actually *require* some action from our commanders. I think that’s the only way”. Another respondent states, “the UN is important as a global standard setter” but does not have the necessary capacity “... to practically implement these issues ...”

To some extent, implementation of GENAD policies in UN operations also relies on the individual efforts of member states to proactively engage with them. Without this, the work of GENADs cannot succeed. Many respondents

note that across UN operations there has been varying levels of awareness of, and commitment to, the WPS policy agenda from member states. In some cases, this comes from limited exposure to the role and value of GENAD work. Respondents routinely identify the difficulties of working with peacekeepers from member states that had limited understanding or awareness of the WPS agenda: “At the UN level, you need to go through a long consultation with all the member states ... you are in an office with military with different backgrounds who don’t necessarily understand the WPS agenda or gender in general — [not] even [a] basic definition”. In other cases respondents spoke of encountering personnel with a wilful disregard of the WPS policy agenda. Acknowledging this, one respondent suggests that the UN “is an organisation that has to get its own house in order in the first instance”, noting that UN missions have very mixed results in terms of ensuring gender responsive practices.

Attitudes to national-level policy support for the GENAD capability

Key finding:

GENADs report that national and organisational level policy regarding the GENAD capability is rarely sufficient but is critical for the success of the GENAD capability.

“The first thing I always say is you need a proper plan. It needs to be a cradle to grave plan. So, you need to have a strategy. That’s my strategy. It could be a different strategy, but you need a strategy that says how do we go with everything from leadership to training to delivery and wrap all of that up?”

At the national level, respondents identify a similar absence of clear policy and guidance on the establishment of the GENAD capability within their organisations. In some cases, respondents were among the first GENADs within their organisation, while others are part of a more established capability. Respondents are clear that developing GENAD capabilities is ‘easier’ in national contexts that have a robust policy framework and normative commitment to gender equality.

48 Sharland (2021). op. cit. p. 22.

49 Louise Allen notes that between 2016 and 2018 numerous GENAD positions lost their funding or were downgraded to less senior positions. See Louise Allen (2019). ‘Mapping of the Gender Recommendations in the Three 2015 Peace and Security Reviews,’ UN Women. In his 2021 report to the UN Security Council on the implementation of the WPS agenda, the UN Secretary-General noted that “Of the current peacekeeping missions, eight have gender units, with a total of 52 gender advisors and officers, but only 4 hold positions at the senior level (P-5) ...” S/2021/827 ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security’, paragraph 87.

Looking outwards, one respondent recommends connecting national WPS commitments to global policy frameworks such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

I certainly feel that we would achieve a great deal more if there was much stronger linkage at government level between the precepts of CEDAW which have a legal obligation, and those of UNSCR1325 which have a moral obligation but no requirement to deliver.

Others note the importance of looking inwards to national-level frameworks and cultures. A respondent from the Philippines notes that their military GENAD capability has been underpinned by the Magna Carta for Women, which has created a broader culture of understanding around gender equality. Similarly, respondents from Europe state that the Nordic countries, which have long-held national gender equality policies, appear to have greater success in developing GENAD capabilities because the ‘idea’ of a military GENAD sits well with, and is supported by, existing gender equality laws and culture.

Snapshot Analysis 1: Designing national-level GENAD policy

Snapshot Analysis 1	According to our respondents, good practice around national-level policy infrastructure for a military GENAD capability involves:
>	A workable and succinct NAP on WPS
>	Corresponding institution-level action plans
>	Alignment of GENAD frameworks with existing institutional and national commitments to gender equality
>	Clear connections to global commitments on WPS and other relevant global gender equality and peacebuilding policies. ⁵⁰

One way to establish robust policy that enables effective engagement is to enshrine it in national legislation. Respondents who have experience in or with the US Armed Forces highlight the positive difference the WPS Act makes to their WPS work, describing it as giving them greater backing and support than just the US NAP. One respondent further explains that Congress and legislation determine military policy, so the Act “really drove home ... that this is something they had to figure out how to do”.

In addition to raising the profile of WPS and its implementation, a respondent identifies the positive impact the Act has on a strategic commitment to resourcing. Another respondent explains that this funding:

was quite helpful for appointing Gender Advisors or getting outside subject-matter expertise to come in and serve as Gender Advisors, since beforehand it was really at the will of the Combat Commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] to decide to do so.

Respondents also spoke of the value of a strong NAP that looks internally, externally and across government. Speaking of the Canadian context, one respondent highlights that a whole-of-government WPS NAP can assist GENADs in their role:

Our National Action Plan touches on many different aspects, from missing and murdered Aboriginal women to UN Peacekeeping Operations. So, it's domestic, international – it's whole of government, different departments in governments. So, I think that's best practice, [to ask] ‘what's the policy environment?’ Because ultimately that's very empowering I think, for a Gender Advisor or for someone with a gender focal point role to have that strong backing through policies.

However, even where a strong policy framework exists, respondents still report challenges in translating national political-level commitments into action within military organisations. Despite the overall support for the WPS Act in the US, for instance, one respondent argues that it is only as good as the departmental strategic framework and implementation plan that is put in place. Another respondent feels that around the world there have been missed opportunities to translate national-level policies into practice within military organisations: “So what's said on the one side [regarding the national commitment to WPS] doesn't always reflect what's happening internally and I think that's very much a reality”.

“There's also a clear gap, I think, in most countries between the political engagements of the respective member states and the statements that a Minister of Foreign Affairs or Defence would make but then really the operational side, these are often two very different things and they speak a very different language in many cases.”

50 Relevant global frameworks might include: 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW); 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; 2015 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, the Children and Armed Conflict agenda.

As noted, respondents held that GENAD policies are strongest when a clear connection can be drawn from global, to regional, to national, to institutional policies. However, many also note GENAD policies need to be supported and embedded *within* military organisations. Some respondents note that their organisation's GENAD policies didn't align with other organisational policies. This creates challenges in connecting GENAD policy to the organisation's values and priorities. In this sense, respondents describe military GENAD capabilities as curious artefacts within a broader institutional context that has not especially embraced gender responsive behaviours. As noted in section III Organisational Culture, this creates confusion around the purpose of GENAD capabilities.

FUNCTIONAL LOCATION OF THE GENAD CAPABILITY

Key finding:

The functional location of GENAD capabilities varies across military organisations, however the rationale for the location is often unclear.

There are different approaches to where the GENAD capability is functionally located within a military organisation. Around the world, GENADs are located within sections addressing diversity and inclusion (D&I), human resources, training and education, and at senior strategic levels. There is not a correct answer to where the GENAD capability 'belongs' within an organisation — much depends on the context, resourcing and the goals of the capability. However, our respondents note that decision-making about the functional location of the GENAD capability is not always purposeful or clearly aligned with its stated goal and function. Moreover, the decision can be highly political and constrain the work undertaken by GENADs.

Many respondents work with organisations that locate their GENAD capability within broader D&I initiatives. This elicited strong views. On the one hand, respondents acknowledge that D&I programs can increase the participation of women in military organisations and encourage the inclusion of gender perspectives, both central tenets of the WPS agenda. In fact, WPS NAPs can create a pathway for considering D&I issues within military organisations where they don't otherwise exist. As one respondent notes: "it is all part of the same story". This approach can also encourage the attention of the GENAD capability toward *internal* organisational reform: "There's some benefit in seeing that the way you treat women in a home environment inside the organisation is also the same high ideals that we would want to be able to achieve for other women in other countries".

On the other hand, respondents were concerned that coupling D&I with WPS allows the two projects to become conflated into a 'just add women' program. Many were concerned that this misses the point of the GENAD capability, which is more than just safeguarding and enhancing women's participation, which is how D&I is often perceived. One respondent notes: "There is, I guess, a misconception that it [the GENAD capability] can fit neatly within diversity and inclusion. Yet so much of what Women, Peace and Security stands for gets neglected if we do go down that line". Recognising the role that GENADs play in enhancing the operations of military organisations, this respondent recommends a "focus on [operations] rather than the 'equality and the numbers game' which can be what it gets relegated to within diversity and inclusion".

“ We are the ones who are implementing the WPS agenda in our armed forces.... That's my task... People say, 'but gender is also this, and it's also that, and we also have to work on the D&I and social integrity and inclusiveness'. Yeah. I agree. Absolutely. But I am here for the WPS agenda. I do support everything they do, and I want to help them, support them, work together as much as we can, but at the same time, I will never, ever, forget my focus. My focus is that we are military gender advisors who should implement the WPS agenda. ”

Similarly, there are debates regarding the advantages and disadvantages of locating the GENAD capability in other LOE, including human resources, and education and training. Respondents note the value of such locations; however, they are quick to identify how it might constrain the work and influence of GENADs and limit the way the capability is understood by others across the organisation. Many note that the decision on the functional location of the capability is political and therefore speaks to the need for a clearly communicated rationale for its location that aligns with the purpose and expected outcomes of the capability.

Ultimately, many respondents agree that NATO's structure (see Figure 1) is an effective model that should be adopted at national levels. This model positions GENADs at a senior and strategic level, while dual-hatted GFPs sit across all divisions, units and work areas. This approach ensures that WPS principles are present in senior-led organisational policy and doctrine, while local areas also have access to technical gender expertise to ensure the gender responsiveness of their work.

WPS AND THE HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA

Recently, there has been movement by some military organisations to position their GENAD capability within a broader human security approach that addresses a range of protection agendas. Our respondents have mixed feelings about this. While some acknowledge the alignment across agendas and the potentially more inclusive language of human security, others feel it undermines the transformational capacity of the WPS agenda and the work of GENADs.

The NATO approach to human security aligns numerous UN thematic agendas, such as the protection of civilians (POC), children and armed conflict (CAAC), countering trafficking in human beings, preventing and responding to CRSV, and protecting cultural property.⁵¹ To reflect this approach, the NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for WPS is supported by a Unit that covers both gender and human security issues.⁵² The UK Ministry of Defence has adopted a similar approach in its 2019 *Human Security in Military Operations* guidance (see Figure 6), which states that those receiving training in the UK "will be certified as 'Military Gender and Protection Advisers' and will be trained in broader human security concerns".⁵³

Figure 6: Excerpt from the 2019 UK MoD *Human Security in Military Operations* guidance

This policy directs the UK Armed Forces to implement UNSCR 1325 and the follow-on Security Council Resolutions relating to women, peace and security along with the wider protection of civilians' concerns such as children in armed conflict and human trafficking – both of which are predicated on a strong gender bias against women and girls. In view of the subjects covered this Joint Service Publication is called Human Security and Military Operations.

Figure 7: Excerpt from the 2019 UK MoD *Human Security in Military Operations* guidance

It is commonplace to hear that the character of conflict is 'changing'. This can make us complacent or sceptical when we're asked as a military to consider and respond to a newly identified security dynamic. But conflict has changed, the conflicts we are witnessing today are socially degenerate. Human rights violations against civilians are no longer viewed as collateral damage, instead the targeting of civilians is central to the warring factions' tactics and objectives.

Positioning GENADs within a human security framework generates much debate. Some see the focus on these issues as part of a reassessment of the role of military organisations in a modern world: "I think the military has started this process of [a] really good internal philosophical hard look of — for lack of a better word — 'who am I? What am I supposed to be doing?'" This comment reflects the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) policy (see Figure 7), which acknowledges the need to respond to the complex challenges facing civilian populations in times of conflict and crisis. Another respondent suggests that the human security framework could generate a more inclusive mindset: "It will be maybe more coherent in moving forward as a community if we say, the objective that we're working toward is human security. This implies human rights obligations, ... this means a broader capability".

51 NATO (2021). *Human Security*. (Brussels: NATO) Available from: https://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/topics_181779.htm?selectedLocale=uk.

52 Personal correspondence from Ms. Irene Fellin (NATO SR WPS) to Jennifer Wittwer (Monash University Project Team) dated 12 April 2022.

53 Ministry of Defence (2019). *JSP 1325: Human Security in Military Operations, Part 1: Directive*. (London: HMG) Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770919/JSP_1325_Part_1_2019_O.PDF p. 6.

For some, human security is a conceptual framing that can build support for the GENAD capability within military organisations. Throughout the research, respondents spoke of the challenges they face in dealing in the language of ‘women’ and ‘gender’. As discussed in Section III(B) Communication, these terms can be dismissed as irrelevant to men or attract backlash and resistance. One respondent argues: “The military doesn’t get gender. So, when you say gender, it’s like this: ‘oh, that’s the girls’ thing’. It’s not helpful because it just puts things into a separate box”. The human security framework might ease this backlash and create a better understanding of the GENAD role: “It’s not just about women and girls; it’s [about] how conflict and security situations affect everybody differently. Using the expression ‘human security’ makes it less – oh, that’s just about women so, pff, whatever ... Language is key – it is important in gaining people’s trust”. Similarly, another respondent argues: “I’m actually not opposed to the human security messaging, because I do think that for male-dominated audiences, it has worked quite well in opening the door a little further and being able to walk through it”.

