

The integration of women in to the Australian Army Infantry corps: Dimensions for success

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Overview

Background & context

Study overview

Findings

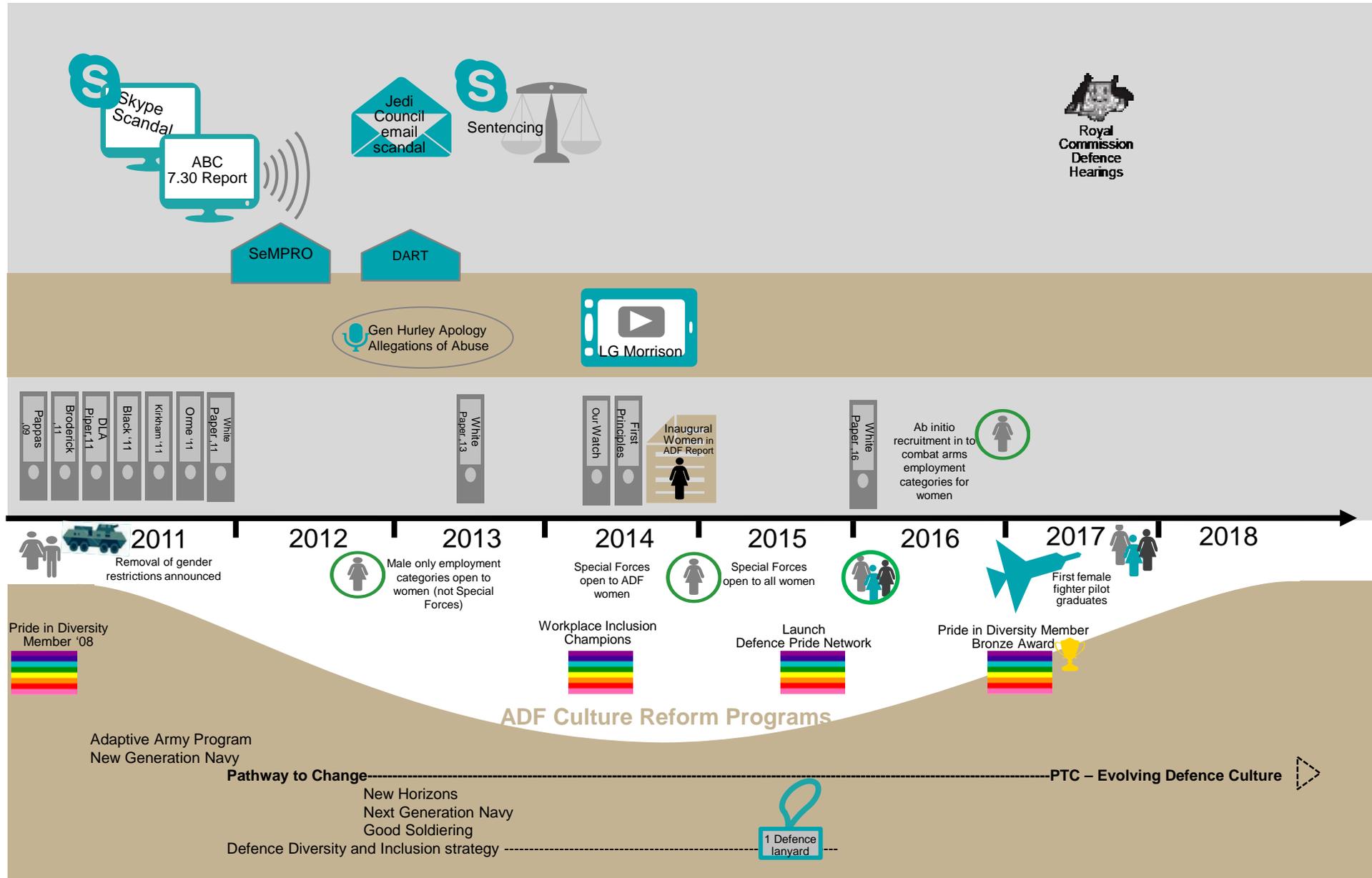
- Dimensions for success, key considerations and actions taken
 - Physical
 - Professional
 - Environmental
 - Social
 - Cultural

