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Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Untapped Enablers of Operational Effectiveness

JCSP 47

Exercise Solo Flight

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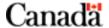
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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: UNTAPPED ENABLERS OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

In 2017, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* identified the importance of leveraging Canada's diversity to enhance military operational effectiveness by drawing on the strengths of the Canadian population.¹ Other than with some token slogans and sound bites, five years later employment equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) remain an afterthought and detached from projects, programs, and planning. Linking human perspectives with the assistance of EEDI into the core components of operational effectiveness, such as integrity of personnel, assessing and conceptualizing future capabilities, and socialization and building effective teams is a requirement. In order to meet one of our mandated deliverables to Canadian society, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) needs to bring the human back into the ranks, across all levels of the CAF and Department of National Defence.

The importance of an operationally effective CAF is clear, demands from our government which deploy the CAF across Canada and the world have members working as anything from ambassadors, to health care providers, and warriors to humanitarians. The CAF's ability to effectively conduct this broad range of operations is fundamental to the protection of Canada and its borders, but also for strategic international communications and messaging. In order for the CAF to remain relevant, it needs to have the trust and support of Canadians.

Specifically, since the summer of 2020, EEDI has become front and center. As the CAF continues to get in step with Canadian society, it is simultaneously griping with its own internal challenges of misconduct. The fuel behind movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo is not something new, what has shifted is how the majority of our population now realizes that

¹ Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. Strong, Secure, Engaged. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.23

"the status quo has never been fair and is no longer tenable." ² How these movements are impacting the core essence of the CAF is important to understand. As a very conservative organization that is "pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, and nationalistic" ³ the pace of social change far exceeds the willingness of the military to adjust.⁴

While typically used together with a broad brush, employment equity, diversity, and inclusion are three very different, albeit intertwined terms that are worth defining before continuing. Employment equity is designed to "identify and remove barriers to equality in employment for reasons unrelated to ability, by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, and remedying the effects of past discrimination." ⁵ Diversity, when associating it with people, is "when many different identities and lived experiences come together within an organization or group." ⁶ Diversity is typically shown in numbers with percentage goals and gaps between available and actual representation within an organization or population. Lastly, inclusion is broadly described as "the extent to which diverse members of a group, society, and/or organization feel valued and respected." ⁷ Diversity is about counting people, where inclusion is making people count.

Meaningful institutional EEDI policies and practices should be a national and international security priority.⁸ By embracing EEDI, the CAF's operational effectiveness will

² Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. 2022. "Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives." In *Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives*, by Barbara T. Waruszynski, Yantsislav Yanakiev and Daniel P. McDonald. Springer Publishing. p.2

³ Ibid. p.2

⁴ Ibid. p.2

⁵ Canadian Race Relations Foundation, "CRRF Glossary of Terms – Employment Equity," accessed 27 May 2022, https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1

⁶ Cambridge English Dictionary, "Diversity", accessed 27 May 2022, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diversity

⁷ Canadian Race Relations Foundation, "CRRF Glossary of Terms – Inclusion," accessed 27 May 2022, https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1

⁸ Meaghan Shoemaker and Michelle Barsa. 2022. "Creating Representative and Responsive Security Sector Forces." In *Untapped Power: Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion for Conflict and Development*, by Carla Koppell, 315-334. New York: Oxford University Press. p.316

increase as it brings in new perspectives which contribute directly to developing a reflective understanding of our complex world and enables an effective response to challenges. ⁹

Once engrained into the CAF core, EEDI is a self-licking ice cream cone when applied to CAF personnel structure. The constant loop of EEDI impacts to personnel integrity consists of strong recruitment and retention which in turn results in higher job performance and satisfaction, and less operational burnout causing the CAF to be more attractive to join or remain a part of. This all culminates in more people doing their jobs to a higher standard, causing in an increase of operational effectiveness.

