



**Counter-Terrorism
Centre of Excellence**

EAPCCO CTCoE Study 1/2023

**The Role of Women in Law Enforcement
and Criminal Justice in Preventing and Countering
Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Eastern Africa**

Abstract

This study focuses on the roles of women in law enforcement in Eastern Africa, specifically within the EAPCCO member countries. It aims to understand women's motivations for joining the police, the challenges they face, and identify ways to promote their participation and career advancement. The study reveals that women, like men, are driven by a desire to make a difference and help others when joining the police. However, women encounter systemic barriers and discrimination, hindering their access to training and promotion opportunities. Gender-based obstacles within the police and the community further affect their experiences. The study proposes targeted recruitment, tailored training, and a supportive organizational culture to address these challenges. Providing career guidance and mentorship for female officers is also recommended. Recognizing and valuing the unique contributions of women is crucial, leading to better community trust and effectiveness in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Policymakers, law enforcement, and the EAPCCO Gender Sub-Committee need to collaborate in driving this transformation for a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in law enforcement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	2
1.2 The problem.....	2
1.3 Objective and methodology.....	3
2. Background of respondents	4
3. Reasons for joining law enforcement.....	9
4. Career advancement and support.....	11
5. Perception and policy	18
6. Recommendations	21
Conclusion	24



01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

With the financial support from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, since 2020 the United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been implementing a project on supporting the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) and its regional Counter-Terrorism Centre of Excellence (CTCoE). The project benefits fourteen EAPCCO members¹ in enhancing national and regional capacities to effectively prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, and transnational organized crime.



One of the objectives of the project is to produce evidence-based research relevant for the law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners in Eastern Africa. The CTCoE produced this study, a new installment in the series of publications addressing various terrorism- and transnational organized crime-related challenges faced by Eastern Africa,² with the support from UNODC as part of this objective.

1.2 The problem

While Eastern Africa contends with an acute and serious terrorism threat, there is a growing need to address the specific roles of women in terrorism – as perpetrators, victims, and members of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions countering the threat.

On the regional level, Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO)



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism notes that women and girls bear heavy and unseen burdens resulting from both the direct and indirect impacts of counter-terrorism law and practice, while the implementation of counterterrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism law, policy and practice is equally gendered.

At the same time, - while some progress is demonstrated in ensuring greater access for women to security sector careers through gender parity strategies, senior and decision-making roles in those arenas remain overwhelmingly closed and inaccessible to women.³

member countries acknowledge the need to prioritize gender mainstreaming towards more inclusive and balanced police across the region. While recognizing the efforts to bridge the existing gender gap, EAPCCO Organs further stressed the continuing importance of mainstreaming gender perspective into the regional efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime. Similarly, EAPCCO member countries aim to strengthen their commitment to enhance parity in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions, including at command-and-control positions.⁴

A growing corpus of research demonstrates benefits of a broader participation of women in law enforcement, and of developing targeted, gender-sensitive interventions addressing the multitude of roles women play in terrorism and violent extremism. Gender mainstreaming significantly strengthens the respect for human rights and effectiveness of the efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.⁵

¹ The EAPCCO members are Burundi, Comoros, the DRC, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

² Please consult the section of the EAPCCO CTCoE website to explore the full range of the EAPCCO CTCoE research publications: <https://eapcco-ctcoe.org/ct-issue-papers/>

³ UNGA/ Human Rights Council (2021) A/HRC/46/36: Human rights impact of counter-terrorism and countering (violent) extremism policies and practices on the rights of women, girls and the family. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3901287/files/A_HRC_46_36-EN.pdf?ln=en

⁴ Resolution 2022/EAPCCO/ORG/GSM24 (2022) 24th EAPCCO Gender Sub-Committee, 29 March 2022

⁵ UNODC-UN Women-INTERPOL (2020) Women in Law Enforcement in the ASEAN region, https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2020/women_in_law_enforcement_in_the_asean_region_full.pdf

Operations may be more successful and effective when more women participate. Crucially, female officers increase community trust, address the needs of women and girls in their communities, respond better to gender-based crimes, and decrease corruption.

Earlier studies, including those of Remington (1983)⁶, followed by Eagley and Steffen (1986)⁷ the 2001 Report of the National Center for Women and Policing⁸, Hoffman and Hickey (2005)⁹, were more concerned with the value female police officers bring to finding a less violent resolution to conflict. These studies examined whether female officers respond differently to volatile situations than their male counterparts. Their overall assessment was that compared with their male counterparts, female officers were more likely to use communication to resolve a dispute.

According to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED), women diversify the perspectives and can engage a broader range of otherwise unreachable stakeholders, while increasing the effectiveness of early warning and identification of threats.¹⁰

However, women in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions in Eastern Africa continue to face systemic barriers and challenges, limiting the potential positive impacts of their broader participation.

1.3 Objective and methodology

This study intends to provide initial insights into the perception and experiences and the differences and similarities between men and women serving in the police in EAPCCO member countries.

The specific objectives include:

- Understanding why women join law enforcement.
- Analysing challenges faced by women in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions in Eastern Africa.
- Identifying good practices for promoting women's participation and advancement in these institutions.

To achieve these objectives, a questionnaire comprising of 111 questions and opened for thirty days in June 2023 was completed by 48 men and 45 women from 11 countries in Eastern Africa. Responses were recorded to explore the role and challenges women undertake and face in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. The study was open to both women and men to gather insights into the perspectives of men in law enforcement in engaging with female colleagues and in supporting an equal and participatory environment, while also serving as a control sample to female respondents.

The study also draws on the feedback and recommendations developed by the participants of the Regional Symposium on the Role of Women in Promoting a Whole-of-Society Approach to Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, as well as other regional and national capacity-building events organized by UNODC under the Supporting EAPCCO Project.

In an attempt to offer recommendation for strengthening the role of and promoting women to decision-making and senior positions within law enforcement and criminal justice institutions, this study presents some of the preliminary findings.

6 Remington, P. W. (1983). Women in the police: Integration or separation? *Qualitative Sociology*, 6(2), 118-135.

7 Eagley, A. H. and Steffen, V. J. (1986). Gender and Aggressive Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Social Psychological Literature. *Psychological Bulletin* 100, 309–30.

8 Lonsway, D., Carrington, S., Aguirre, P., Wood, M., Margaret, M., Harrington, C. P., Smeal, E. and Spillar, K. (2002). Equality denied. *National Center for Women and Policing*, 4, 1-11.

9 Hoffman, P. B., & Hickey, E. R. (2005). Use of force by female police officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33(2), 145-151.

10 UNCTED (2021) Integrating Gender into Counter-Terrorism, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org/securitycouncil.ctc/files/ctc_cted_factsheet_gender_oct_2021.pdf



02

**BACKGROUND OF
RESPONDENTS**

Individuals from 11 EAPCCO member countries, completed the questionnaire, with the majority (45) of respondents originating from Kenya (48%) followed by 11 each from Ethiopia and Uganda.

Of the 93 respondents, 48 were men and 45 women, with the male sample being slightly older with 54% being older than 40-years of age, while 64% of female respondents were younger than 40.



