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WOMEN IN SECURITY

A Study of Barriers and Enablers
to Entering and Progressing within the
Security Field in South Sudan

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CD – Country Director
CoP – Chief of Party
CRSV – Conflict-related Sexual Violence
DE&I – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
GBV – Gender-based Violence
HAD – Humanitarian Aid and Development
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
SFP – Security Focal Point
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
WiS – Women in Security
UN – United Nations
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

BACKGROUND

Despite instances of women advancing to senior positions within the security field, by both traditional (second careers following time spent in the military, police or intelligence services) and non-traditional routes¹, at the global level women are under-represented within the security sector², and this is pronounced in South Sudan³.

Part of the acute underrepresentation of women in the security sector in South Sudan is linked to socio-cultural factors, but the nature of the risk environment is also an influence, as it is in other high threat contexts, where leadership and management roles across the spectrum are filled by fewer women than in other contexts. Research conducted by the Humanitarian Advisory Group in 2019 concluded that, “Security issues can reduce women’s representation in humanitarian leadership. In extreme security risk countries, men tend to dominate leadership positions, filling between 60 and 69% of leadership positions. Interviewees from a study on diversity in humanitarian settings feel that high security risk contexts often lead to the exclusion of women.”⁴

Under representation in the security sector is an equity issue of course, but it also likely directly affects the ability of organizations to most effectively manage their security risks, even though it is estimated that over 40% of the half a million humanitarian workers who provide frontline care during emergencies, wars and disasters, are women.⁵

Opportunities for South Sudanese women to enter the security profession, including within the Humanitarian Aid and Development (HAD) sector, are rare to non-existent. This reflects a range of cultural, professional and educational constraints. Some barriers to entry into the field of safety and security also apply to international female professionals, whose percentage remains low among those employed in the risk and security management sector in South Sudan.

Women have proven talent within the risk and security management field, offering the community different perspectives and capabilities and being able to fulfill security roles to the same degree of professionalism as men, who dominate the sector. In addition, gender security challenges – *where the issues may be female focused and sensitive in nature* – are more fittingly addressed by women. This could have a cascading effect where women can seek counsel from female security professionals, in cases when otherwise they may be reticent to seek assistance. Diversifying the field of risk and security management would thus benefit all the stakeholders involved, especially the diverse make-up of the teams comprising the implementing partner community.

¹ See for instance, the 2018 Security Leadership Issue: The Rising Role of Women in Security <https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/89067-2018-security-leadership-issue-the-rising-role-of-women-in-security>. Accessed 17 March 2022.

² For the purposes of this research study the security sector is defined as the field of risk and security management within the broader Humanitarian Aid and Development (HAD) sector. It encompasses professionals working for the UN, private companies and non-profit organizations that deliver humanitarian aid and development assistance specifically in the context of South Sudan.

³ According to an article published by the Churchill Security Services, “Only 9% of qualified security officers are women, with 84% of female security officers stating they feel like the security sector is dominated by men.” The article was published in August 2021, and does not provide a definition of a ‘security officer.’ However, due to the nature of the publisher, the article can be seen as speaking primarily about the private security sector. The full article can be found here: <https://www.churchillgroup.com/resources/news-insights/women-in-security/>. According to another publication by European Interagency Security Forum (EISF, and now the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF)), “Despite the fact that security has historically been a male-dominated sector, and in many ways continues to be so, the number of women working in security is by no means negligible nor are the contributions of women to the sector hard to discern.” However, the publication does not provide exact figures on the number of women working within the HAD safety and security sector. The full publication can be found here: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/women-security>.

⁴ Blackney H, Giri S, Henty P, Sutton K. Data on diversity: humanitarian leadership under the spotlight. Humanitarian Advisory Group 2019. https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/HAG_Data-on-diversity_Final-electronic.pdf. Accessed 18 March 2022.

⁵ Patel, P., Meagher, K., El Achi, N. et al. “Having more women humanitarian leaders will help transform the humanitarian system”: challenges and opportunities for women leaders in conflict and humanitarian health. *Conflict Health* 14, 84 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-020-00330-9>. Accessed 19 March 2022.

The conversation around existing barriers and enablers for women to enter and progress within the risk and security management sector is applicable in South Sudan, for national and international candidates alike, as well as more globally. Where the mechanism for entry into the security sector is absent, it becomes important to understand what type of enablers, such as formalized training, focused mentoring, peer collaboration, and experience driven learning, can overcome existing barriers and make women viable candidates for employment in the risk and security management sector. Similarly, it becomes important to understand the type of everyday challenges that women might be facing once they do acquire roles as risk and security management professionals. These everyday barriers and socio-cultural stereotyping might be deterring competent women from working in the sector.

The context of South Sudan can be characterized as lacking resources dedicated to professional development not only within the area of risk and security management, but also more broadly, especially in terms of adult learning and availability of resources to support individual professional development. Being able to understand, and outline, the type of initiatives that can make the risk and security management sector more open, and more appealing, to women could pave the way towards implementation of specific interventions and adjustments to correct the practices that might be making the field less accessible to female candidates.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research study is to present the status of women in the risk and security management profession in South Sudan, identifying barriers and enablers for their entry and advancement within the sector. Some of the key questions explored by the study included understanding the type of challenges that women face when entering the profession, as well as the challenges that might be affecting their everyday professional life once in the sector. The research focused on specific questions:

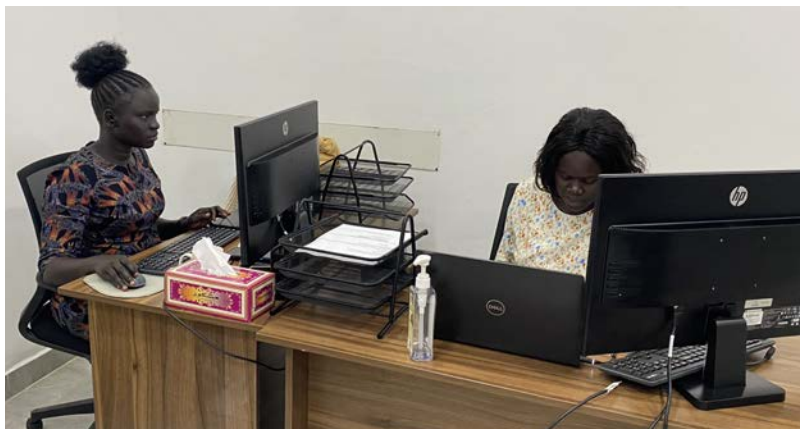
- Are there different skills and abilities required of men and women to enter the risk and security field?
- What are the barriers to entry and progression of women within the risk and security field?⁶
- For female survey respondents / consultees only | What barriers to progression do you experience day-to-day?
- What are the enablers that foster / encourage entry and progression in the risk and security field?
- What is the representation of women in the risk and security field in South Sudan?
- How do, or how *could*, women add value to the risk and security field?
- What initiatives or actions could enhance opportunities for women to enter the risk and security field?

Another purpose of this study is to support action-based outcomes for USAID implementers, HAD stakeholders and security practitioners in developing the type of initiatives that would level the playing field for men and women security professionals. The study encourages information sharing within organizations and peer groups, stresses the importance of professional and personal development [training and exercising], and underpins the need to purposefully support and promote diversification of the risk and security management sector, encouraging the involvement of women at different levels, thereby also supporting USAID's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts (DE&I).

⁶ Note that this study did not explore the existing barriers to entry for men, as the focus of the study is specifically on female professionals in the field of safety and security. The PLSO has produced a separate study on *Professionalization of Security*, which unveils cross-gender barriers to entry and progression in the profession.

