Organising for Change:
Female Staff Associations and the Security Sector

Workshop Report

24 - 25 September 2012
Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Brussels, Belgium

DCAF

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is an international foundation whose mission is to assist the international community in pursuing good governance and reform of the security sector. The Centre develops and promotes norms and standards, conducts tailored policy research, identifies good practices and recommendations to promote democratic security sector governance, and provides in-country advisory support and practical assistance programmes.
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DCAF's gender and security programme implements research, policy and technical advice, and regional projects to support the development of security sectors that meet the security needs of men, women, boys and girls, and the full participation of men and women in security sector institutions and security sector reform processes. Contact us at: gender@dcaf.ch

The North South Institute

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shares the results of a workshop and policy conference on the roles of female staff associations (FSAs) in the security sector. Co-hosted by DCAF and NSI the event gathered 26 participants of FSAs from the defence, justice and police sectors and umbrella security sector staff associations, as well as allied professionals, from approximately 15 countries in Africa, Europe and North America.

The workshop's outcomes included: increased awareness of good practices and methods to strengthen FSAs – including in relation to supporting their members – greater awareness of how to integrate gender into security sector institutions and increased networking between members of different FSAs. Many participants found that despite coming from different regions and sectors, they faced similar challenges. These included the question of how to remain relevant to their members and provide them with adequate support; run their associations more effectively, in particular, in difficult environments and with limited resources; improve service delivery to the community; and, make their institutions more gender sensitive.

The good practices shared throughout the workshop included: involving more young women in leadership roles; providing incentives for FSA members such as training opportunities and awards; lobbying and advocating for the integration of gender issues by decision-makers and policy/law-makers; monitoring security sector institutions; diversifying sources of funding and methods of communication; and, supporting FSA members and members of the community.

At the policy conference portion of the event, researchers shared recent findings on FSAs and security sector reform and pointed to ways policymakers and practitioners could support gender-sensitive reform and FSAs, including through robust gender-sensitive policies, investment, particularly in girls' education, partnership with FSAs and research.

Next steps include creating new FSAs at national or regional levels, implementing different types of capacity-building activities for FSA members, conducting new types of fund-raising activities and identifying entry points to integrate gender into security sector institutions (see Annex 2). Progress toward and challenges in achieving these goals will be assessed in April 2013.

INTRODUCTION

In most countries around the world, national security priorities and decision-making continue to remain largely the preserve of a small élite group, often excluding women. Limited participation of, and consultation with, women reduces the availability of much-needed additional human resources and the benefit that can be gained from integrating different perspectives and experiences. In the area of peace and security, the effective provision of security and justice for men, women, boys and girls is compromised.

Female staff associations are organisations or networks that associate female professionals. Within the security sector, these associations have existed since the 1920s and have grown considerably in numbers along with the growth in the number of women employed in the security sector. FSAs' aims are to support female personnel in their professions and to render the policies and practices in their security sector institutions more gender sensitive.

Since the passing of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), a lot of progress has been made to promote the protection and participation of women in the area of peace and security. The UNSCR and national action plans for its implementation[1] have provided a stronger foundation and more favourable environment for FSAs to support their members and to make security sector institutions (SSIs) more gender inclusive and responsive. Despite advances in integrating gender into SSIs and the activities and achievements of FSAs around the world, many challenges remain. Common challenges faced by FSAs include limited capacity, insufficient financial resources and discriminatory institutional policies and practices.

In order to support FSAs' capacity to make SSIs more gender responsive and help their members, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and The North-South Institute (NSI) organised a workshop in Brussels on 24-25 September 2012 for representatives of FSAs from different security sectors and regions as well as others working on gender and SSR issues. This event was the first of its kind organised for this type of target audience. The workshop built on ongoing work by DCAF and NSI on gender and security sector reform, particularly researching FSAs and their role in integrating gender into SSR processes. DCAF has also worked with FSAs in West Africa and the Western Balkans to develop their institutional capacity.

The proceedings focused on the three sectors where FSAs are more prevalent and active: defence, police and justice. Participants were limited to thirty in order to maintain a high level of interaction. We sought balanced representation across different security sectors and regions (West Africa and Western and Eastern Europe). Workshop proceedings were conducted in English and French with simultaneous translation and bilingual materials available. The event was designed to be highly interactive with a combination of presentations, group work, and plenary discussions.

The objectives of the workshop were to
- Strengthen institutional capacity for outreach and FSA members' engagement;

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[1] 36 UN member states have now implemented national action plans on UNSCR 1325.

- Reinforce participants' capacity to identify entry points and strategies to integrate gender into security sector institutions;
- Reinforce dialogue among FSAs from different sectors and regions on the one hand; and between FSAs and SSR practitioners and policy makers, on the other;
- Share research and workshop findings and policy options with the international community in order to promote more gender-sensitive security sectors.

These objectives were validated by workshop participants in a first exercise to identify their expectations, presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Participants' Self-defined Expectations for the Workshop
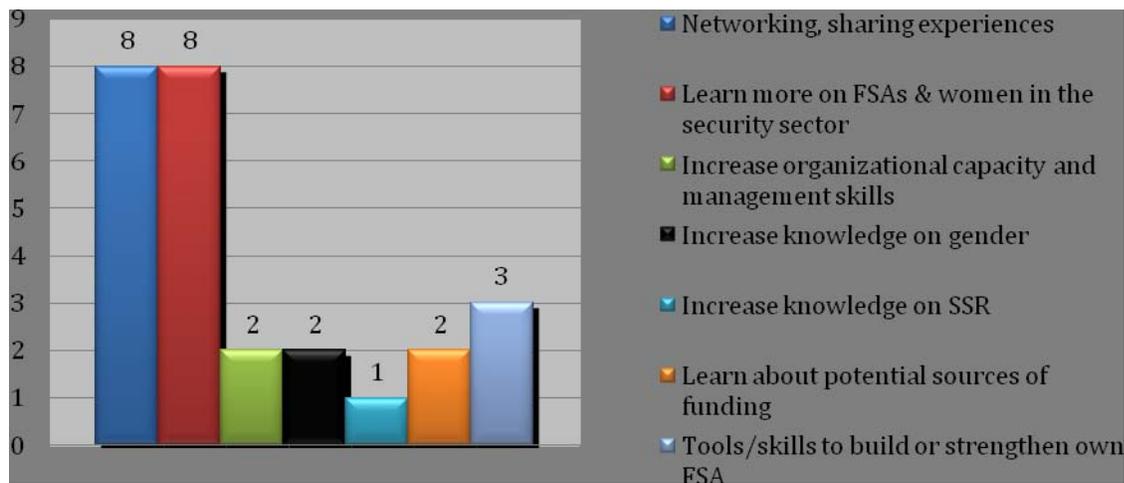
THEME 1 : THE ROLE OF FEMALE SECURITY SECTOR STAFF ASSOCIATIONS