Representing an older sample, 58% of male respondents offered more than 16-years of service, with 44% being commissioned officers (above the rank of Lieutenant) and 56% non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

In comparison, 38% of women were commissioned officers with 24% having between 11 and 15 years of experience. Most (27%) of the women who participated in the study had between six and ten years of service, resulting in 76% of the female sample being NCOs. While years of service have an impact on promotion, police officers in most police agencies have to apply for promotions and not all may want to become the commanding officer.



Surveyed women are on average younger and hold more junior positions.

In addition to years of experience, education will equally contribute to an individual's career advancement. Recalling the age discrepancy between the two samples, 23% of female respondents only possessed a school certificate against 6% amongst the male sample.

Figure 1: Countries represented in the study
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement of acceptance.

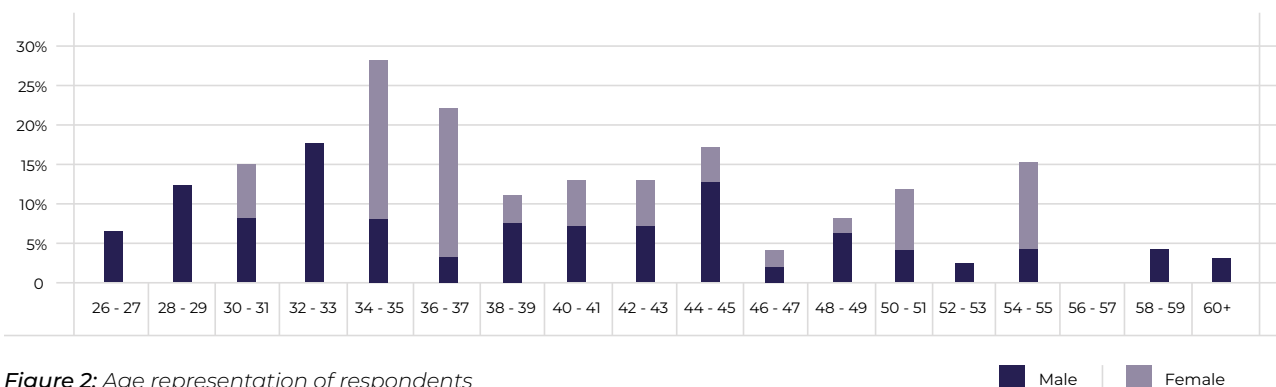


Figure 2: Age representation of respondents

Male | Female

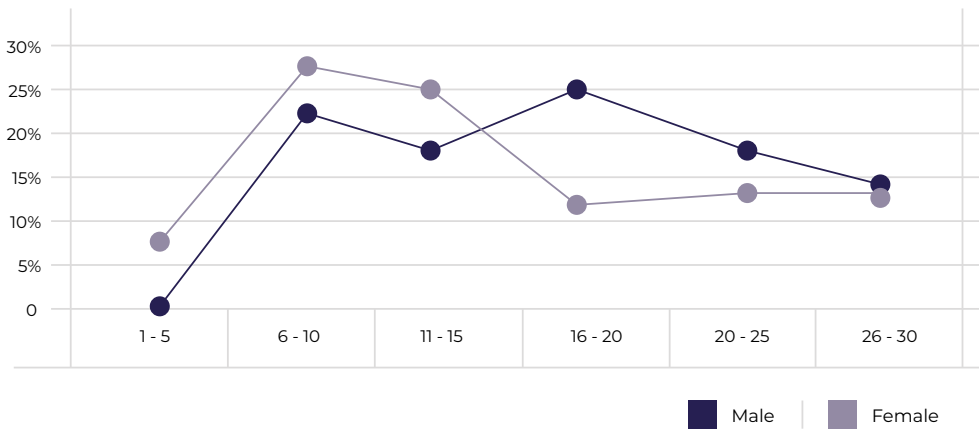


Figure 3: Years of service of respondents

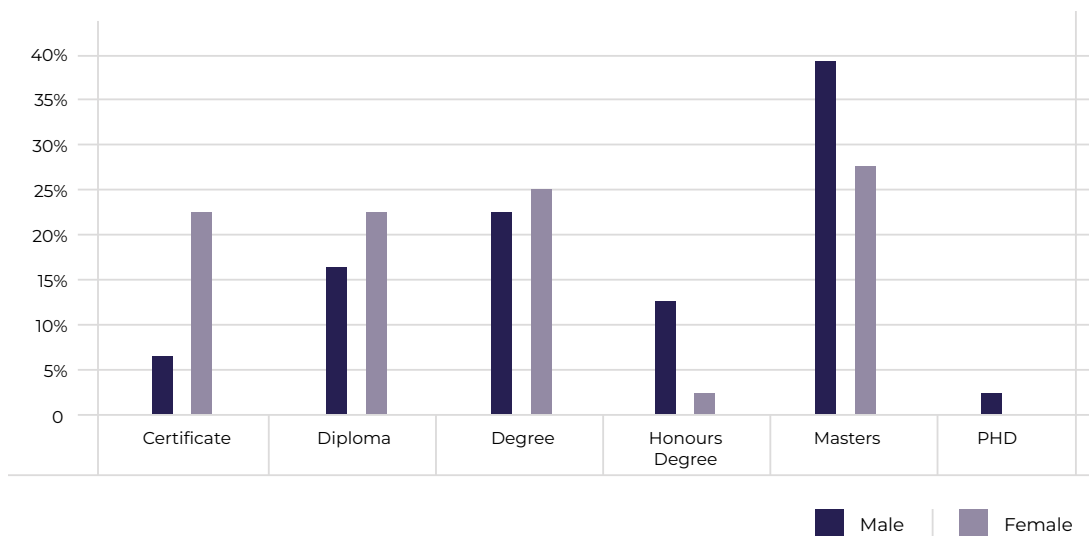


Figure 4: Highest level of education

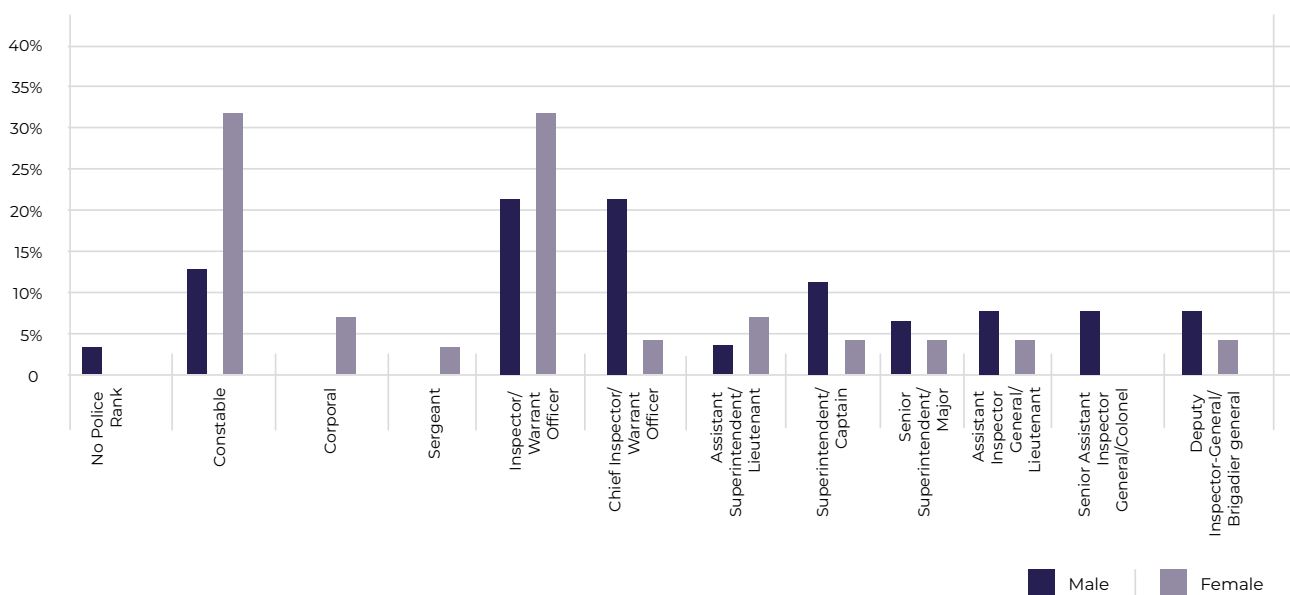


Figure 5: Position (rank) in the police

Asking respondents to rate their own personal qualities, self-confidence was on average notably higher in the male sample. A closer analysis of individual responses revealed that more women (75%) rated their ability to be compassionate at the maximum (5/5) against 62% of male respondents. The same number (32) of male and female respondents placed their levels of determination at the same maximum level. These results are challenging a common perception amongst male officers that women are not as driven as men.