The intended audience for the study includes existing professionals in the field of security and risk management, as well as any aspiring professionals, especially women, who would like to enter the field. The study will thus be of use to the broader HAD and private sector community (in South Sudan, but also globally), including donors, private sector companies, humanitarian organizations, the UN and educational institutions. The study also helps organizational leadership at the headquarters level to understand the challenges experienced by women seeking to enter and progress within the security sector, and to take active steps to remove or minimize these challenges.

From the most practical standpoint, the study is of relevance to existing and aspiring female security professionals, as it provides an insight into how best to pursue their career goals and where to focus their professional development efforts. The study also sheds light on the types of barriers that women are likely to encounter, bringing a certain level of transparency into the conversation around gender and risk and security management as a profession.



METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed method approach, combining three methods for information gathering: an online survey, semi-structured interviews, and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Online Survey

Conducted through the Survey Monkey platform, the survey included qualitative and quantitative data gathering tools, primarily requesting the respondents to do the following:

- Choose the most prominent barriers [from a pre-identified list developed in scoping exercises with male and female security risk management peer professionals, and a free text entry field] for women to enter and progress within the risk and security management profession, specifically in South Sudan.
- Choose the most prominent enablers [from a pre-identified list developed in scoping exercises with male and female security risk management peer professionals, and a free text entry field] for women to enter and progress in the risk and security management profession, specifically in South Sudan.
- Choose the most appropriate initiatives [from a pre-identified list developed in scoping exercises with male and female security risk management peer professionals, and a free text entry field] that could support and promote the entry of women into the risk and security management sector in South Sudan.
- For female security professionals, the survey specifically asked for further insights on the type of barriers that they face in their day-to-day work in the risk and security management sector.

The survey received 87 responses from the HAD community in South Sudan. In terms of their profile, respondents included Security Managers (21%), Security Focal Points (SFPs)⁷ or other individuals with operational security responsibilities (17%), Country Directors or Chiefs of Party (15%), Operations and/or Logistics Managers (9%) and 31% of respondents identifying themselves as other roles. Over 78% of the respondents were men and 20% were women, a division that is perhaps representative of the wider risk and security management sector in South Sudan.

Semi-Structured In-Person Interviews

Conducted with key stakeholders in the HAD sector in South Sudan, these semi-structured interviews generated additional insights into the competencies, barriers and enablers for female risk and security management professionals. The interviews included the following key questions:

- What are the key competencies that risk and security management professionals and SFPs should possess in order to enter and progress within the security sector in South Sudan? Are these key competencies different in any way for men and women professionals in the field?
- What are some of the key barriers that aspiring risk and security management professionals face in South Sudan? Are these barriers different for men and women professionals in the field?
- What are some of the key enablers for risk and security management professionals in South Sudan, allowing them to enter and progress in the security field? Are these enablers different for men and women professionals in the field?
- What is the current status of women in the risk and security management profession in South Sudan? How could the risk and security management field benefit from their advancement?

The 17 conducted interviews (9 women, 8 men) were recorded and anonymized during the transcription process. Coding was used to identify trends and patterns within responses, generating quantitative and qualitative data.

Notably, the interviews were conducted with support of the PLSO Women in Security (WiS) interns⁸, thus contributing to their capacity building, and included participants representing the following key categories of stakeholders:

- International and local national NGOs – risk and security management professionals at different stages of their career.
- Private security companies – management, analysts and operational security professionals.
- UN agencies – analysts and operational security professionals.
- NGO security and forum groups.

⁷ Security Focal Points is a term widely used in the HAD sector to define an individual who is not a risk and security management professional but is assigned operational responsibility for security matters.

⁸ The USAID South Sudan PLSO WiS internship was a pilot initiative developed and implemented by the PLSO South Sudan team to develop the professional skills and capability of women seeking to enter the risk and security management field. As well as training and mentoring, the interns participate in field visits and work placements with HAD sector organizations. The first cohort of 4 interns graduated in January 2022, with two already finding full time roles in the field as a direct result of their participation in the program. Highly regarded by USAID South Sudan, and such was the success of the pilot scheme, the PLSO team are now supporting a second cohort of interns.

Focus Group Discussions

Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held during the research. The FGDs, consisting of HAD professionals (a total of 9 people – all men) who expressed their interest to participate through the survey, were used to explore, within a collaborative setting, the issues faced by female professionals in the field of risk and security management. Specific formats and questions for the FGDs were developed based on the survey results' analysis and the review of individual interview responses. Participants were asked to contribute their interpretation of the key findings and to offer any other input they considered relevant. Notably, all the FGD participants were men.

FINDINGS

This section of the report sets out the findings for each of the research questions.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED OF MEN AND WOMEN TO ENTER THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD?

During the interview process, the respondents were asked whether the competencies necessary for a risk and security management professional were different for men and women professionals in the field. The results showed that the majority of interview respondents believe that the set of competencies was broadly the same, but with some caveats.

Over 70% of those interviewed stated that the competencies needed to enter and progress within the field of risk and security management were not different for men and women professionals. The respondents overwhelmingly spoke to the fact that core competencies within the security sector can be learnt and both men and women can undoubtedly do the job equally well. Taking into account that the interviewees gave an overwhelming preference to the soft competencies of communication, analysis and understanding of the context, respondents often highlighted that women and men need to possess the exact same set of attributes for a risk and security management role.

“We need people who have the soft skills, which are decision-making, problem solving, working on initiative-based tasks, being able to think, being a team player, being a team leader,” said one of the respondents, an expatriate risk and security management professional working for an international entity. *“And all those [are] core competencies, because the rest of the stuff you can learn, you can gain it through education, through qualifications, through training courses.”*

Over 29% of interviewees, however, said that the core competencies, necessary for the risk and security management profession, were in fact different for the two genders. Notably, 80% of the respondents who pointed out that the set of competencies was different were female interviewees. When respondents spoke about the differences in the necessary competencies, they often referred to the socio-cultural constraints that women face and the competencies that women might need to address or overcome these constraints.



By extension, men would not need to possess these competencies, as men do not face the same socio-cultural barriers. Speaking from her personal perspective, one female expatriate security professional working for an NGO said: *“There [are] a lot of cultural barriers when it comes to women in security that I faced, for example, in the field. ... People do not take you seriously when you're giving advice. ... It's very hard for this context to take a woman seriously in any management position. I feel as though it is easier for a man to work in this context at a managerial and at the field level.”* A male expatriate interview respondent, employed with the UN noted the following: *“I would imagine that to get the same outcome, [for women] there needs to be a lot more effort put in, and then you would have to potentially overperform to get the same level of buy-in as a male would.”*



Several interview respondents placed emphasis on communication skills as a core competency and spoke about the fact that women might have to exert greater levels of effort in ensuring that they employ this competency adequately in their professional life. Even though many interview respondents said that women can be better communicators than men, the male-dominated nature of the profession might still require them to possess a unique set of communication skills that go beyond a certain baseline. *“I think definitely [women] would have a more difficult time being heard initially, or being recognized as a voice, so even if they have excellent communication skills, there often could be just a bias towards [the] information they are sharing,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working with the UN. *“Just by merit of being a woman, they'll probably have to raise their voices a bit louder.”* The interviewee further spoke about a bias towards how men are perceived versus how women are perceived in the field of security, as women need to make sure that what they are saying is in fact taken into consideration. In other words, women just do not get listened to as much, according to the interviewee. Another respondent, a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN, noted that, *“Women ... in general are better communicators. Whether they're listened to or heard, I think that's another story, and generally I don't think they are.”*

Speaking about the context of South Sudan and noting that it tends to be a male-dominated society, one interviewee, a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO, noted that, *“Just the very fact that we are within the context of South Sudan and the way the society is set up predominantly to favor males in the workplace and in your interactions with authority, just intrinsically men would get more access to those high-level conversations, and maybe even unfortunately be trusted a bit more, even though fundamentally they may not be as skilled.”* The interviewee noted that just due to the nature of perceptions, women in the field of risk and security management often experience a certain level of a patronizing attitude exhibited towards them.