Statistics Canada Census 2021 indicates that our Canadian population is growing in representation and the demographics within society contrasts with the composition of the CAF. Failure to address the reasons for the increasing gap between labour market availability and CAF representation will result in numerous positions remaining vacant. The strain and stress on current serving members who are picking up the slack of these vacant billets is trying, it decreases job performance and satisfaction leading to early release. Tapping into a less constrictive talent pool through the removal of systemic barriers in the recruiting process is one possible solution to meeting recruitment needs without needing to impact operational effectiveness or capabilities. On this note is the barrier of post-secondary education for some Canadians. "Meaningful educational experiences are an individual right which helps to secure academic, personal, and social success through better health, higher incomes, and just generally being happier" ¹¹ so if facilitating more post-secondary opportunities within the CAF with a

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⁹ Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.23 ¹⁰ Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy. 2022. *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination – Final Report*. Final, Ottawa: Her Majesty the Oueen in Right of Canada. p.20

¹¹ M Tamtik and M. Guenter. 2019. "Policy Analysis of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategies in Canadian Universities - How Far Have We Come?" *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 41-56. p. 49

focus on those who may otherwise not be awarded that opportunity would result in the CAF becoming a more attractive employment option. Lastly is the importance of future recruits seeing themselves in uniform and seeing a career without barriers in their future. This point leads into the "what came first" issue with retention.

A focus on only representation within the CAF is not enough to retain our members and this needs to be applied with steps to strengthen inclusion. ¹² While high retention rates overall can be an indicator of great moral, which contributes to operational effectiveness, it is important to desegregate the data and dig deeper before assuming this is the case in the CAF. "2021 statistics demonstrate that members identifying with one or more of the designated groups have much lower retention rates than those who don't."¹³ Let's look at the multiple layers of impacts due to that statement. Without bringing human perspectives into retention considerations in the CAF, members of designated groups will continue to be sparse at higher ranks, resulting in diminished opportunities for designated groups to see a future in the CAF. Additionally, this subsequently negatively impacts attraction as the CAF will continue to outwardly look very homogenous. As indicated in the Minister's Final Report, these discussions are not meant to devalue the contributions of cis-gender, white, straight, able bodied men in the CAF, but to identify that barriers do exist and without implementing EEDI at the core of personnel integrity then operational effectiveness will be impacted.

There is evidence that inclusion is closely linked to member's engagement, itself in turn a critical aspect of retention and productivity.¹⁴ When a full complement of members deploy, all

¹² Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle *et al.* 2020. *Diversity Wins, How Inclusion Matters*. London: McKinsey and Company. p.6
¹³ Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a focus on Anti-

Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy. 2022. *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination – Final Report.* Final, Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada. p.16

¹⁴ Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle et al. 2020. Diversity Wins, How Inclusion Matters. London: McKinsey and Company. p.32

proficiently trained to meet the demands of the mission, and efficiently functioning as a team, job performance increases resulting in feelings of accomplishment and job satisfaction. If individuals are not included, they expend energy suppressing and covering their differences in order to fit in. More than likely, they give up on the CAF and simply do the bare minimum until they can leave. Burnout can manifest from multiple sources such as stress, high operational tempo, and a lack of safety within a group due to experiencing any or a combination of the "isms". These actions lead to the concept of othering of members, an exclusionary act which implies that they're not good enough to be part of the "in" crowd. Within the US military, there have been proven links between inclusive environments relating to lower feelings of burnout. ¹⁶

In this section, the constant loop of impacts to personnel integrity was discussed where EEDI is at the base of strong recruitment and retention, resulting in higher job performance and satisfaction, and less operational burnout causing the CAF to be more attractive to join or remain a part of. The more that confident, competent and included members exist in the CAF leads to an overall increase of operational effectiveness. A personnel structure which is established and maintained allows for better capacity to challenge our future capabilities as will be discussed next.

To plan for future capabilities without including buzz words such as innovative or outside of the box thinking is setting the CAF up for failure. In this section, impacts of EEDI on the ability to challenge group think past "the way it's always been done", to better assess the future operating environment, and to design and procure equipment which is more inclusive to a human interface will be discussed.