ORGANISING FOR CHANGE: RESEARCH RESULTS

Panellists: Kathrin Quesada (DCAF), Jenny Becker (International Rescue Committee, formerly at NSI)

Until quite recently, the different structures and roles of FSAs were significantly under-researched. This gap was partially filled by DCAF and NSI through recent research conducted both separately and jointly. Results from two research papers were presented:

Female Staff Associations in the Security Sector: Agents of Change? (DCAF, 2011)[2]

This report addresses a knowledge gap and makes available information on how FSAs support the interests and needs of their members and if they have been able to promote change in their institutions. It presents the results of a mapping of 67 FSAs and their different mandates, structures, activities and trends. Limitations to the results include accessing information, language barriers and limited time and

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[2] http://dcaf.ch/Publications/Female-Staff-Associations-in-the-Security-Sector-Agents-of-Change

resources. FSAs included are mainly from Europe, Africa and North America, mostly from the police and justice sectors. The main findings are that FSAs can effect institutional change through their different activities. They do this through changing institutional cultures, policies and practices, lobbying, advocating, collaborating with governments and SSIs, raising awareness of gender-related issues and developing the capacity of female staff to enable them to perform more effectively and advance in their professions. **What makes associations strong are factors including regular assessments of members' needs, strategic and financial planning, strong leadership, inclusive and transparent internal governance as well as networking with a range of stakeholders**.

Freedom through Association: Assessing the Contributions of Female Police Staff Associations to Gender-Sensitive Police Reform In West Africa (NSI, 2011)[3]

This research report explores the roles of policewomen's staff associations in Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone and how these associations have contributed to making police reform processes more gender responsive. Among the good practices identified in the report are the ways FSAs provide social support and a forum for dialogue, coordinate professional development, provide dispute resolution and serve as role models. Some of the common challenges faced by the associations included reliance on a small number of women as leaders and difficulty inspiring younger members, limited resources and reach outside of capital cities, weaknesses in organisational management, gender stereotypes and discrimination, and limited capacity or in some cases, willingness, to lobby or advocate on the integration of gender issues.

Drawing on this analysis, the report offers several policy and practice recommendations. Among them are:

- Strengthening internal communication
- Involving younger women in leadership roles
- Increasing the number of female decision makers
- Promoting the association's profile, networking (locally and internationally) and fundraising
- Building capacity to advocate more effectively for the inclusion of gender perspectives in the police service

Plenary discussion of the research papers elicited conversations around conducting parallel research examining mixed-sex or male-only associations, to compare similarities and differences and draw appropriate lessons learned in addition to deepening the analysis of female staff associations. Questions were also raised regarding how to overcome the difficulties in engaging youth. Mentorship programmes, such as that offered by the Ghana Police Ladies Association (POLAS), were identified as potentially useful solutions. Participants reinforced that while it might be difficult to motivate young members to contribute their time voluntarily, it is important to communicate clearly to all members the added value of an FSA in order to motivate members to contribute. Family responsibilities must also be taken into account when considering how to encourage young members to contribute. One participant noted that within the military in her country, younger women are not yet concerned with addressing family

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[3] http://www.nsi-ins.ca/fragile-and-conflict-affected-states-2/freedom-through-association-female-staff-associations-and-gender-sensitive-police-reform-in-west-africa-2011/

life/work balance, though another participant disputed this. She shared that consultations in her country showed that young women are more concerned with career development and interested in mentoring. Focusing on the specific concerns of younger people – as defined by them – could be a practical means of drawing in more active, young members.

Discussion also centred on how FSAs can address societal attitudes against having women in the security sector. The Sierra Leonean example offers a potential solution in its combination of social functions with FSA meetings to engage and educate men within the security institution as well as the general public. However, the possibilities for shaping attitudes may also be dependent on the sector and its proximity to the public (i.e. the police tend to work more closely with the community than the armed forces).

ROLES OF FEMALE STAFF ASSOCIATIONS

Panellists: Julia Jaeger, International Association of Women Police
Fatimata Dicko Zouboye, Female Lawyers' Association Mali
Brig. Kestoria Kabia, Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces Service Women's Association

Panellists from different sectors shared good practices and challenges related to how their associations have supported their members and contributed to making their institutions more gender-sensitive. While the experiences of these three sample organizations cannot be representative of every FSA, they do provide a starting point for identifying what organizations are doing, where they are seeing successes and where they are facing challenges.

Activities of FSAs are often similar, regardless of the sector they work in: awareness raising/outreach, membership support and training are common goals. For example, in the justice sector, the Female Lawyers' Association in Mali's main activities are awareness raising on a variety of legal topics, training of paralegals and providing legal aid services through mobile clinics. In order to encourage greater representation of women in the justice sector, the Association, in coordination with the Malian chapter of Women in Law and Development in Africa, provides educational support to young women. In the military, the RSLAF Service Women's Association's (RSLAFSWA) supports its members through welfare and support services, being a conduit for raising concerns or complaints – such as harassment – with superiors, and advocating for more gender-sensitive practices. In policing, among the services provided by the International Association of Women Police to its members are annual training opportunities, a magazine focusing on women and policing, and conferences to facilitate information sharing, learning, dialogue and networking.