Thus, while the interviewees overwhelmingly noted that the set of competencies for men and women in the field of security is the same, some respondents pointed out that the difference in how men and women might be treated in the profession does necessitate female professionals to possess additional skills. Notably, many of the responses echoed the kind of sentiments that were shared by the interviewees in response to a different question – that revolving around the barriers that women might face in the profession, which are addressed further in this study.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND PROGRESSION WITHIN THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD?

The question on barriers to entry and progression in the risk and security management profession specifically for women generated a rather similar set of responses from female and male survey participants. For women, the most prominent barriers were [1] lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement.) and [2] socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms) to women working in the sector. Men identified socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms) to women working in the sector as the most prominent barrier.

Looking closer at the female survey responses, the top two choices (lack of genuinely gender-blind processes and socio-cultural resistance) were selected by over 84% of female respondents each, creating a tie for the number one and number two top barrier. Notably, over 61% of female respondents chose both of the top two barriers (that is – over 61% of female respondents selected lack of genuinely gender-blind processes and socio-cultural resistance as barriers to entry and progression in the profession). Lack of female role models in the field ranked as the third most prominent barrier, with over 76% of female respondents selecting this barrier from the list. The next place, in order of importance, was split between [1] visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside the less formal networks where opportunities arise) and [2] negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management (both having been selected by over 69% of female respondents). Lack of formal education, technical expertise, first-career experience in military/police all ranked towards the bottom of the list. Thus, from the perspective of women, it is cultural norms and expectations, perceived to be prominent within the sector, that amount to the most significant barriers for their entry and advancement in the field of security. (See Table 1 in Appendix A for detailed data from female respondents). These responses were strongly corroborated by both FGDs and the interviews (the findings from which are outlined further below).

For male respondents, the rankings resulted in a similarly organized list of barriers. Notably, however, more male respondents chose lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police) as a barrier (chosen by 56% of male respondents). This barrier ranked at the same level as visibility of recruitment opportunities to women. The top three most frequently selected barriers started with socio-cultural resistance, which was chosen as a barrier by 80% of male respondents. Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management was selected by 74% of male respondents and ranked second. Third ranked barrier to entry and progression within the sector was the lack of female role models in the field (68% of male respondents). (See Table 2 in Appendix A for detailed data from male respondents).

For senior leadership, Country Directors and Chiefs of Party, socio-cultural resistance, visibility of recruitment opportunities to women and negative perceptions as to the aptitude of women versus men received the highest rankings as barriers to entry, with 80% of senior leadership respondents choosing these three options. (See Table 3 in Appendix A for detailed data from CDs and CoPs respondents).

Security Managers also identified socio-cultural resistance and negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women as key barriers to entry for women (both barriers have been selected by over 61% of Security Managers). Lack of female role models and lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes split the second place, both having been selected by more than 53% of Security Managers. Visibility of career opportunities fell towards the middle of the list (over 38% of Security Managers selected this as a barrier). This might testify to the fact that practitioners in the field think that career opportunities have equal visibility to men and women. (See Table 4 in Appendix A for detailed data from security managers respondents).

SFPs universally chose socio-cultural resistance as the most significant barrier (with 100% of SFPs identifying this as a barrier). Lack of female role models in the field followed suit, having been selected by over 85% of SFP respondents. Among all the other groups of respondents, SFPs selected the lack of female role models most frequently (over 85% of SFP respondents, placing this barrier as number two). Logically, this might stem from their first-hand experience of observing a lack of female security professionals, especially in field locations. Lack of project management experience was not selected as a barrier by any of the SFP respondents. (See Table 5 in Appendix A for detailed data from SFP Respondents).

The aggregated ranking, represented in the table below, strongly favors socio-cultural norms and negative perceptions as the most prominent, and most frequently selected, barriers for female professionals to enter the field of risk and security management. Such choices were further corroborated by the FGD and the interview findings. An alternative view, however, was offered by one FGD participant who pointed out that socio-cultural resistance, ranking so high as a barrier, might be perceived as counterintuitive as most of the decision-makers (for hiring purposes) in the South Sudan context (and within the HAD sector) are internationals and often females. Further to this, only two interview respondents, out of 17, noted that women *do not* face any barriers that are different from those faced by men when entering into and progressing within the profession.

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	ALL RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms) to women working in the sector.	80.95%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	73.02%
Lack of female role models in the field.	69.84%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	65.08%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	58.73%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	50.79%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	47.62%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	47.62%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	41.27%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	31.75%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises,	31.75%
Lack of project management experience.	12.70%

FGD participants agreed that in the South Sudanese context, cultural aspects play an important role: women have particular roles in the community, which effectively function as a framework as to what women should and should not do. Socio-cultural factors also featured prominently in the interview responses, with at least three respondents referencing culture directly, when listing the type of barriers faced by women in the profession. A female local national risk and security management professional working for an NGO specifically noted that, *“There are some cultures within this country [South Sudan] whereby they feel that a woman does not deserve to be in certain positions.”* The interviewee continued to say that a female manager who is supervising male colleagues might face an issue of male colleagues not respecting her decisions, *“Because they feel like you are just a woman,”* she noted, before continuing with, *“As much as people believe in some cultures that a woman’s work is childbearing and kitchen, they feel like a woman cannot make a sound decision.”* Another interviewee mentioned that women are side-lined in the South Sudanese society, which in turn inhibits their ability to work in the field of security. *“Women have always been side-lined within the context, generally,”* said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. *“That in itself creates challenges, especially when [women] apply for certain security positions.”*

The context of South Sudan as such also received attention from both interviewees and FGD participants. At least three interviewees noted that the volatile nature of the context and a woman’s role in the family, which often prohibits her from leaving the home, prevents women from acquiring safety and security jobs that require a degree of mobility or travel to the field. Perceived practical challenges in sending women out to the field also received attention from at least one interview respondent. *“Men treat the world as their toilet; females are unable to do so,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *“And I noticed this on a number of opportunities I’ve had to visit field locations, and when you are travelling for long periods of time and need to toilet, there are quite often no facilities available to do your toileting in a private and preferred manner.”* Thus, women might prove to be less mobile not only due to the limitations generated by the society and the attitudes they might be facing at home, but also due to practical factors associated with the nature of field work, especially in the developmentally challenged context of South Sudan. According to FGD participants, prolonged insecurity and the prevalence of living in remote areas, and thus not having access to job opportunities, also served as additional barriers preventing women from breaking the gender norms in employment more generally, including the field of safety and security.

Negative perceptions towards women’s ability to conduct security work were referenced by at least six interview respondents, proving to be the most common barrier among those listed during the interviews. *“There is a perception that security can be led more, better, when a man is doing it, rather than when a woman is doing it,”* said a female local national risk and security management professional working for an NGO. According to another interview respondent, this negative perception affects women’s ability to progress in the field, as it becomes a significant barrier to overcome. *“As a woman, you almost have to prove your worth for a very long time to even get a very senior position as opposed to a man. You have to work through it. You have to work for it, and you have to work for a very long time to prove your worth,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. *“...Even when you get into the job, you still have to work extra hard.”* When on the job itself, the perception of women, and their abilities, leads to them being side-lined into duties that might not be placing them into the decision-making or the operational realm, which ultimately lead to progression and promotion. *“...Men are seen as security professionals, whereas women are automatically seen as the administrative, finance, HR, pushing paperwork kind of thing,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for a private security company. *“I think it comes down to perceived stereotypes of men do security, women do administration,”* she continued. Another interview respondent noted that women, by stepping into the male-dominated world of security, simply become “paper-pushers.”