Respondents also note that men are more likely to engage with a human security framework than they are with one focused on gender. One respondent notes that in their organisation there has been a large increase of men in operational roles signing up for a human security course, as opposed to a majority of women who are interested in a WPS course: “If that’s the hook that drags them in then why not? Then we can field it back out again, but you’ve got to have something that creates the change, don’t you?” Another notes the same phenomenon: “Moving towards a human security focus would definitely have some benefit in probably a far wider reach across the defence industries that we work with. The appeal of undertaking a human security course is quite different from that of a gender advisor training session”. One respondent referred to this as “coating the pill with sugar; it goes down much easier”.

Yet there was also strong opposition to the conflation of WPS and human security. For some, the agendas are quite separate, requiring discrete knowledge and technical skills: “Child protection is its own area of expertise. Human trafficking, modern slavery, they are all important areas of expertise ... Somebody who has done a couple of weeks’ training on gender will not be an expert on child rights”. Another respondent believes that having a generalist advisor would diminish and delegitimise the individual mandates: “We would never say you’re a specialist political advisor in the Balkans, oh but we’re just going to throw you in Ukraine just because you’re hanging around”.

One respondent notes that the human security framework is largely dominated by a protection ethic. The CAAC agenda, for instance, is a protection agenda for children in conflict.⁵⁴ Similarly, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), CRSV and anti-trafficking agendas are about developing strategies to protect and support victims of violence. This potentially marginalises women’s agency and leadership in conflict and crisis settings and risks reinforcing harmful stereotypes of women as only ever victims of conflict. As WPS practitioners, GENADs need to be able to work with communities to facilitate women’s meaningful participation and leadership in security settings. One respondent notes:

It’s not just ... about protection. So, we keep them [the different agendas] separate. They are like cousins. They communicate. They engage on each other’s portfolios. There is a seamless integration between the two, but they stand very firmly on two different feet in two different camps.

Many others supported this view, noting the logistical challenges posed by an overarching human security agenda. For some, the concern was that WPS would become siloed and devalued among the multitude of other issues. This would potentially impact resourcing:

If you do change the terminology but you’re resourcing something effectively: you have the right training, you have the political commitment, all those sorts of things, then it may not be as problematic. But my concern is that we don’t have those things yet and I think that’s part of the challenge.

Others note that the agendas have different governing and reporting structures at the national and global levels: “They go across lots of different departments in Governments. They go across lots of different departments within Defence”. Similarly, at the global level the thematic agendas have different reporting, accountability and compliance mechanisms.⁵⁵

A similar point was made about training, which (as discussed in Section III Organisational culture) is already seen as too limited: “If it already is too short, how will participants be able to manage so many other topics?”.

Respondents are also concerned that the human security approach dilutes the transformative potential of WPS within the culture and practices of military institutions. For some, the human security approach is a way of placating a masculine-dominated institution that actually needs to confront the realities identified in the WPS agenda. In this sense, one respondent argues: “moving to human security fades the whole idea that we have disproportionately ignored what’s going on with women and what women know”. This approach assumes that women’s and men’s experiences, realities and requirements are equal or gender neutral.

54 See Katrina Lee-Koo (2018). ‘The Intolerable Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: The United Nations Security Council and the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict’. *Global Responsibility to Protect* 10:1-2, 57-74.

55 See for example, Lisa Hultman and Angela Muvumba Sellström ‘WPS and Protection of Civilians’ and Katrina Lee-Koo ‘WPS, Children and Armed Conflict’ in Sara E Davies and Jacqui True, eds (2019). *The Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 598-617.

Most respondents agree that a human security approach would undermine the important focus on women and girls: “You really risk diminishing the fact that women and girls are specifically targeted [in conflict]. They are the glue that holds many communities together, so to specifically attack them and to break the cohesion of social groups as a tactic is a reality of warfare”. Many of these respondents see the human security approach as part of a broader backlash against feminism: “Ultimately there is a real resistance within militaries to them understanding [their role as] promoting a feminist agenda. That’s connected to the resistance to feminism within the broader community, large parts of the broader community”.

“While we’re still trying to get to a point where gender mainstreaming is the norm.... I think it is useful to have the use of the term Gender Advisor. It hones in on the fact that this has been overlooked and this is why we’re doing this. It may be that that conversation evolves in a few years and it’s more appropriate perhaps to use a broader, more encompassing terminology [like human security]. But I don’t think we’re quite there yet.”

Overall, most respondents feel disheartened that they were required to ‘rebrand’ the agenda in order to get support from leadership and colleagues. For some, it undermines the purpose of the WPS agenda, which is to engender positive changes towards an open acceptance of, and commitment to, gender equality: “I don’t think that human security is the first example of where a male dominated organisation has tried to rebrand a subject which is clearly something that they can’t throw out the window”.

Despite these frustrations, many respondents are pragmatic and voice their flexibility and willingness to be open to change, to do whatever ‘works’:

My first impulse is, I’m often strategic, and I’m like, if that helps, if that brings more peace and less violence, let’s change the name, you know. My second impulse is, why do we have to continue to hide, or neglect that gender equality is beneficial.

WPS AND FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

While many respondents suggest that the human security framework is a means by which military organisations can circumvent feminism, other states have openly embraced a feminist foreign policy. Sweden pioneered this approach in 2014 with the launch of its self-declared feminist foreign policy. Since then, Canada, the UK, France, Luxembourg, Spain, Germany, and Mexico have all made pledges or policy commitments to a feminist approach in their foreign policy.⁵⁶ Our respondents agree that a national commitment to a feminist foreign policy creates a strong supporting framework for the implementation of the WPS agenda and a significant enabling environment for the work of military GENADs.

Sweden is mentioned by several respondents as having a coherent, holistic approach to gender in foreign and security operations: “They are very, very holistic, to a point where all Swedish diplomats also know what their feminist foreign policy looks like, but also the preparation of the military staff that is sent out, and I think that is quite notable”.

Respondents also recognise that Canada benefits from declaring a feminist foreign policy:

All of a sudden this was a talking point with every key leader engagement ... The Gender Advisor was always flanking the Commander for all of these meetings and photos ops and so on. So, the demeanour changed, and I noticed that immediately once our Foreign Minister talked about a Feminist Foreign Policy.

One respondent argues that a feminist foreign policy is crucial to the success of the GENAD role:

Ultimately the Gender Advisor’s role is connected to the Women, Peace and Security commitment, and if the Women, Peace and Security commitments aren’t truly embedded in the Foreign Policy and Defence Policy statements of that government, of that state, then I think it’s harder. Then you’re trying to implement change very much against the grain, and maybe you’re lacking that policy cover outside of the National Action Plan which very rarely has distinct [prescriptions] on supporting Gender Advisors in an operational context.

56 See the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (2021). ‘A Brief Timeline of Feminist Foreign Policy’. Available from: <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/feminist-foreign-policy>

One respondent, in discussing Sweden's feminist foreign policy, spoke of the advantages of using the language of feminism and gender equality where other nations have shied away:

A lot of people have argued that how could you possibly use that terminology. The F word is so [laughs] difficult in many parts of the world. Yes, it is. At the same time, it did get a lot of attention. It has quite a lot of impact thanks to that terminology. Because it frightens and it causes a stir. Sometimes it's better to use the language that creates a reaction rather than to hide it. I also think there's an aspect to this that is quite important. That is, that the internal organisational culture and representation will have an impact on how you operate — so, this is not just a way of operating to create operational effectiveness. Anyone can do it. I think you have to be an inclusive organisation with a certain level of representation of women, as well, to do good gender operations in the field. That means we cannot shy away from these questions.

CONCLUSION

While military GENAD capabilities remain nascent in many armed forces around the world, there is evidence that GENAD policy frameworks are becoming more robust at the global, regional and national levels. The development of these policies must continue to be purposeful to ensure that the full benefits of a military GENAD capability can be realised.

Our research finds that GENAD policy frameworks are most effective when they clearly model the capability structure, when the purpose and anticipated impact of the capability is articulated, and when the policy aligns with other relevant policies at the organisational, national and global levels. The research also finds that GENAD policies are most effective when they are developed alongside broader commitments to, and cultures of, gender equality within the military organisation, nation or mission.

II. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

This section examines how the GENAD policies explored in the last section are translated into the working structures of military organisations. In particular, we consider how the capability is structured and resourced, the training regimes on gender and for GENADs and GFPs, and the processes to monitor and evaluate the work of the GENAD capability. We examine the challenges and opportunities presented by this implementation process for those working as part of, or alongside, the GENAD capability.

Our research finds that while practices vary around the world, there are common opportunities to better integrate the GENAD capability into the structure of military organisations in ways that enhance impact. In most organisations and operational contexts there is opportunity to provide clearer guidance on the responsibilities of the GENAD capability, to offer greater and sustained commitments to resourcing and training, to develop programs that build and sustain institutional knowledge, and to engage in periodic evaluation of the capability. Strengthening these aspects would demonstrate commitment to the capability and its intended outcomes. It would also create a foundation for the institutionalisation of WPS throughout the organisation.

A. THE GENAD CAPABILITY

“... the role of gender and the role of gender advisors is significantly misunderstood”

Our research finds that gendered stereotypes and cultures undermine efforts to establish a diverse and effective GENAD capability within armed forces. The continued association of ‘gender’ with ‘women’ and ‘women’s issues’ means that many see gender advising as a niche area of military effort that concerns women and so-called ‘women’s issues’. This discourages the work from being structured as a military capability alongside commensurate capabilities such as political or legal advising. It undermines efforts to establish the capability as an area of expert technical advice that has a career structure and requires dedicated skills and an accumulation of knowledge and experience.

The absence of a clear job description

Key finding:

GENADs rarely have clear, specific and widely understood job descriptions for their roles.

In the case of UN missions, current and former GENADs agree that in their experience GENAD policies were poorly translated into clearly defined position descriptions. Many note that the specificities of their work rely on the individual Force Commander’s directives. Respondents note that these directives are shaped by the Commander’s commitment to, and knowledge of, the overarching GENAD policies outlined in Section I. One respondent describes it as “a fair bit of making it up as we go”.

When asked how they responded to these challenges, an interviewee — who had deployed as a GENAD to the DRC — replied:

It wasn’t a shock because I was [already] dealing with it [in my own Army]. I was like, ‘yeah, people don’t completely get this yet. It’s not in our DNA’. So, it wasn’t a shock, but I think I expected to have a little bit more policy wrapping around it. The UN has shed loads of policy on stuff but it’s at such a high level and we have the same problem in [my country]. Our civilians that work at government level, they operate in concepts and ideas and then there’s this massive gap between them and the [GENAD] on the ground that’s going ‘what do you want me to do?’ So, I wasn’t surprised, but I thought this really should be better structured by now. This should be much clearer. It shouldn’t be the case that a middle of the road Major comes in and says: ‘I’ll create a plan’. There should be a plan that exists and that we all buy into particularly with something that needs a long-term approach.

Respondents note that these challenges intensify when there is no handover from a previous GENAD on the mission, when there has been no previous GENAD or there is a time gap between GENAD deployments. One respondent mentions: “... people are quite frustrated when they go on UN missions that there isn’t any handover because the previous Gender Advisor left three, four months ago, and they come in and they kind of figure things out, they have a six-month rotation, then there’s a gap again”. This can impact mission success, as one respondent explains in the case of Afghanistan:

... one of the things that came through the NATO Civil Society Advisory Panel reports was the Afghan women's networks saying: 'We have had contact with a Gender Advisor, but [now] the position sits empty and we never hear from them'. So, the nature of the short postings, turnarounds, postings left empty, makes it very difficult for them to build a meaningful relationship with civil society.

However, a few respondents comment that the lack of detailed guidance offers freedom and flexibility in designing the role and tailoring the desired impact. It allows GENADs to do their own contextual analysis of the unfolding situation and establish relevant priorities. Yet this also comes with costs. A former GENAD with extensive experience across several UN missions notes:

So, somebody would come in and just go: 'Oh, I'm going to focus on child protection for this tour because I think it's important' and somebody else would come in and go: 'I'm going to focus on DDR.' But DDR is 90 per cent a civilian issue. Now, [the GENAD] cares and is committed and is doing lots of good stuff but actually, how much of an impact is focusing so much military attention on DDR going to make when we have 16,000 people on the ground that probably need to know a lot more about gender than they do? So, I think that the issue for me was not really people's commitment but their lack of strategy because otherwise, you're just sort of more heat than light.

Others note the lack of specific directives can also create challenges in operationalising core areas of the WPS agenda. One respondent gave the example of wanting to address sexual violence, but facing challenges putting this into practice as it was not written into any mission objectives or flow-on directives, or reflected in the rules of engagement:

Your mission objective is often something like, 'train and assist the local national security forces'. So, there are tensions between doing that and things like sexual violence response. There are questions whether you even have the authority to intervene with force in an issue where human rights abuse is happening, because it's just not what your mission is built around. There's a real gap between what's written in the policy around the role of Gender Advisors being to support the implementation of 1325 and how that then becomes implemented when it's not actually what your mission is arguably ever going to be framed around.

Some of these issues may be addressed by introducing more robust policy and greater policy awareness at the global level. However, the research finds that the translation of global GENAD policy in UN missions remains far from consistent, with success dependent on support through resourcing, specific mission mandates and command attitudes and priorities.