Many of the challenges these associations face are also shared. Limited resources, both human and financial, and weak institutions/institutional support for women or the association are found in many different cases. In Mali, the main challenges faced by the Female Lawyers' Association are helping the population, in particular women, to obtain better access to justice and increasing the participation of women in the justice sector. Key challenges towards improving access to justice to the population relate to weak government capacity and support to the association in addition to the socio-economic and legal status of women in the country. In Sierra Leone, the RSLAFSWA's activities are hindered by a lack of financial resources and institutional support and the low numerical strength of women in the armed forces, in particular at decision-making levels. Their members also face challenges including balancing

work and family life, possessing the necessary skills and education required to be able to compete effectively with male colleagues and a lack of support and self-confidence for advancement.

Questions and Comments raised in plenary focused on a number of different issues. One in-depth discussion explored the different effects mandatory versus voluntary membership can have on an organization. Mandatory membership can help to ensure that there is "power in numbers," a particular asset in the military where the chain of command must be respected. On the voluntary side, recruitment is an important function and can be done through advertisements, local/regional focal points or at conferences. Conferences hosted by the International Association of Women Police, for instance, are very important sites for their membership drives as both the organisers and members take them very seriously. Another means to recruit members is to engage with universities following the example of the Mali Female Lawyers' Association. Engaging with students can help to address concerns around engaging younger members who sometimes lack the motivation to join and continue their membership.

Another lengthy conversation focused on how to ensure sustainability of an organization once the founding members move on. One example from Sierra Leone, shared by Kestoria Kabia, is not to have senior women lead the organization. In Women in the Security Sector-Sierra Leone, an umbrella organization, senior women have an advisory role only and this is working well. However, she cautioned, for sector-specific organisations, senior women need to play leadership roles because they are closest to senior-level management and policy makers. Drawing on her experiences in policing, Julia Jaeger recommended holding regular elections and applying term limits so power is shared and new people gain leadership experience.

INTEGRATING GENDER INTO THE SECURITY SECTOR

This session focused on identifying different gender entry points at various institutional levels, such as institutional policy and operations, service delivery, structures, budgets and logistics. A wide range of entry points and good practices were shared. [4] Some highlights include

- The Liberia National Police has created a new institutional structure – the Women and Children Protection Service – to address sexual and gender-based violence.
- In Senegal, the women lawyers' association has organized training and awareness raising for the police on gender-based violence.
- In Sierra Leone, the concept of 'friend-raising' – cultivating good relationships with gender champions in top management – has proven successful in advocating for change.
- The Southeast Europe Women Police Officers Network's gender agenda publication has proved a useful advocacy tool in that it offers solutions rather than just highlighting problems. [5]

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[4] Examples include: uniforms and equipment adapted to women's physiques; focusing on the relevant skills for the realities of contemporary conflicts that women are more likely to possess when recruiting, rather than emphasizing physical strength as endures in recruitment for special forces; adequate safe houses for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; and, working with civil society to advocate for changes in public policies.

- In the UK, FSAs can intercede to ensure that unpaid support payments such as alimony are deducted from a police service employee's wages.
- In Côte d'Ivoire, the women lawyers' association analyses relevant international law, conventions and treaties to which Cote d'Ivoire is party and recommends changes to ensure compliance in national legal frameworks.
- In Ghana, the Police Ladies Association has successfully advocated for women's inclusion in peacekeeping operations.

In small groups divided along sector lines, workshop participants discussed key problems related to integrating gender in their sector. Each group chose one problem then developed one goal for their FSA in response to the problem and how they might practically work towards that goal. Detailed outcomes are available in Annex 3 (police), Annex 4 (justice) and Annex 5 (defence).

THEME 2: BUILDING FEMALE SECURITY SECTOR STAFF ASSOCIATIONS

Whether the mission of a female staff association is to support female staff, mainstream gender in the security sector and/or provide security services to the community, the association needs a number of internal practices and structures that allow it to successfully carry out activities designed to forward these goals. The morning session of the second workshop day was dedicated to the topic "Building your association," focusing on the internal practices and resources FSAs need to function. Discussions centred on four principal themes: internal governance of FSAs; internal communication and membership outreach; external communication and public outreach; and fundraising from external sources.

INTERNAL GOVERNANCE OF FSAS

Panellists: Bojana Balon (Project Coordinator) and Sanja Sumonja (Executive Committee Chair), Women Police Officers' Network in South East Europe

Drawing on the experiences of female police representatives from nine administrations in eight countries in the Women Police Officers' Network in South East Europe (WPON) and the Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior Female Staff Association in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the panellists identified a number of good practices for internal governance. WPON has had success with annual meetings, governance by an elected executive committee and developing an annual work plan that contributes to increased transparency. The Republika Srpska Interior Ministry FSA demonstrates that a steering committee and advisory board are both useful additions to internal governance.

Participants identified further good practices through small group exercises, among them: democratic processes to elect the executive committee, making executive meetings open to the membership, including by teleconference, and publishing minutes of meetings. Furthermore, rotating meeting locations and involving young or new members through traineeship positions on the executive

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[5] See Annex 6 (tools and reference materials) for WPON's *Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Policing Practice* and the network's 2009 Annual Report.

committee were identified as ways of engaging members and thereby ensuring the sustainability of the association.

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Panellists: Adisa Zahiragić, Association of Women Judges in Bosnia and Herzegovina
                        Maj. Mariya Vakova-Zhelyazkova, Bulgarian Armed Forces Women's Association

This session addressed two types of communication and outreach: internal, with FSA members, and external, with the general public. Drawing on the experience of the Association of Women Judges in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Adisa Zahiragić shared good practice in engaging its membership, such as convening a retreat for members to meet and plan, and organising capacity building workshops on advocacy skills and project management. The association produces a newsletter to communicate with its members. The newsletter provides information on the association, its activities and achievements; it is widely distributed to all courts and other relevant institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Discussion revealed that FSAs use a number of modes of communication: internal systems (notice boards, internal dispatch systems, intranet), other communication technologies (telephone, email, websites, newsletters) in addition to meetings and personal conversations. Several associations send out a weekly newsletter detailing the association's activities for the upcoming week. Challenges to effective communication include technical issues, such as limited access to email in some regions and resource constraints (reliance on voluntary work, lack of funds). Suggested solutions included appointing dedicated communication officers and seeking funding or sponsorship – either directly or by negotiating with service providers for lower rates, for example.