Discussion

- Command perspective
- Sociological perspective

Next steps

Timeline & context



Women in infantry

WOMEN IN INFANTRY – SERVICE CATEGORY 7 AND SERVICE CATEGORY 5 [permanent & reserve force] (as at 1 October 2018)

	Female		Male	
	No	%	No	%
Enlisted in the RAINF	166	N/A	3609	N/A
Trained Force	38	22.9	1516	42.0
Still in training	47	28.3	1209	33.5
Transferred to other employment categories	45	27.1%	194	5.4%
Separated from Army	36	21.7%	690	19.1%

Notes:

- Figures are for Other Ranks only.
- Figures do not include soldiers recruited on the Regional Surveillance List.
- Figures do not include those that enlisted into other employment categories and transferred into Infantry.

As at 1 October 2018, 21 Infantry women have been posted to the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. This includes 19 soldiers (5 of which are Gap Year Program soldiers) and 2 officers.

Women in combat roles

WOMEN IN COMBAT ROLES – SERVICE CATEGORY 6/7 [permanent] and GAP YEAR (as at 1 October 2018)

SERCAT 6/7 [permanent]:

Headcount		Trained Force	Training Force		Total
		Unit	Recruit Training	IET Training	
RAINF	Commando (ECN 079)			1	1
	Infantry Officer	2			2
	Rifleman (ECN 343)	14	3	12	29
RAA	Artillery Command Systems Operator (ECN 254)	7	1	1	9
	Artillery Gunner (ECN 162)	3	4	5	12
	Artillery Observer (ECN 255)			1	1
	Artillery Officer	12			12
	Operator Air and Missile Defence Systems (ECN 237)*	11	1	1	12
	Operator Unmanned Aerial System (ECN 250)*	22	1	6	29
RAAC	Armoured Cavalry (ECN 060)	15	3	12	30
	Armoured Officer	12			12
Total		98	14	38	150

Gap Year:

Headcount		Trained Force	Training Force		Total
		Unit	Recruit Training	IET Training	
RAINF	Rifleman (ECN 343)	5		5	10
RAA	Artillery Gunner (ECN 162)			1	1
	Operator Air and Missile Defence Systems (ECN 237)*			5	5
RAAC	Armoured Officer	1			1
Total		6	0	11	17

* Trades previously open to women.