Within national military organisations, respondents also identify challenges around articulating the core responsibilities of the role. This appears to be particularly the case where the capability is nascent or very small (two interviewees report that their organisation has only one GENAD position). In such cases, the capability lacks a clear structure or clear division/definition of roles for GENADs and GFPs (as recommended in the NATO guidelines, see Figure 1). Respondents who had worked as a GENAD in this type of arrangement spoke of their exhaustion at being seen as the person 'who does it all', as opposed to managing the capability at the strategic level. One respondent recalls: "Anything that said women, female or gender was all of a sudden in my portfolio and that's just not necessarily the work of a Gender Advisor or the way that they can bring the most value to the [organisation]". One respondent spoke of their experience feeling overloaded with tasks:

People look at me as a Gender Advisor and think I'm responsible for integrating (gender) into plans, developing the plans, integrating gender into doctrine, developing the training, executing the training, briefing my senior leadership, developing the program to work with partners, implementing the program to work with partners and now you have a Gender Adviser who is ... doing just about everything, especially at that operational and strategic level.

Respondents who had worked with military organisations with more developed GENAD capabilities refer to some improvements in the structure and role clarity. For some, these improvements can in part be attributed to the work of organisations including the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), which have promoted and supported the professional socialisation of the role. This is done through activities including training (discussed below) and the production of handbooks and guides to support armed forces to translate their GENAD policies into "well defined roles and responsibilities".⁵⁷

Our respondents agree that targeted guidance is critical to enabling military organisations to establish and develop an efficient and sustainable GENAD capability. To assist with this task, a generic job description for a non-operational GENAD is presented in Box 3.

57 Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (2020). 'A Military Guide to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security', (Stockholm: Swedish Armed Forces) p. 27.

Box 3: Template for a Gender Advisor (Non-operational) Job Description

CE Post Number:

Date:

HQ/Unit:

Duty Location:

Job Title: Gender Adviser

Authorised Rank/Grade: OF-3 – OF-5

1. Role

To provide advice on mainstreaming gender and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) through the (title of the institution) XXX National Action Plan for Implementation of UNSCR 1325. This includes but is not limited to mainstreaming gender into all policy areas, doctrine, procedures, education and training, crisis and conflict analysis, and operations and missions. The Gender Adviser reports to [*head of security sector institution*] and is organisationally placed within the [*Command Staff*].

2. Duties:

- a. Provide guidance and advice to commanders on how to integrate gender perspective into policy development, operations and missions, crisis and conflict analysis, concepts, doctrine, procedures, and education and training.
- b. Ensure gender mainstreaming across all divisions / units within [*security sector institution*].
- c. Act as the [*security sector institution*] lead focal point on gender matters.
- d. Provide technical leadership on gender strategies and programming interventions that will lead to positive gender equality outcomes.
- e. Provide advice and support to Technical Working Group on implementation of NAP.
- f. Monitor and report to the commander on the progress of institutional NAP implementation plans.
- g. Provide technical/functional guidance and advice on UNSCR 1325, and related WPS Resolutions, gender topics and gender mainstreaming methods and tools to staff as required.
- h. Provide guidance and advice on ensuring gender analysis and developing the gender-sensitive policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination and gender bias.
- i. Monitor and analyse developments on gender at national and international level.
- j. Establish, support and manage a network of Gender Focal Points within [*security sector institution*].
- k. Develop and maintain positive working relations with a wide network of [country] partners, including Government, security sector agencies, national and international organisations supporting gender equality efforts.
- l. Proactively work with equivalent organizations in the UN, NATO, EU, and international women's organisations to facilitate sharing of information on implementation of WPS and gender mainstreaming in security sector institutions.
- m. Establish and oversee a system of gender awareness education and training programs within [*security sector institution*].
- n. Prepare briefing and policy materials for the [*head of security sector institution*] as required.
- o. Perform any other duties upon the request of the supervisor.

3. Reporting

Gender Adviser will report on annual basis to the Head [of Security Sector Institution] and on day to day basis to the Command Staff (please specify).

4. Qualifications, skills and experience

The GENAD will be expected to have the following experience and skills:

- A relevant undergraduate qualification is essential. A post graduate degree or certified course in gender, women's empowerment, international relations or development, or feminist studies is highly desirable.
- An influential communicator, with excellent written and verbal skills.
- Evidence of good analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge and understanding of the institutional, legal and policy frameworks at national and local level that impact on the status of women in [*security sector institution*].
- Ability to network effectively, and to develop a wide range of relevant contacts
- Completion of NATO Gender Adviser course at Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations.

Organisational confusion regarding the role of the GENAD

Key finding:

There is a general absence of strategic directives on the purpose and responsibilities of the GENAD capability and its intended impact.

The absence of a clear job description contributes to wider confusion within military organisations about the purpose of the GENAD capability. Firstly, there is an assumption that the GENAD focus should just be externally facing, rather than also internally facing. Second, current and former GENADs routinely encounter colleagues who see the role as dealing with so-called ‘women’s issues’: “there’s still the preconception that gender equals women”. Other respondents report that GENADs are confused with HR roles that support the career development of women. Another interviewee recalls being confused with the sexual harassment complaints officer. One respondent notes that for many “gender equals the protection for women and girls against sexual violence”, so GENADs are seen as working solely on the prevention of sexual violence.

These assumptions demonstrate the persistence of gender-based stereotypes that equate ‘gender’, ‘women’ and ‘victim’. This suggests that much work needs to be done to educate military communities on the purpose of GENAD work. Central to combatting the siloing of GENAD work is building understanding of it as part of a high-level strategic capability that is relevant to all aspects of the organisation and is “a shared responsibility of everyone who works on national security or defence”.

Career structure and progression

Key finding:

There is generally no career structure for GENADs within military organisations. Appointments are routinely for the duration of one posting only. GENADs are often appointed without relevant knowledge, experience or training.

Respondents report that within their military organisation there is no career structure for GENADs or GFPs and that GENAD positions are routinely structured as a placement or a short-term (up to two years) posting. Many told us that becoming a GENAD was, therefore, not a feasible career aspiration. For some, it was seen as a ‘pause’ rather than an advancement in their career, which could have a negative impact on promotion prospects. Several respondents believe that GENAD appointments can be considered a demotion.

As a GENAD appointment is outside the staff member’s normal occupation, performance in this role can be overlooked when being considered for promotion. Consequently, spending time in a GENAD role can — in some organisations — be disadvantageous to a military career. This is at odds with an organisational commitment to gender equality.

For many, this is not only demotivating, but also adversely affects the credibility of the GENAD capability. One respondent highlights that if a GENAD wants to continue working on gender issues in a full-time role, they need to leave the armed forces and work as a reservist or in a civilian capacity. A few respondents spoke of such cases, referring to the ‘brain drain’ impact on the organisation.

Several respondents recommended that the GENAD capability replicate the career structures, training and organisational support of similar roles – such as the POLAD (Political Advisor) or LEGAD (Legal Advisor). This would offer those with an interest and aptitude for this work:

... some sort of career path...as opposed to: ‘oh, you’re this person who either is a woman or said the word gender once and let’s throw you into a course and ship you off to a foreign country’. That is certainly not a good approach for making sure this capability is actually successful.

Elevating the status of GENADs to that of political or legal advising would recognise the technical and knowledge-based expertise required for the role and encourage an investment in education, training, professional development and the creation of a clear career structure.

The GENAD paradox

“We’ve got a Gender Advisor, they’re the one who’s responsible for it, the rest of us can just sort of sit back and not have to worry about it.”

GENADs are routinely told that the purpose of their job is to eventually make much of their work obsolete. Ideally, military organisations will reach a point where its members engage in gender responsive behaviours as a matter of routine. However, our research finds that the development of a GENAD capability can also encourage the opposite effect. Rather than seeing WPS as a shared responsibility, military personnel may believe they no longer need to think about gender if a GENAD is appointed in the force or mission:

We see that happen in UN peacekeeping missions and I think perhaps there is an assumption here that ... this is not a responsibility that’s shared, and I think that’s really problematic. You are more likely, then, to encounter challenges when it comes to influencing decision-making in senior leadership, particularly if the Gender Advisor does not have access to those conversations and is not seated at the table.

“I don’t have to think about gender because that’s what the GENAD is going to do.”

Research elsewhere similarly finds that “the placement of the gender expertise and the focus of their work has led to their increased sidelining within missions ... [allowing] other mission staff to assume that the gender expert will take care of gender, and they themselves do not have responsibility for the issue”.⁵⁸

In response, our interviewees emphasise that ultimate responsibility for implementation of WPS lies with the Commander; the GENAD supports the Commander. As discussed in the DCAF handbook *Teaching Gender in the Military*:

The role of the gender adviser is to support his or her commander in implementing a gender perspective in daily work. The adviser should be able to influence the implementation of the mission’s mandate by the integration of gender perspectives into mandated tasks.⁵⁹

Similarly, NATO’s *Bi-Strategic Directive* establishes the overall role of the Commander:

Within NATO, all personnel have responsibility to integrate gender perspective. Although the overall responsibility rests within respective commanders, the effective integration is only possible when GENADs, GFPs and all staff work together.⁶⁰

Importantly, within NATO, the GENAD reports directly to the Commander and is organisationally placed within the Command or Staff Advisory group (alongside the POLAD and LEGAD). At the tactical level, the dual-hatted GFPs “facilitate gender mainstreaming in their functional area”.⁶¹ This structure allows the GENAD capability to be porous and its work and influence to seep across the organisation in a clear and managed manner rather than be siloed in a specific area.

Case Study 2: The work of GENADs during COVID-19 in the New Zealand Defence Force

Reflections from **WGCDR Jennifer Atkinson, Royal New Zealand Air Force**⁶²

As COVID-19 unfolded across New Zealand, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) stood up Operation PROTECT to coordinate their internal response and contribution to the All-of-Government (AoG) response.

In the early stages the NZDF Gender Advisor developed a gender brief which provided an overview of the gendered aspects of Covid19, with reference to the disproportionate effect on women from both COVID-19 and the lockdown but also the need to address these impacts in planning and the importance of NZDF teams to include females.

Very shortly Op PROTECT had NZDF personnel primarily focussed on supporting the Managed-Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQFs) which were initially based in one location but soon evolved to more than 30 facilities spread over the country. The MIQFs were housing a diverse range of New Zealand citizens, each for a block of 14 days, with the majority having arrived back into the country from abroad. NZDF personnel found themselves tasked with an array of duties around the MIQF management and co-ordination – engaging with the hotel staff, security, police, welfare, medical and most importantly those undergoing quarantine or isolation.

Subsequently the GENAD adapted the gender perspective brief to include gendered considerations specific to the MIQF setting. Drawing on the lessons learnt from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and also from discussions with those personnel already involved with the MIQFs, the refined brief highlighted a number of valuable insights. Firstly, within the MIQFs gender-based violence could appear as domestic violence within family bubbles, accusations of sexual assault between guests, potential sexual exploitation of at-risk females, and/or inadvertent placement of guests within close proximity to guests with criminal and sexual offending records. Mention was also made to disruptions to sexual and reproductive health within the MIQFs, highlighting the need consider the management of pregnant women, especially those requiring clinical management onsite or if required to leave the MIQF for the delivery of the baby. Furthermore, planning considerations needed to include how females in the MIQF would access feminine hygiene products when not allowed to leave the hotel to purchase supplies. The refined brief also emphasised the potential challenges facing single parents (more frequently women) in the MIQFs especially if they had multiple or high needs children. Finally, the point was made that personnel should recognise opportunities and engage with those staying in the MIQFs who were influential within larger groups and have them disseminate information and feedback concerns, especially where language could be a barrier. Constantly evolving, NZDF personnel working in the MIQFs provided valuable examples on the gendered impact of the MIQF experience and this information was used by the GENAD to better prepare the next rotation of NZDF personnel.

58 Aïssata Athie and Sarah Taylor (2017). ‘UN Peacekeeping: Where is Gender Expertise?’ *International Policy Institute*. Available from: <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/10/un-peacekeeping-where-is-the-gender-expertise/>

59 DCAF (2016). op. cit. p. 67.

60 NATO (2021). op. cit. 13.

61 ibid. p. 7.

62 With over 20 years of service, WGCDR Atkinson joined the RNZAF as a psychologist and has deployed many times in support of missions in the Pacific and the Middle East. WGCDR Atkinson is currently the Gender Advisor for the NZDF tasked with implementing the NZ National Action Plan. She is living in Wellington with her husband and two children.

Diversity within the GENAD capability

Key finding:

Greater diversity in personnel will likely strengthen the GENAD capability.

Gender advising “needs to be a role that men and women can have and that that’s seen as a totally normal thing.”

Overwhelming, GENADs are women. One respondent acknowledges the irony that military organisations are male-dominated, except for this one area. Respondents agree that diversity within the GENAD capability would strengthen the overall performance of both the capability and military organisations, and many suggest that increasing the number of male gender advisors is important.

However, as mentioned above, cultural and attitudinal barriers persist in seeing the role as one that can only be filled by a woman. One respondent reflects on their own organisation that appoints only women GENADs:

I suppose because they feel it’s the right way to do it, almost exclusively appoint women officers to do the job. That’s laudable on one level but it is sending the wrong message on another level. Why shouldn’t a male officer do it because he has got to know at the very least what it’s all about and be able again to hold this mirror up to authority?