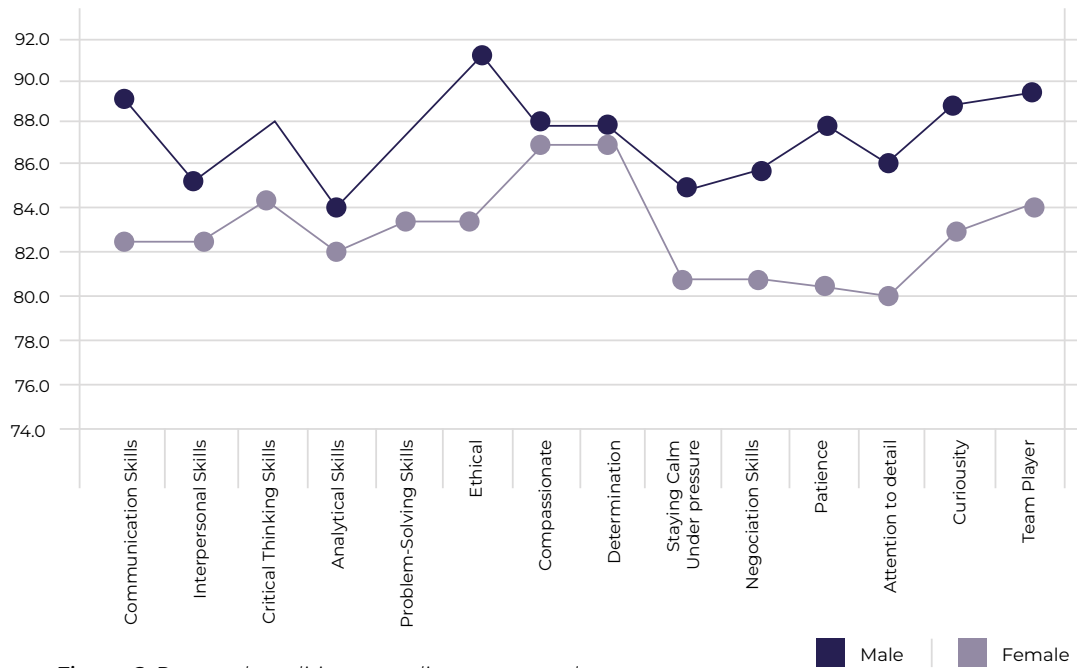


Figure 6: Personal qualities according to respondents



03

**REASONS FOR
JOINING LAW
ENFORCEMENT**

For the purposes of the study, it was important to determine if women feel that they are not given the same opportunities than their male counterparts before and after joining the police and what motivated both samples to join law enforcement.



Most female respondents (53.49%) and 30.23% of male respondents were of the opinion that they were not given the same opportunities as others before joining the police.

Rating the prominence of potential reasons behind perceived discrimination, 44% of female respondents who experienced a sense of discrimination referred to gender, followed by ethnic/tribal affiliation (40%). Male respondents made reference to ethnic/tribal (38%), followed by religious (35%) affiliation as factors

contributing to a perception of being discriminated against.



Gender and ethnic affiliation appear to be the predominant perceived factor of discrimination among surveyed women, while ethnic and religious affiliation dominate male responses.

For women, while ethnic/tribal affiliation was the second most prominent factor contributing to a perceived sense of inequality, religious affiliation was the least prominent with 26%. Respondents were also given an opportunity to identify personal challenges they have experienced when joining the police to which those who elected to answer referred to corrupt practices, nepotism, tribalism, and favouritism and a lack in transparency during the recruitment process. Despite these challenges, 75% of female against 66% of male respondents ranked the recruitment process as 'easy'.

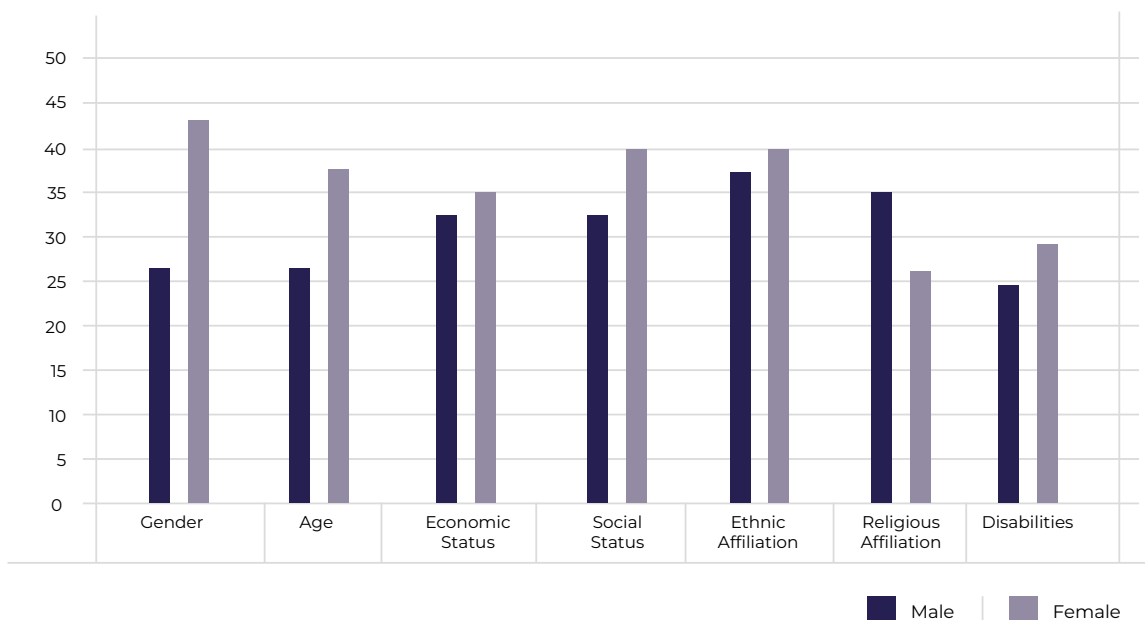


Figure 7: Basis for perception of discrimination

Regarding the primary motivating factors for joining the police, on average, more than 70% of respondents representing both samples indicated that they 'always wanted to become a police officer' with a few differences.

