

CONQUERING A NEW FIELD

INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

"We are committed to integrating the gender dimension into our international missions", says Major General Anders Lindström from the Swedish Armed Forces, "and the Genderforce project is helping us to translate this commitment into a reality." General Lindström is responsible for the implementation of Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" which was adopted by the United Nations in 2000. This resolution calls on all UN member countries to ensure the equal participation of women, at all decision-making levels, in conflict resolution and peace processes. It also urges its members to pay special attention to the impact that armed conflict can have on women.

GENDER FORCE: The Genderforce Development Partnership (DP) is working in this context and its specific aim is to establish gender equality in Sweden's international relief operations and peace keeping missions that are designed to assist regions suffering from natural and human disasters or conflict. Increasing women's participation is perceived as of crucial importance, as they bring additional competence and experience and they can also reach out to the female population in the mission areas and help to ensure the protection of the human rights of these indigenous women in these difficult or dangerous situations.

MALE AND FEMALE DOMAINS JOINING FORCES

Initiated and led by the [Swedish Armed Forces](#), this EQUAL partnership has linked six organisations which are all concerned with international relief operations and/or peace keeping missions. Apart from the army three other male domains have joined forces: the [Swedish Police](#), the [Swedish Rescue Services Agency](#) and the [Association of Military Officers in Sweden](#) which is a trade union. They benefit from the gender expertise of the [Kvinna till Kvinna](#) Foundation, and of [Lottorna](#), the [Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organisation](#). The foundation is a women's NGO with long-standing experience and reputation in supporting women in war and armed conflict areas. Lottorna is the largest of Sweden's 23 auxiliary defence organisations and open only to women.

The partners have committed themselves to applying the principle of gender balancing, which means that they aim to increase the number of females at all levels of hierarchy in the army, police and rescue services. The second principle that is at the core of all project activities is gender mainstreaming and this is used to take proper account of the different interests, needs and realities of women and men when it comes to planning, preparing, implementing and monitoring the various activities that may be part of an international mission.

Even if the army, police and rescue services have made special efforts to improve female access and promotion prospects, they are still a long way from establishing a gender balance, and this is particularly true for their international actions. For instance in the Swedish Armed Forces, there are 11.000 officers and roughly the same number of conscripts. Only 4.6 % of both groups are female, whilst amongst the 7.880 civilian employees, 40 % are women. Female participation in international service varies depending on the type of mission and ranges between 4.8% in the case of Liberia and 11.4% in the mission in Kosovo. Many of these women work in nursing and medical care and very few have leadership responsibilities.



A STRONG WEB OF INTERLINKED ACTIVITIES

The radial threads in a spider's web sustain the delicate edifice and in sub-projects of the DP, gender balancing and gender mainstreaming perform the same crucial role. These eight sub-projects incorporate a large number of mutually reinforcing activities that reflect the key aspects of the DP's remit and include:

1. developing strategies for gender-fair recruitment;

2. supporting the authorities in organising international missions from a gender perspective through the provision of new tools for shaping, implementing and following-up assignments;
3. providing the personnel of Swedish international missions with increasing knowledge about UN resolution 1325 and its practical implications for leaders, project/mission managers and educators, as well as other staff. (This, in turn, helps to empower local women in the mission areas as the resolution mentions offering opportunities for participating in reconstruction projects in an equal and active manner);
4. improving cooperation between military and civilian players in the mission areas whilst integrating a gender dimension;
5. training gender field advisors to enable international missions to apply gender mainstreaming;
6. awareness raising and training of managers and personnel stationed in the field about trafficking of human beings and its consequences. (This prepares people in positions of command to enact the established code of conduct for mission personnel which means ensuring that soldiers or other members of staff comply with Swedish law. This prohibits the purchasing of sexual services even when abroad and so personnel have to be prevented from using bars and pubs which are known to be involved in prostitution and trafficking);
7. designing and implementing a Gender Coach Programme for top level decision-makers from the organisations participating in the DP;
8. improving the knowledge of instructors, particularly those from the partner organisations, but also all other personnel going abroad about gender equality and women's rights through providing appropriate training modules.