None of the respondents think that either women or men are ‘better’ at the job of gender advising. However, many respondents reflect on the barriers, challenges, attitudes and opportunities that might differently face male and female GENADs. On the one hand, female GENADs, particularly on deployments, may have opportunities for greater effectiveness by virtue of their gender. Due to social, cultural or personal reasons, female GENADs may have greater access to local women and gain greater acceptance in homes, women’s groups and communities. For the same reasons, women in conflict and crisis affected contexts may feel more comfortable speaking with female GENADs, particularly in cases of disclosures of gender-based violence.⁶³ This enhanced access and trust can positively benefit operational effectiveness and reduce the possibility of harm, by enabling women in the local community to engage with security actors. However, female GENADs may be easily dismissed in settings that are male-dominated or defined by a patriarchal culture.

On the other hand, there may be circumstances where the effectiveness of male GENADs is shaped by gendered cultures and stereotypes. As an example, male GENADs may have greater success in engaging other men on issues of gender equality and may be granted greater authority within patriarchal cultures and settings. One respondent comments:

You can have male gender advisors as well. But if you do have male gender advisors, how much time have you invested in unpacking masculinity? Do those male gender advisors recognise that they may get more traction but that’s because of privilege? It comes from male privilege, and so what are the obligations that come from male privilege and how do they use that privilege, and how do they then use that position to create space and amplify diverse women’s voices in the military?

However, there may be circumstances where male privilege is of little use. In some contexts, male GENADs report that they believe it takes them longer to establish relationships with local communities on missions or within their own organisations. One male GENAD believes that he is treated with suspicion by others and is isolated from his own organisation’s network of GENADs because of his gender and his perceived lack of passion or understanding of the role.

Another respondent highlights how his role as a GENAD generates discussion and engagement on issues related to gender with those who were surprised to see a male GENAD. He notes that this has begun to breakdown stereotypes that equate gender with women or that see gender issues as women’s work.

All respondents see value in greater diversity within GENAD capabilities. Many emphasise that gender advising is a professional skill that is learned and developed in a manner similar to providing legal and political advice. While this may seem obvious, respondents note a persistent assumption that being a woman makes you a ‘natural’ GENAD:

There’s an expectation if you’re a female that you are going to see the gendered aspects of a situation. Also, that you represent all women. [Becoming a gender advisor] doesn’t necessarily happen through osmosis, it happens through people who are curious, and they read up and they want to know more.

For these reasons, the research finds that diversifying the capability and appointing personnel who demonstrate an interest and aptitude for the role will contribute to its professional socialisation.

B. RESOURCING

Financial support and the allocation of sufficient and appropriate personnel and other resources is essential to the success of any military capability. However, the research finds that overwhelmingly GENAD capabilities are poorly resourced. This is out of step with the rhetorical support that nations and international organisations give to the WPS agenda. Current and former GENADs report that in their experience, resourcing of the GENAD capability has been both insufficient and inconsistent. This has negatively impacted the ability to plan for and develop the GENAD capability in a sustained and determined way.

63 See United Nations Peacekeeping (2022). ‘Female Military’. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/female-military>

Funding

Key finding:

Inadequate resources compromise the effectiveness of GENADs and the implementation of the WPS agenda. This is often reflective of weak political will or institutional support.

In his 2017 report on WPS, the UN Secretary-General notes that gender programming and expertise are often the first areas to face budget cuts or lack funding instruments.⁶⁴ For example, Allen notes that between 2016-2018, GENAD positions across UN missions faced significant funding cuts.⁶⁵ At the national level, NAPs rarely include dedicated implementation budgets, leaving it to responsible agencies, such as military organisations, to identify funding within existing budgets to develop gender responsive capabilities.

The lack of sustained funding for the capability is consistent with the view that addressing gender issues is an 'add on' that may enhance, but not necessarily be essential to, the work of the mission or organisation. This has become a particular concern since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the impact on national budgets and the global reversal of progress towards gender equality.⁶⁶ Without adequate and sustainable funding, the effectiveness of GENAD capabilities will be compromised.

Most respondents agree there has been a lack of funding for the GENAD capability across missions and military organisations. Where there is funding, many respondents comment that it is not always flexible in how it can be used. Some note that where funding is drawn from specific budget lines, such as education and training, there is little opportunity to use the funding to develop and support strategic initiatives.

The issue of having a dedicated budget line for the GENAD capability is important for respondents. Speaking about their own armed forces, one respondent states: "The gender capability was being rolled out without any budget to support it". In another country, a current GENAD notes that in their armed forces funding is "made available" for the GENAD capability but it doesn't have its own budget line. This means that the funding is not guaranteed, nor is it especially visible or sustained in the way it is for other capabilities within the armed forces. In speaking about their experience on a multi-lateral operation, another respondent recalls:

They [GENADs] don't have any budget. They would like to do things like organise meetings of local women, but there's no budget. So, the nuts and bolts of just being able to do [their job] in mission is very difficult.

While respondents recognise that many missions and armed forces are under budgetary pressures, many identify the lack of funding as symbolic of a broader lack of political will. A respondent notes: "resourcing is a problem, but of course [it] is at root a political will problem. So, again, the political commitment to WPS and gender mainstreaming within militaries is generally not backed up with any significant budget allocation". Many suggest that this is the case even where there is strong rhetorical commitment by the national government or military institutions to the WPS agenda.

This leads to concerns that armed forces are merely paying 'lip service' to issues of gender equality. However, some respondents suggest that in times of resource constraint it simply becomes an issue of priorities, and gender responsiveness is not seen as one: "People, though often broadly supportive of the idea of working on gender, were saying, 'I just don't have enough people in my team to drop one of them for a gender advisor'". The view that gender advising is seen as a low priority by armed forces and missions was expressed across the research. Respondents emphasise that such attitudes limit the scope of GENAD work and the ability to plan and develop the capability.

Human resourcing

Key finding:

GENADs demonstrate a depth of knowledge and commitment to the WPS agenda, constituting the bedrock upon which substantial progress can be made.

“... they're understaffed, under-financed, not at a senior level, so they're just not taken seriously.”

The research identifies a strong and collegial global community of informed, experienced and committed serving and former GENADs. In its most recent reporting, NATO notes that just over half of its member and partner countries' armed forces have developed GFP networks alongside their GENADs (56 per cent of NATO members and 55 per cent of partner nations).⁶⁷ But this is not globally consistent. At the other end of the spectrum, several respondents work in organisations where there is between 0.5 and 1.0 GENAD working across the organisation. In at least one case, a trained GENAD who had deployed to a UN mission returned to their national armed forces which has not developed a GENAD capability. In fact, several respondents report a lack of recognition for the training received and skills developed after returning from a UN mission as a GENAD. Many claim that their armed forces did not take advantage of their expertise to develop or enhance a GENAD capability, they instead returned to their primary roles.

64 UNSC (2017). 'Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security', S/2017/861.

65 Louise Allen (2019). 'Mapping of the Gender Recommendations in the Three 2015 Peace and Security Reviews'.

66 See Masooma Rahmaty and Jasmine Jaghab (2020). 'Peacebuilding during a Pandemic: Keeping the Focus upon Women's Inclusion.' *International Peace Institute*. Available from: <https://www.ipinst.org/2020/09/peacebuilding-during-a-pandemic-keeping-the-focus-on-womens-inclusion>

67 NATO (2019). *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives*, (Brussels: NATO), pp. 109-11.

In armed forces where there is a nascent or limited capability, GENADs report that the lack of human resourcing undermines the capacity to develop a GENAD structure. In one country, a GENAD told us that their request for a GENAD structure had not been approved and they were forced to make compromises:

Our recommended structure was for a strategic senior Gender Advisor in headquarters and an operational gender advisory joint force. Then probably a Gender Advisor at the senior Army unit and one with special forces. However, we haven't been able to get funding or agreement for that. So, the Gender Focal Point, we are hoping, will be the *de facto* Gender Advisor in many of those locations and work on deployments including in ... humanitarian assistance and disaster recovery.

Such compromises are common where GENADs are unable to focus on strategic-level work because they are understaffed in other areas, such as training. One such GENAD remarks: "I've literally had my head down in survival mode for the last 12 months" as they had "end[ed] up being tasked with everything". On being spread "too thin to be effective in certain ways", another respondent told us: "We were so excited to have Gender Advisors and then all of a sudden, they just got dumped on with everything Women, Peace and Security". Many report that the under-resourcing and overwork can be "emotionally exhausting", isolating and frustrating, with some noting that the consequence will be that GENADs leave organisations, which can compromise the institutional memory and long-term effectiveness of the capability.

Some respondents identify a lack of experience and training as a further human resourcing concern within GENAD capabilities. One respondent observes:

I think we need to avoid just piling on the tasks and expectations of Gender Advisors when they're people who just don't have the depth of training and resources to do some of that work in a context where getting it wrong can result in harm and put communities and individuals in danger.

Similarly, a few respondents express concern about situations where GFPs perform roles that they are not sufficiently trained for, experienced in or have the capacity for. While several countries are reporting impressive numbers of GFP training and appointments, some respondents describe the appointment of GFPs as haphazard or poorly thought through. One notes that: "Gender focal points are usually double, triple, quadruple hatted, have little to no training and often little to no interest in the role". For some, the double-hatting (having two major roles within the organisation) undermines a GFP's ability to focus on work that develops the GENAD capability. Bastick and Duncanson argue that "expecting one individual's skills, knowledge and capacities to span so widely is extraordinary" in military institutions "where functional specialisation is the norm" and "could place an unreasonable workload on one person".⁶⁸

Others interpret the roles of GFPs differently: "The gender focal point [structure] is a way to spread that knowledge and that understanding throughout more of the organisation than the Gender Advisor can. So, there's a

network of people with a little more understanding that can implement this in the field". According to this respondent, we should see the GFP role as part of the "ripple effect" of mainstreaming gender across military organisations.

Seniority among GENADs

Key finding:

GENADs are often appointed from junior levels and lack the rank and military experience to effect change in the organisation and shape institutional leadership commitment.

Throughout the research, respondents emphasise the importance of being purposeful in the appointment of GENADs. In practice, this means appointing personnel with sufficient rank, experience, knowledge and technical skill to perform the role. GENAD work requires influence and effecting change in a highly structured and disciplined organisation. At times, it requires questioning or challenging assumptions or behaviours — even challenging orders — in an institution where this is not culturally acceptable.

As one respondent argues "... if you're doing gender-related work, what you're doing is work that is highly political, because you are challenging power and power dynamics within organisations, within how organisations work". All research participants agree that GENADs need to be appointed at sufficiently high rank to be able to access senior leadership and confidently advocate for the work. Similarly, GFPs with appropriate experience and capacity should be appointed in line with the role they are expected to perform.

C. TRAINING

This section addresses the education and training regimes in place to develop military GENAD capabilities, as well as broader gender awareness training in military organisations. The research acknowledges the ongoing development of bespoke GENAD training programs at the national, regional and, recently, global levels. While respondents report favourably on their experiences with many of these programs, the research finds that they are often insufficient in length of time and issues covered to fully prepare GENADs for their role. Similarly, the research finds that stronger commitments to gender training across the organisation will enable and enhance the effectiveness of the GENAD capability.

GENAD TRAINING

Key findings:

GENAD training programs provide a foundation for network building, information sharing and international cooperation.

Despite an increase in the number and quality of courses, training is considered insufficient for GENADs to effectively carry out their duties.

68 Bastick and Duncanson (2018), op. cit. pp. 562-563.

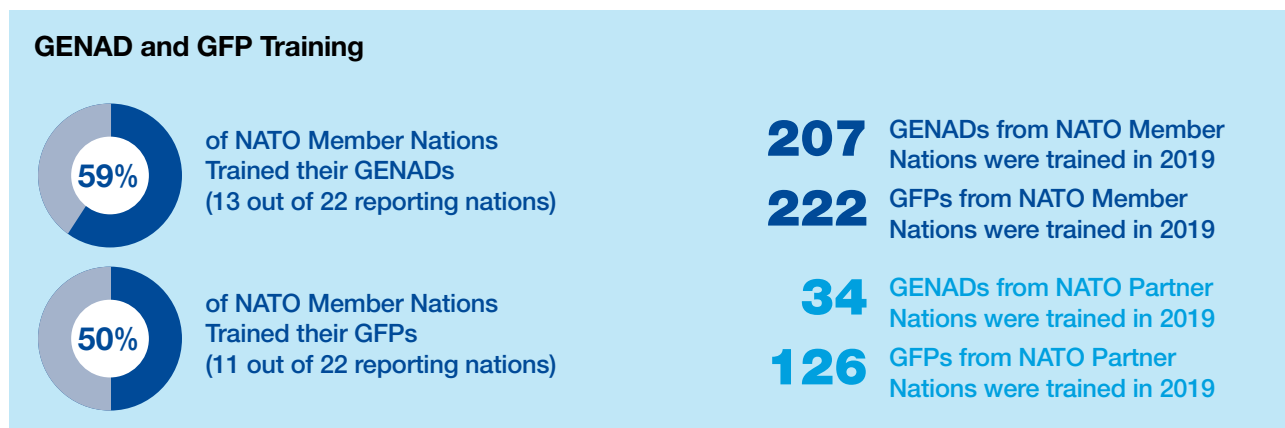
Data suggests that armed forces are providing formal training opportunities to their GENADs and GFPs. As noted in Figure 8, in 2019, 59 per cent of reporting NATO member countries had trained their GENADs and 50 per cent had trained their GFPs. This data also shows that around the world there is a strong culture of training GENADs among NATO partner countries.⁶⁹ Training is currently available at regional and many national levels. Face-to-face training, online training and training products are offered by NATO, the NCGM, the European Security and Defence College and DCAF.⁷⁰ Separate training courses are also being designed for GENADs (as a more senior position) and GFPs.⁷¹

The pre-eminent training program, upon which both NATO and the UN currently relies, is the two-week NATO GENAD Course, conducted by the NCGM, which attracts participants from around the world.⁷² This course is a pre-deployment requirement for all GENADs to NATO and UN operations. There are also several online courses offered through NATO's Joint Advanced Distributed Learning Program.⁷³ In some cases, GENADs participate in university postgraduate courses on WPS, including those offered by The Fletcher School at Tufts University and Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre. In late 2021, the UN announced that they will offer the first UN GENAD and GFP training via a free online course available in French and English.⁷⁴ This is a significant development; many of our respondents note the lack of UN-based GENAD training opportunities.