¹⁵ Alister Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani. 2019. *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p.9

¹⁶ Katrina P. Merlini *et al.* 2019. "Linking Inclusion to Intent to Leave Through Burnout in a Military Context." *Military Psychology* 490-498. p. 491

Due to a reliance on tradition, many security forces are inhibited when it comes to innovation and creativity due to subconsciously allowing the domination of the majority group. 17 "Diverse teams are more likely to frequently reexamine facts, remain objective, and encourage scrutiny of each member's actions." 18 By dividing up homogeneity, members become more aware of their own biases which conceal and limit ways of thinking that can blind them to key information. ¹⁹ Overall, it's proven that people from diverse backgrounds can alter the behavior of a group's majority in ways that lead to improved and more accurate group thinking.²⁰ Research has shown that inclusive teams perform up to 30% better in diverse environments through challenging group think and implementing better decision making, ²¹ which in turn links into increased job performance and satisfaction as discussed in the previous section. Additionally, the increased ability to make better decisions enables action "with decisive military capability across the spectrum of operations to defend Canada, protect Canadian interests and values, and contribute to global stability." ²² Understanding that Liddell-Hart's critique that "the only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out", ²³ the CAF requirement to proactively adapt "to emerging challenges by harnessing new technologies, fostering a resilient workforce, and leveraging innovation, knowledge, and new ways of doing business" ²⁴ should take precedence.

¹⁷ Meaghan Shoemaker and Michelle Barsa. 2022. "Creating Representative and Responsive Security Sector Forces." In *Untapped Power: Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion for Conflict and Development*, by Carla Koppell, 315-334. New York: Oxford University Press. p.316

¹⁸ Heidi Grant and David Rock. 2016. "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter." *Harvard Business Review* https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter.

¹⁹ Îbid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Moira Alexander. 2021. "5 ways diversity and inclusion help teams perform better." *Chief Information Officer (CIO)* https://www.cio.com/article/189194/5-ways-diversity-and-inclusion-help-teams-perform-better.html.

²² Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. Strong, Secure, Engaged. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.63

²³ Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. 2022. "Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives." In *Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives*, by Barbara T. Waruszynski, Yantsislav Yanakiev and Daniel P. McDonald. Springer Publishing. p.15

²⁴ Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. Strong, Secure, Engaged. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.63

One of the essential aspects of looking at future capabilities is a quality assessment of the future operating environment in order to "anticipate and better understand potential threats to Canada and Canadian interests."²⁵ Greater diversity within a team changes the way that a team digests and analyses the information which are needed to come to the best informed conclusions. 26 The promotion of a more inclusive debate through listening and engaging with diverse perspectives enables a historical discussion, which is too often dominated by the majority groups and perspectives, to be more accessible. 27 "Historically, Western white males have dominated the study and practice of international security. Even today, many biases related to race, and gender hamper the inclusion of greater diversity in international security". ²⁸ An example where Canada's assessment of the future operating environment would improve is through the inclusion of Indigenous peoples, immigration, and human security perspectives. ²⁹ More specifically, the Inuit views on climate change and its threat on their social cohesion, or the preservation of their cultural identity and political autonomy.³⁰ Indigenous knowledge presents concepts of security that may be overlooked, particularly with respect to human and food security related to fisheries and hunting.³¹ Looking more broadly, the CAF recognizes that conflict, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises affect people differently depending on their intersecting identities. "Implementing GBA Plus into the planning and execution of operations is a means to both improve operational effectiveness and meet the needs of those who are

²⁵ Ibid. p.63

²⁶ Heidi Grant and David Rock. 2016. "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter." *Harvard Business Review* https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter.

²⁷ Marianne Bouchard and Gaëlle Rivard Piché. 2021. For Greater Inclusion and Diversity in International Security: Courses of Action for the Network for Strategic Analysis. Policy Report, Kingston: Network for Strategic Analysis. p.1

²⁸ Ibid. p.2

²⁹ Ibid. p.2-3

³⁰ Ibid. p.2-3

³¹ Ibid. p.2-3

disproportionately affected by conflict and crisis".³² Lastly, the cultural competency due to engaging and listening to diverse personnel can lead to "better prediction, comprehension, and influencing of the behaviour of diverse people in foreign lands."³³