Most (87%) male respondents identified with 'wanted to help people in crisis' while 'wanted to make a difference' resonated most (83%) amongst women. The largest difference (14%) between the two samples was recorded on 'being part of something bigger than myself' with 70% of the female sample agreeing with this view, compared to 55% of their male counterparts.



Women are motivated by a desire to make a difference and being part of something bigger.

Another noticeable difference between the two samples was documented on the need to 'correct injustice' with 72% of male and 61% of female respondents (difference of 12%) recalling this factor in playing a role in their decision to join the police. Both samples were equally driven by the need to first 'serve and protect my country' and secondly, 'serve and protect my community' speaking to a higher national identity.

Despite these positive motivating factors some respondents referred to the perception within the community that those joining the police did so because poor grades left them with no other option as a 'last resort'. While slightly more women (34%) than men (29%) made reference to the 'only employment opportunity available' as a factor contributing to their decision to join the police, **higher levels of interest towards law enforcement as a career choice is an important building block towards higher professionalism.**

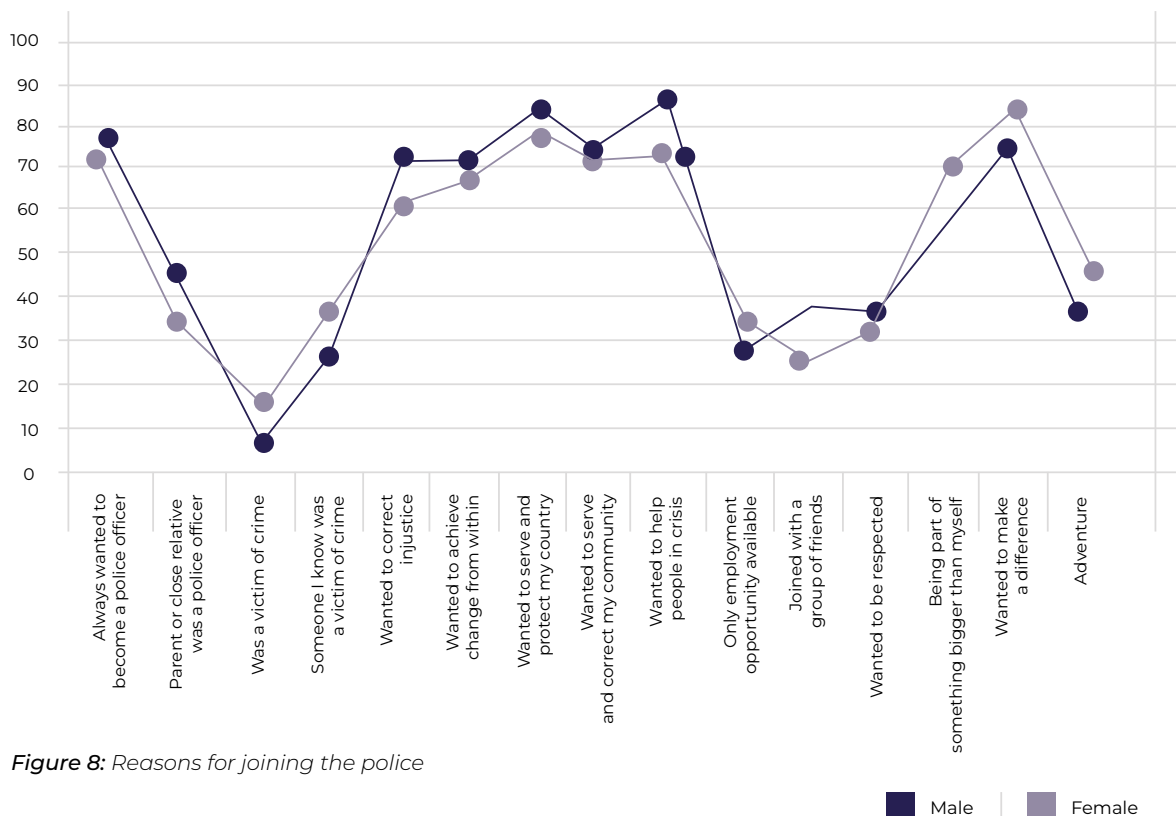


Figure 8: Reasons for joining the police

Adventure may not be the primary motivating factor driving recruitment, but individuals who act outside the norm by following a career path that presents elements of danger and pushing themselves, will recognise elements of adventurism in their personality.



04

**CAREER
ADVANCEMENT &
SUPPORT**

A large majority of women (64.29%) and 36.36% of men were of the opinion that they were not given the same opportunities as other colleagues since they joined the police. On average, the largest discrepancy (13.5%) between the two samples on their experiences since joining the police was on receiving the same training opportunities with 25.6% of female respondents being of the opinion that they did not receive the same access to training.

Focussing on the net promotor score (NPS), 48% of women versus 79% of male respondents were convinced that they have received the same training opportunities (difference of 31%). Access to education amongst the female sample increased to 64% (from 48%) against 73% under the male sample (difference of 9%). **The perception of slightly higher support amongst community members according to female respondents are positive indicators towards building and increasing trust between the police and the community.**



Women do not feel they were given the same opportunities as others since joining the police, in particular attributing that to the disbalance in receiving the same access to training.