A case study exercise further highlighted that, to ensure a representative and vibrant association, an FSA needs to actively engage new members and reach out to young women in the security sector and members outside the capital region. Participants identified various activities to increase membership engagement, such as conducting membership surveys to map needs and expectations of the FSA both among new recruits and existing members, as well as holding regular meetings outside the capital region.

While the principles of effective communication hold true for external outreach, given the audiences in question, practical approaches differ. The Bulgarian Armed Forces Women's Association engages in two different types of external communication: communication with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and public outreach. The association provides support and formulates recommendations to the MoD in activities related to the participation of women and gender mainstreaming in the military. It has also involved external actors in this realm, for example, by inviting journalists to seminars on gender sensitivity aimed at male and female military personnel. The association also engages in public outreach activities to forward its goals, which include making a contribution to society as a whole. Public outreach campaigns have included charity to assist Haiti as well as breast cancer awareness raising.

Participants exchanged different types of public outreach activities that they either already carry out or those they could envision carrying out. FSAs communicate with the public through "open day" events; awareness-raising campaigns using media publications, radio discussions and television spots; lecture

series with students; and meetings with senior security sector officials. As with many other activities, securing funds and other resources for such activities was identified as a key challenge.

The case study exercise drew upon FSAs' existing experience and good practices in external outreach. Participants highlighted that public outreach should be conducted simultaneously at both the grassroots level and at the decision-making level. Participants suggested two different modes of external communication to address two types of audiences: mass communication for public sensitisation campaigns and individual communication to engage community leaders, politicians, senior administrators and other decision makers in integrating gender in the security sector.

FUNDRAISING

Panellist: Fanny Aboagye, Ghana Police Ladies Association

The many challenges of raising funds to support and expand the work of FSAs were raised throughout the workshop. Fanny Aboagye shared the successful experiences of the Ghana Police Ladies Association as examples of good practice in external fundraising and diversifying funding sources. As with many other organisations, POLAS collects membership dues and levies special contributions from members as necessary. The association receives voluntary contributions from individuals, grants from non-governmental organisations, funding from international bodies and corporate donations. It carries out fundraising activities and undertakes income-generating projects. POLAS invests a portion of its funds to generate additional income. The association has a fundraising committee that harnesses the power of its most convincing communicators. It solicits financial support from organisations or corporations that use police support and offers them visibility in the association's activities. Essential to POLAS' success in this regard has been the association's yearly planning activities in order to mesh with donors' funding cycles which are poorly suited to ad hoc requests.

Participants identified different actual and potential sources of funding for their own associations during group exercises and discussed the skills and resources needed to secure such funding. Many FSAs receive funds from at least some of the same types of sources as POLAS. Further sources identified included applying for funding from the relevant security sector institution. Organisational planning was discussed, as was the need to monitor and report to funders on activities. One concern raised was the need for senior management to approve any requests for funding from outside organisations. Accordingly, raising the profile of the FSA within the security sector institution itself to highlight its professionalism and credibility was identified as a prerequisite to gaining approval for fundraising activities.

Conclusion: Global Engagement

Workshop participants were joined by members of the Brussels policy and practitioners community for a short policy conference to share insights, discuss research results and network. Among the participants were representatives from the European Union, UN Women, the Canadian Mission to the European Union and the Swiss Mission to NATO. Among other delegates, we were privileged to welcome Mari Skåre, NATO's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security.

The discussions focused on policy changes that can be made to support more gender-sensitive security sector reform/governance, such as supporting the work of female staff associations, enacting gender policies and better enforcing existing codes of conduct. The closing session also provided a valuable opportunity for FSA representatives from a variety of sectors to engage directly with policy makers. Our hope is that this direct connection, sharing of information and common goals will benefit the female staff associations present as they work in the coming months and years to build their associations, support gender-sensitive security sector development and respond to the needs of their dynamic memberships.

Organising for Change: Female Staff Associations and the Security Sector

24 - 25 September 2012
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Agenda

Monday 24 September	
08:30 - 09:00	**Registration** DCAF
09:00 - 09:20	**Opening and welcome remarks** Jennifer Salahub, Senior Researcher, Fragile & Conflict-Affected States, NSI Daniel de Torres, Deputy Head of Operations III, DCAF
09:20 - 10:20	**Introduction and objectives** Facilitators: Aiko Holvikivi and Anike Doherty, Project Officers, Gender and Security Programme, DCAF *This session will include introductions of participants and a presentation of the workshop objectives and agenda.*

10:20 - 11:00	**Session 1: Female staff associations: Organising for change**
	
	Facilitator: Anike Doherty, DCAF
	
	This session will consist of a brief presentation of key research findings by DCAF and NSI on female staff associations and on the integration of gender perspectives into security sector/ police reform. This will be followed by a short Q & A.
	