Snapshot Analysis 2: Core learning outcomes for GENAD training

Snapshot Analysis	Following their training, GENADs should be equipped to:
2	
>	Demonstrate technical knowledge of the WPS agenda and its operation
>	Identify relevant policy frameworks regarding gender and advise on their integration into military processes and outputs
>	Undertake a rapid gender analysis of conflict or crisis contexts
>	Develop and support gender responsive military policy and practice
>	Establish respectful relationships with civil society and civilian partners as appropriate
>	Articulate the value of gender responsive approaches to colleagues and partners

Figure 8: Overview of training among NATO member nations in 2019⁷⁵



69 See NATO (2019). *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives*, (Brussels: NATO) chapter 7.

70 *ibid.* p. 120.

71 See Swedish Armed Forces, 'NATO approved Gender Focal Point Course'. Available from: <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/courses-at-ncgm-and-how-to-apply2/gfp/>

72 See Swedish Armed Forces, 'NATO Gender Advisor Course'. Available from: <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/courses-at-ncgm-and-how-to-apply2/nordefco-gender-advisor-course/>

73 See NATO (2021). *NATO Joint Advanced Distributed Learning – Online Course Catalogue*. Available from: <https://jadl.act.nato.int/CourseCatalog.pdf>

74 See UNITAR (2021). 'Military Gender Advisor Online Training'. Available from: <https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/peace/our-portfolio/pre-deployment-support-military-police-corrections-and-civilians/military-gender-advisor-online-training>

75 NATO (2019). *op. cit.* p. 123.

The GENADs and GFPs interviewed for this research had undertaken some form of bespoke training, but the majority believe that this was insufficient and inadequately resourced.⁷⁶ They remark that the training was limited in terms of content, scope, duration and strategic intent. Most respondents note that the training had been between one and three weeks and offered only limited preparation for the breadth of their role. This was compounded by the fact that many report having no prior understanding of the role or specific knowledge of the WPS agenda. As one respondent reflects: “I don’t believe that you can send a person in with no prior knowledge to do a two-week course and they come out as a Gender Advisor”. Others comment that the complexity and broad range of tasks required of GENADs further underscores the need for more substantial training, with one stating that “to be able to provide this level of support and detail you actually have to have a real breadth and depth of understanding to add real value”.

Many note that the duration and scope of the training sat in stark contrast to other roles within the military where a similarly high level of expertise was expected. One respondent compared the skills required to undertake a gender analysis alongside those of intelligence or cyber analysis:

... that’s totally inadequate training, and totally out of step with the military’s general approach to professional development ... if you’re serious about this as a capability, treat it as seriously as you would treat a capability in cyber analysis or intelligence analysis where people really get sustained training.

Similarly, respondents equate the GENAD role to that of the POLAD or LEGAD, recommending that the same level of investment be made:

The primary issue lies in that you’re putting in an advisor in a context where they have to advise a Commander and speak up. If you compare a Gender Advisor to a Legal Advisor, the training and the background that’s led them up to that point is just not the same. So, you’re not setting up the Gender Advisor for success if the training and expertise hasn’t been cultivated and thought through.

Ultimately, respondents equate the limited training for GENADs with the regard in which the positions are held. As one respondent said: “people still don’t see the value, the real value, of what it is to be gender aware, and to integrate a gender perspective into our work” and so there is little investment in training for GENADs or on gender, as the following section explores.

Building skills and knowledge

Several respondents comment that training tends to focus on technical knowledge rather than equipping GENADs with the skills required to do their job. Some report that the training they had undertaken dealt with WPS issues at the conceptual level, but not with the type of ‘job readiness’ training they needed in the field. One respondent notes:

... nobody actually said: ‘This is what a Gender Advisor does’ and I remember clearly sitting on the plane flying out to the Congo thinking ‘I don’t know what my job is’. ... I walked away (from the training) with a fairly good understanding of why gender is important but not necessarily what I was going to do.

This was acknowledged by those responsible for designing the training: “what’s stupid is, that we’re designing training when we don’t even know what we want these people to be able to do”. Others involved in designing training spoke of the need to be judicious in what content could reasonably be covered in a few weeks, and also to cater for a broad cohort of personnel with a range of existing knowledge.

Some respondents suggest that the training acknowledge the *political* aspects of the WPS agenda. These respondents explain that GENADs must dedicate at least part of their time to engaging those who are ignorant, sceptical or even hostile to the agenda. Some, therefore, advocate for training to incorporate development of the skills needed to promote the value of WPS — particularly at the command level — and deal with resistance from across the mission/organisation. One interviewee says it was “appalling” that even though there have been GENADs appointed for many years, when she would explain to commanders the reasons why integrating gender was important, it was often the first time many of them had heard this reasoning: “Twenty-one years later, first time they’ve ever heard it. I mean seriously. So, we’re clearly not training or giving or finding our Advisors with the right skills”.

Respondents therefore suggest that training should equip GENADs with the political, leadership and diplomatic skills needed to build the momentum for change and navigate the associated challenges, by integrating into training questions like:

What kind of culture is it you will be facing? How can you approach that? Who can you contact when it’s tough?... [especially] Because it’s not an easy job. I haven’t seen any Gender Advisors have long and happy careers within the military, unfortunately.

⁷⁶ See also Bastick and Duncanson (2018). op. cit. p. 571.

Respondents agree that, to some extent, being an effective GENAD requires *political* as well as *technical* skills. This involves having the confidence that comes with well-developed content knowledge on the WPS agenda, senior rank and experience in the military, and the skills to effectively communicate and navigate challenging and dynamic contexts and cultures. On this point, some add that their training was not sufficiently forward-focused or dynamic. In this sense, they feel the training had not captured the transformative capacity of WPS, nor was it responsive to the emerging directions and debates within the WPS agenda around the role of men and boys, issues of diverse gender and sexuality, backlash against gender equality movements and emerging threats in complex conflict and crisis zones.

The need for more comprehensive training is also highlighted across the broader research. Foster, for example, underscores the importance of continued training for GENADs while on the job, including the need to “be given the opportunity and resources (such as time away and funds to travel to the training) to develop this expertise”.⁷⁷ The NCGM similarly advocates security sector institutions (SSI) being responsible for properly training gender experts, including GENADs, GFPs and Women Protection Advisors (WPA), as well as ensuring this expertise is then properly used by creating structures and processes that provide the requisite organisational support.⁷⁸

Training on gender in military organisations

Key finding:

The lack of institution-wide gender training for military staff across ranks and functions limits the effectiveness of GENAD capabilities and WPS implementation.

Several GENADs we spoke with lament the time they must spend explaining and justifying the role and value of the GENAD capability to colleagues. This may be addressed by a consistent and sustained commitment to gender training across military organisations and operations.

There is evidence that training on gender in the armed forces has advanced in recent years. For example, NATO’s 2019 reporting shows that 26 out of 27 NATO member nations (96 per cent) integrate a gender perspective into pre-deployment training.⁷⁹ In addition, the UN’s core pre-deployment training for peacekeepers, used by national peacekeeping training centres, includes a module on gender and WPS. Similarly, both NATO

and DCAF have developed training materials that can be incorporated into national training frameworks on gender and WPS, to address both operational and organisational dimensions. Two readily available resources include NATO’s *Reference Curriculum for the Professional Military Education of Officers*⁸⁰ and DCAF’s *Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military*.⁸¹ Several respondents also refer to examples of sharing training materials and tools between nations, which has helped build capacity and knowledge.

Snapshot Analysis 3: Integrating gender responsive practices into military training

Snapshot Analysis 3	Broader organisational training on gender in military organisations can:
>	Acclimatise members of the armed forces to the relevance of gender issues to their work
>	Encourage gender responsive practices throughout the military
>	Raise awareness of the role and value of the GENAD capability
>	Build military cultures conducive to gender equality
>	Address problematic assumptions around gender, WPS and the GENAD capability

Overall, however, our research finds that gender-related training within military organisations is often *ad hoc* and there would be value in institutionalising training on gender and WPS across all military education and training. This training should extend through the ranks of organisations to capture senior leadership as well as new recruits. As one respondent notes:

Training on Women, Peace and Security cannot happen the first time when an officer arrives at a combat and command. They’re 10 to 15 years in their career ... So, I think you don’t have to start talking about Women, Peace and Security explicitly, but you do have to start talking about the concept of gender as a basic concept, because that way, when they encounter a Gender Advisor or they

77 Stephanie Foster (2020). ‘Gender Advisors Key to Effective Policy’. *Council for Foreign Relations*. Available from: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/gender-advisors-key-effective-policy>.

78 Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (2020). ‘A Military Guide to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security’, 27-28.

79 NATO (2019). *op. cit.*

80 NATO (2011). ‘Generic Officer Professional Military Education: Reference Curriculum’. Available from: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151013_151013-generic-officer-eng.pdf

81 DCAF (2016). *op. cit.*

encounter somebody talking about the Women, Peace and Security agenda, it's not so foreign of a concept Th[is] can actually start when you are a private before you even enter.

The benefits of integrating gender issues into organisation-wide training is overwhelmingly acknowledged by the respondents. As one respondent argues:

I think if we want to get militaries to fully engage with the operational relevance of gender, we must actually show how it's relevant to them and it's not enough that the investment could be a good one, but that if they don't do it, people are going to die and stuff's going to get broken.

This is supported by broader research. Foster argues that investment in training is critical for “employees in foreign policy and national security [to ensure they] understand the importance of a gender lens”⁸² Elsewhere, research draws attention to the importance of training on gender to improve operational effectiveness, including being better able to understand and respond to complex contexts without causing harm.⁸³

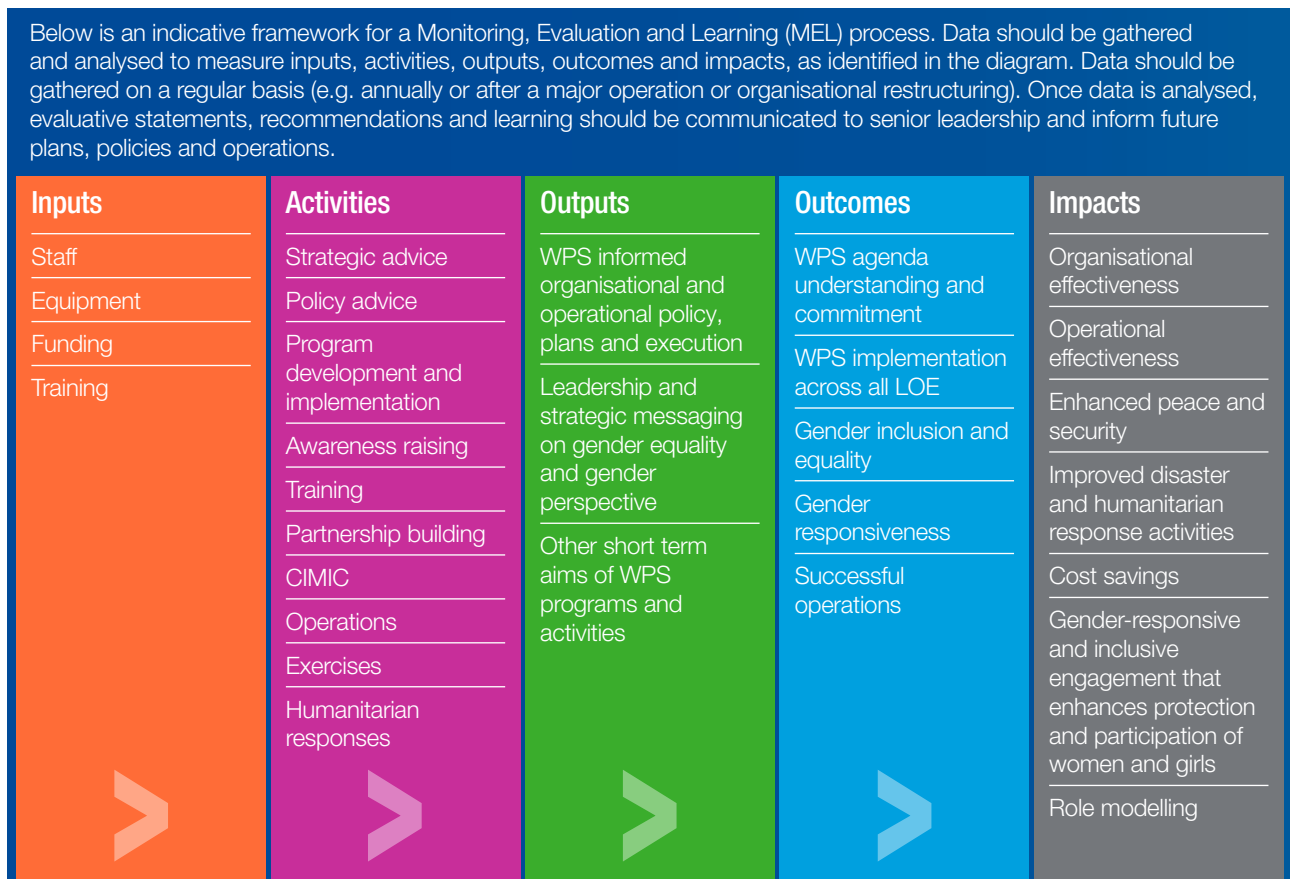
D. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