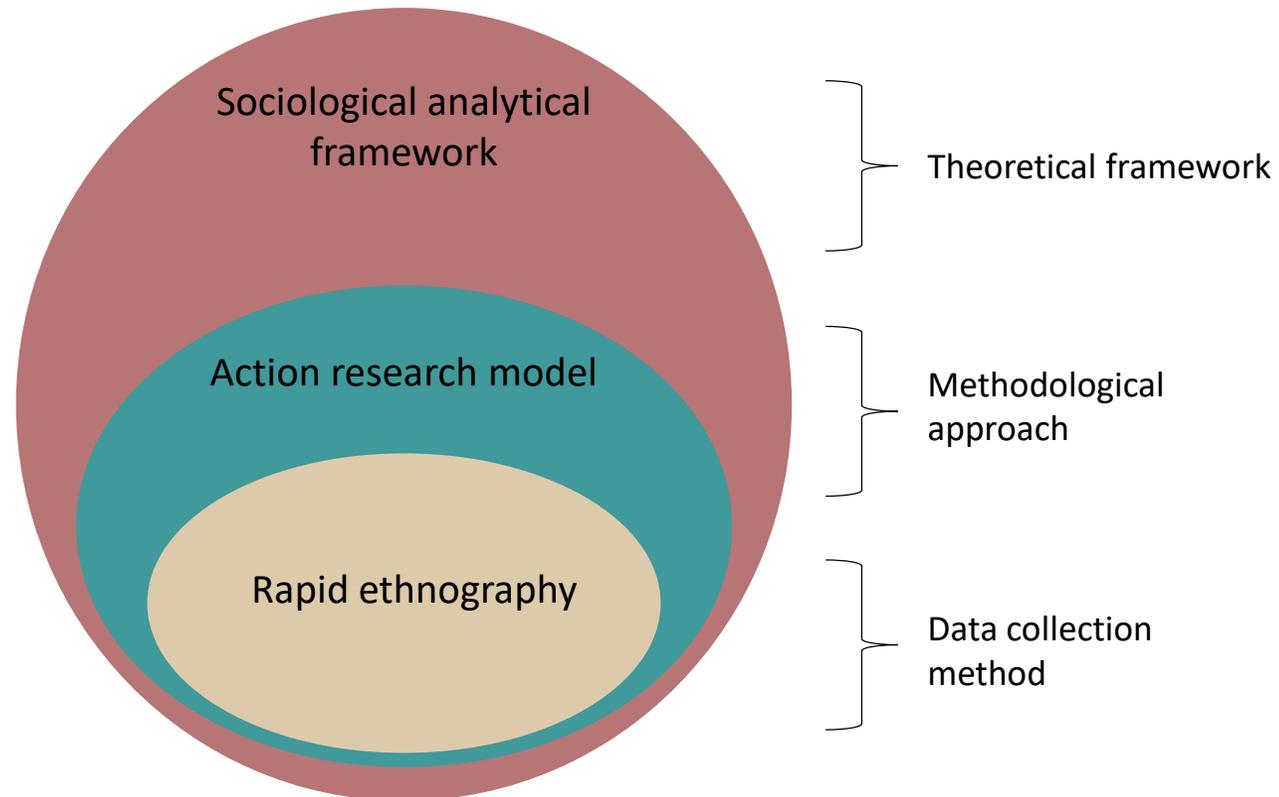
Study overview

Objective

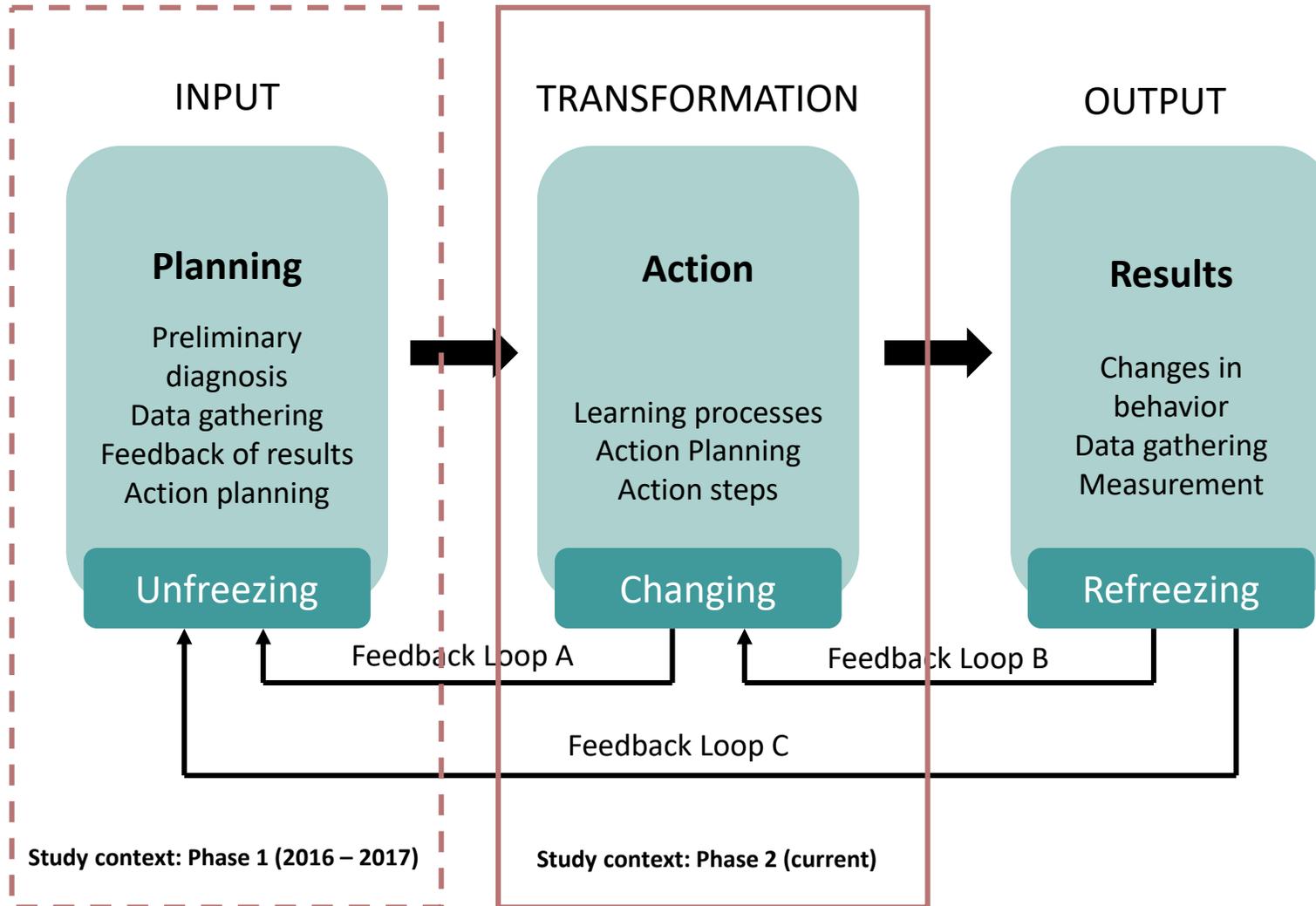
to gather qualitative data to monitor and better understand the lived experience for women preparing for and entering arms corps