	  - Brief Introduction
	
	  - Presentation of : *"Female Staff Associations in the Security Sector: Agents of Change?"* (2011)
	
	    Kathrin Quesada, Project Coordinator, Gender and Security Programme, DCAF
	
	  - Presentation of : *"Freedom Through Association: Female Staff Associations and Gender-Sensitive Police Reform In West Africa"* (2011)
	
	    Jenny Becker, Women's Protection and Empowerment Manager, International Rescue Committee [formerly NSI]
	
	  Q & A

11:00 - 11:20	*Coffee/tea break*
11:20 - 12:30	**Session 2: Roles of female staff associations** Facilitator: Jennifer Salahub, NSI *In this session, three panelists from different sectors will share good practices and challenges related to how their associations have supported their members or contributed towards making their security sector institutions more gender-sensitive. Presentations will be followed by a facilitated discussion in plenary.*
12:30 - 13:30	*Lunch*
13:30 - 14:30	**Session 3: Integrating gender into security sector institutions** Facilitators: Anike Doherty and Daniel de Torres, DCAF *This interactive session will include an introduction to the concepts of gender and SSR. Participants will also discuss and identify various gender and SSR entry points.*
14:30 - 15:30	*This will be followed by group exercises focused on identifying objectives for female staff associations and activities as well as tools required for achieving those objectives.*
15:30 - 16:00	*Coffee/tea break*
16:00 - 17:30	*Report back, discussion in plenary*
17:30 - 18:00	**Wrap-up**
19:30 -	**Welcome dinner**

Tuesday 25 September	
09:00 - 09:15	**Recap of previous day**

09:15 - 10:55	**Session 1: Building your association**
	Facilitators: Kathrin Quesada and Aiko Holvikivi, DCAF
	
	   - Introduction
	Brainstorming exercise on internal governance, communication and fundraising
	
	   - Panel discussion
	5 panelists will present good practices related to effective management of female staff associations and engagement of members. The panelists will consider how to promote inclusive and transparent planning and decision-making, how to communicate effectively internally and externally and ways to identify different sources of funding.

10:55 - 11:15	*Coffee/ tea break*
11:15 - 12:00	**Building your association** – *continued* *This session will feature case study exercises in small groups focused on consolidating and applying skills needed to achieve the objectives identified on day 1 from a*

governance perspective. The case studies will focus on internal governance structures, communication strategies and fundraising.

12:00 - 12:20	*Reporting back*
12:20 - 12:30	Group photo
12:30 - 13:30	*Lunch*

Meeting with a select group of international representatives including policy makers and practitioners

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13:30 - 14:45	Facilitator: Jenny Becker, IRC **Reinforcing the role of FSAs: global engagement** *- Introductions, presentation of NSI research findings (including from the NSI publication <u>"African Women on the Thin Blue Line : Gender-Sensitive Police Reform in Liberia and Southern Sudan"</u> (2011), policy recommendations and Q & A* **Jennifer Salahub, Senior Researcher, Fragile & Conflict-Affected States, NSI** *-Presentations of workshop recommendations by 2-3 speakers* *- Facilitated discussion in plenary*
14:45 - 16:00	***Round table rotations & coffee/tea*** *Networking and informal exchanges between a few Brussels-based representatives from the international community and workshop participants with an opportunity for members of female staff associations to display, present and discuss the main goals and activities of their associations.*
16:00 - 16:45	**Closing**
16:45 - 17:00	**Wrap-up and evaluations**
17: 30 -	**Cocktail**

EVALUATION REPORT

This report is based on information gathered from a short evaluation form[1] distributed to all participants in the workshop *"Organising for Change: Female Staff Associations and the Security Sector,"* which took place from 24-25 September 2012 in Brussels, Belgium. During the first 1½ days, the workshop welcomed 26 participants representing female staff associations (FSAs) from the judicial, police and defense sectors and from different regions (Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Africa). The last half day of the workshop consisted of a policy conference open to the public entitled "Reinforcing the role of FSAs – Global engagement." Policy makers and representatives of the international community based in Brussels were invited. Twenty-four participants returned a completed evaluation form, including two persons who attended only the public conference.
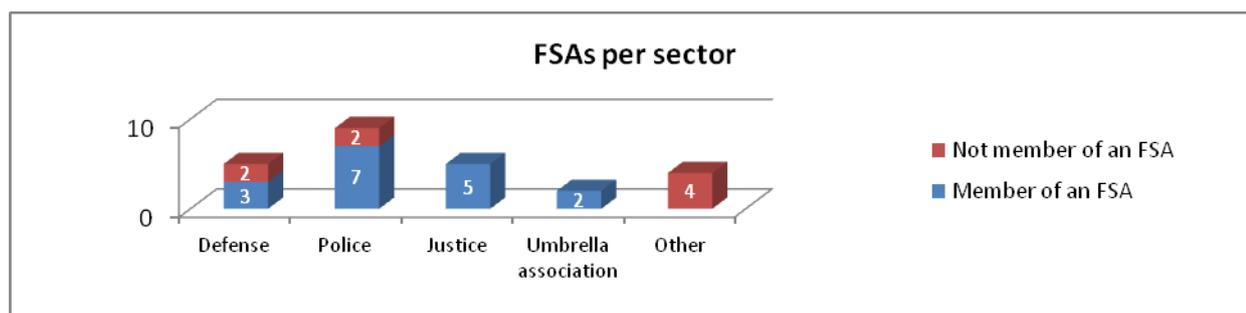
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1
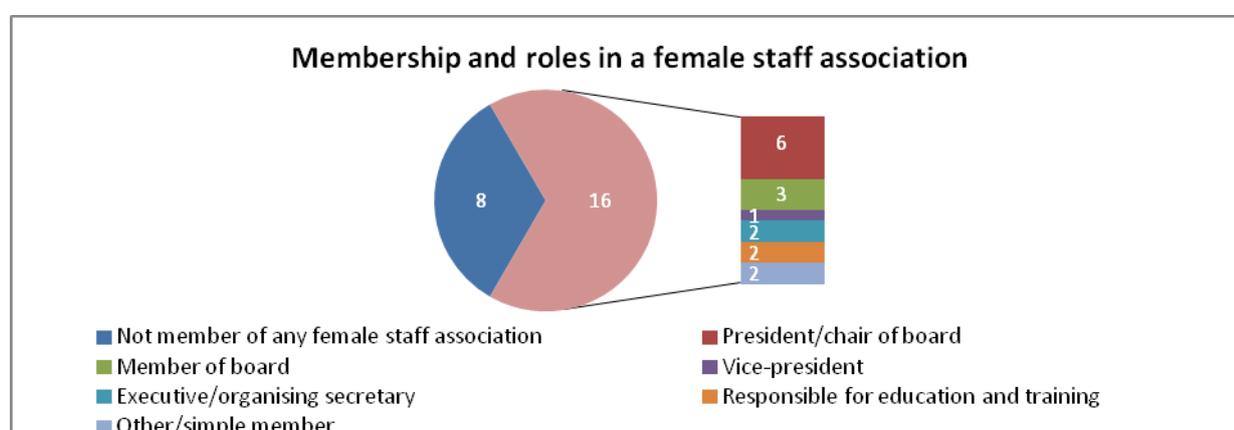
Two thirds of respondents are active members of a FSA (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows their distribution over the sectors. "Other" includes those representing an NGO or diplomatic mission.