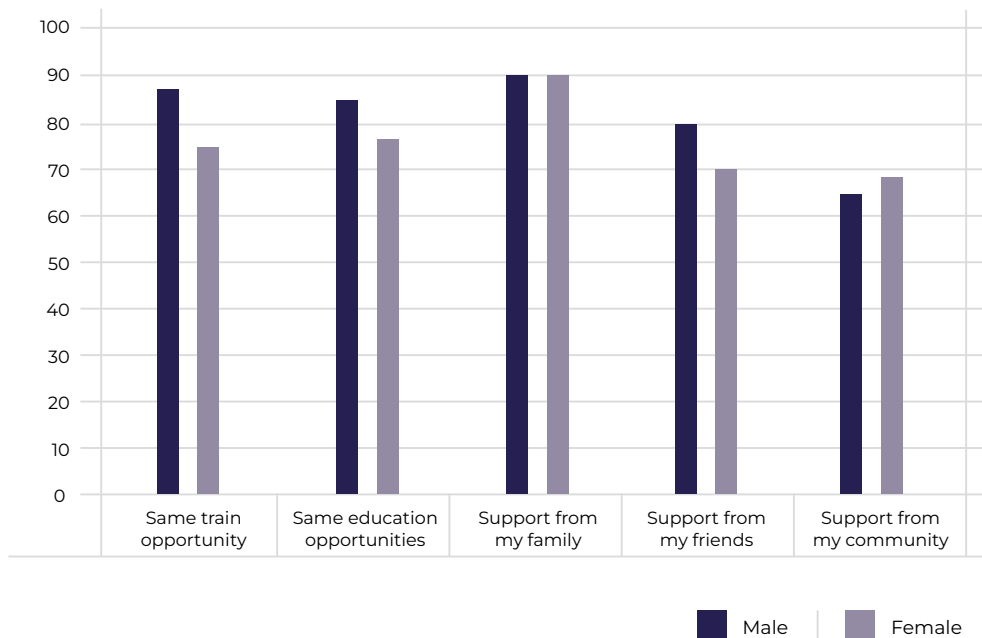


Figure 9: Experiences since joining the police

Male respondents on average enjoyed the physical component of basic training more than female counterparts. Figure 11 captures the different topics covered during basic training, but presented based on difference in interest. Despite the overall more positive perspectives of male respondents, the views of female respondents followed that of their male counterparts. **Two topics – when to resort to force (-4.9%) and giving evidence in court (-2.4%) – appealed more to female respondents than their male counterparts.** Both samples,

53.3% of women and 48.5% of men least appreciated the discussion on under what circumstances they are allowed to use force.

While perceptions surrounding physical capabilities to women will be discussed in a later section and although physical fitness remains important while serving in any security agency, the nature of policing continue to change. Considering growing specialization that requires the need to develop an array of other skills – some not based on physical

strength – not relying on the physical elements of basic training to assess candidates skills would be beneficial given the diverse range of skills now required in law enforcement. **In other words, targeted recruitment with specialisation in mind and tailored training may be more effective on the long-term.**

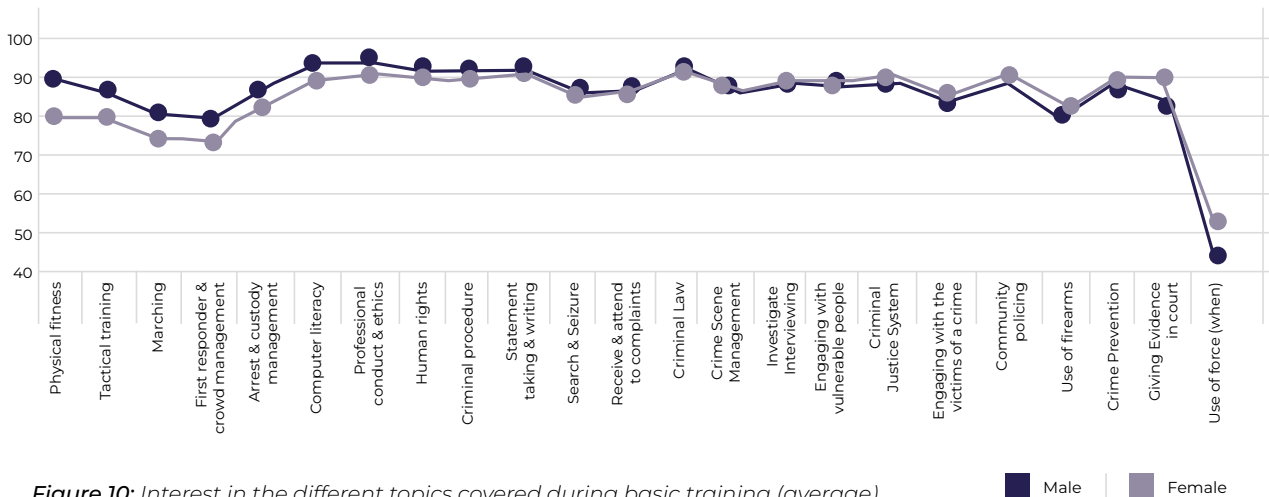


Figure 10: Interest in the different topics covered during basic training (average)



Top five favorite topics covered during basic training

According to 37% of female against 58.2% of male respondents, they are convinced that they received the same promotion opportunities than other colleagues. Along this large difference of 21%, 65.6% of women indicated that they are encouraged to advance their careers against 75.8% amongst male respondents.

Both male (74.2%) and female (68.6%) respondents experience a strong sense of belonging, both samples being proud of being members of the police (see Figure 12).



While the majority of women indicate they are encouraged to advance in their careers, they do not feel they receive the same promotion opportunities



Figure 11: Experiences since joining the police

While male respondents reflected a more enthusiastic view throughout the study, asking respondents to reflect on their current experiences, positions change drastically between the two samples. In contrast, on average 91% of women feel that what they are doing is making a difference compared with 85% in the male sample. The majority (84.5%) of women are 'happy' with their decision of joining the police force/service, a position shared by 80.3% of men (difference of 4.18%).

Although the overall majority of respondents representing both samples (82.25% of men and 81.93% of women) are satisfied with their current placement (as reflected in Figure 13), participants in the study were also asked which unit they would want to be part of (see Figure 14).

Given the opportunity, women gravitate more towards regional cooperation (being incorporated into EAPCCO), followed by criminal investigation, intelligence collection, counterterrorism, cyber investigations, and financial crimes.

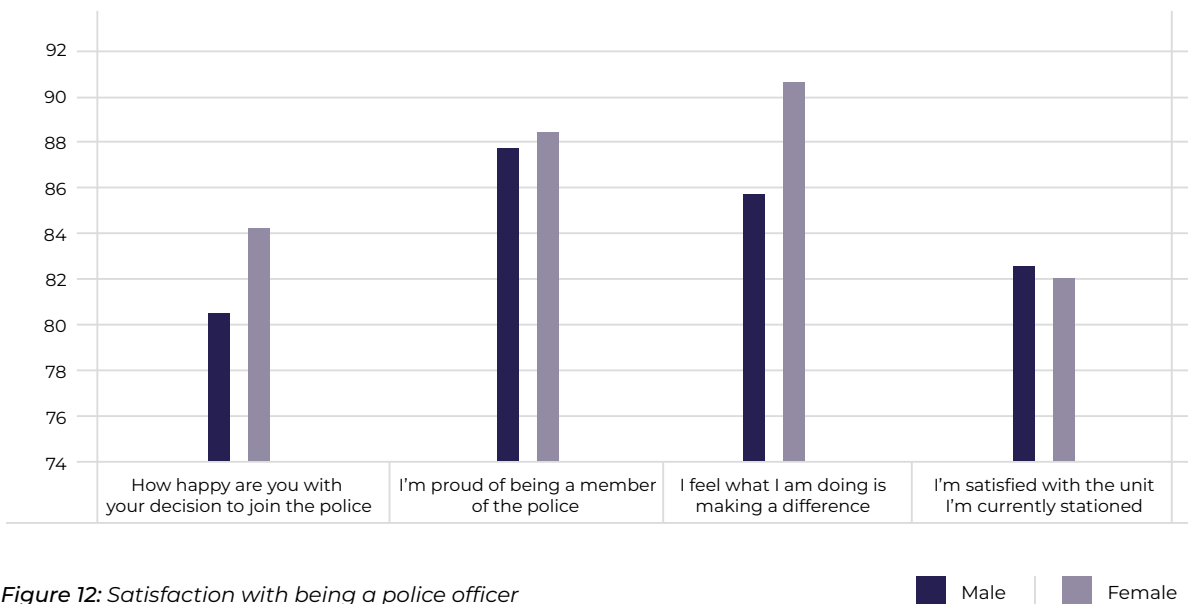


Figure 12: Satisfaction with being a police officer

While the female sample expressed no interest in administrative duties (including secretarial and human resources), 12% of male respondents selected this area of work.



