



# TEACHING GENDER IN THE MILITARY

## A Handbook

Editorial Board, "Introduction"  
in PfPC SSRWG and EDWG, *Handbook on Teaching Gender in the Military*  
(Geneva: DCAF and PfPC, 2016).



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# Introduction

## Editorial Board

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“ *If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.*<sup>1</sup>

Sun Tzu

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## Why teach gender to the military?

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Gender is an important, but sometimes invisible, part of most of social life. It is also present in and affects many aspects of military institutions and operations. Many recent developments have demonstrated an increased urgency, need and willingness to integrate a gender perspective into the armed forces. Modern military missions require the capability to gather and disseminate information from and through the local population, a task which requires the capacity to interact with both men and women in culturally diverse contexts.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, as new skills and knowledge are needed to be able to respond to new security threats, the armed forces need to tap into the potential of the widest population. Accurate casualty estimates in planning kinetic operations require application of a gender perspective.<sup>3</sup> And military forces are often called upon to respond to conflict-related sexual violence and deal with male and female survivors of such violence in the theatre of operations.<sup>4</sup> Military institutions have had their own challenges, which include strong gender dimensions. There have been high-profile national and global debates in recent years focused on preventing misconduct – such as sexual exploitation and abuse in missions or sexual harassment within the ranks – as well as on the integration of women in the services.<sup>5</sup> All share a concern with defining the professional identity, obligations and capability requirements of servicemen and servicewomen.

It is clear from this that military forces need to take gender perspectives into account, both to ensure that they are able to fulfil their mission and to respect the rights and dignity of men and women, whether they are civilians or uniformed personnel. As Lena Kvarving and Rachel Grimes in Chapter 1 of this handbook so poignantly put it, “It’s about doing things right and doing the right thing.” In recognition of this necessity, various legal and policy documents have been drafted which mandate the inclusion of gender perspectives in the military, ranging from the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security to the NATO policy for implementing these resolutions. Thus integration of gender perspectives is not only an operational necessity, and crucial to the fulfilment of human rights; it is also a legal obligation.

Education is a key method for integrating gender perspectives into military operations and institutions. Whether the challenge is interaction with (and responding to security needs of) women and men in the local population or addressing discrimination or sexual harassment within the ranks, military education and training should foster the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable personnel to overcome these challenges. Accordingly, both the UN Security Council resolutions and the NATO policy and action plan mandate the inclusion of gender in education and training.

#### *Training*

Undertaken in the hopes of gaining specific skills.

#### *Education*

Undertaken in the hopes of furthering individual knowledge and developing the intellect. A lifelong process.<sup>6</sup>

### Three principles of mainstreaming and implementing UNSCR 1325<sup>7</sup> within the armed forces

#### 1) Equal rights.

The equal rights principle – the right to influence and participate in society, and to have access to power and influence – is seen as the basis for democracy and the legitimacy of the state. In the planning, execution and evaluation of military operations this principle involves guaranteeing human rights for women and men, boys and girls.

#### 2) Recruitment and retention.

Recruitment and retention aim at building the capability of the armed forces to create legitimacy, to broaden the basis for recruitment and to construct a position as a desirable employer. To create conditions where men and women can work and develop within all areas and at all levels of the armed forces will create accountability – nationally and internationally – and strengthen the armed forces internally and externally.

#### 3) Operational capability.

The operational capability of the armed forces is strengthened if the best individuals from a broad basis of recruitment are selected. Capability in this sense refers to an individual human being's capacity to perform based on the knowledge and experience that the individual has. Capacity of human beings can be influenced and shaped, supported by processes, methods, directives and approaches. A solid basic capacity and personnel who feel capable can increase the effectiveness of military operations. Situational awareness improves if personnel have a deeper understanding of the needs and preconditions of different groups. The ability to facilitate improved conditions for both men and women strengthens security for the different groups. This in turn will generate support for the mandate of the armed forces.<sup>8</sup>

## Purpose and audience: What and who this handbook is for

Noting that teaching gender in the military is an operational necessity and a legal obligation, and responds to a humanitarian need, the purpose of this handbook is to provide educators and instructors with knowledge and resources to aid them in these efforts. The handbook addresses two related questions: *what* do we need to teach about gender in the military, and *how* should we teach it?