Figure 2


GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

In the second part of the evaluation form participants were asked to state their opinion and general impressions about the usefulness and relevance of the workshop to them (Figure 3). Most respondents agree that the workshop significantly **improved their knowledge of gender**. The main reasons for this relates to the exchange of "good practices from other countries" and a "lot of different experiences." An overwhelming majority considers the **workshop relevant to their work**. It should be noted that four of the six participants who did not fully agree that the workshop has **helped them to strengthen their own FSA** are not members of

[1] In addition to simple "yes/no" and open-ended questions, the evaluation form asked participants to rate various aspects of the conference with a range of three smiley faces (happy, neutral, sad) and provide further comments. Graph legends through the report refer to a happy smiley face as "positive answer", a neutral smiley face as "neutral answer" and a sad smiley face as "negative answer." Depending on the context, these should be understood either as "good or very good/normal/bad" or "absolutely/somewhat/not at all" or "fully/partially/insufficiently," etc.

an FSA. The participants considering the workshop useful to their own FSA engagement particularly appreciated the real life examples and sharing of best practices with other FSA representatives. One respondent remarked that "thanks to the sharing of experience information which will help me to relaunch the association." Participants who consider their workshop expectations fulfilled, comment that they had
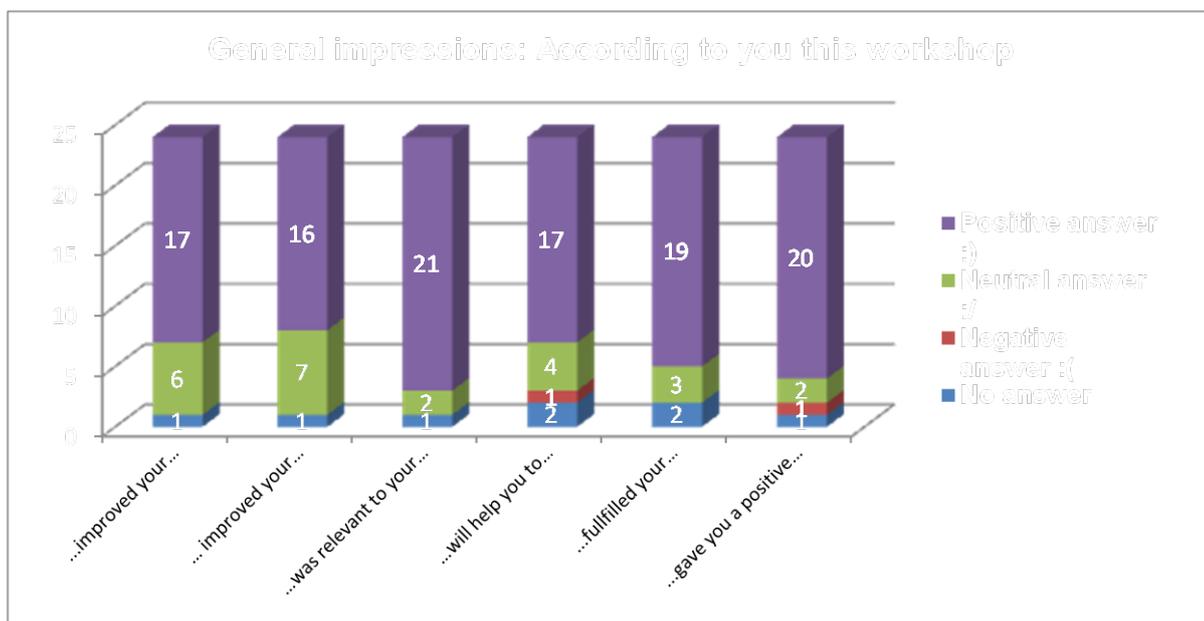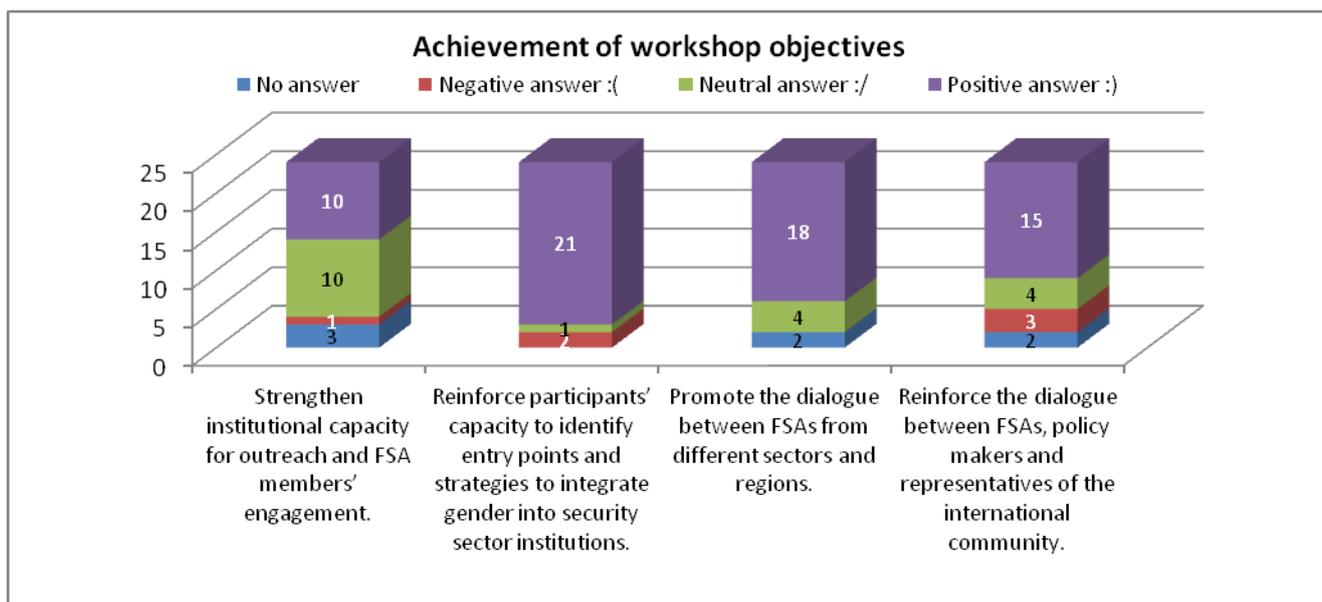