Women are not interested in administrative positions as an ideal career path, rather gravitating towards roles in regional cooperation, intelligence collection, counterterrorism, cyber investigations, and financial crimes.

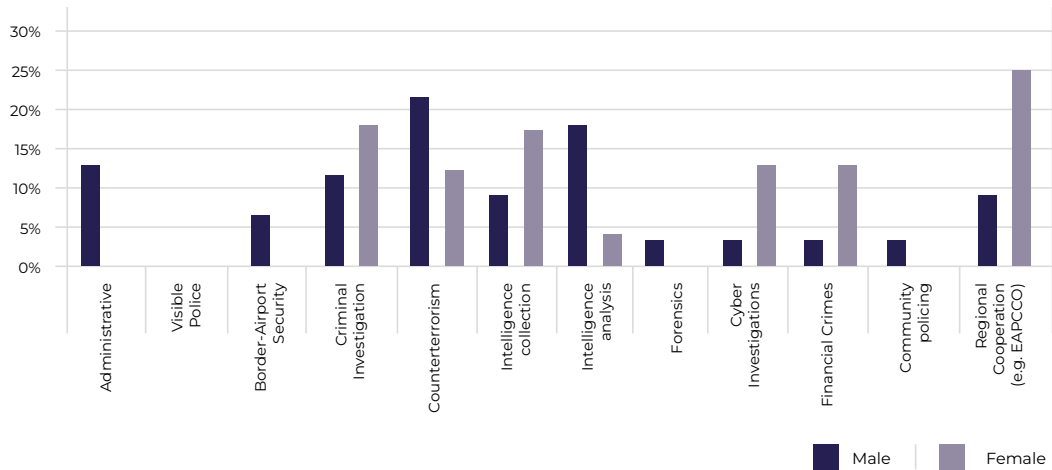


Figure 14: Given the opportunity, in which area would respondents want to work in

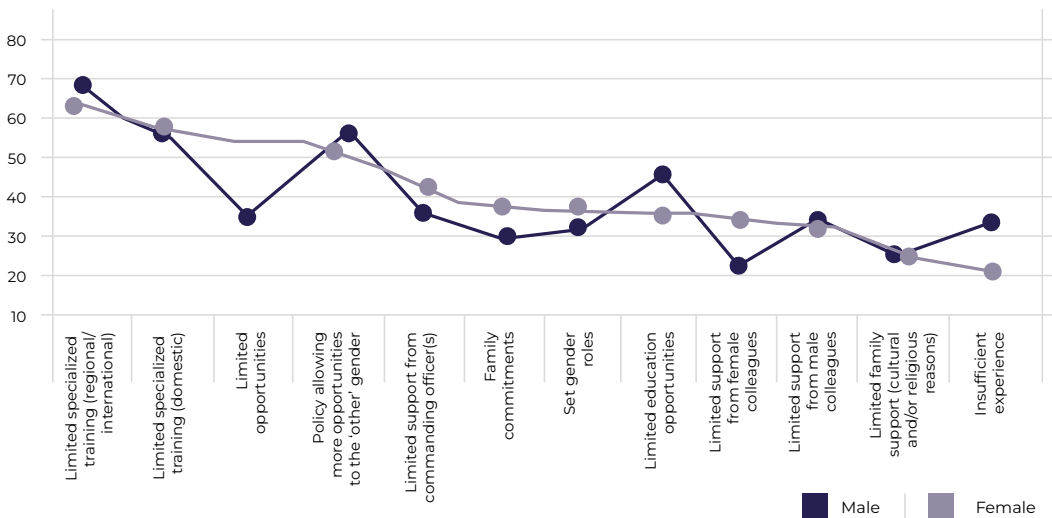


Figure 15: Perceived factors preventing ideal placement

Figure 15 summarises the most prominent reasons according to female respondents preventing them from being employed where they see themselves, in relation to the perspective of male respondents.



The biggest stumbling block according to both samples is limited specialised training – both regional/international and domestic. The perception of 57% of women in the sample is that the current policy prevents them from reaching their goals.

WHAT HOLDS WOMEN BACK?



LIMITED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



LIMITED CAREER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FROM CURRENT COMMANDING OFFICERS



LACK OF EQUALITY IN PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES



FAMILY COMMITMENTS

While both samples made reference to limited career guidance and support from current commanding officers, **38.8% of female respondents continued to identify family commitments and set gender roles (38.3%) as obstacles they foresee in preventing them from their ideal placement.** Both samples referred to a lack in support from members of their own gender - 36% for men and 35% for women - in preventing them from achieving their goals. It is interesting to note that a 13.71% difference between male (35.31%) and female (21.6%) respondents exists on the question of experience, while 9.28% of men are more concerned about limited education opportunities than their female colleagues (37.69%). Ideally, equal promotion opportunities should rest upon the 'best candidate for the job' while experience and education are two key components that should not be overlooked.

Men and women in the study placed different emphasis on the impact potential factors may play in their decision to request a transfer. Figure 15 identifies these different factors, as well as the decreasing difference between the two samples – from a difference of 7.4% between female and