Key finding:

There are few formalised MEL structures, tools or systems related to GENAD work. This compromises the ability to ascertain the effectiveness of their efforts.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning systems and processes (MEL or M&E) are critical to assessing and improving the impact of GENAD capabilities. According to our respondents, there are few – if any – formalised MEL structures, tools or systems.⁸⁴ Research supports this finding, drawing attention to a lack of MEL frameworks to measure the impact of the GENAD role⁸⁵ and the absence of comprehensive studies on the effectiveness of GENADs.⁸⁶ Similarly, there is no known formal global platform, hub or system for sharing best practices or lessons learned for GENAD,⁸⁷ with the exception of materials produced by NCGM.⁸⁸ Consequently, this is an area where the capability can be significantly advanced.

Figure 9: Indicative MEL framework



82 Stephanie Foster (2022) op. cit.

83 DCAF (2016). op. cit.

84 NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 in 2009 does provide for evaluation of efforts to implement UNSCR 1825 across NATO.

85 Isabella Sinisterra-Beron (2018). 'Time to strengthen the Gender Advisor Role', *Australian Civil Military Centre*. Available from: <https://www.acmc.gov.au/news/time-strengthen-gender-advisor-role>.

86 Sabrina Karim (2019). 'Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations', in Robert Egnell and Mayesha Alam M (eds), *Women and Gender Perspectives in the Military: An International Comparison*, 23-40, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press), 34.

87 Sinisterra-Beron, 'Time to strengthen the Gender Advisor Role'.

88 See NCGM (2022). 'NCGM Publications.' Available from: <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/swedint/nordic-centre-for-gender-in-military-operations/ncgmpublications/>

Snapshot Analysis 4: The value of a MEL framework

Snapshot Analysis 4	MEL frameworks can build a sustained approach to developing effectiveness by:
>	Establishing a clear statement on the role, aim and goals of the GENAD capability
>	Building institutional memory of lessons learned
>	Capturing impact and best practice
>	Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the GENAD capability, enabling them to be built on or addressed
>	Creating an evidence base for the value of the work
>	Offering formal organisational commitment to the GENAD capability

While the research identifies a general absence of formal MEL frameworks, some respondents spoke of reporting mechanisms for their GENAD capability. This usually comes in the form of reporting the number of GENADs and GFPs that have been trained or deployed. For example, in the most recent WPS resolution, UNSCR 2493 (2019) requests the Secretary-General to report on the appointment of GENADs to UN operations in his annual reporting to the Security Council.⁸⁹ As noted, NATO member and partner nations are invited to report on GENAD and GFP training while NAPs may also include reporting on the deployment or training within their GENAD capability as part of its MEL framework.

The significance of this reporting lies in its capacity to map the growth and breadth of the GENAD capability over time. It can also be an important accountability mechanism in terms of reaching targets or fulfilling commitments to deploy GENADs to operations. However, quantitative reporting can be limited in terms of evaluating the quality of GENAD capabilities and, importantly, their impact on organisations and operations. As a simple example, reporting on the number of personnel who have completed an online training program does not speak to the quality of that program; similarly, reporting on the number of GENAD deployments does not measure the impact of their work on the ground. It also does not capture lessons learned.

Importantly, none of our respondents work with formal or sustained qualitative measures of impact. This finding is supported by research elsewhere. In their study interviewing NATO GENADs, Bastick and Duncanson found that while some identify “steady progress in institutionalization”, others draw attention to the inadequacy of systems for capturing best practice and sharing knowledge, including some who were not asked to do the usual end-of-tour reporting after returning from deployment.⁹⁰ Several of our respondents also report an absence of standard debriefing following GENAD postings. As noted, many respondents offer examples where they returned from deployment and their new-found expertise was not used to enhance the GENAD capability in their home country.

This demonstrates the need for a purposeful MEL framework to support development of the GENAD capability. Evaluating success is critical to having an impact, to learning and improving engagement, to building institutional knowledge and a strong evidence base, and to advocating for and justifying resources (an area of significant concern, as outlined earlier). One respondent argues:

It's got to be the monitoring and evaluation, the M&E part of it. I really think that's the key. I mean, we can keep doing it on faith that Gender Advisors matter, but at some point, somebody's going to want to say or want to ask: 'Did this really make any difference?' I think we've got to be able to answer that question.

Furthermore, establishing a MEL framework can facilitate the effectiveness of the GENAD capability. By setting benchmarks, goals, targets and measures of success, the GENAD capability can clearly communicate its purpose and intended impact (see Snapshot Analysis 4). This will assist in addressing the concerns raised earlier that there is often no shared understanding of the role, aims and priority areas of the GENAD capability. A robust MEL framework can provide clarification, which is critical for a capability that works across the armed forces as well as at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

⁸⁹ UNSCR 2493 (2019), OC 10(b): “Requests the Secretary-General to include the following in his next annual report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions: (b) the implementation of the appointment of **gender advisers** and/or women protection advisers”

⁹⁰ Bastick and Duncanson (2018). op. cit. p. 571.

Shared learning

Key finding:

There are few global platforms, hubs or systems for sharing GENAD best practice, lessons learned and other resources.

The research identifies an absence of formal global networks or platforms for sharing best practice on GENAD work or the implementation of WPS in military contexts. Many respondents could identify informal networks for GENADs (for example, Facebook or LinkedIn) or informal communities of practice (sometimes led by civil society or researchers). Several also point to research by organisations such as DCAF and NGCM. A few respondents had heard of single nations trying to set up a platform for women in peace operations (Germany and Finland were mentioned). Some spoke of initiatives to gather best practice or lessons learned on mission but note that this was *ad hoc* and reliant on the personal commitment of individual GENADs rather than an institutionalised program. While many saw value in these informal networks, they are regarded as generally limited to sharing anecdotal experience or research in an *ad hoc*, rather than sustained and purposeful way.

The lack of formalised efforts to organise and disseminate lessons learned and best practice results in a loss of institutional memory. A shared platform or depository of information or a network for lessons learned could provide professional support and guidance. Many respondents believe there would be value in some form of global ‘shared lessons’ initiative. Some recommend a shared depository of information, while others spoke about an active professional network where ‘lessons learned’ could be systematically collated and shared. Respondents note that such a network would be particularly valuable for those countries with nascent GENAD capabilities and where GENADs may feel isolated or would benefit from an experienced GENAD network. As one respondent said to us: “it’s really hard to know where to go, to share or to ask”.

A few respondents recommend that a formal network of GENADs and a central depository and hub for best practice and lessons learned be managed through an international organisation such as the UN, NATO or DCAF, which is already a significant depository of information on gender and WPS. However, many recognise that this requires the explicit commitment and dedication of resources from individual nations and their armed forces. Importantly, respondents stress that such a global hub would not negate the need for each individual country to undertake, gather and reflect on, and develop and implement, its own MEL processes in order to improve their own practice. As one respondent notes: “... I think it’s important we not let nations say, the UN should do this, or NATO should do this”, noting that accountability remains a national responsibility.

There are concerns that such initiatives might further impose on the limited capacity of the GENADs who might be expected to provide information to populate the platform. Others drew attention to other sources of invaluable information – highlighting the need for investment in someone/some organisation pulling it all together, sorting, sharing and managing it. There was also concern that such a platform [or hub] would not be helpful unless the information was organised, updated and quickly accessible, drawing attention to the wealth of resources already available. As one respondent said:

... data that’s not tagged or organised correctly is not useful. ... anything that says women, gender or female sometimes gets thrown into a category and then you’re trying to sort through things that are everything from women’s role in peacekeeping processes to female engagement teams, which is a huge divide of information to sort through when you’re just trying to find a quick bit of information.

Others identify reluctance on the part of military organisations to share experiences with other nations or civilian organisations, due to concerns about information sensitivity, classification issues and reputational damage. Others suggest there might be resistance among national armed forces for information that has been solicited from host nations, civil society or independent researchers.

CONCLUSION

Globally, military GENAD capabilities are in varying stages of development. However, there are common experiences across efforts to translate the intent of global, regional and national policy into practice. Importantly, the research finds that central to the institutionalisation of the GENAD capability is the development of a clearly communicated and well-resourced GENAD structure within the organisation. There are many benefits to a well-articulated structure: it provides clarity around the aims, purpose, organisation and intended impact of the GENAD capability. This gives GENADs greater confidence in the scope of their role and influence, provides a foundation from which the capability can be effectively evaluated, and communicates the purpose of the capability to the broader organisation.

The development of a clear GENAD structure demonstrates sustained commitment to the capability, which encourages appropriate resourcing and commitment to its development. This, in turn, attracts professionalisation in ways that will build training and career structures akin to other advisory capabilities, such as LEGADs and POLADs. Finally, the research identifies the need to develop purposeful, open and sustainable approaches to building robust MEL frameworks and formal GENAD networks and engaging in impact and ‘lessons learned’ research to develop an evidence base and an assurance of the value of GENAD work.

III. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

This section examines the interaction between the values, cultures and practices that drive the WPS agenda on the one hand, and military organisations on the other. It explores these intersections through a focus on military leadership, patterns of communication and workplace cultures. The research finds that where the organisational culture and leadership of militaries is dynamic and open to these intersections, GENAD capabilities are well used and effective.

For many, the ethos of the WPS agenda is at odds with the fundamental precepts of military culture. The origins of the WPS agenda lies with women's civil society and peace activism. Broadly speaking, their goal has not been to "make war safe for women", as Cora Weiss has famously stated, or to facilitate women's participation in the security sector, but rather to transform global political attitudes and practices towards cultures of peace and the prevention of conflict. In this sense, the WPS agenda is necessarily and intentionally disruptive. It seeks to transform cultures that tend to war and exclude women from decision-making authority. Alternatively, it is argued that military cultures can be defined by hierarchy, compliance, tradition, male authority and the appeal to armed force. Therefore, seeking to integrate the WPS agenda into military organisations can generate undeniable challenges.

Yet, in many countries and crisis response efforts, military actors and military organisations are showing strong commitments to the WPS agenda and are central actors in its success. This is seen in the responsibilities given to armed forces in NAPs, in the WPS UNSCRs, and in UN and other mandates for peace and crisis response operations. As evidenced in this review, military organisations are taking this responsibility seriously.

Around the world armed forces understand that the nature of their work is changing. Peace, security and operational success can no longer be assured by conventional means. Instead, military organisations increasingly need to work with other armed forces, government actors, international organisations, local civil society and local communities. They must also work across culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In doing so, a number of military organisations recognise that gender perspectives provide valuable pieces of the puzzle that enhance their capabilities, provide significant insights into conflict and crisis dynamics, and increase their chances of success.

A. LEADERSHIP

Key finding:

Strong, senior military leadership support is inconsistent across organisations due to various levels of buy-in to the WPS agenda, but is essential to the effectiveness of the GENAD capability.

The support of senior military leadership is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of GENAD capabilities. It is through this leadership that WPS will become part of an organisation's or mission's culture. As one respondent notes: "The first part of institutionalising gender is leadership: you need leadership buy in". The research finds that strong and senior military leadership that supports the work of GENAD capabilities is present — and has increased over time — but nonetheless remains inconsistent across leaders and organisations.

According to our respondents, senior military leadership on WPS is strongest amongst those leaders who are well versed in the agenda, either through training or previous experience working with GENADs. Several of our respondents spoke at length about positive experiences with such leaders and note that they drive the agenda, look for opportunities to institutionalise it through directives, strengthen communication around the value of the agenda, and create opportunities for GENADs to expand their work and influence. One respondent reflects that when the leadership on WPS is strong, this "signalling is felt" throughout the entire organisation: "If the Chief of Defence Staff cares about it, then senior officers [who are] tasked as being commanders on the field start caring about it, and the people in the staff headquarters start caring about it too".