increased knowledge and enjoyed the opportunity for networking and making "so many new friends."

Figure 1

ACHIEVEMENT OF WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

According to the evaluations, all workshop objectives have been at least partly reached (Figure 4). However, the number of participants who consider an objective achieved varies greatly among objectives.

Figure 2

Only ten participants see their **institutional capacity for outreach and FSA member engagement strengthened** after this workshop. An additional ten respondents chose a neutral answer to this question, which might be interpreted as partially satisfying the achievement of this objective. Less than half of the

participants from the defense sector and the police are members of an FSA. It seems that instead of not giving an answer to this question at all, some participants, who are not members of an FSA gave a neutral answer instead of skipping this question. Another explanation for this result might be that several of the police/defense FSA representatives come from fairly robust associations which enjoy high member engagement.

Most participants considered the objective of **reinforcing participants' capacity to identify entry points and strategies to integrate gender into security sector institutions** as achieved, as they developed new ideas through exchange with others who face similar challenges.

Three in four participants who consider the objective of **promoting the dialogue between FSAs from across sectors and across regions** as only partly achieved and one in two who did not answer the question are francophone. Indeed only around one fourth (7 out of 27) of the participants (including bilinguals) speaks French. Language barriers may have limited the francophone participants' possibilities for exchange. However the main reason francophone participants gave for choosing a neutral response is lack of time.

Regarding the objective of **reinforcing the dialogue between FSAs, policy makers and representatives of the international community,** the public policy conference was, on the one hand, very much appreciated by some participants, in particular those representing an FSA. They consider it a great opportunity for "learning, meeting, sharing," gaining "more ideas" and "giving and getting a global outlook on gender." Some participants, on the other hand, rated this session as neutral or negative, noting their uncertainty that "this dialogue will carry fruits," concern that time was limited for exchange and disappointment that there were not enough opportunities for dialogue with policy makers and representatives of the international community. This comment might also allude to the fact that attendance at the policy conference included only an additional ten people, the majority of whom were representatives from military/defense-related international organizations (e.g. NATO) which reduced their relevance for FSA representatives from the police.

MAIN LEARNING OUTCOMES[2]

Many participants write that they learned a lot about the work of and "different forms of FSAs" (5 participants) and the "challenges other organizations face and ways of overcoming them" (11 participants). Several participants were impressed by the fact that "people in other countries experience more or less the same difficulties" and that there were many "commonalities and issues despite where in the world one comes from." More than a quarter of the respondents (7) considered networking as a key outcome. These answers suggest that the main expectations which participants have expressed in the pre-training needs assessment a few weeks prior to the actual workshop – networking, sharing of experiences and good practices and learning more about FSAs and women in the security sector – were largely achieved.

ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL WORKSHOP SESSIONS

All of the sessions received positive feedback, though results were understandably mixed. Participants found the sessions involving the most group work and sharing of experiences ("The Role of FSAs – Sharing Experiences" and "Building Your Association") to be the most helpful. The session on "Integrating Gender into the Security Sector" received only positive feedback. However, the response rate on that question was low. In a pre-training needs assessment, participants rated the topics they felt would be most useful to them. Issues related to women in the security sector, fundraising and strategic planning/project management were ranked highest. Indeed the sessions on "Integrating Gender into the Security Sector," "The Role of FSAs" and "Building Your Association" counted among those receiving the most positive feedback. Where participants were neutral or disappointed by the sessions, this was largely due to a lack of time. This was most true for the session on "Building Your Association," which more than a third of respondents (9) considered the most useful of all sessions as it offered ideas and solutions for challenges faced by FSAs in all sectors. Respondents from police FSAs are particularly likely to rate this session as the best. For participants who are not security sector workers, the session on "The Role of Female Staff Associations: Sharing Experiences" was especially helpful as their aim in participating in the workshop was mainly to understand better what FSAs are and what role they can or could play within SSR.

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[2] Most important things learnt: common challenges FSAs face and how to overcome them (11); new fund-raising ideas (7); importance of networking (7); about gender and SSR (5); about the variety of FSAs and their work (5); building and strengthening FSAs (4); the importance of FSAs in SSR (4); new project and activity ideas (4); project management skills (4).

The policy conference open to the public was also very much appreciated by some participants, especially the ones representing an FSA. Overall, however, this session and the first session were identified as less helpful to participants than other sessions.

NEXT STEPS

A majority of participants (17) indicated a desire to follow-up on what they have learned during the workshop. Below are ideas for follow-up activities that participants shared in the evaluation.