Most partners are involved in the full range of these activities and all of them take the lead in one or more where they can offer a special expertise or where they urgently need to change their practices. *"Working in partnership is benefiting everybody"*, states project manager Cecilia Righammar, *"not only because the partners can learn from each other, but also because of the existing commonalities which form a solid base for cooperation and ground-breaking."* Mariola Gummesson is the Head of Lottorna's training department and represents her organisation in the DP's steering group, whilst also being in charge of transnational cooperation. She adds that *"this project is also benefiting from a network of people whose paths have crossed before and who stick to their gender equality commitments and thus, form a very cooperative team."*

BREAKING TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Increasing women's participation in international missions obviously requires a thorough consideration of how people are recruited for these operations. What are the requirements and procedures? Who are the key players in the selection process? What are the stumbling blocks for women? One of the sub-projects used questionnaires to determine how many people went abroad, how many had wanted to go but were not admitted, and what they had perceived as the obstacles.



Unsurprisingly, proportionally more women than men were unsuccessful in their applications. This was the case for both the relatively short 3 week missions of the Rescue Services and those of the Armed Forces which last six months. Also, the results of the survey indicated that, as Mariola Gummesson puts it, *"a lot of informal recruitment"* goes on, which means that men recruit other men from within their personal networks. The process is not at all transparent but it appears that often security issues are used as the final argument to block women's involvement. If the leader of a mission claims that security concerns have priority and already has a team whose members have worked together in a similar context, then the opportunities for female newcomers are almost negligible.

Sometimes the way in which job requirements are formulated tends to exclude women. Anna-Karin Hamrén, the Head of the International Department of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, gives an example, *"some years ago the capacity to drive a truck was advertised as the sole requirement for certain missions and this produced almost entirely male teams. We think that analysing job contents and*



reformulating requirements so that more than one skill is included, could help to open up more functions to women and eventually lead to a better gender balance." Anna-Karin has conceived a workshop for those who "recruit" for missions. Over three days, the tasks that are required for a given mission are analysed and then each workshop participant has to develop a plan for the fulfilment of these tasks that proactively integrates a gender dimension. Her goal is that these workshops and all other strategies and tools developed by Genderforce should become part of the normal training and briefing procedures for missions of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency.



Lars Hammarstedt, who is responsible for EU Affairs and International Coordination at the Swedish Police Headquarters, is not content with the number of female police officers nor with their participation in international service. *"Although this participation almost reflects the official figure of 21 % of female officers in the police service, it could and should be more, and this is why we are putting a lot of energy into the sub-project on recruitment."* Lars also feels that *"working abroad does not really pay in terms of career advancement and sometimes you can be seen as a liability when you come back and nobody is interested in your experiences or values them. This is an important aspect that must also be addressed by our project."*

The DP will organise a conference, in May 2007, to disseminate its strategies and practices for integrating a gender dimension into personnel policies for international service and to stimulate further debate amongst key players.

IMPROVED GENDER EQUALITY KNOWLEDGE IS KEY

Increasing gender knowledge in the partner organisations is another cross-cutting priority for the DP. Sub-project 5, which is developing the new profile of a gender equality field advisor, and sub-project 7, which provides gender coaching for senior managers, both aim to increase awareness raising and training opportunities for different contexts and levels of the organisational hierarchy.

Gender equality field advisors

The goal of sub-project 5 is to recruit 20 people from the partner organisations and to train them as gender equality field advisors or, in other words, as experts who can ensure that a gender dimension is integrated into the preparation, implementation and monitoring of international missions. The members of the sub-project's steering group searched for suitable candidates within their own organisations. These individuals were then approached and given time to consider the possibility of working as a coach which most accepted, as they already had expertise in, and a commitment to, gender equality. After a week of introductory training, at the beginning of 2007, the participants will be left on their own with a self-study learning pack to guide them further into their new field of work. Later in the year, these future gender advisors will return for additional training, which will then be much more geared to the gender equality situation in a chosen country and to the specific tasks the organisations are performing during their missions abroad.

The plan for the future is to offer this kind of training at least once a year. Anna-Karin Hamrén explains, *"so gradually a pool of gender advisors will be created, a group that will build trust for this new function and, backed by my Head of Department, in my own organisation, I trust, that participation in these programmes will become a precondition for leadership of international missions."* Mats Norrman, the Director of the Genderforce project, who is heading up this sub-project, is seeking to move things even further as he feels that *"promotion inside the Armed Forces should require knowledge of gender equality and equal opportunities for all and we should follow the example of the United Kingdom that we learned about through our transnational exchange."*