Integrating a diverse range of current and future human psychological and biometric perspectives into the design and procurement process is key to future operational effectiveness. Consulting with individuals who do not look, talk, or think like the majority allows teams to innovate and conceptualize future capabilities. ³⁴ The most effective way to gain more perspectives is to consistently implement steps of GBA Plus throughout the procurement process, from the very first concepts into life-cycle considerations and execution. Through this analysis process, barriers to the most effective and efficient human use of equipment can be identified and rectified early which costs less and can result in more equipment being purchased. Barriers can be something as small as needing to lower a valve by an inch so as to make it more comfortable and effective for people less than 5 ft 6 inches to reach and twist. They can also be as impactful as creating inclusive shower spaces which are single person use with locks to enable those who have or are at higher risk of experiencing military sexual trauma to feel safe. Physical barrier removal decreases risk of injury or discomfort but more importantly, it minimizes the pressure for members to compensate just because their bodies were not considered in the design. Barrier removal which supports a more mentally safe and inclusive environment allows members to focus on the task at hand and feel enabled to be their true and authentic selves. Integrating diverse perspectives into the design and life cycle of CAF future capabilities leads to innovative

³² Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. Strong, Secure, Engaged. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.24

³³ Edgar, Alister, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani. 2019. *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p.8

³⁴ Grant, Heidi, and David Rock. 2016. "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter." *Harvard Business Review* https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter.

concepts and procurement of equipment which is inclusive of a more diverse group of sailors, solders, aviators and operators, which results in an increase in operational effectiveness. On the precipice of complex security threats associated with climate change, pandemics, cyber, and artificial intelligence, the CAF needs to apply all resources available to remain operationally effective in the future, of which EEDI is a cornerstone.³⁵

The essence and backbone of any military is teamwork and its ability to enable a group of individuals to work together to successfully execute a mission. Without deeply engrained aspects of EEDI into the military socialization of individuals, those who are considered "others" will never feel included and their diverse voices will never be truly heard. The importance of inculcating inclusive leadership cannot be understated, the ability of a leader to develop and maintain an inclusive and trusting team is at the heart of EEDI. A team where everyone feels heard and valued leads to efficiency, effectiveness and confidence, and decreases the risk of imposture syndrome and tokenism.

The traditionalism and conformity that defines a sailor, soldier, aviator or operator in the CAF can "inadvertently exclude those with a desire to serve their country. Such barriers to inclusion both infringe upon the rights of individuals to serve and impair the effectiveness of security forces." ³⁶ These empty spaces caused by members feeling silenced, pressured to cover, and excluded enable a cycle of "normative whiteness." ³⁷ Practices such as the use of traditions, customs, and ceremonies which focus on what and who is important to the CAF, the make-up of the ideal sailor, soldier, aviator and operator, and the awarding of honours and recognition all

³⁵ Shoemaker, Meaghan, and Michelle Barsa. 2022. "Creating Representative and Responsive Security Sector Forces." In *Untapped Power: Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion for Conflict and Development*, by Carla Koppell, 315-334. New York: Oxford University Press. p.316

³⁶ Ibid. p.316

³⁷ Tammy George. 2020. "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces." *Atlantis* 42–56. p. 44

accentuate service before self and engrain peer loyalty. ³⁸ These identifying aspects can be seen as strengths and weaknesses. Implementing them without EEDI considerations means they are most likely and unintentionally centered around white men ³⁹, criteria and standards are based on hundreds of years of doing exactly that and this deserves attention to rectify. By taking an EEDI approach, the CAF can reject the singular notion of a typical soldier, against which all differences are measured, 40 and redefine the notion to one that is more accepting of a broad variety of identities and factors based on diverse lived experiences. When celebrating individual differences, intersectionality must be taken into consideration, especially when differences are invisible such as religious faith or sexual orientation.⁴¹ While it's understood that each recruit walks into basic training with their own set of identities which have helped shape their lived experiences, what needs to be explored through an EEDI lens is whether everyone needs to look, act, and experience life the same way after graduation. One way that the CAF has attempted this is through its gender neutral policies. Although inadvertently, this has pressured many women and gender diverse members to downplay feminine traits and amplifying masculine behaviours. While well intentioned, the CAF has inadvertently moved backwards by making women and gender diverse members feel less included, which circles back to negative impacts on personnel integrity. Lastly, gender-neutrality and colourblindness both operate by encouraging homogeneity and focusing the blame on the individual instead of the organization. The inability