In addressing these questions, the hope is that the handbook will speak to a wide range of people involved in education and training. The “what to teach” part may be of interest to educators and instructors who wish either to integrate gender in the content of the courses they deliver or to design a specific module or course dedicated to the topic. The question of “what to teach” will likely also be of interest to gender experts who do not come from a military background, and wish to build their expertise of gender in the military. The “how to teach” part likewise offers something for both gender experts and educators. On the one hand, this part of the

handbook gives an introduction to the principles of adult education and active learning methods, which will provide resources and guidance to those relatively new to delivering educational content. On the other hand, the section may provide seasoned educators with some fresh ideas on how to ensure that their instruction is gender-responsive, regardless of the topic at hand, and how to incorporate transformative gender learning in their instruction.

In brief, this handbook seeks to provide gender experts and military instructors and educators with resources and guidance on what to teach and how to teach when it comes to gender in the military. This is an ambitious topic, and one that a single handbook cannot claim to cover exhaustively. Moreover, the editors and authors recognize the excellent literature and practical resources that already exist on these topics. As such, the aim of the handbook is to fill in knowledge and resource gaps, and to serve as a complement to existing resources. To mention a few areas deliberately omitted, the reader will note that the handbook does not contain ready-made lesson plans or presentations – these resources have been provided by NATO Allied Command Transformation with the NATO department head and the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations.<sup>9</sup> This handbook aims to equip instructors and educators with the background knowledge regarding gender and skills for delivering this content. In a similar vein, the handbook does not offer a military curriculum that integrates gender: gender has been included in the recently published Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfPC)/NATO reference curricula for the professional military education of officers and non-commissioned officers.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the chapters of this handbook provide guidance to faculty members on how they might integrate gender in their own curricula, and expands upon how to design gender lessons and what types of learning methods and classroom activities might come in useful. To ensure complementarity and help direct the reader to further resources, each chapter includes an annotated bibliography that describes the key resources related to the topic at hand.

In addressing a diverse audience of gender experts, instructors and faculty members, this handbook focuses on the experience and normative frameworks of NATO Member Nations and partners. Nonetheless, as the aim of the handbook is to provide resources and suggestions, rather than being prescriptive, the hope is that it may also be useful for the wider global community.

## Methodology: How this handbook was compiled

This handbook draws from the work of two PfPC working groups: the groups on Security Sector Reform and Education Development. Between 2012 and 2014 the two working groups jointly organized a series of four workshops under the title “Teaching Gender to the Military”.<sup>11</sup> These workshops involved 66 gender and education experts from 23 countries of the NATO Member Nations and partners.

The workshops covered the topics included in this handbook – ranging from learning methods to lesson planning, integrating gender in the curriculum, and assessment and evaluation. The series established a need to document the knowledge outcomes of the workshops, and to provide a resource for a broader audience.

In autumn 2014 the working group chairs established an editorial board for the handbook, which sought volunteers from among the workshop participants to write chapters corresponding to their areas of expertise. The authors were chosen for the diverse and complementary expertise and points of view they bring to the publication. They include academics, faculty in professional military education, military gender experts, civilian staff from ministries of defence and security, and civil society experts.

The authors and editorial board held an initial working meeting in Stockholm in December 2014 to agree on the handbook’s contents, and to draft and exchange chapter outlines. During spring 2015 the editorial board circulated draft chapters to expert reviewers, who provided written feedback on the drafts. This peer review process culminated in a review workshop held in Vienna in June 2015, which enabled the reviewers and authors to exchange views and gather more input. The authors submitted final drafts of their chapters by August 2015.

This final product has been content edited by the editorial board and edited for language. It attempts to provide a coherent approach while respecting the diverse experiences and views of its contributing authors. The authors and editors hope that it will be widely used and serve as a useful resource. Our wish is that it will support the delivery of quality education on gender, ultimately contributing to furthering gender equality both within the armed forces and through their operations.

## Introduction to the content

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This handbook is divided into two parts, following its dual goals of establishing what to teach and how to teach when it comes to gender in the military.

Part I focuses on content, asking what military audiences need to know about gender. In its opening chapter, Lena Kvarving and Rachel Grimes address the overarching question of why gender is a relevant consideration in the activities of armed forces. They demonstrate how introducing a gender perspective is crucial to understanding modern conflict and its human cost, as well as how taking gender into account contributes to operational capacity. In Chapter 2, Sally Longworth, Nevena Miteva and Ankica Tomić unpack the legal basis and normative obligations for teaching gender in the military. They provide an overview of the different international instruments that mandate gender education and training for military audiences, arguing that not only is the integration of a gender perspective beneficial, it is also a requirement. Martina Lindberg and Yvette Foliant delve into more detail in Chapter 3, discussing what gender knowledge, attitude and skills are most relevant to military audiences at different levels and in different contexts. Their overview of what should be taught regarding gender also provides an introduction to existing gender training initiatives currently under way in the context of NATO Member Nations and partners. In the final chapter of this part, Aiko Holvikivi and Kristin Valasek examine how gender can be integrated in military curricula. Chapter 4 explores ways of integrating a gender perspective into curricula that are not exclusively dedicated to gender. Its holistic understanding of the curriculum – including not only content but also faculty, assessment and evaluation – serves as a bridge for thinking about how to teach as well as what to teach.