Yet, while senior military leadership on WPS is core to its success, it can be challenging for individual leaders. Respondents spoke of the difficulties that leaders who advocate gender equality can face. Many note that military cultures can be resistant or even hostile to issues of gender equality and confronting this — even when done by senior military officers — can be challenging. One respondent spoke of a senior military leader who is committed to gender equality but notes that "he's faced with a political environment where he's quite out of step, so it won't be easy". Another observed a situation in their armed forces where senior leaders were treated suspiciously for supporting the WPS agenda: "I really see it for men who are decision-makers and who are stepping up; the men who are stepping up now are being challenged on so many levels, even down to the point where their morality or professionalism is questioned".

Both the GENADs and military observers that we spoke with readily note that WPS leadership within the military requires careful navigation of opposing and passionately defended cultures that see gender equality as either ‘essential for success’ or ‘political correctness gone mad’.

“I was the Gender Advisor for the last half of my tour, and I had a really machismo general, and I said to him, ‘I really think you should go and talk to some women, because you never do it.’ He was like, ‘oh, I don’t need to do that, you go and talk to them.’ I said, ‘no, you come and talk to them.’ He was so amazed by the information that he got from them. It wasn’t intelligence, but it definitely built up his understanding. He was a different person, and after that he used to say, ‘make sure that we talk to the women, they’re really good’.”

Respondents spoke openly of cases where leaders were ignorant, indifferent, or even hostile to the WPS agenda. Unsurprisingly, respondents note that when senior leadership is absent, GENADs lack the support, direction and oversight needed to do their work. A few respondents had experienced an openly hostile attitude to their work. One former GENAD recalls being told by the mission commander: “You know, in my family it is [my culture’s] rules, my wife listens to me ... We have to have you, but it is nothing”. In other cases, respondents describe the lack of knowledge or appreciation of the agenda among senior leadership. One respondent argues that “we’ve still got to do more to get those people away from their offices and deal with this issue and do some training on this issue more specifically”.

Where knowledge around the agenda is limited, respondents note the main consequence is the GENAD capability is under-utilised. As one respondent notes: “You can have a perfect job description, but if no one around you understands it and knows how to work with that function within a staff, then it’s pointless”. Some respondents spoke of working with senior leaders whose understanding of the agenda is isolated to the women’s participation pillar and failed to grasp the nuance of gender responsive work. As one respondent notes: “I think there’s a lack of understanding of why this [work] is important. I don’t think we have articulated it greatly in any organisation.” In this sense, some feel that in many organisations the GENAD capability is yet to be able to demonstrate its full potential.

“It is definitely frustrating ... that the mission success can be — for a Gender Advisor — dependent on whether leadership is supportive, and it definitely shouldn’t be.”

Ultimately, however, the research finds that senior military leadership on WPS was largely something of a personal choice. In many cases there was little national or international oversight or accountability to ensure a consistent approach to supporting the work of GENADs. In some cases, this gave senior leaders a wide scope to promote their GENAD capability while in other settings GENADs report being sidelined because the role wasn’t valued or understood by military leadership.

It is promising to be able to identify examples of strong leadership, but as one respondent notes: “I feel it can be championed by certain members and whilst that’s a good thing, it’s not institutionalised if it’s just championed”.

Leadership is therefore strongest when there is a commitment to institutionalise the WPS agenda within the organisation. This can be done through policy or other doctrines that are endorsed by senior military leadership. One respondent describes it as:

Action not just talking ... formalise these things ... put it in – for instance, force commander directives so that it’s clear for the rest of the mission what’s expected of them ... If a GENAD manages to convince [a force commander] to add this [WPS] dimension, I think that’s a really big success.

Adopting a strong statement of institutional will by the Force Commander or Chief of Defence Staff to all staff (military and civilian) establishes a clear directive that ensures WPS implementation is not a matter of choice or personal interest. One example is the statement by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) in the *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Jordan Armed Forces – Arab Army 2021-2024*⁹¹, in which he articulates his vision for JAF to be “a leading Arab military institution ... in practising gender mainstreaming, building capacities, and promoting the advancement of women in all aspects ...”

91 UN Women (2021). *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Jordan Armed Forces – Arab Army 2021-2024*. (Jordan: UN Women) Available from: <https://jordan.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/gender-mainstreaming-strategy-for-jordanian-armed-forces---arab-army-2021-2024>

Successful leadership by GENADs

GENADs are leaders within their organisations who often find themselves responsible for challenging long-held attitudes about gender roles and responsibilities. While they are at the coalface of the cultural change associated with creating a gender responsive military, unlike senior military leaders, GENADs tackle these issues with lower rank and less experience. In military cultures that value hierarchy and time-served, this can create challenges for GENADs.

“I am an activist. I am an activist for 1325. I am. I think every armed force in the world should have at least one activist for 1325 in military uniform ... You need to have someone who has the uniform and also the field experience, but also the respect from the others, 95 per cent are men, of course. Oh, she has operational experience, and at the same time, she is standing up for 1325.”

Respondents agree that working towards cultural change requires rank. As noted earlier, NATO recommends that GENAD positions be filled by NATO OF-4/Lieutenant Colonel rank and above (while respondents recommend a rank of OF-5/ Colonel). Our respondents note that this isn't always the case. One respondent told us you need to ask:

where in the [military] hierarchy is your Gender Advisor situated? The more senior they are, the more likely they are to be able to influence and do that advocacy-related work. ... If good practice is to be [operating at the] strategic [level], then you want them in much more senior positions.

Our respondents agree that rank plays a major role in the capacity for GENADs to be effective leaders. One notes the difference when they came across a senior ranked GENAD in Afghanistan:

[This] is an example of taking the right approach to a Gender Advisor and that is, sending somebody who has got some rank on their collar ... and importantly, professional military experience in working with these kinds of issues ... She is not shy about engaging with people and telling you what she thinks. When you put someone like that in that kind of position, you're going to start bringing about some change, even if it's incremental, because she won't be ignored.

Organisational experience and situational awareness are also identified as key leadership qualities for GENADs, and often accompany rank. Respondents note that the ability to deftly traverse organisational terrain and adapt to dynamic situations (particularly in operations) is key to the success of GENAD work. One respondent recalls:

When I reflect on my own experience, I think some of the things that really helped me were knowing and understanding the military culture in the organisation that I worked for. So long as you can confidently link what you're doing to the missions that your command has set, you can be pretty successful and then particularly if you understand the odd bureaucracy of your organisation and how to swiftly navigate it and build coalition and buy-in, you can usually effect some sort of change or push along your particular mandate. But I think for those gender advisors who might not have that confidence or not understand their organisations that well, it might become a little bit more difficult for them.

Technical competency is also identified as central to establishing credible leadership by GENADs. The capacity to articulate, defend and advocate for the WPS agenda is core to GENAD leadership and the result of a confident and deep understanding of the agenda. One respondent notes that, particularly for women in the military, “you have to have credibility in your speciality” in order to be taken seriously. Another respondent believes that for GENADs, this can be undermined by the limited formal WPS training available to them when compared to other specialities. This respondent suggests that this can become clear “particularly given that the Gender Advisor is usually at a much lower rank than the other senior advisors”.

Others argue that GENADs can demonstrate leadership through more generic skills and personal characteristics. Respondents report that being a GENAD in the military requires adaptability, assertiveness, persuasiveness and confidence. A respondent suggests that GENADs should have a degree of “flexibility, open-mindedness, a willingness to be challenged and an ability to reach out and build networks.” Speaking of the operational context, another respondent notes: “So in that environment, arriving as a Gender Advisor, you have to know the professional domain in which you are the expert. Then you have to have the confidence and leadership presence to thrive in that environment, so that you're at the table being listened to”.

A few respondents spoke about the passion for WPS that GENADs frequently display. While some note that the passion must be matched by technical knowledge and skill to be credible, others note that it is necessary in order to persist with the challenges of advancing the WPS agenda. One respondent states:

I think some of the successes is that the community of people who work on Women, Peace and Security inside of the Department of Defense is a very motivated and passionate group of individuals who have really driven change with a bottom-up approach. It's interesting because I think we all kind of feel that we're constantly pushing a rock up a hill because of the lack of resources or senior leadership support or just these institutional barriers that don't readily accept WPS or have a misunderstanding of gender; a lot of us spend a lot of our time because we are so passionate about this topic and its relevance to national security. I don't know if that is a quality that we hire for in the gender adviser community, but it is certainly one that people bring once they get into these positions, you know?

Consequently, GENADs report that success in their role requires rank, activism, personal commitment, persuasive leadership skills and expert knowledge of their specialisation and the context in which they operate to be able to shape cultural change, challenge resistant attitudes and have real impact. In response, military institutions need to support GENADs by ensuring they have the requisite rank, military experience, training and skills to encourage support for WPS implementation.

B. COMMUNICATION

Key finding:

Clear and consistent communication around the purpose and value of a GENAD capability is essential to raising organisational awareness of, and commitment to, this nascent area of military effort.

While there is growing awareness of the GENAD capability, the research finds that communication within, between and external to military organisations remains inconsistent. Within military organisations it can be challenged by a poor general awareness of the purpose and value of the military GENAD capability across the organisation. Externally, the work of GENADs is undermined by a lack of information sharing, poor lines of communication between military and civilian agencies, under-developed relationships with civil society, and the challenges of multilingual and cross-cultural communication, and work with interpreters.

WPS as a political language

The relative newness of GENAD capabilities within military organisations means that its purpose and value need to be broadly communicated. Respondents agree that there remain pockets of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of GENAD's work and, by extension, the WPS agenda. However, while respondents agree that better communication is part of the solution, they do not agree on what communication strategies should be adopted.

Many respondents allude to the political undertones of language and the impact it can have on broader attitudes within militaries. For some, effective communication begins, therefore, with 'setting a tone' about what gender responsiveness in the organisation means and why it is adopted. For some, this means ensuring that the language the organisation uses is inclusive and reflective of its members. One respondent spoke about the positive impact of efforts to use gender-neutral or gender-inclusive language in military doctrine. She notes that:

We created the gender responsive language manual which is now sent to all of our military commands and now, we are changing the term officially from 'manning' to 'staffing' across our military structures. We are changing the term of the 'chairman' of the military committee to the 'chair' of the military committee. We have made a huge influence I think in the language.

Many agree that while these may seem like small changes, they signal a directional shift towards cultures of inclusion and non-discrimination.

For others, such changes are subtle and need to be accompanied by more direct action. One respondent recommends directly and openly confronting the challenges posed by 'gender politics' — including advocating for a process of open dialogue about masculinity and femininity in the military. This underpins a communication strategy that places 'gender issues' as opposed to 'women's issues' at the heart of debates about advancing the WPS agenda in military cultures. This respondent notes:

Those Gender Advisors who can articulate concepts of femininity and masculinity as it relates to sociocultural norms I think have been the most successful [in engaging their broader military culture] and so that more nuanced or comprehensive understanding of women, peace and security, I think, has really helped out those other Gender Advisors.

However, others spoke about the hostility they encounter around the language of gender and, particularly, feminism. One recalls that: “So quite transparently in the last administration we couldn’t say the word gender, so we all became Women, Peace and Security Advisors quite quickly because there wasn’t the ability to say Gender Advisors, it wasn’t an acceptable word politically in the department”. Another spoke of working in multinational settings and being told by other GENADs that “I don’t feel like we should be using that word [feminism]”. Others argue that the use of language around feminism and masculinities is alienating to many ‘ordinary’ members of military organisations. One respondent argues:

... the [2017] version [of NATO’s Bi-Strategic Command Directive on WPS] does make some improvements, but then it goes off on tangents that are just going to turn regular, by regular I mean mostly male, military audience off. For example, it starts talking about the need to explore masculinities and how they impact operations and most military men, when presented with that term, will have an instinctive feeling inside them where they’re curling up in a foetal position.

These debates touch on the politics associated with the WPS discourse. For some, the antidote to hostile or poorly informed attitudes is to engage the *technical* rather than overtly *political* aspects of the agenda. Some respondents suggest emphasising the positive impact of GENAD capabilities on the organisation’s core mission. In short, they advocate for a technical language that demonstrates the value of WPS in effectively and efficiently achieving mission or organisational goals. Respondents argue that for this to occur, there needs to be a much stronger evidence base that demonstrates the value of WPS to the organisation. One respondent reflects:

I really do believe ... we do not have enough evidence-based approach to this agenda ... if we want to have success, we’re going to have to prove it. We need evidence-based approaches, we need justification, we need hard core connection to pure security. Why does it make sense for defence? Why does it make sense for cyber and resilience? Why does it make sense for all of these? Until we get to that point, I think we’re going to struggle.

Similarly, another respondent argues that GENADs need to convince “people that this is important, that lives are at risk from it, that reputations are at risk and that if allowed to go unchecked it will permeate the whole of the situation that the military could find themselves in, and there is no coming back from it”.

However, some felt that this approach instrumentalises gender responsive approaches as an issue that is only important *because* it serves military interests or satisfies mission objectives. These respondents believe that rather than tying the WPS agenda to organisational effectiveness, it is important to communicate gender responsiveness as a process of natural justice and human rights. At the heart of this argument is the idea that gender equality is a widely accepted social value that should be promoted within armed forces. One respondent argues:

Now ... when I think about it, I think that we should not argue ... that women should be in our organisation because of specific tactical reasons; I think we should argue that women should be in the armed forces because they have the same right to be here as men do or anybody and that should be enough.