Method

- Rapid ethnography
- Action research

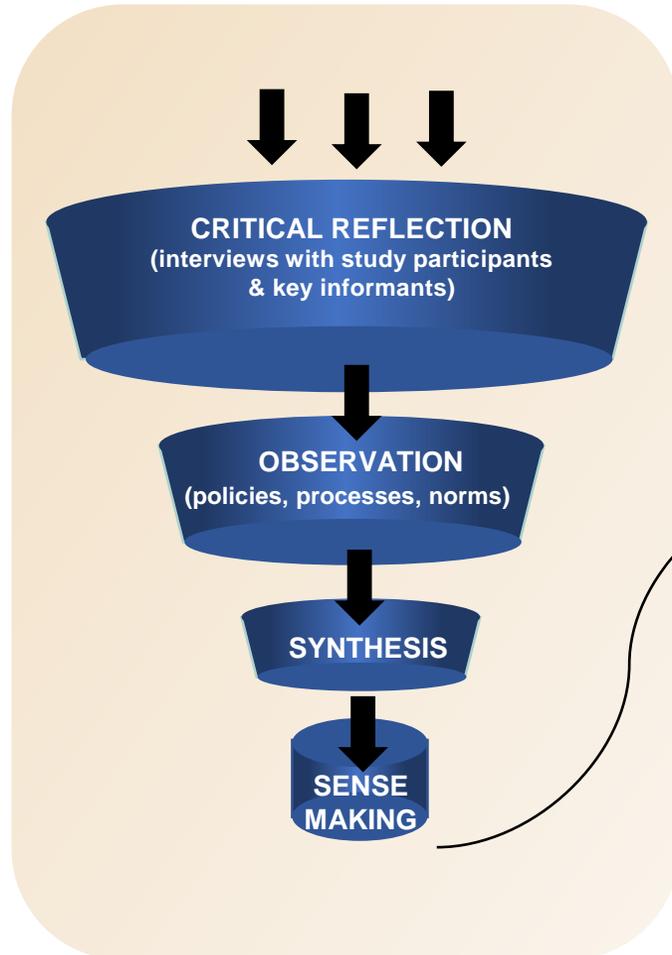


Action research model

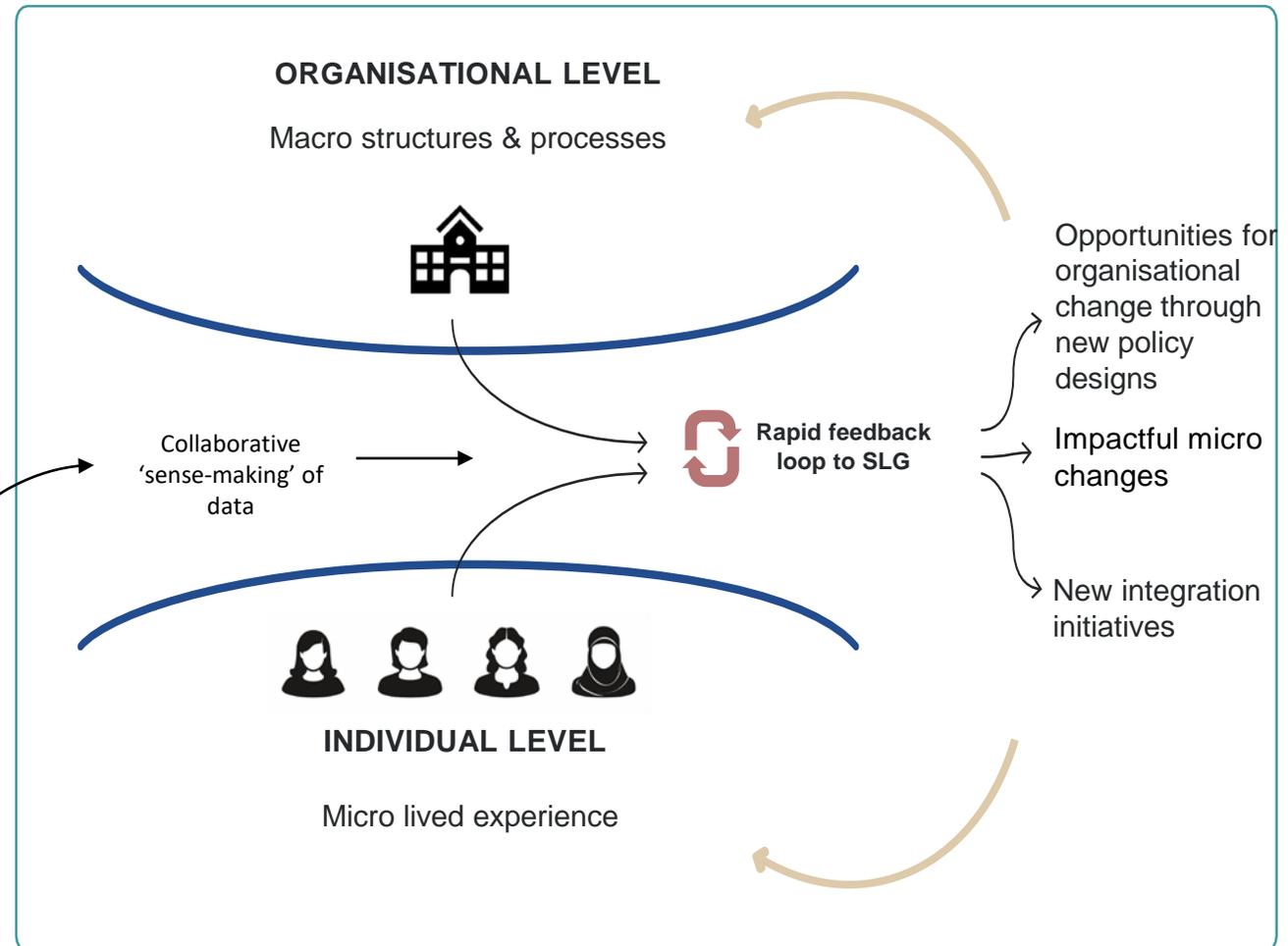