Part II of the handbook is dedicated to the question of how to teach. It aims to provide gender experts with more information on how to deliver educational content, as well as to provide seasoned educators with some considerations that may be useful in ensuring that their instruction is delivered in a gender-sensitive manner. In Chapter 5, Iryna Lysyckina, Andreas Hildenbrand and Kathaleen Reid-Martinez introduce basic principles of adult learning and the concept of transformative learning. They present the principles underpinning effective education, as well as discussing why learning about gender should be transformative and how this can be achieved. Callum Watson then examines gender dynamics in the classroom in Chapter 6. He draws attention to a multitude of practical considerations that can help educators ensure that the instruction they provide is both effective and gender-responsive. In Chapter 7, Iryna Lysyckina, Virpi Levomaa and Andreas Hildenbrand outline how to plan lessons (including gender content). They also provide examples of classroom-based activities that realize the goals of good adult education through active and transformative learning. Chapter 8 turns to consider how we measure whether the required learning has taken place through assessment and evaluation. In this chapter, Elizabeth Lape presents the evaluation process and its different levels, considering how we can ensure that learning outcomes have been met and that the process is gender-responsive and non-discriminatory. The last two chapters are dedicated to teaching gender outside the classroom setting. In Chapter 9, Tanja Geiss and Gigi Roman ask how technology can be leveraged to support education and training on gender. They examine currently available e-learning applications, and discuss the advantages and limitations of online learning for teaching gender. Chapter 10 focuses on coaching and mentoring as distinct but complementary methods for advancing gender equality and competence across educational institutions. Nathaly Levesque and Maka Petriashvili explore ways in which mentoring can enhance gender equality and gender mainstreaming in military organizations, and how coaching can support leaders in ensuring that gender perspectives are addressed in their institutions.

## Final remarks

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The aim of this handbook is not just to support those tasked with teaching gender in the military, but also to foster the development of a network of experts. While the terminology and examples have been tailored to NATO Member Nations and partners as the primary audience, significant sections will also be relevant to a wider audience. With this in mind, we encourage the use, reproduction and translation of this handbook, given appropriate credit. We also welcome feedback at [gender@dcaf.ch](mailto:gender@dcaf.ch).

## Notes

1. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War: The Oldest Military Treatise in the World*, trans. Lionel Giles (Leicester: Allandale Online Publishing, 2000), p. 11.
2. Eva-Lena Lindbäck, "Women can provide valuable information", in Åsa Nyqvist (ed.), *Good and Bad Examples: Lessons Learned from Working with United Nations Resolution 1325 in International Missions* (Stockholm: Project Genderforce, 2007), pp. 20–21.
3. Jody M. Prescott, "NATO gender mainstreaming", *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 158, No. 5 (2013), pp. 56–62.
4. Patrick Cammaert, "Protecting civilians from conflict-related sexual violence", in National Defense University (ed.), *Women on the Frontlines of Peace and Security* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2015).
5. Cheryl Hendricks and Lauren Hutton, "Defence reform and gender", in Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds), *Gender and SSR Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN-INSTRAW, 2008), pp. 13–17.
6. Major Nathaly Levesque, Aikio Holvikivi and Commander Andreas Hildebrand, "Second workshop on teaching gender to the military – Designing sample gender lessons", George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 12–14 December 2012.
7. UN Security Council, "Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security", UN Doc. No. S/RES/1325 (2000), 31 October 2000.
8. Captain Anna Björsson, "Gender coach presentation", given at joint meeting of Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council, Vienna, 7 October 2015.
9. NATO HQ SACT, "Gender education and training package for nations", Norfolk, VA, 2015, available at [www.act.nato.int/gender-training](http://www.act.nato.int/gender-training).
10. Canadian Defence Academy, *Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen: NATO PfPC, 2011); Canadian Defence Academy and Swiss Armed Forces College, *Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen: NATO PfPC, 2013).
11. "After action" reports of these workshops are available at [www.dcaf.ch](http://www.dcaf.ch).