When discussing the issue of negative perceptions, one FGD participant, local national security professional

working for an NGO, noted that, *“Men feel a sense of entitlement to the role of [a] security [professional] and [only a] few [women] are brave enough to take on security roles.”* This interpretation might further testify to the male-dominated nature of the security profession, which would be naturally off-putting to anyone who does not possess the ‘right’ profile for entry. However, one participant disagreed noting that most entities within the HAD sector comply with the labor law, which would make discrimination and prevalence of negative perceptions difficult to adopt, given the necessity to employ transparent recruitment and employment practices. Speaking about the recruitment practices, at least one interview respondent stated that stereotypes negatively affect women’s ability to get a chance of entering the profession. *“I feel that straight from when you're doing interviews - actually, straight from when you are applying and being shortlisted, there are a lot of issues of barriers that separate men and women,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. *“A man is [more] likely to be shortlisted for a security job than a woman, and I feel it's very stereotypical across [the board].”*

One FGD participant noted that the definition of security, as a profession in South Sudan, has traditionally been very rigid and excluded women, a notion that has been subject to change more recently. With the recent relative stability in the country, more people have been exposed to new ideas (through travel and the return of diaspora) which has been informing a shift in cultural practices. Others noted that economic challenges and the need to gain employment often lead women to enter the security sector (which, perhaps, otherwise would be a less desirable sector for their employment).

Reluctance on the part of women to enter the safety and security profession was listed as a barrier by two interview respondents (one male and one female). *“A lot of... females do not feel confident and comfortable taking up these roles,”* said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. A female interviewee (an expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN) noted that, *“Particularly with women, they are very much reluctant to put themselves forward unless they feel that they are fully qualified for a job. Whereas men are much better at just saying, ‘Yeah, I could do the job, I’ll apply for it,’ and then finding out whether they can actually do it or not.”*

Echoing the above, one FGD participant noted that lacking desire from female professionals to enter the security sector is also a key barrier, which might be generated by the lack of female role models in the sector. The FGD participant, a local national working in a security role with an NGO, noted that when he was trying to recruit a female security professional, it was difficult to find the right candidates. FGD participants largely agreed that the lack of female role models is a major barrier, as without existing examples, it becomes difficult for women to aim for positions in security. *“Females are scarce in this field,”* said one of the participants, a local national security professional working for an NGO. However, the participant also noted that more recently the country has seen an increased number of female officers in the military and police, which promotes diversity and has the potential to create role models as well as a pool of talent that, when transitioning to a subsequent career, may create a ‘supply side’ push (from what would be regarded traditionally as a standard career path [military / police > risk and security management professional]) that would translate to a greater representation of women in the sector.

Historic and traditionally established notions about security, as well as the fact that the field remains male-dominated, were also mentioned by the interview respondents on a number of occasions. At least three interview respondents noted that there are simply not enough females in the field (echoing the lack of female role models as a barrier that received number three ranking in the survey listing). *“This is a heavily male-dominated industry. There has been little room or flexibility over the years. It has been improving, but the flexibility and room has been quite limited, especially for women,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. *“I think it starts with a perception issue, and I think the common perception that you’ll come across is that most male professionals tend to undermine or*

underrate female professionals in the industry.” One interview respondent spoke about the existing bias towards women in the profession, which carries a historic characteristic. “The barrier that I see is historic, and I think it’s out of date. It’s an old fossil. It’s an old dinosaur, and we need to move on, because the security world - the security environment we’re in is now ideal for men and women to work in, and I think at an equal level,” said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for a HAD sector forum group. The respondent called such bias against women “irrational,” but present within the DNA of organizations.

Further to the above, additional barriers listed by survey respondents included:

“More men [than] women are former military across the board so then within the security related careers as well. There definitely seems to me that some former military men [think] that this is the only previous work experience which matters in this field.”

“Women’s willingness to join the profession.”

“Male dominated work [environment].”

“Proper understanding of gender equality at work.”

“Social stigma and anticipated workload and risks associated with the position, especially field travels.”

Notably, most of the additional barriers offered by survey participants also centered around socio-cultural norms and the overall gender balance (or lack thereof) in the profession. One respondent noted just how strong the perception is that the field of security is suitable for ex-military/police only. This might be proving a further barrier to entry for female professionals. Currently dominated by ex-military/police males, the field tends to hire those who come from a similar background. These individuals’ primary and instinctive focus is more likely to be on the physical component of security risk management which in complex contexts such as South Sudan, where negotiated humanitarian access, the need to engage stakeholders in a sophisticated way or other, ‘softer’ components of security risk management associated with humanitarian security models, will often be of at least equal importance to gates, guns, and guards. While the military or police careers will provide some skills that are relevant, perceptions that, for instance, decision-making under pressure, the ability to think clearly when self or others are facing danger or emotional resilience, are the sole preserve of the military or police, are self-evidently false. And, equally, military and police careers are less likely to provide skills or experience of matters that may have more direct relevance to risk and security management in complex humanitarian aid settings, for instance such as the challenges faced by HAD programming, or stakeholder engagement.

FOR FEMALE SURVEY RESPONDENTS / CONSULTEES ONLY | WHAT BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION DO YOU EXPERIENCE DAY-TO-DAY?

For female respondents, the survey posed a question around which barriers they feel affect them in their day-to-day work as a risk and security management professional. Over 76% of female respondents chose the barrier revolving around certain stereotypes about women in the workplace, which limit their participation in more critical tasks.

Female respondents strongly pointed towards the fact that, on an everyday basis, female security professionals find themselves limited by certain stereotypes about women in the workplace (such as their ‘added value’ in attention to detail, emotional intelligence, open mindedness, etc.). This, in turn, limits their participation in more critical tasks, creating a certain glass ceiling as to what women can do and achieve within the security profession. Notably, this notion was also firmly present in at least two interview responses (outlined in the section on barriers to entry and progression within the profession).

The next most popular everyday workplace barrier, selected by female respondents, was a tendency of male colleagues to form a ‘guys club’ of risk and security management professionals that purposefully excludes women. While this study cannot determine whether men actually do or do not purposefully do this, the perception that a ‘guys club’ exists within the security profession is definitely prominent among female practitioners.

On a similar note, lack of networking opportunities, as the field is dominated by men who structure and use the networks for their own benefit, was chosen as a barrier by over 61% of female respondents.

The full list of everyday barriers selected by female respondents is presented in the table below:

BARRIERS IN EVERYDAY WORK OF A FEMALE RISK AND SECURITY PROFESSIONAL	FEMALE RESPONDENTS
Certain stereotypes about women in the workplace and their ‘value added’ (attention to detail, emotional intelligence, open mindedness, etc.), which limit women’s participation in other, more critical tasks.	76.92%
A tendency of male colleagues to form a ‘guys club’ of risk and security management professionals that purposefully excludes women.	69.23%
Lack of networking opportunities, as the field is dominated by men who structure and use the networks for their own benefit.	61.54%
Negative perceptions as to the aptitude of women for working in the field of risk and security management.	53.85%
Assumptions about a woman’s lacking ability to lead in the time of crisis.	53.85%
Overall socio-cultural resistance from male colleagues to women working in the field of risk and security management.	46.15%
Limited opportunities for career growth, as certain jobs/postings/locations are perceived to be for men only.	46.15%
Inability to have a woman’s voice heard in management and decision-making meetings, as these are dominated by men.	46.15%
Everyday sexism at work.	38.46%
Largely male-dominated management structures that are reluctant to promote and advance women.	30.77%
Higher burden of administrative work, as opposed to that delegated to the male colleagues.	23.08%

WHAT ARE THE ENABLERS THAT FOSTER / ENCOURAGE ENTRY AND PROGRESSION IN THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD?

