Problem/objective tree analyses:
Retention of female police officers

Type of exercise: Conceptual
Audience: Any
Time required: 30–90 minutes (dependent on group size and desired extent of analysis)

Intended group size
Any group size (trainees can complete this exercise individually, in small groups or in a large group with facilitation and direction)

Supplies
Flipchart and markers
Trainees' handouts

Guidance to trainers
Problem/objective tree analysis is effective as a method of illustrating abstract concepts that underlie specific recommendations on police reform and gender. If your audience wants better clarification of the rationale behind a given recommendation or set of “best practices”, this is an an excellent open-ended exercise.

This particular exercise is useful in facilitating systematic exploration and analysis of recommended retention and human resource policies related to police reform and gender. Specifically, this exercise can help demonstrate why existing retention and human resource policies are not appropriate for a diverse and representative workforce, even if they were perceived as adequate for an entirely or mostly male police service.

After completing this exercise, trainees will be able to:
• Demonstrate understanding of root causes of and practical solutions to low retention rates of female police officers by producing a detailed problem tree
• Outline positive measures for retaining and advancing female officers

Exercise instructions
Provide the attached handout to trainees. If necessary, provide explanation of the conceptual process reflected by problem/objective tree analyses.

Problem trees are used to explore complex issues and identify their root causes. Once the central problem has been analysed and the various contributing factors and root causes have been identified, it is possible to determine which factors are actionable and which are not. Similarly, objective trees are used to devise solutions to complex problems.

Consider any problem or objective. For any given problem, ask yourself “Why?”; for an objective, ask yourself “How?” Most problems or objectives have many interrelated causes or contributing factors. Those causes and contributing factors in turn have their own causes and contributing factors. Understanding these complex factors and relationships can help us develop better policies and programmes. For instance, in order to address the problem of high female drop-out rates in the police service, one obvious solution might be to contractually require female recruits to serve for a certain number of years in exchange for receiving training. While this may “solve” the problem (on the surface at least) this solution will likely be resented by female officers, because it is not also applied to male officers. A better approach is to ask “Why?” female officers drop out more than male officers one cause might be low female morale on your police service. Why else? What other factors might contribute? For each factor you can identify, again ask “Why?” For instance, why is female morale low? What specific reasons/factors contribute to the low morale and what can be done about them? Through this process, we can identify root causes to any problem and then target new policies or programmes to address those casual issues rather than simply addressing the problem head-on but without enough reflection.

The trainer can use the attached problem/objective tree example to demonstrate the process. Be sure to emphasise that the attached example only represents the early stages of a complete analysis; a more comprehensive problem/objective tree would have many layers and branches identifying multiple causal factors for each problem/objective.
Trainees will conduct problem/objective tree analyses based on the central problem of low retention rates for female police officers. The background information in the handout provides many policy recommendations from which trainees could identify potential causal issues.

Facilitate a full group discussion to explore the findings of the problem/objective tree analyses and any implications. Key discussion trends to keep in mind include:

**Difficulty linking contributing factors to policy recommendations:** The background information provided in the handout contains many specific and actionable recommendations related to retention policies. If asked, trainees should be able to identify the specific problem or deficiency each recommendation addresses and work backwards to identify the larger issue to which each problem contributes, until they link the chain of contributing factors to the central problem of low female retention rates. This process alone should provide more branches than time would permit for analysis; if trainees demonstrate difficulty with the exercise, consider walking them through a few examples using listed policy recommendations.

**Excessive focus on female-specific problems/objectives:** Many policies that could increase retention of women are likely to also be applicable to men and are beneficial to the police service overall. For example, more flexible working schedules are likely to be appreciated by all police officers and thereby increase overall effectiveness while addressing specific issues that affect female retention rates. Ensure that trainees recognise this point in discussion, and keep watch for problem/objective trees that unnecessarily limit analysis to “female” issues.

The problem/objective tree analysis exercise format can be readily applied to explain any recommendation or explore a specific problem related to police reform and gender. For instance, for any problem listed or implied in the Police Reform and Gender Tool, there are numerous recommendations and objectives suggested as ways to address it. These problems and recommendations can be used as the basis for new problem/objective trees, so that the tree demonstrates the linkages between the problem and the implementable actions. Potential root problems and correlated recommendations/objectives include:

- **Problem:** High rates of gender-based violence not currently being addressed; **Recommendation/objective:** Create hotlines to receive calls on gender-based violence (from “Procedures and initiatives on gender-based violence”, pages 8–9)
- **Problem:** Low recruitment rates for female police officers; **Recommendation/objective:** Revise job descriptions for police officers (from “Recruitment”, page 11)
- **Problem:** Existing institutional culture not appropriate according to concepts of police reform and gender; **Recommendation/objective:** Implement regular gender training for police at all levels (from “Gender training”, page 15)

The problem/objective tree example given in this exercise is simple enough that both a problem tree and an objectives tree can be completed within a reasonable timeframe. A methodological adaptation would be to design the trees to focus not only upon root causes and contributing factors (the roots of your tree) and the definition of the core problem (the stem of your tree), but also on the effects (the crown of your tree).