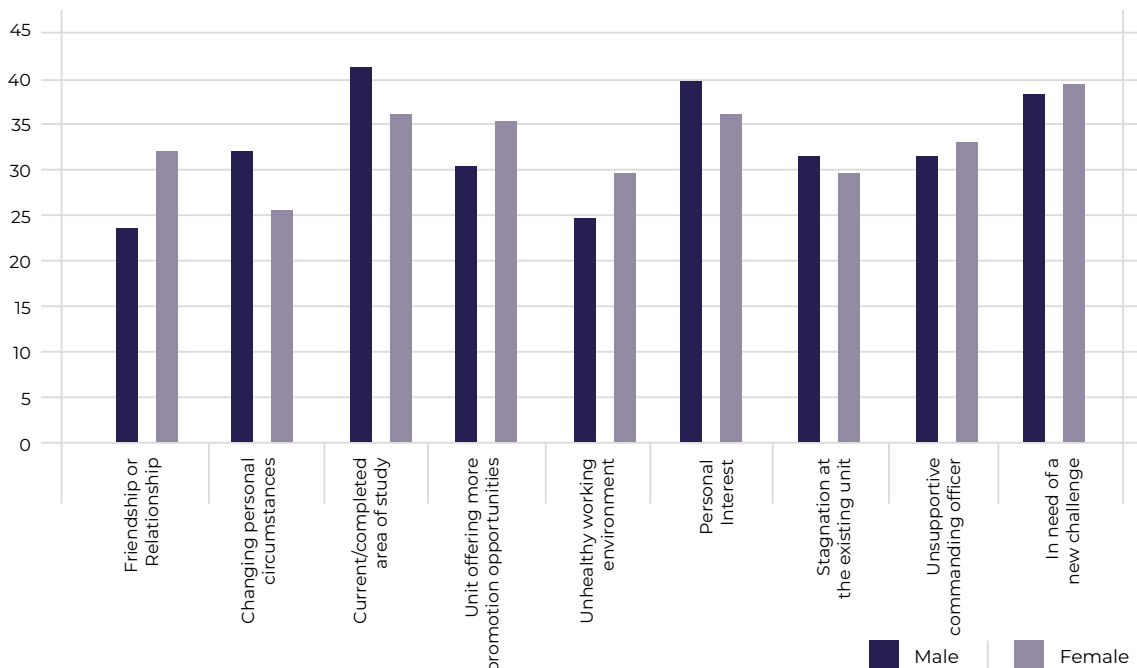
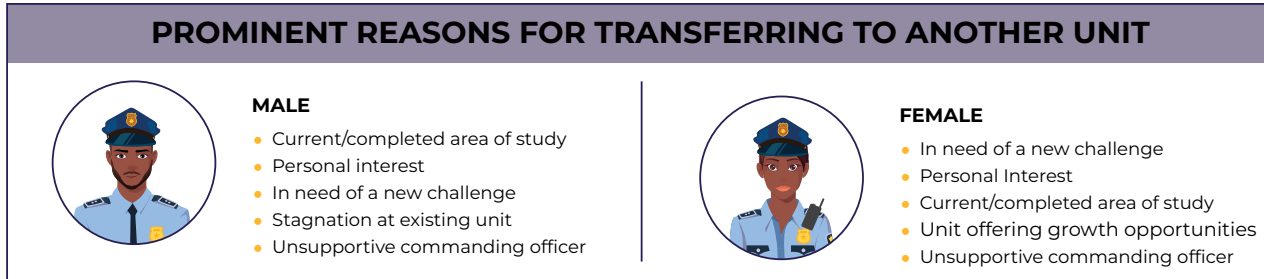


Figure 16: Factors influencing transferring to a different unit

male respondents on the impact of friendships and relationships to a 1% difference between the two samples on the need of a new challenge. The graphic below reflects on the most prominent reasons based on priority impacting the two samples.

Women thrive on ambition and embrace new challenges



Top five most prominent reasons for transferring to another unit



05

**PERCEPTION &
POLICY**

Recalling above discussion on factors preventing respondents to reach their ideal placement, a series of statements were presented to which participants had to reflect their level of agreement. While male respondents led views on the perception that 'women should work in the office as administrators' and 'women are not as career driven as men' it was the perception of women that may be more damning to the career advancement of themselves and other women. For example, a difference of 21% was recalled on the perception that 'women cannot fulfil certain functions due to family obligations', 19% difference on 'female commanding officers do not receive the same levels of respect as their male counterparts' and probably the most discerning 31.54% of women are under the impression that 'women are mentally unable to serve in certain units'. Furthermore, 35.77% of women are of the opinion that they are physically unable to serve in certain units of the police. The graduation of a team of 48 all-female Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team in Kenya in August 2019 largely contradicts this perception and reflected a shift in the willingness of general Hillary Mutyambai, the former Inspector General of Police (April 2019-August 2022) to follow policy through action. According to the article announcing the graduation, the 48 women were selected from the Administration Police Service (APS) and

have undergone five months of physical and combat drilling which is the first phase of their regular training over 15 months.¹¹

It is however interesting to note that while 37.58% of men are convinced that physical limitations of women prevent them from being a police officer, only 19.7% (11.84% less than the female sample) identified mental limitations of women as a limiting factor. Explaining an inferiority perception amongst women, it is important to remember the psychological impact of growing up being continuously reminded – even on a subconscious level – by society, including within her own family of being inferior, less capable, and less suitable than men to be in this case a professional police officer, that will be the hardest to change.



Gender stereotypes negatively impact women's perception of their own role and capabilities. An ingrained societal perception of being weaker and less capable than men translates into women feeling less mentally capable and unable to perform certain functions due to family obligations.

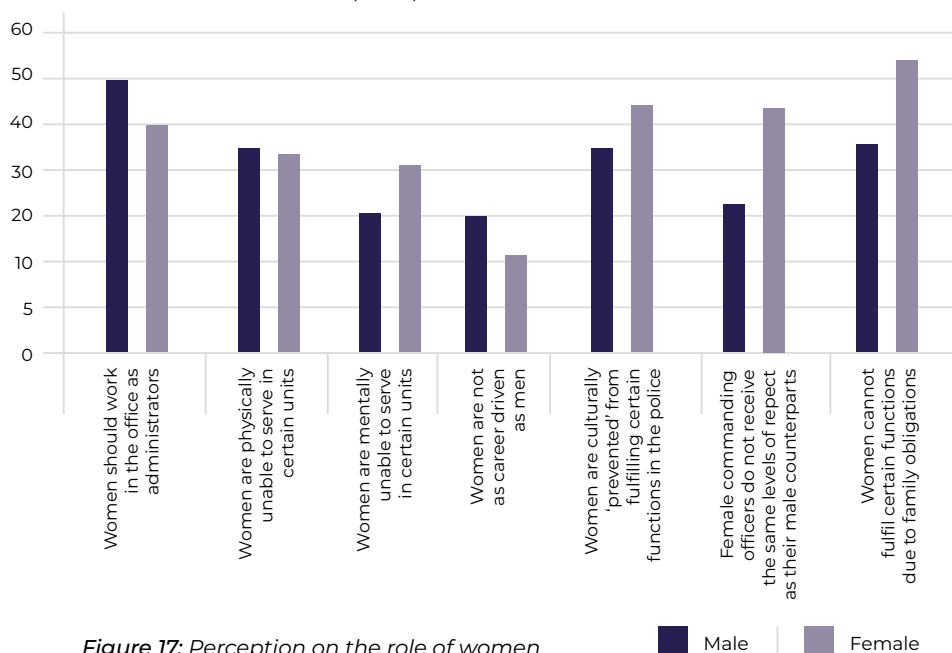


Figure 17: Perception on the role of women

¹¹ Ngechu W (2019) "Meet Kenya's First All-Female SWAT Team, a First in Africa." Citizen Digital, 9 August, <https://citizentv.co.ke/news/meet-kenyas-firstallfemale-swat-team-a-first-in-africa-268500/>

Despite above views, 98% of women believe that ‘men and women should be given the same opportunities in the police’ against 87% amongst male respondents. Recognising the ‘different qualities’ that women bring to the police other than men, as identified by 61.29% amongst the male and 69.17% of the female samples, 90% of women and 87% of men recognise that there is a ‘need to develop a gender policy in respective countries ‘to change the type of opportunities given to women’ in the police. While 94.4% of women and 89.03% of men support these changes, a difference of 19.45% was noted on whether ‘women should receive additional training opportunities to advance their careers in the police’ with 88.8% of women agreeing.

A photograph of two police officers in uniform standing in a hallway. The officer in the foreground is a Black man, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a light blue shirt, a dark tie, and a dark vest with a badge and patches. The officer in the background is a Black woman, also in uniform, looking slightly to the side. The image has a dark blue overlay.