When choosing enablers that might be specific to women who aspire to enter and progress in the field of security, survey respondents focused on concrete skills and experience in security management and incident and crisis management. Senior leadership placed emphasis on oral communication skills and relevant formal education. Notably, interview respondents found it more challenging to speak about the enablers (as opposed to barriers) and, on at least seven occasions (out of 17) the interviewees actually lapsed into a conversation about the existing barriers, when trying to identify any potential enablers.

Female respondents favored [1] incident and crisis management skills and experience and [2] risk and security management skills and experience as enablers for entry into the field (chosen by more than 81% of female respondents each). These were followed by relevant formal education/university degree (chosen by more than 63% of female respondents). (See Table 8 in Appendix A for detailed data from female respondents).

Male respondents, similar to their female counterparts, chose risk and security management skills and experience as one of the key enablers for women (more than 70% of male respondents chose this enabler). The second place, however, was given to [1] understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security and [2] pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals (both chosen by over 65% of male respondents). These choices point to the perceived importance of networking to one's success in the field of risk and security management. Knowledge of humanitarian principles enhances one's ability to operate as a security professional in the HAD sector, thus proving an important potential enabler (if such knowledge is in fact acquired). (See Table 9 in Appendix A for detailed data from male respondents).

For senior leadership respondents, possession of oral communication skills ranked as the highest enabler for women to enter into the profession (over 77% of CDs and CoPs choose this as an enabler specific to women). The second place was split between [1] relevant formal education/university degree and [2] risk and security management skills and experience (over 66% of senior managers chose each). The next three enablers in the overall ranking based on the senior management responses included: [1] understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security, [2] incident and crisis management skills and experience and [3] pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals. (See Table 10 in Appendix A for detailed data from CDs and CoPs respondents).

Security Managers identified risk and security management skills and experience as an enabler for entry, with this choice having been selected by over 91% of Security Managers. The second identified enabler was pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals. Those working as Security Managers can perhaps best relate to the value of networking in acquiring opportunities, as the field is composed of the same individuals who rotate between security companies, organizations, and similar contextual environments. Incident and crisis management skills and experience was chosen as an enabler by over 66% of Security Managers. Understanding of humanitarian principles was elevated to the fourth place, having been selected by over 58% of Security Managers respondents (similar to the ranking provided by senior leadership respondents). (See Table 11 in Appendix A for detailed data from security managers respondents).

SFPs most frequently selected three potential enablers: [1] understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security, [2] risk and security management skills and experience, and [3] pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals. Each of these enablers was selected by 75% of SFP respondents. Once again, the importance of networking, actual skills and experience, combined with an understanding of humanitarian principles, featured prominently. Such elements as formal education,

technical training, oral communication skills and incident and crisis management (four enablers in total) all split the second place in the SFPs ranking, each having been selected by over 66% of SFP respondents. (See Table 12 in Appendix A for detailed data from SFP Respondents).

The aggregated ranking, presented in the table below, gave risk and security management skills and experience as the most frequently selected potential enabler for women to enter the field of security (with over 72% of respondents selecting this enabler). [1] Incident and crisis management skills and experience and [2] pre-existing exposure to networks in the profession both received over 63% of cumulative responses. Understanding of humanitarian principles followed, with over 61% of respondents selecting this enabler.

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	ALL RESPONDENTS
Risk and security management skills and experience.	72.73%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	63.64%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	63.64%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	61.82%
Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	58.18%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	52.73%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	47.27%
Report writing and editing skills.	43.64%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	41.82%
Management and leadership skills.	36.36%
Project management experience.	34.55%
Experience with compliance, audit and evaluations.	0.00%

During the interviews, the most prominent answer was that women do not benefit from any specific enablers (given by four interviewees – two males and two females). Seven interview respondents (out of 17) lapsed back into a discussion on barriers when asked to name enablers for female risk and security management professionals.

A policy of gender balance and organizations purposefully and explicitly seeking to employ more women in the field of risk and security management was mentioned by at least three interview respondents (two males and one female). *“One of the big enablers is that within the UN and the NGO sectors, people are proactively trying to achieve some kind of gender balance, so they will be actively looking for women for many jobs,”* said

a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for a HAD sector forum group. Another interview respondent, a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN, said that, *"In many of the international organizations and operators, there is currently a gender balance policy [that] is in effect, which means that particularly as we are an incredibly male-heavy industry, it means right now, to be a woman, you are sitting lucky, to say the least. You're going to get promoted quicker than men. You're going to get more opportunities than men. Generally, across the board, you're just better off."* A female interview respondent, working as an expatriate risk and security management professional with a private security company, perhaps exhibited the most positive outlook about the type of enablers available for women professionals in the field. *"I would say there's definitely more enablers for women, because every organization is pushing to hire more women,"* she said. *"I don't know if it's fair, but if organizations have quotas for the hiring of a female over a man - I'm not sure if I believe in that, but definitely women are given more opportunities and are given more training opportunities, I find, within organizations."*

Unlike many of the responses listed under the question on the existing barriers, one interview respondent referred to the culture of South Sudan as an enabler, especially when compared with societies which do not allow women to work full stop. *"There is no discrimination, and women staff, they do the same job as the male staff,"* said the respondent, a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *"They're equally capable, and they are willing. So there is no ... issue for them to join."* The respondent also referred to the existing educational opportunities, also abroad, as an enabler for women to join the sector.

Two interview respondents spoke about the value of mentorship as an enabling factor. However, their views on mentorship within the profession varied, with one respondent being markedly more positive than the other. *"I'm so lucky I think in my career to have men who have really encouraged me in my field, but it's not always the same across the board,"* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO. *"I've also had a fair share of women who've mentored me through my career, luckily for me."* However, she attributed more to the male mentors, who *"created this space for me in their field, in a field that is very male dominated."* Another interview respondent, a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN, said the following: *"Look, women are bitches. We know this, and we are supposed to support each other. How can we do better and lift other women up if we don't talk positively about each other and each other's success and celebrate that success. Unfortunately, we still have women in the sector that see other women as a threat, and while that is disappointing, I think it should still be acknowledged that it does occur."* This negative perception of the value of female role models in the field speaks to the barrier to entry identified earlier in the study. The frankness of the response from one interviewee perhaps helps to uncover that not all the role models are created equal and even when they exist, they do not necessarily work to level the playing field for others.

A number of other enablers mentioned during the interviews included experience, willingness to do the job, ability to consider many aspects prior to making a decision and competency. Additional enablers offered by the survey respondents, as specific to women, included the following:

"... [recruitment] process which encourages female applicants and societies which treat women equally and [allow] them to take any roles men are involved in."

"Thick skin, aware of the male dominated culture of [South Sudan]."

"Put more incentives and flexibilities for female security professionals."

Notably, additional enablers listed above once again spoke to the socio-cultural norms and attitudes that exist within the security sector more broadly, as well as specifically within the context of South Sudan. The reference to possessing 'thick skin' further underlines the notion that for women to advance in the profession, they perhaps need to possess greater levels of grit and perseverance as compared to their male counterparts.