Problem/objective tree analyses: Retention of female police

Targeted recruitment campaigns are only as effective as the ability of the police to retain new recruits. Due to the high cost of conducting recruitment campaigns and training officers, police executives need to improve retention rates, particularly of women and under-represented groups.

Suggested measures for increasing retention rates:

- Institute targets or quotas in training courses and position levels.
- Ensure equipment and logistics meet the needs of all officers, specifically sanitation facilities, living quarters, childcare facilities, specialised uniforms and other materials for female officers. Allocate relevant budgetary resources for this.
- Ensure policies related to pay, benefits, pensions or other remuneration methods are based on equity for male and female officers.
- Enforce policies and establish initiatives to prevent and respond to discrimination, sexual harassment and GBV—including mandatory sexual harassment and gender-awareness training; codes of conduct; and disciplinary measures and regimes. Strengthen internal and external accountability mechanisms to enable victims within the police to report and receive redress.
- Reward gender-sensitive policing and include it as a factor in career and ranking regimes.
- Institute mentoring programmes.
- Establish staff associations, such as an association of female staff, to support officers from underrepresented groups to advocate for their rights, suggest improvements to police executives, provide training to individual officers and contribute to a reduction in discrimination levels.
- Monitor retention rates to identify obstacles or areas where targets are not being reached.
- Use high-ranking officers from target groups as role models and to illustrate possibilities for career advancement.
- Promote changes in organisational culture that help create a gender-responsive climate.

Human resources policies and practices in the police have traditionally responded to the needs of men. Policies regarding hours worked, time off and other issues often focus on officers demonstrating their commitment through working long hours and taking shifts. It was also assumed that male officers had wives to take care of the household and children, or were single and independent. As women were introduced into the workforce, these assumptions were challenged and reforms had to be made to ensure that human resource policies are not discriminatory. Revisions will not only benefit women, but can improve the work-life balance for male personnel as well, which in turn can increase retention and efficiency.
Problem/objective tree analyses: Retention of female police officers

Measures to increase female recruitment and family-friendly human resources:

- Flexible work hours for shift work and leave options
- Part-time and job-sharing opportunities for men and women
- Clearly defined pregnancy policies that are flexible, fair and safe—including light work or modification of current duties and appropriate pregnancy and maternity cover
- Adequate maternity and paternity leave
- Day care facilities
- Nursing facilities
- Access to psychological support
- Appropriate uniforms—including during pregnancy

By addressing these issues, police organisations will send a strong message internally and externally that law enforcement is a viable career choice for mothers and fathers. In addition to changing policies, police organisations need to ensure that officers who take advantage of these options are not stigmatised or treated as less serious officers, impacting on career advancement opportunities and promotions.

Exercise instructions

Using the formats of the attached problem/objective tree examples as guides, develop problem/objective trees to analyse and form objectives to address the problem of low retention rates for female police officers. Keep in mind that each item in the attached examples could (and should) be broken down further to identify multiple causal factors and explore the complex relationships therein.

Identify as many contributing factors as possible at all levels to develop a complex network of branches ending with actionable and non-actionable root causes/objectives. Actionable problems/objectives are specific and implementable in the near term; non-actionable items do not necessarily mean that the problems are insurmountable but simply that there is nothing that can be specifically done in your current contextual environment to address them. Be creative! Try to identify as many causal issues as you can.
Problem/objective tree analyses: Retention of female police officers

**High female drop-out rates in police force**

- **Contributing factor**: Low female morale
- **Contributing factor**: Family responsibilities conflict with normal working hours
- **Contributing factor**: Female police officers report stress from being in a new and unfamiliar role and environment
- **Root cause**: Most female police officers are relatively new because female representation in police force is a very recent development
  - **Root cause**: Using equipment and facilities designed originally for men

**Problem**

- **Root cause**: not actionable
  (only time will address this issue in conjunction with increased recruitment and retention of women)

- **Root cause**: actionable
  (provide proper equipment for female police officers)
Problem/objective tree analyses: Retention of female police officers

Increase female retention rates in the police force

Increase female morale

Address reports of stress ascribed to being in a new and unfamiliar role and environment

Address reports that family responsibilities conflict with normal working hours

Continue to strive for increased recruitment and retention of women

Provide proper equipment for female police officers

Objective

Contributing objective

Contributing objective

Root objective: not actionable (only time will change the fact that female representation in the police force is a very recent development)

Root cause: actionable (address stress caused by using equipment and facilities originally designed for men)