06

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite a relatively small sample of 93 respondents (48 men and 45 women), this study provided valuable initial insights into the perception and experiences and the differences and similarities between men and women serving in the police in Eastern Africa.

Drawing on the data analysis and key recommendations from past UNODC activities, this study offers a set of practical recommendations.

1 Law enforcement should be diverse and representative of the community it serves

Although law enforcement has been traditionally regarded as a male-dominated career, women make up roughly 50% of society, if not more in most countries. However, under-representation of women in law enforcement and criminal justice effectively means that **almost half of the population has been excluded from being adequately represented within the police that should reflect the demographics of the community it serves.**

Recruiting and deploying more female police officers adds value to police-community relations. In addition to enhancing representation of women in the police that will enable more women to come forward in reporting crime (especially gender-based violence or GBV), female police officers proved to be better communicators needed to defuse potentially volatile situations. Community mirroring establishes a common connection with women in the community that may include victims, but also female perpetrators and enablers.

For the trust to be established, those in positions of authority – police officers – have to have a better understanding of where community members are coming from, their history, culture, challenges, etc. These principles are as relevant for gender than ethnic/tribal and/or religious differences. **When police officers reflect the community, it facilitates better communication by establishing a genuine connection that is essential to generate trust.**

In addition to being **better communicators**, women possess a number of traits that make communities trust the police more, directly improving police-community relations.¹² Ultimately, men and women bring different traits to the table to serve the needs of the entire community.

2 Identify and recruit women (and men) who want to build a career in law enforcement.

Law enforcement is not for everyone, but everyone that wants to follow this career path should be given the opportunity. More studies are however needed on why young people, especially women want to join and what type of police do they want to be part of. Assessing the perception of the police in especially vulnerable communities – women are equally categorised as being vulnerable – may explain but also assist in building a more inclusive community policing-centred police.

3 Increase specialization and tailor recruitment

Recognising that policing is continually changing requires redefined recruitment parameters. In other words, instead of accepting x-number of new recruits into the police service/force, during the selection process, the potential future placement of new officers should guide the process. **Targeted recruitment and tailored training towards increased specialisation** will also address misconceptions.

Considering the diverse disciplines in law enforcement, **young people need to receive effective career guidance to address misconceptions, incorrect perceptions, and uncertainties.** In clearly explaining the process and next steps, recruitment officers play a key step ensuring that the most deserving individuals are recruited. Steps need to be taken to investigate corruption allegations in the recruitment process.

¹² Erik Fritzvold. "Why We Need More Women Working in Law Enforcement." San Diego University. <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/women-in-law-enforcement/>

4

Provide more and better training opportunities for women

Women respondents were unanimous in identifying the lack of training opportunities as the primary hindrance for career advancement. **Specialized capacity-building should be provided for female officers to provide them with the necessary and desirable skills aiding in career advancement.**

5

Mainstream diversity in specialized roles

While some countries through a process of affirmative action set gender targets, the sustainability of this process and the quality of candidates need to be considered. While some may be tempted to measure success by the number of female police officers, real impact should be determined based on quantity, as well as quality. In other words, the quantity in numbers, but the **quality established by the placement of female police officers throughout the service/force, especially in operational and specialised units against being placed in token-positions.**

6

Engage with communities

In addition to research being done within police agencies, it is equally important to **assess the views of community members and their perceptions of law enforcement overall, including the role of women in the police.** This type of initiatives will equally strengthen police-community relations in making the community part of the process in being responsive to the needs and views of respective communities. **Understandably, some more conservative communities may be more reluctant, requiring more dialogue and working especially with the women in these communities.**

7

Commanding officers should spearhead change

Commanding officers need to be more willing to actively recruit and task female police officers with equal responsibilities beyond what they perceive female police officers being more suitable for. While both samples made reference to unsupportive commanding officers, dedicated efforts to build and strengthen commanding officers' **skills to mainstream gender-sensitive policies with regard to placement, promotion, and training opportunities** need to be considered.

8

Challenge pre-conceptions and stereotypes and build confidence to be agents of change

Female police officers need to build self-confidence. When newly appointed, women may continuously doubt themselves on a sub-conscious level. However, becoming a police officer means that these women already had to tackle and overcome perceptions and societal obstacles in pursuing law enforcement as a career; to this end, **providing continuous assistance is imperative.**

Equally, **challenging and changing the perception amongst men that standards need to be lowered to accommodate women** has a direct impact on immediate acceptance, respect, and performance. On the other side of the coin.

The historic male domination of police has resulted in a disproportionate emphasis on enforcement and damage to police-community relations. To counter, the involvement of women will restore the relationship that needs to exist for the "police [to be] the public and the public the police".¹³ In other words, **women should not act as men by giving in to pressure to conform to the prevailing police culture, instead the culture needs to change, albeit with time and dedication.**

¹³ Ruwan Uduwera-Perera and Duncan Woodhead. (2023) "Have the police forgotten Robert Peel's principles?" The Guardian, 2 March. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/02/have-the-police-forgotten-robert-peels-principles#:~:text=The%20service%20should%20remember%20Robert,are%20incumbent%20on%20every%20citizen%E2%80%9D>.

9

Create mentorship networks

Many women in law enforcement have a role-model they look up to. Understanding who these role models are and creating a **platform to talk to other women may address feelings of isolation, especially in the absence of other female officers they can relate to.** Identifying mentors – both men and women – will further assist in allowing young officers to establish themselves.

10

Create an enabling environment for career advancement of parents and care-givers

The expectations on single-parent and female police officers with families are higher. **These officers especially require assistance with finding a workable work-life balance.** While some may argue that family-commitments are an exclusion factor for women to pursue a career in law enforcement, strategies exist in the form of flexible working conditions and other internal working arrangements as in the case of Hertfordshire Constabulary in the UK.¹⁴

11

Support regional efforts

The EAPCCO Gender Sub-Committee (GSC) plays a critical role in transforming law enforcement agencies in the region to be more inclusive. **Regional efforts should be given full support to harmonize policies and practices, champion gender mainstreaming, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.**

12

Understand the problem better at the regional and national levels through research

Recognising that this study is far from being representative of law enforcement agencies across the region, additional research is needed to facilitate and strengthen of the role of women in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism and promoting women to more responsible positions within law enforcement and criminal justice institutions in Eastern Africa.

CONCLUSION

Despite the differences between the two samples, many similarities exist between male and female police officers in the region, recalling similar trends in the reasons for joining the police, as well as interest in the different topics covered during basic training. Although the focus of this paper is on gender, ethnicity or tribal affiliation was also identified as a discriminatory variable for both samples, followed by religious affiliation according to especially male respondents.

The recruitment of more women, their career development, and the placement of more women in specialised units and managerial positions is however part of a much broader discussion on the need to change how police officers interact with the public when conducting their mandated responsibilities. The study makes evident the existing disbalance in opportunities and perceptions of women and men will result in lower community trust. Governments and international community should, therefore, support initiatives and efforts to increase the diversity and gender balance of law enforcement institutions of the region.

¹⁴ Ward, Aiyana, and Tim Prenzler. (2016). Good practice case studies in the advancement of women in policing. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 18(4), 242-250.