Action research & rapid ethnography in practice

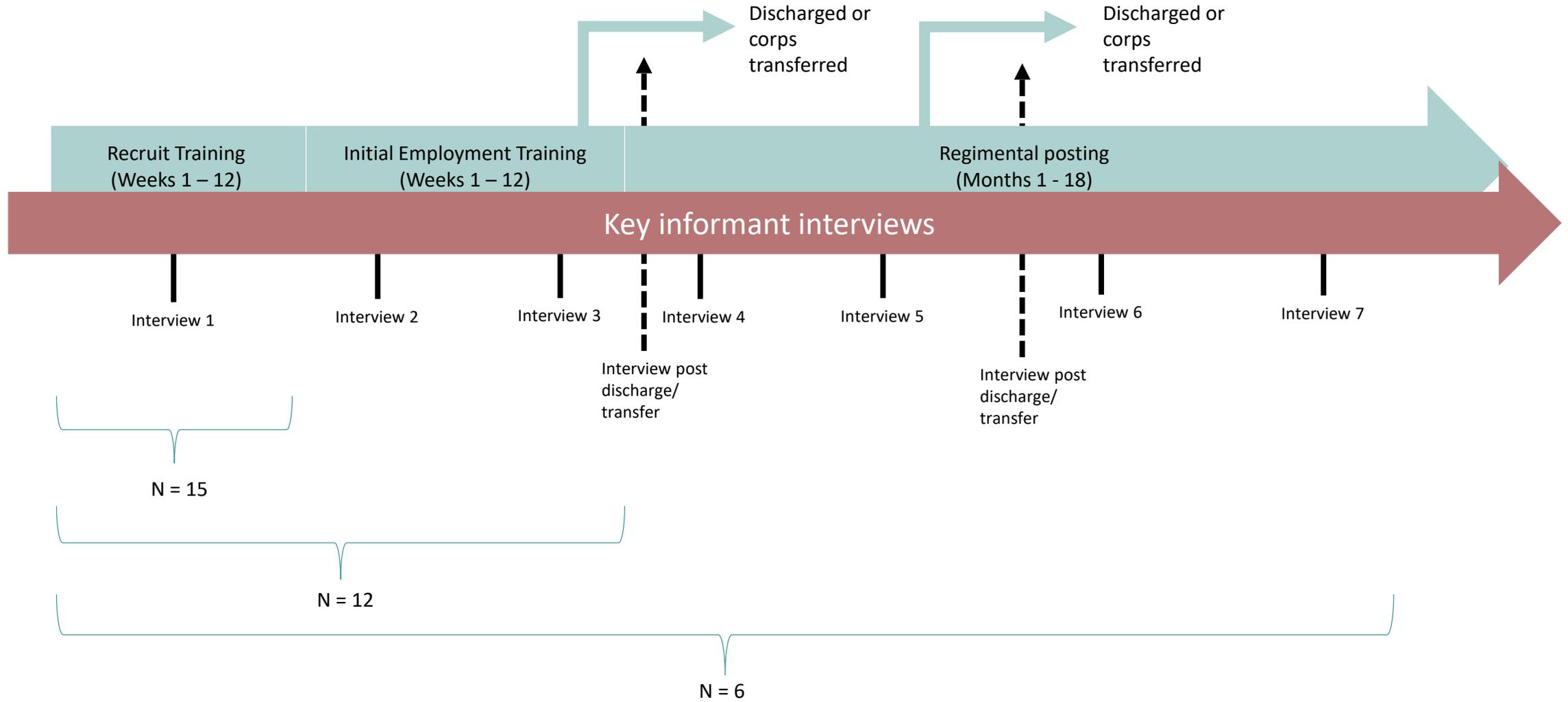
RAPID ETHNOGRAPHY (researchers)