³⁸ Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. 2022. "Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives." In *Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives*, by Barbara T. Waruszynski, Yantsislav Yanakiev and Daniel P. McDonald. Springer Publishing. p.10

³⁹ Ibid. p.10

Alister Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani. 2019. Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p.10
 Ibid. p.10

⁴² Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. 2022. "Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives." In *Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives*, by Barbara T. Waruszynski, Yantsislav Yanakiev and Daniel P. McDonald. Springer Publishing. p.6

to name and counter any of the "isms" through institutional policy and change just continues to perpetuate the problem with the discouraging of reporting and lack of accountability. ⁴³

Conformity without an EEDI lens creates the conditions under which some current and future military members, "for whom the institution was not originally built, experience significant discrimination while others for whom the institution was historically constructed to support, can perceive that all exist in a culture of inclusion and equality."⁴⁴ The dominant culture established in the military environment includes barriers to the equal and equitable inclusion of all its members, particularly ethnic, linguistic, sexual, and gender minorities. "Idealizations of specific masculine behaviours, ethnocentric views, and in some cases, misogynist thinking, has created an environment that is often antagonistic to women and visible minorities, and marginalizing of Francophone members." ⁴⁵

The importance of inclusive leadership to a team's operational effectiveness is a key fundamental aspect. A leader in which team members cannot trust to take action when one or many of the team is being harmed, or a leader who does not enable diverse voices to be heard is operational <u>inefficiency</u> waiting to happen. EEDI cannot be solely implemented at the policy level, it's been shown that historically it has been the trust in leadership which has increased inclusion and ownership at the grassroots level. Recent research involving racialized members of the CAF indicated that some who had experienced racist or discriminatory behaviours "placed much of the blame for the culture on poor leadership within their units, suggesting that leaders enabled poor behaviour by failing to act appropriately when complaints were reported". ⁴⁶
Additionally, as touched on earlier, the ability for members to see themselves in leadership roles

⁴³ Ibid. p.7

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.9

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.9

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.5

is worth an infinite number of pages of a policy, and teams which are led by diverse leadership are more likely to innovate and find out of the box solutions. Where caution is required is when discussing an "ideal" leader and "perfect" leadership practices, this combined with the previously discussed normative conformity and peer loyalty tends to preserve institutionalized norms such as masculinity and whiteness. More effective transformational leaders invest time and effort to listen to others and make sense of what they observed and experienced and is "based on the recognition that each person will interpret the same environment and experiences in their own way." An inclusive leader enables safe and effective teams, and when paired with maximized capabilities and personnel integrity the overall operational effectiveness of the CAF is increased.

Despite efforts within the CAF, acts continue to occur which negatively impact the trust and operational effectiveness throughout the organization. "These acts are part of a larger system of interlocking dynamics which negatively affect efforts to provide a true sense of belonging and worth for women, Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Colour, LGBTQ2+, and religious minority communities within the CAF." ⁵⁰ This paper discussed the importance of linking human perspectives through EEDI into the cores of key aspects of operational effectiveness, such as integrity of personnel, assessing and conceptualizing future capabilities, and socialization and building effective teams. When the CAF's ability to anticipate, adapt, and act to "deliver"

⁴⁷ Heidi Grant and David Rock. 2016. "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter." *Harvard Business Review* https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter.

⁴⁸ Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros. 2022. "Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives." In *Team Diversity and Inclusion in Defence and Security: International Perspectives*, by Barbara T. Waruszynski, Yantsislav Yanakiev and Daniel P. McDonald. Springer Publishing. p.5

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.15

⁵⁰ Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy. 2022. *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination – Final Report.* Final, Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada. p.106

tangible results for Canada at home and abroad" ⁵¹ requires operational effectiveness to be maximized, there is no other choice then to embrace the implementation of EEDI into all aspects of the CAF.

⁵¹ Canadian Armed Forces. 2017. Strong, Secure, Engaged. Ottawa: Minister of National Defence. p.63

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