WHAT IS THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD IN SOUTH SUDAN?

When asked about the current representation of women in the risk and security management profession in South Sudan, interview respondents pointed to the fact that there are simply not enough women in the profession. However, the respondents remained mildly optimistic, noting that some progress has been achieved already.

At least three interview respondents mentioned the presence of women in security guard forces, referring to the private security companies in South Sudan and the requirement, as might be posed by the clients, to have women at the gate. This was the only area with a relatively significant presence of female security professionals, as highlighted by the interviewees. Two respondents (both females) said that they have never come across another female risk and security management professional in the context of South Sudan. While this might not be representative, such a notion does highlight how weak and/or unpopulated the networks of female security professionals are. One male respondent noted that there might be only one woman out of every ten security professionals in South Sudan. Another male respondent, however, estimated that the field might be divided more evenly – half-and-half. At least two respondents put the number of women working in the security sector in South Sudan at about ten total. *“Participation [of women in the sector] is very low,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for a private security company. *“You can count on a hand how many women are in the industry, and that’s for an international and a local level, for sure.”* One female respondent noted that she could name around ten expatriate female risk and security management professionals. Speaking about local national staff, the interviewee then emphasized another point, discussed as one of the barriers that women face in the field: *“They [local national female staff] are not security and risk professionals, to be honest. They’re not. They’re security assistants,”* she said. *“They’re security officers, but ... they’re doing the administrative part of security management.”* Thus, all the anecdotal evidence above shows how rare the notion of a female security professional is in South Sudan and how little the overall security circle actually knows about these professionals.

Based on PLSO approximations, the context of South Sudan currently employs around seven expatriate females in safety and security roles, working for the UN and INGOs. The number of local national females working in the safety and security sector might be higher but cannot be ascertained without an all-encompassing survey.

At least eight (three male and five female) out of 17 interview respondents flatly stated that the context of South Sudan simply does not have enough females in the risk and security management sector. *“First of all, there is generally a shortage of women,”* said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for a HAD sector forum group. *“Secondly, there is an acute shortage of South Sudanese women in the sector.”* One interview respondent, a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO, shared the following thoughts: *“It’s been horrible, really. [Women are] completely underrepresented. You’d go to an organization and find even less than 10 women globally [working] in security.”*

At least four respondents (two men and two women), however, were cautiously optimistic, noting that the situation is improving. *“It’s getting better. There’s a lot of room for improvement, but I think we’re definitely seeing more women come into the sector, slowly, and I do think there is definitely a push within the humanitarian sector, at least that I’m aware of, to look at that gender balance and make sure that there is a bit more equity ... and women are more represented in the security field,”* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *“I definitely think it’s being recognized and being talked about. That being said, there still is a huge discrepancy between the numbers of men versus women,”* she continued.

HOW DO, OR HOW COULD, WOMEN ADD VALUE TO THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD?

The set of interview questions also included an inquiry into the value that the advancement of women can bring to the risk and security management profession. Many respondents spoke about the soft skills that women possess, including communication, as well as their ability to incorporate a female perspective into security plans and protocols, thus leading to a more balanced approach to security. Women's ability to negotiate access and gather information were also highlighted in the responses.

At least five interview respondents (four men and one woman) spoke about a unique and different perspective offered by female professionals. The fact that women in security often come with a different background than that of a typical male security professional (frequently ex-military or police), might contribute to their ability to see things differently and offer a different skill set. *"They [women] would offer a different skill set, and ... may come from different backgrounds, as well,"* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *"They would ... add a completely unique perspective that's just not represented in the security sector a lot of the time."*

From a practical standpoint, a greater number of women in the profession might lead to the development of mitigation measures and security policies that account for the specific risks to women (including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and gender-based violence (GBV) more generally). This view was shared by three interview respondents, one man and two women. *"Having a female perspective in developing those standard operating procedures or whatever risk mitigation is extremely important, to make sure that it's all inclusive for both genders,"* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. Another respondent (a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN) noted that the presence of women on a security team would cause the team to consider security issues from a wider angle, taking into consideration the male and the female perspectives, with, *"The mitigating measures ... reflected accordingly,"* he concluded. Another respondent (a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO) spoke about a balanced approach to security, which can stem from the greater presence of women in the profession: *"I think it [the advancement of women in the profession] would create a very balanced approach in terms of what we see, how we see it and what we do about it,"* he said.

Ability to negotiate access was mentioned as an added value by two respondents. *"You are far more likely to be received well as a female here, ... than you are as an international male,"* said a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *"I think recognizing that women can be real access enablers in terms of information collection and in terms of literal physical access is something that we could go a long way to recognize,"* she continued. Communication skills, perceived as being a strength that women possess, were also mentioned during the interviews, together with several other skills that interviewees termed as "soft." *"Women see things and communicate things in a different way, and I think that is often more effective and more acceptable to the people that we're trying to talk to, so I think women bring a lot to the profession,"* said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an HAD sector forum group. Another respondent (a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for an NGO) noted that women, *"Have a bit more level of tact for conducting certain interviews, conducting certain activities,"* which allows them to generate results in the risk and security management sphere. Another respondent (a female expatriate risk and security management professional working for a private security company) emphasized that women offer more soft skills, look at risk situations differently, are calmer (as compared to men) during a crisis and follow procedures/plans, when a crisis escalates. Attention to detail, thoroughness, and possession of a "gut feeling" also made it to the list of soft skills. *"We all know that diversity helps in decision-making, and I do believe that women have more soft skills than men,"* said a female

expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. *“Again, this is a trait that is becoming more apparent as being needed.”*

On a side note, of course, many of the statements from respondents also reflect widely held perceptions as to how men and women think and act differently and also the fact that the men represented in the sector tend to come from backgrounds that have traditionally not tended to prize softer, interpersonal skills or emotional intelligence. This is problematic, because some of the barriers to entry and progression might, therefore, equally be experienced by men who do not come from a military or police background and assumes, also, that all men have fewer soft skills... To put it another way, if a potential entrant to the field who comes from a humanitarian aid technical programming background was being described, and is adept at engaging local stakeholders, builds rapport quickly and easily across genders and cultures and is a decisive, clear thinker under pressure, is it a man or a woman being described? Clearly, it could be either!

A notable perspective was offered by one respondent, who emphasized that women make up about 50 percent of the total population, which constitutes an enormous resource for information gathering. Thus, female security professionals could be best positioned to tap into this resource, which is especially of value in a patriarchal society (as women are perceived as inconsequential and can thus see and hear things when they are not noticed by others). *“Generally, the more patriarchal a society is, the more undervalued women are, the more of a goldmine they absolutely are for information gathering, collection and so forth,”* said a male expatriate risk and security management professional working for the UN. This, in turn, positions female risk and security management professionals as an excellent, and necessary, element of information gathering and analysis.

At least two respondents emphasized that women have a strong approach to management, which would once again only benefit the sector as a whole. *“Their [women’s] approach to management of issues is to solve the issue and not to create another one,”* said a female local national risk and security management professional working for an NGO.

WHAT INITIATIVES OR ACTIONS COULD ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE RISK AND SECURITY FIELD?

When reviewing a list of potential initiatives that could be launched to enhance opportunities for women to enter the risk and security management profession, launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management and training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies became the most frequently chosen responses. Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan received significantly less support.

Female respondents chose [1] launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management and [2] training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management) as the most relevant initiatives. These were closely followed by [1] making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity,) and [2] conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men. Notably, provision of relevant university-level education ranked last among the list of potential initiatives, with only 27% of female respondents choosing it as an initiative that can enhance opportunities for women to enter the security profession. (See Table 14 in Appendix A for detailed data from female respondents).