	Report	Follow-up activities	New projects
Defense	• Debrief to superior and FSA		
Police	• Report to national and regional and international FSA boards of directors	• Organize training on gender based violence for FSA members • Link relevant board members to specific FSAs in their region • Circulate the FSA constitution and create a plan of action for the next nine months. • Build on new contacts to affiliate national FSAs to international network of FSAs. • Identify most suitable entry points to convince authorities to integrate gender into the security sector and to support FSAs • Write an action plan	• Establish national FSA of police women • Projects to make FSA visible and credible in society
Justice	• Debrief to FSA members	• Implement received recommendations to motivate FSA members to take new engagements in the association, improve governance and internal communication • Develop new training modules • Plan future activities based on workshop results • Make use of new contacts with counterpart FSAs (e.g. invite them to international event)	
Other sectors (national security, civil society organizatons, diplomatic missions, etc.)	• Feedback to interested colleagues	• Review existing proposals on gender and SSR projects to include mention of FSA development as sub-objective	• Fundraising • Establish a concrete network with other FSAs • Create a network for the three anglophone West Africa countries present and then later expand to include francophone countries

LOGISTICS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Overall feedback on the logistical aspects of the workshop is positive. The simultaneous translation received exceptionally positive feedback. Some comments suggesting improvement in the future related to airport transfers (especially for those not speaking the local language), more time for presentations and Q & A and a "sharing bazaar" where all are encouraged to talk to each other about good practices.

All the other additional comments made were to thank DCAF and NSI for the organization of the workshop and express the wish to "follow-up soon!"

Exercise outcomes: gender and the police sector

Challenge: Not enough women in the police

Goal: Full gender parity at all levels, beginning with recruitment

Steps to help reach goal:

1. Enactment of a law requiring 50% quota and measures of affirmative action (positive discrimination)
    a. Advocate for a legislative change and draft the proposed legislation
2. Lack of resources, funding, and knowledge
    a. Establish alliances with civil society organisations to provide support, training, and knowledge

The low numbers of women in the police are detrimental to the legitimacy and quality of the service. A police service with gender parity at all levels would be more representative and better respond to the security needs of the whole population. The Female Staff Association will help draft legislation requiring a 50% quota in recruitment and promotion policies, and will advocate for its passage. The Association will overcome its lack of financial resources and specialized legal knowledge by partnering with civil society organisations with such expertise.

Challenge: Lack of qualified female officers in certain areas of police work

Goal: Professional development of female officers

Steps to help reach goal:

1. To enhance the professional skills and capacity of female officers and provide a working environment with opportunities
    a. Provide female officers with training on professional police skills, computer literacy, etc., and advocate for an enabling environment
2. Stereotypes in the police culture; lack of access to senior management and policymakers
    a. Remove internal resistance through personal networking and advocacy.

Certain areas of police work lack sufficient numbers of qualified female officers, in detriment both to the officers and the police service. The Female Staff Association will work towards the professional development of female officers with the aim of enhancing their skills and capacities and therefore expanding their professional career choices. The association will provide its members with training on basic police skills and other hard skills, such as computer literacy. This initiative may face gender stereotypes deeply ingrained in the police culture, which the association plans to address through internal advocacy and personal discussions with senior leadership to show the benefits of such activities to the service as a whole.

Challenge: Female staff associations not seen as legitimate or "serious"

Goal: Obtain recognition of female staff associations as credible, legitimate professional associations

Steps to help reach goal:

1. Obtain official recognition from police management and establish credibility
   a. Demonstrate value of associations by providing relevant training to members; charging membership dues; and producing recommendations and providing assistance on an issue of interest to management (such as training on reporting sexual harassment, etc.)
2. Counter the perception of female staff associations possibly being considered as threat to the established order, bordering on insubordination
   a. Act with transparency and candor, holding meetings with senior management to overcome any suspicions

In spite of their inherent value, security sector female staff associations are too often dismissed as "social clubs" or otherwise not legitimate or serious. The Female Staff Association considers it therefore necessary to establish its credibility with police senior management and obtain official recognition. The Association will demonstrate its value by providing relevant training to its members; charging membership dues to show its members' commitment; and producing recommendations and providing assistance on an issue of interest to management, such as training on preventing and reporting sexual harassment. The Association will conduct its work with full transparency, inviting police management to meetings and workgroups to defuse any misunderstanding about its goals and activities.

Exercise outcomes: gender and the justice sector

Challenges: **(1) Gaps in the development, interpretation and enforcement of legislation among actors in the security sector.**
(2) Gaps in knowledge of the law among the civilian population.

Steps to help address these challenges:

1. Organise awareness raising and training sessions for different actors in the security sector, e.g. judges, lawyers, youth protection officers, medical staff, members of parliament, and the general public.

2. Distribute information (in hard and electronic copies) about access to justice to (i) actors in the security sector, and (ii) victims.

3. Establish a counselling centre (for support and legal aid) and a legal assistance fund.

The development, the interpretation and the enforcement of legislation can lead to injustice and a lack of access to justice for the population when different actors in the security sector – such as judges, lawyers, medical staff, and police officers – and the population have insufficient knowledge of the law. The female staff association can improve access to justice by strengthening knowledge of law through sensitisation and information sessions. It could also establish a counselling and legal aid centre.

To address challenges related to the lack of funding available for the association and the population, the association could submit project proposals to its partners, including international organisations. To overcome sociocultural obstacles hampering access to justice, e.g. victims who hesitate to report gender-based violence, it could raise awareness of gender issues while providing advice and support to the victims. Throughout these initiatives, the association could draw on existing expertise within its network of external partners, such as *Circle of Friends*, which is active both in Mali and in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Exercise outcomes: gender and the defence sector

Challenge: Underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions

Steps to help address this challenge:

1. Increase number of women at decision-making level, by promoting career of competent women.
2. Promote gender equality, equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and institutionalize quality training on gender in security sector.
3. Lobbying, advocacy and campaigning to draw media attention to the issue. Present role models and share success stories.
4. Change behaviour and challenge established stereotypes.
5. Continuous advocacy and look for support by national and international partners, with whom to share good practices.
6. Capacity building and increased media attention for gender awareness.

Women are underrepresented in the defense sector in general, but especially at decision-making levels. In order to bring about change, transformation of institutional culture is needed, which FSAs can support through continuous advocacy activities. These can be strengthened by building national and international partnerships and through support from the media.

ANNEX 6

Tools and reference materials

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