While debates persist, all respondents accept that there needs to be ‘management’ of the message, given the deeply held views around gender within military organisations. During interviews, GENADs talked of the strategies they had developed to “bring men and women along on the journey” of WPS. For some, it was about being open and honest about the challenges of cross-cultural understanding and communication, while others spoke of strategies that could “open the door from [male military personnel] thinking ‘this is not my space’ to actually ‘I can contribute’, which empowers people then to get involved”. One respondent spoke about their manipulation of the message across a military operation:

Yeah literally I had to trick people into doing it. I had to say things like, ‘yeah, the General thinks it’s a really good idea’. So, the guy in charge of force generation was like, ‘the General thinks it’s a good idea?’ I was like, ‘yeah, he’s all over it.’ Then I’d go to the General and say, ‘the force generation team think this is a really possible area to work on’.

Ultimately, attitudes towards the WPS agenda and the GENAD capability are predominantly shaped by two things: informed understanding of the purpose and anticipated impact of the capability, and broader social and cultural attitudes towards gender issues. As noted throughout the research, this speaks to the need for senior leadership to carefully and clearly articulate the purpose of the GENAD capability and the value and impact of its work.

Information sharing within and across organisations

“So, I think that we don't necessarily share information well ... I do think that we could be a lot more collegiate in the way that we share information.”

GENADs, particularly on missions, routinely work across military organisations and with external civilian and military actors as well as local communities and civil society organisations. The willingness to share information, and the capacity to develop effective cross-sector relationships, can be a critical element of success. However, our respondents generally experience poor information sharing within and across organisations.

They attribute this to several factors. Respondents spoke of longstanding cultures of *not* sharing information outside of their own organisations or even sections. Others — particularly in operational contexts — spoke of a lack of situational awareness of who the relevant external actors were that they should be communicating with. One spoke of a 12-month military GENAD post where it was “about the nine-month mark” when they were able to access the civilian GENAD within the mission. Others spoke of the difficulties of translating or interpreting the lexicon that dominates sectors, particularly across civil/military or humanitarian/security sectors. One experienced military GENAD notes that there can be challenges with even working effectively with members of your own country's State Department/Foreign Ministry, let alone foreign agencies where you have no pre-existing networks or understandings of their bureaucracy:

At the same time, they're not military, and they have no clue the issues that we're working on. It's kind of hard sometimes to get people to understand when you're on different playing fields, trying to do the same thing with two different groups of people. So it's that understanding among the two groups, that you may speak different acronyms, some different language, but you're all working towards that same goal, just in different realms. So very important that you collaborate and work together, and learn how to talk each other's language so that you can work in synergy to help the women, whatever country you're in.

Cross-cultural and multilingual communication on WPS

Several GENADs spoke about the challenges of communicating their role in cross-cultural contexts. This is particularly the case in multinational operations where attitudes, understandings and expectations of gender identities and gender roles differ. For example, one respondent spoke about the impossibility of discussing efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse to members of a military organisation who found it culturally inappropriate to discuss issues of 'sex' with a woman.

Respondents also highlight the challenges of working through interpreters, particularly on sensitive issues regarding gender, where the nuance of meaning can be easily lost. On a mission in the Congo, a respondent reflected that they needed to work with colleagues who spoke English, French, Hindi, and Bengali, as well as civilians who spoke several local dialects. This sometimes required two lines of interpreters. Another respondent spoke of being on a mission where there were no women interpreters. She notes that: “So when we're talking to people about sexual violence, and particularly when that's been committed by people in uniform (men predominantly), they're not going to talk to you” if they need to speak through one or two male military interpreters.

C. WORKPLACE CULTURES

Key finding:

Harmful cultures continue to operate within military organisations that are antithetical to the work of GENADs and the implementation of the WPS agenda.

A workplace culture that fosters gender equality underpins an effective GENAD capability. As one respondent notes: “You need to have an institutional culture that will support and value the use of Gender Advisors.” While workplace cultures are dynamic, and multiple ‘micro-cultures’ can exist within the one organisation, the research finds that both military and feminist cultures shape the experiences of GENADs.

Military cultures and feminist ambitions

“How do you work within such a masculine system to then try and influence change to think in much more gender responsive ways? Masculinity is inbuilt in everything that the military does. That is their challenge. They're working in a deeply patriarchal space, and they're being asked to make that space more gender responsive. How do you do that if you don't transform the space? I think they're caught between a rock and a hard place.”

Respondents routinely note that masculine cultures continue to dominate the armed forces. Many argue that this creates a natural discord between military organisations on the one hand, and the feminist ambitions of the WPS agenda on the other. One respondent suggests: “The first challenge is working on an issue that the military organisation, and its culture, isn't very comfortable with ... The military organisation is suspicious towards you. What is this? [Are] the gender police here?!”

In fact, most respondents could identify examples where they had experienced or witnessed hostile attitudes that position GENADs as a threat to the military, its masculine identity and its effectiveness. For many, efforts to change this culture must come from across the board: “The other place that we need help is the buy-in of our peers, that the people we work with, if they don’t buy in to it, and they’re advising a partner nation or a foreign nation ... that makes your job so much harder. So, it’s not just about our leaders, it’s about the bottom up too.”

Others point to what one respondent described as the ‘can-do’ culture of military organisations. A few respondents describe militaries as task-oriented organisations that zero in on ensuring efficient and focused outcomes. For some, this sits in contrast to the ethic of the WPS agenda, which is more contemplative, self-reflective, and prepared to ask the ‘big questions’ about how we manage peace, conflict and security. One respondent comments:

... within the feminist or the development sector we spend a lot of time reflecting on the shortcomings of what we do, identifying problems and talking about lessons learned and how we can improve. It’s considered good practice to be quite critically self-reflective. But militaries aren’t like that, I don’t think. You have to project the fact that you’ve done a great job, that you were really successful, that everything you did was very successful. That culturally makes it difficult to do this sort of work in a meaningful way and in a way where you build up your expertise over time.

Finally, respondents suggest that many military cultures remain conservative, steeped in tradition and cautious in the face of radical change. However, for some, radical, transformative and structural change is precisely the goal of the WPS agenda.

Therefore, the highly structured and disciplined character of armed forces can operate in tension with GENAD work, which is about questioning decision-making and initiating changemaking, especially normative change. As one respondent suggests:

I think what is really difficult about this role is that it’s a changemaker. It’s - sometimes, in military cultures, it’s not the ones that kick up dust that have the most long and lasting careers ... as a Gender Advisor, you have to ... kick upwards. You have to be difficult to your commander, as well. Sometimes it’s really uncomfortable [to kick] downwards, as well. So, you’ll have few friends — That’s hard.

There are synergies between these two cultures: both are committed to building peace and security, and to specific issues such as civilian protection. The goal, however, is to create open and honest dialogue that can navigate the differences.

Gender responsive action vs box ticking

Some respondents spoke of the difference between genuine and superficial approaches to developing cultures of gender responsiveness within armed forces. Many respondents acknowledge the damaging nature of ‘box-ticking’ or tokenism when implementing the GENAD capability. One respondent notes: “The pushback internally is huge still. There is still not really that true commitment from leadership. So, it still feels as if they’re ticking the box and just saying the right things in public settings but not walking the talk”. This is echoed by respondents and the research finds that the culture of box ticking operates in several ways.

First, respondents routinely identify cases when the GENAD capability is interpreted as a form of lip service to the WPS agenda; where GENADs were included so that commanders could tick a box: “It just becomes a tokenistic, box checking exercise. ‘Was the gender advisor in the room?’ ‘Yes, they were.’ ‘Okay, we’ve done it. Tick’.” Another recalls an experience with “the Army Board saying, ‘we’ve got to tick this box to get this damn policy out. I don’t get care who you get to do it. Just do it’.” In acknowledging that GENADs can be “a check-the-box ... kind of thing”, one respondent continues: “But they have no authority, no power, no resources, they’re not really doing anything”. This can have the very negative impact of work that is not responsive to gender being legitimated by GENADs.

Second, respondents also identify cases where the GENAD capability is ‘paraded’ as window dressing to suggest a gender responsive military culture. One respondent recalls a time where a commander needed to choose members to participate in an event on gender: “Honestly, I felt like he was choosing the girl’s netball team and ideally the pretty ones that would be good for a photo”.

The research identifies similar examples in the operational context. A respondent recalls a situation where a female engagement team was needed and was told:

We need six women to deploy because we need an engagement team and that was it. There was no more or less thought than that ... It’s just going to be photo opportunities. That doesn’t make any difference at all. It’s just nice pictures that a General can stand in front of rather than actually thinking about what you need them for and how to use them.

Another respondent suggests that GENAD work is showcased for the wrong reasons: “I think there’s too much military grandstanding that they have gender advisors and [are] using that as a way to pretend that they’ve re-oriented their activities toward human rights and human security when they manifestly haven’t”.

Finally, some respondents interpret the box-ticking as part of a ‘numbers game’, where an organisation’s commitment is limited to statements on how many personnel have gone through training or been appointed as part of a GENAD capability. This was seen as corrosive

by respondents. One suggests that “I think you’ve got to watch that you don’t just simply say we’ve ticked the box, we’ve trained up 213 gender advisors. They’re being dropped around the world in a lot of humanitarian disaster spots or places of active conflict so look how good we are”. Another identifies this attitude at the global level: “What I have seen certainly from a UN perspective is that the operational perspective is not there yet. It is just focused on, dare I say it, a numbers game.” Such attitudes miss the point of the GENAD capability. Fundamentally, gender responsiveness within a military organisation demands consideration of gender issues (and not just women) in every decision, policy, plan and operation.

So, what concerns our respondents is that while ‘numbers’ maybe a move in the right direction, it can only ever be considered a first step. For those numbers to have an impact, “you have to fundamentally transform the military”. For many, this is a two-step process. The first step is to genuinely understand the value of the GENAD capability; the second is to create a culture conducive to their work. As one respondent argues:

It needs to be so much more than that numbers game. So, you’re looking at what is the added value that a diverse workforce brings, not just in counting numbers and percentages, but how you look at problems, how you solve problems, how you plan, how you conduct operations and why it’s important to include not just women, but a diversity in your decision-making apparatus at the highest levels as well as at the operating levels.

Similarly, there needs to be “a cultural shift across the whole of the institutions, the agency”. For many, this cultural shift aligns and occurs alongside the structural shifts recommended in Section II Organisational structures. Strong organisational structures for the GENAD capability (for example, around policy, training, resourcing and rank) will clarify and legitimise the role of the GENAD within the organisational culture. It will heighten the capabilities’ credibility as a mainstay of the organisation.

CONCLUSION

The cultures that dominate WPS on the one hand and armed forces on the other can often be at odds with one another. Yet, for either to be successful in achieving peace and security, they arguably need one another. Our respondents agree that military cultures must genuinely move to embrace gender equality and the principles of gender responsiveness within the organisation. This requires change, and it requires leadership. This can be achieved by senior military and GENAD leadership that is vocal, knowledgeable, and accountable to the WPS agenda.

CONCLUSION

Through the interviews conducted for this research, current and former GENADs demonstrate themselves to be passionate, committed and experienced experts on the WPS agenda. Drawing from years of professional military experience, they are in unanimous agreement that the GENAD capability can support military organisations to enhance peace and security globally. Interviewees can easily and extensively articulate the material benefits that GENAD work has had on the professional development of their organisation and the lives of those in conflict and crisis-affected contexts, enhancing both organisational and operational effectiveness.

Yet, GENADs also report being unsupported and under-utilised in their work. Many of our respondents spoke of working within a capability where its structure is ill-defined, is poorly or inconsistently resourced, undervalued and misunderstood across their organisation, and lacks an articulate, robust and integrated policy framework.

The consequence is that GENADs must become advocates within their organisation for the development of the capability. Many interviewees describe feeling isolated in this task, despite the public rhetoric and policy underscoring the importance of the WPS agenda and a military GENAD capability. One respondent describes the work as pushing a rock up a hill — a process with steps forward, but also backsliding.

Importantly, the steps forward are noticeable: the research demonstrates increasing recognition of the value and impact of gender responsive work in armed forces across functions and missions. There is growing commitment at the global, regional and national levels to provide the policy and training that GENADs require, and the wealth of knowledge and experience that GENADs have accumulated is being shared across global GENAD networks. Moreover, the capability has some strong and committed champions among senior military leaders and GENADs who highlight the value and impact of the work.

However, the backsliding and challenges persist. While there are examples of good practice, it often remains piecemeal. The development of the GENAD capability too often relies on personal and political will, rather than institutionalised and mandated practices. Still too frequently absent is the sustained investment that recognises gender responsiveness as a capability that will strengthen the core purpose of armed forces.

This research has sought to highlight the pressure points that GENADs and stakeholders identify within military GENAD capabilities around the world. In doing so it has looked for ways to address, mitigate or navigate these in an effective and efficient manner.

It is hoped that this research is the beginning of further efforts to document, analyse and develop the work of military GENADs worldwide, and thereby contribute to efforts to advance this work, facilitate the implementation of the WPS agenda, and advance global peace and security.

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