For male respondents, the ranking of potential initiatives was very similar to that provided by female respondents. Once again, launch and promotion of professional networks and training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies topped the list, each having been selected by more than 81% of

male respondents. Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals ranked in the third place, with more than 79% of male respondents selecting this initiative. Provision of relevant university-level education ranked quite low in comparison, with only 38% of male respondents selecting this as a viable initiative. (See Table 15 in Appendix A for detailed data from male respondents).

Responses generated by senior management, resulted in a near identical ranking to that provided by the male respondents. The top three initiatives ([1] launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management, [2] training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management), and [3] making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.)) – all received more than 77% of the vote from CDs and CoPs. (See Table 16 in Appendix A for detailed data from CDs and CoPs respondents).

For Security Managers, making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals constituted the most appropriate initiative (selected by over 91% of Security Managers respondents). This was followed by [1] launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management and [2] training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (over 83% and 75% respectively). Large-scale projects and university-level education were ranked towards the bottom of the list of initiatives. (See Table 17 in Appendix A for detailed data from security managers respondents).

For SFPs, launch and promotion of professional networks and training opportunities received an equal score to that recorded by their Security Manager colleagues, with over 91% of respondents identifying them as important initiatives. Over 83% of SFP respondents voted in favor of conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men. SFPs constitute the only group of respondents who placed this measure/initiative in a firm third place – this might be stemming from their experience in the field, outside of the capital city of Juba, where perceptions around what constitutes a ‘woman’s work’ might be more entrenched than in the capital (which might also be witnessing a larger number of females working in the field of safety and security). (See Table 18 in Appendix A for detailed data from SFP Respondents).

The top three initiatives, as selected by the aggregated survey responses, were [1] launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management, [2] training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management), and [3] making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity). Notably, conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan was selected by 54% of respondents. However, its overall low ranking speaks to the perceived low likelihood of such an initiative being able to generate any level of immediate success.



Aggregated ranking is presented in the table below:

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	ALL RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	81.82%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	81.82%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity).	78.18%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	70.91%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	69.09%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	54.55%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	36.36%
None of the above	0.00%

FGD participants overall agreed with the aggregated ranking, noting that creation of institutions to provide training for women in security and inclusion of security into university curriculum could constitute valuable initiatives. One participant specifically noted that South Sudan does not have any formal risk management training institutions. At the moment, risk management educational opportunities are available in the neighboring countries only and attending them might require significant financial resources and ability to travel. *“By training, women will develop an understanding [of] what risk management is, which will make them unique and different from those who don’t have that exposure and it will make them the ambassadors of risk management,”* said one participant, a local national security professional working for an NGO.

As for the notion of female role models in the field, participants noted that private security companies do in fact employ female security professionals, especially as guards, but they might have difficulty transitioning into the humanitarian security sector, which does not necessarily make them effective role models in the field. However, more broadly, there are good examples of leadership in the humanitarian sector in South Sudan, as most organizations have females in leadership roles. The presence of women in leadership roles – even if they are not security related – can serve as a positive example and encouragement for women to enter the sector.

Focusing on the visibility of recruitment opportunities, one FGD participant, an expatriate working as a security manager for an international entity, noted that, *“Through combating discrimination we are creating more discrimination – ultimately what you want is the best person for the job.”* If recruitment becomes targeted towards certain groups, such as people with university education, this might create conflict between these individuals and those who do not possess university education, but still have the necessary qualifications.

Another FGD participant shared that women might not be visible to recruitment processes: *“Whilst women often have the will and the interest (even the education) they often do not have access to the tools for professional development,”* he said. Others also agreed that targeted recruitment might be a fitting initiative for the South Sudan context. Currently, private security companies in South Sudan are male-dominated and when people leave, they often become replaced “like-for-like” through networks and connections, to which women might not have access.

Speaking outside of the provided list of initiatives, one FGD participant, a local national working as a security professional for an NGO, noted that the term ‘security’ is associated with the war and military and police activities in South Sudan. *“Changing the names of positions, by removing the word ‘security’ might allow more women to become part of the sector,”* he said.

CONCLUSION

The research study revealed a broad consensus that both men and women are equally capable of fulfilling roles as risk and security management practitioners. The majority of interview respondents stated that the competencies, needed to enter the field of security, are the same for men and women. However, throughout its findings, the study consistently highlighted the significant negative impact of socio-cultural norms and perceptions of female practitioners, either at the stage of entry into the field or during their time in the job. Notably, some respondents referred to these socio-cultural factors as necessitating women to develop additional competencies to combat what were, ultimately, limiting or demotivating influences. The reference to possessing ‘thick skin,’ made by one of the survey respondents, further underlined the notion that women in security need to develop greater levels of grit and perseverance as compared to their male counterparts.



Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms,) to women working in the sector has been identified as the most prominent barrier to women’s entry and progression within the sector. When in the job itself, the perception of women and their abilities, leads to them being side-lined into duties away from the decision-making or the operational realm, a fact which ultimately stunts their progression. The study revealed evidence suggesting that, in some cases, women simply become ‘paper-pushers’ in the male-dominated world of security.

The study also confirmed an anecdotally recognized fact that there are simply not enough women in the risk and security management profession in South Sudan. However, the respondents remained mildly optimistic, noting that some progress has been achieved already and that many organizations, at least in principle, are aiming towards a greater gender balance in their safety and security departments.

The study’s findings around enablers for women to enter and progress within the field of security proved less positive, as many of the interview respondents lapsed into a discussion of barriers instead, seemingly unable to

re-orientate their view to one where there were ideas or actions that could have a directly positive effect. This, in itself, should signal to the sector that the gender gap is real, and few tools exist to combat the negative perception, gender bias in favor of men, and challenge socio-cultural norms around the roles of women.

Arguably resonating with the study's finding that the field of security was essentially a 'guys' club', with opportunities, networking, selection and recruitment often controlled or constructed to favor men, it was the launch and promotion of professional networks for women and training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies that were the most frequently chosen potential initiatives for the advancement of women in the security sector.

The overarching conclusion of this research are that, in parallel with more generalized efforts (cross-sectoral) to foster diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I), the following actionable recommendations would likely have the greatest impact on increasing gender representation and breaking down barriers to progression within the risk and security field in South Sudan:

- Launching and promoting professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management. Participation in these networks by peers who can serve as mentors and role models is perceived to be of value.
- Training opportunities, offered specifically to women, and targeting technical competencies (in risk and security management) perceived to be in demand would play a positive role.
- Increasing the visibility of both the role of women within the sector and also recruitment opportunities and doing so in contexts where women are more likely to 'see' this communication would play a positive role.