Gender coaching for the very top

The DP partners are very aware that gender mainstreaming is a top-down approach and that without strong backing for the Genderforce objectives from the decision-making level of each organisation, it would be impossible to bring about lasting change. Thus, the movers and shakers of the coaching sub-project invested time and energy in identifying leaders and key people in the army, the police and the Association of Swedish Officers. These leaders were then offered a personal gender coach for one year to equip them with gender knowledge at a time, pace and



location of their own choosing. The response was encouraging, as many of these extremely busy people agreed that gender equality was definitely on the current agenda but admitted that they lacked a solid base of knowledge and experience. *"They have neither time to attend seminars on gender equality, nor to read books"*, says Mariola Gummesson *"but some were quite pleased with the prospect of finally being able to ask all the silly questions about gender equality in the home, in building a career and in the labour market."*



As a result of this outreach strategy, 12 high-level candidates were selected and matched with individual coaches. Most of these coaches were recruited from outside the partner organisations. They came from JÄMO, the National Equality Gender Agency, a management consultancy, universities and even a large enterprise like Volvo. However, there were also a few coaches with gender expertise that had been acquired in the Armed Forces or the Police. Half of the group were women and half men, and the clients could choose whether they preferred a male or female coach, who could be someone from inside or outside their organisation. In September 2006, the scheme was officially launched with a seminar during which the "coaching couples" presented themselves and their aims and expectations. The Head of the Regional Police in Skåne summed up why most of the "coachees" wished to learn as he felt that *"I need to undergo personal development so that I can move from understanding the very academic concept of gender mainstreaming to the full capacity of putting it into the daily practice of my organisation."* Four regional Chiefs of Police, one of them a woman, the two top Executives of the Association of Military Officers and six Generals, including the Head of Personnel in the Armed Forces, are now being coached, at least once a month for a full year. A formative evaluation process is monitoring this learning and the change that it is stimulating.

MAINSTREAMING: PUSH AND PULL IN BALANCE

Transferring innovative approaches into regular policies and practices requires both push and pull activities. Whilst the developers of new models must push to get them adopted as part of mainstream systems, key players who are in position to make this happen have to actively "pull" the new solutions into the given policy area which they want to change. For projects, pushing is the only solution in some circumstances because there is not enough interest on the part of policy makers to pull. In the case of Genderforce, push and pull are well balanced. This is mainly due to the fact that Sweden has a National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Resolution 1325, and the contribution of the EQUAL DP is regarded as an integral part of that plan. Regular contacts with the Department of Defence and the Department of Justice ensure that the relevant key players are kept well informed about the development and progress of the DP's different components and thus, can make the maximum use of the project's achievements.

Each partner has set up an "EQUAL Implementation and Steering Group" to relay information on current and future activities, to disseminate results and to ease the way towards the mainstreaming and sustainability of the Genderforce concept within its organisation. In the Swedish Police, this commitment is closely linked to this agency's responsibility for sub-project 8, which aims to establish a solid base of gender knowledge as part of the regular training offered by participating organisations. Björn Anderson who is leading this sub-project is the Superintendent of the Swedish Police Academy and also the president of an NGO named "Men against sexual harassment" whose members are male police employees, both uniformed and civilian. His experience within the police force of combating the alarming degree of sexual harassment is an important element in this developmental work. *"Committing men to passing on the message of no tolerance against sexual harassment to other men is of key importance,"* he says, *"in a male dominated culture it needs courage and leadership to do it and we try to build this up. We avoid communicating a feeling of guilt and instead we set out clearly what the consequences and sanctions are."*

By 2009, Björn expects to have a basic course in place that will cover UN Resolution 1325, gender equality, women's rights and human rights and also a training programme for trainers that will address the same topics. *"We have used a first version of the course in Autumn 2006 to train 20 members of Lottorna who wish to go on international missions. The results are now being carefully evaluated and, if necessary, the course will be improved. The idea is to structure it in eight building blocks that learners can take flexibly. At the same time, we will test and finalise the training of trainers so that, in the future, all of the partners will be able to offer this education on a permanent basis."*

Another example of successful mainstreaming is the DP's gender field advisor scheme that is already being replicated by other European Armies in the context of the [EU mandate](#) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This operation is aiming to support the United Nations' Mission ([MONUC](#)) during, and immediately after, the process of national elections. Charlotte Isaksson, a Gender Expert in the Swedish Army who had been in charge of the EQUAL project is now seconded as gender advisor to the [German-led Operational Command](#) of this EU mission and is putting into practice the concepts that have been developed thanks to EQUAL.

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