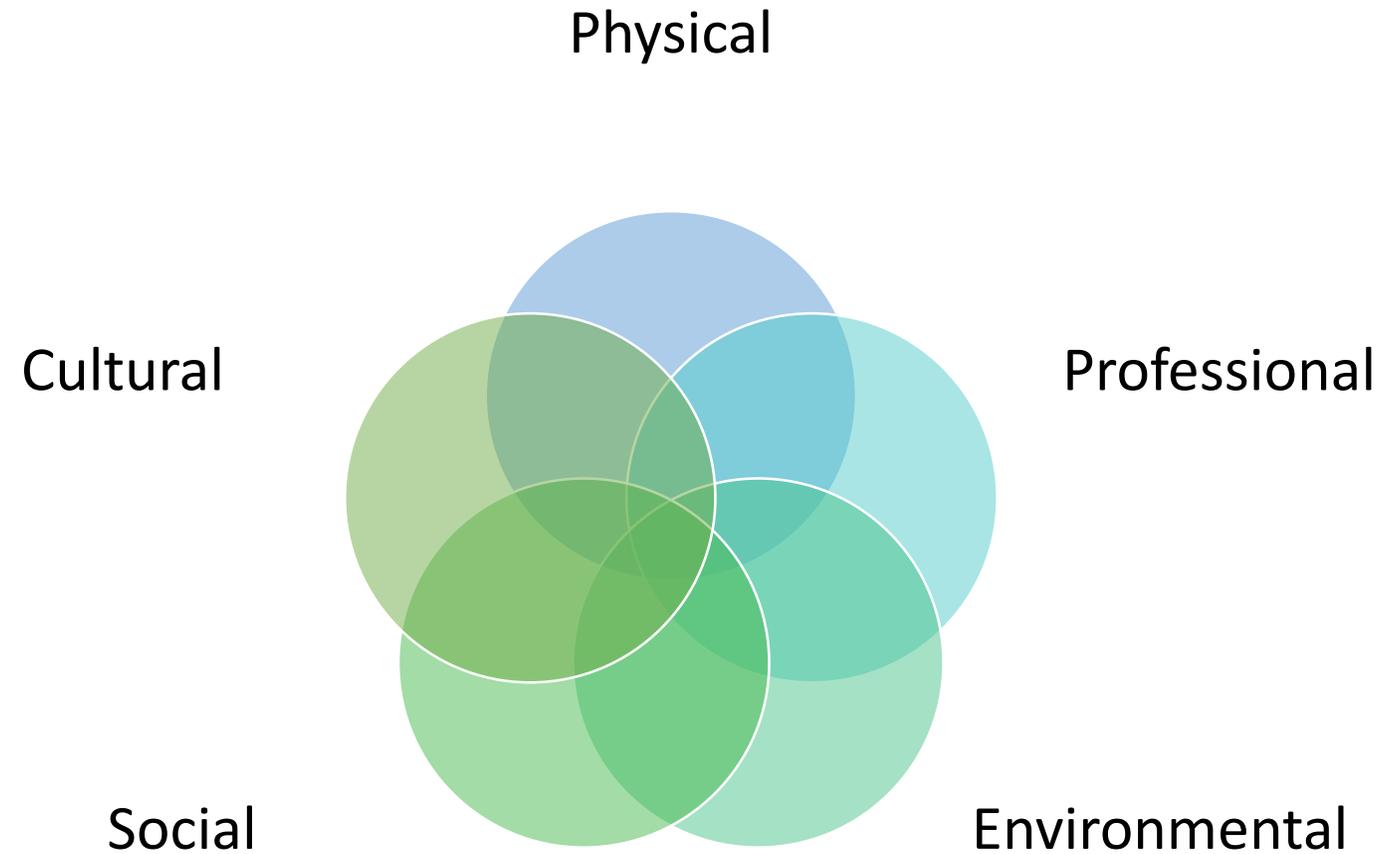
CO-DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (researchers & Army stakeholders)