APPENDIX A

DATA TABLES – WOMEN IN SECURITY RESEARCH STUDY

Question 1: From the list provided, choose the most prominent barriers specific to women aspiring to enter or progress in the risk and security management profession, specifically in South Sudan:

Table 1

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	FEMALE RESPONDENTS
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	84.62%
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	84.62%
Lack of female role models in the field.	76.92%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	69.23%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	69.23%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	53.85%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	46.15%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	30.77%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	30.77%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	30.77%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	23.08%
Lack of project management experience.	15.38%

Table 2

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	MALE RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	80.00%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	74.00%
Lack of female role models in the field.	68.00%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	60.00%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	56.00%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	56.00%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	52.00%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	48.00%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	38.00%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	34.00%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	32.00%
Lack of project management experience.	12.00%

Table 3

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	CDs and CoPs RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	80.00%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	80.00%

Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	80.00%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	70.00%
Lack of female role models in the field.	70.00%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	70.00%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	60.00%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	60.00%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	60.00%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	50.00%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	40.00%
Lack of project management experience.	20.00%

Table 4

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	SECURITY MANAGERS RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	61.54%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	61.54%
Lack of female role models in the field.	53.85%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	53.85%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	46.15%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	38.46%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	38.46%

Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	30.77%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	23.08%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	23.08%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	15.38%
Lack of project management experience.	15.38%

Table 5

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	SFP RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	100.00%
Lack of female role models in the field.	85.71%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	78.57%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	71.43%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	64.29%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	64.29%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	50.00%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	50.00%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	42.86%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	42.86%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	28.57%
Lack of project management experience.	0.00%

Table 6

BARRIERS TO ENTRY SPECIFIC TO WOMEN	ALL RESPONDENTS
Socio-cultural resistance (including hostility, expectations with regard to cultural norms, etc.) to women working in the sector.	80.95%
Negative perceptions as to relative aptitude of women versus men for working in the field of risk and security management.	73.02%
Lack of female role models in the field.	69.84%
Lack of a genuinely gender-blind processes (recruitment and selection, career advancement, etc).	65.08%
Visibility of recruitment opportunities to women (as, for example, women may be perceived to fall outside less formal networks where opportunities arise).	58.73%
Lack of first-career experience within the field of security (military/police).	50.79%
Lack of technical expertise in risk and security management.	47.62%
Lack of pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	47.62%
Lack of relevant formal education/university degree in security, crisis or resilience.	41.27%
Lack of experience in the use of security technologies and equipment.	31.75%
Lack of communication skills for training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	31.75%
Lack of project management experience.	12.70%

Question 2: As a female professional in the field of risk and security management, which barriers do you personally feel apply to your everyday work in South Sudan (either at the entry stage or as you are trying to progress in your career) (select all that apply):

Table 7

BARRIERS IN EVERYDAY WORK OF A FEMALE RISK AND SECURITY PROFESSIONAL	FEMALE RESPONDENTS
Certain stereotypes about women in the workplace and their ‘value added’ (attention to detail, emotional intelligence, open mindedness, etc.), which limit women’s participation in other, more critical tasks.	76.92%
A tendency of male colleagues to form a ‘guys club’ of risk and security management professionals that purposefully excludes women.	69.23%
Lack of networking opportunities, as the field is dominated by men who structure and use the networks for own benefit.	61.54%
Negative perceptions as to the aptitude of women for working in the field of risk and security management.	53.85%
Assumptions about a woman’s lacking ability to lead in the time of crisis.	53.85%
Overall socio-cultural resistance from male colleagues to women working in the field of risk and security management.	46.15%
Limited opportunities for career growth, as certain jobs/postings/locations are perceived to be for men only.	46.15%
Inability to have a woman’s voice heard in management and decision-making meetings, as these are dominated by men.	46.15%
Everyday sexism at work.	38.46%
Largely male-dominated management structures that are reluctant to promote and advance women.	30.77%
Higher burden of administrative work, as opposed to that delegated to the male colleagues.	23.08%

Question 3: From the list provided, choose the most relevant enablers specific to women, aspiring to enter the risk and security management profession, specifically in South Sudan:

Table 8

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	FEMALE RESPONDENTS
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	81.82%
Risk and security management skills and experience.	81.82%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	63.64%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	54.55%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	45.45%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	45.45%
Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	45.45%
Project management experience.	27.27%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	27.27%
Management and leadership skills.	27.27%
Report writing and editing skills.	18.18%
Experience with compliance, audits and evaluations.	0.00%

Table 9

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	MALE RESPONDENTS
Risk and security management skills and experience.	70.45%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	65.91%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	65.91%

Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	61.36%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	59.09%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	50.00%
Report writing and editing skills.	50.00%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	47.73%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	45.45%
Management and leadership skills.	38.64%
Project management experience.	36.36%
Experience with compliance, audit and evaluations.	0.00%

Table 10

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	CDs and CoPs RESPONDENTS
Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	77.78%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	66.67%
Risk and security management skills and experience.	66.67%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	55.56%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	55.56%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	55.56%
Project management experience.	44.44%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	44.44%
Management and leadership skills.	33.33%
Report writing and editing skills.	33.33%

Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	22.22%
Experience with compliance, audits and evaluations.	0.00%

Table 11

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	SECURITY MANAGERS RESPONDENTS
Risk and security management skills and experience.	91.67%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	75.00%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	66.67%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	58.33%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	50.00%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	50.00%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	33.33%
Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	33.33%
Report writing and editing skills.	33.33%
Project management experience.	25.00%
Management and leadership skills.	16.67%
Experience with compliance, audits and evaluations.	0.00%

Table 12

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	SFP RESPONDENTS
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	75.00%
Risk and security management skills and experience.	75.00%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	75.00%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	66.67%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	66.67%
Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	66.67%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	66.67%
Management and leadership skills.	58.33%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	50.00%
Report writing and editing skills.	41.67%
Project management experience.	16.67%
Experience with compliance, audits and evaluations.	0.00%

Table 13

ENABLERS FOR ENTRY INTO THE FIELD OF SECURITY FOR WOMEN	ALL RESPONDENTS
Risk and security management skills and experience.	72.73%
Incident and crisis management skills and experience.	63.64%
Pre-existing exposure to the network of security and risk management professionals.	63.64%
Understanding of humanitarian principles as it relates to security.	61.82%

Oral communication skills relevant to conducting training, briefings, table-top exercises, etc.	58.18%
Relevant formal education/university degree.	52.73%
Specialized technical training, of relevance to the humanitarian and/or commercial sector.	47.27%
Report writing and editing skills.	43.64%
Technical expertise in one or more of the additional functional areas (finance, contracts, legal, compliance, business development, etc.).	41.82%
Management and leadership skills.	36.36%
Project management experience.	34.55%
Experience with compliance, audit and evaluations.	0.00%

Question 4: Which of the following are the most relevant initiatives to implement in order to enhance opportunities for women to enter the risk and security management field in South Sudan (select all that apply):

Table 14

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	FEMALE RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	81.82%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	81.82%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	72.73%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	72.73%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	63.64%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	45.45%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	27.27%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 15

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	MALE RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	81.82%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	81.82%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	79.55%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	75.00%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	70.45%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	52.27%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	38.64%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 16

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	CDs and CoPs RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	77.78%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	77.78%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	77.78%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	66.67%

Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	66.67%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	55.56%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	44.44%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 17

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	SECURITY MANAGERS RESPONDENTS
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	91.67%
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	83.33%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	75.00%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	66.67%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	66.67%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	33.33%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	33.33%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 18

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	SFP RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	91.67%

Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	91.67%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	83.33%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	75.00%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	66.67%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	66.67%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	41.67%
None of the above	0.00%

Table 19

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO ENTER THE SECURITY PROFESSION	ALL RESPONDENTS
Launch and promotion of professional networks for women in the field of risk and security management.	81.82%
Training opportunities to develop specific technical competencies (in risk and security management).	81.82%
Making recruitment opportunities visible to aspiring female professionals (targeting university campuses, locations where women might be more likely to see the advertised opportunity, etc.).	78.18%
Conducting events and initiatives that remove the perception of risk and security management as a field most appropriate for men.	70.91%
Formulating recruitment opportunities in such a way that they become more appealing to women.	69.09%
Conducting large-scale projects that aim to change gender norms and perceptions in South Sudan.	54.55%
Provision of relevant university-level education.	36.36%
None of the above	0.00%