Study Participants



Dimensions of integration success



Physical

Physical dimension of integration	
Importance	Key considerations going forward
<p>The physical dimension seeks to understand the unique physical requirements that may affect the employment and performance of female infants. The aim in doing so is to find innovative and creative ways by which to mitigate the risk short-term injury and long-term adverse physical side effects that may result from such issues as ill-fitting equipment or inappropriate training methods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The appropriateness of PES-A without appropriate conditioning;• Load carrying equipment (ie take in to consideration appropriate fit, sizing and load carriage distribution and impact points on female bodies);• Personal hygiene requirements and aides (especially the ability to tailor or modify equipment to accommodate these needs);• Physical fitness and strength training• Iron, calcium and possibly Vitamin D supplements to assist in preventing stress fractures and aide recovery.• Minimum age requirements for entry in to SOI IET.• The possibility of full medical screening prior to entry in to SOI (including bone density, and iron and calcium levels)

Professional

Professional dimension of integration	
Importance	Key considerations going forward
<p>Army has a successful continuum of training (IET, OJT, OJE incl mentoring) that produces high quality male infanteers at all rank levels. However, Army must seek to draw on available evidence, best practice from coalition partners, and ongoing research, to build a model of professional development that is tailored and appropriate to the specific needs of female infanteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The appropriateness of the infantry employment category training continuum;• The critical features of a mentoring model, where there are no employment specific and experienced female JNCOs, SNCOs, WOs or Officers to be drawn on;• The limitations of a 'female support group' model on base that is not aligned with their profession (ie no one from combat corps)• Opportunities for female infantry soldiers who are now in the unit to visit those at SOI and Kapooka• Sponsorship;• Infantry as a pathway to a broader Army career, rather than a career in itself.• Improved functional and procedural communication

Social

Social dimension of integration	
Importance	Key considerations going forward
Supportive peer groups are essential for mutual support, encouragement and for building resilience. Careful consideration must be paid to the fostering, building and supporting of these social and peer support groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The careful management of cohorts (from recruit training to IET and then to posting within a battalion) so that bonds forged during training are preserved;• Integration into battalion and mess life;• The ability to engage in competitive sport; and• Back squad management at training establishment.

Environmental

Environmental dimension of integration	
Importance	Key considerations going forward
Training establishments, in particular the SOI, have undertaken significant facilities assessments and risk audits and actioned sensible changes to the physical environments. However more needs to be done in the environs of the Infantry battalion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety and privacy in infantry battalion lines without compromising esprit de corps and team bonding;• Safety and privacy in the field while operating as a member of a mixed gender infantry section; and• The appropriate design of social spaces.

Cultural

Cultural dimension of integration	
Importance	Key considerations going forward
With regard to this micro minority group Army need to be particularly vigilant and have creative strategies that encourage inclusion and acceptance over alienation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The likely existence of microaggression and the risk that it is 'unseen' by the chain of command.• The risk of the marginalisation and exclusion of female infanters from the normal bonding and team building conventions of their male counter-parts as well as by other non ECN 343 women posted to infantry units; and• Deliberate discrimination

Discussion: Initiatives

Cultural dimension of integration	
Women in Infantry specific	Whole of Infantry and/or Army
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command initiated oversight of body armour issuing • Opportunities for women to access Physical training instructors (PTIs) and the gym differentially (ie after hours) • Batching of female recruits where possible (however it is acknowledged that keeping women in their platoon cohort is preferred to keeping women in holding until other women arrive). • All women interested in enlisting to infantry must watch the information video prior to application • All women in infantry can have an in-service transfer at any time • More deliberate posting of senior women in related employment categories to the infantry battalion for support (ie female combat engineers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Chief of Army letter to all 2*s that outlined his approach to recruiting, training and sustaining the whole workforce • Development of the 'Good soldiering' program • Army Pre-Conditioning Program courses. • PESA has begun to be reviewed as part of a conditioning continuum (Kapooka to IETs) for both men and women. • A nutritionist was recruited to Kapooka to assess nutrition and provide advice. • Review of the role of PTIs to shift from physical training to human performance more holistically

Discussion: Reflections

Gender neutral \neq gender equality

Differential treatment \neq preferential treatment

Thank you

Questions/Comments:

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