

## PAKISTANI WOMEN MODERATING EXTREMISM A Coalition-Building Case Study

Written by Sarah Chatellier

*In August 2010, The Institute for Inclusive Security formed a partnership with the US Institute of Peace (USIP) to implement Pakistani Women Moderating Extremism, a program that aimed to increase the visibility and capacity of Pakistani women to moderate extremism. Since 1999, the Institute has promoted the inclusion of marginalized stakeholders, particularly women, in peace processes around the world. Exploring how women combat extremism was the focus of the Institute's annual 2010 Colloquium, which brought 20 women leaders from Bosnia, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Rwanda to Cambridge, MA and Washington, DC. During this event, Pakistani participant Mossarat Qadeem indicated a dire need for an initiative to advance women's efforts to curtail extremism in her home country. Given the Institute's mission, Inclusive Security partnered with Ms. Qadeem and the organization she directs, PAIMAN Alumni Trust,<sup>1</sup> to build and support a national coalition of women peacebuilders dedicated to this cause. The grant from USIP, combined with equal Institute resources, ensured two years of initial support for the coalition.*



*Amn-o-Nisa coalition members gather during a workshop. Women leaders from across Pakistan formed the coalition to collectively mobilize against extremism and promote social cohesion in their country. (Photo by Inclusive Security, 2011.)*

This publication was made possible with support from the United States Institute of Peace. However, the opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USIP.

This working paper is meant to serve as a coalition-building case study for funders, peace practitioners, and organizations seeking to implement similar initiatives in conflict-affected environments. It provides an overview of the program's design, its key phases, its impact, and lessons learned. The appendixes further elaborate on major challenges Inclusive Security faced throughout the program as well as critical factors that impacted its success.

## Program Description

Inclusive Security's 13 years of field experience illustrate that women not only have keen insight about conflicts in their communities, but they also offer informed, pragmatic solutions for how to prevent, respond to, and rebuild after violence. Women's participation in peace processes also transforms their structures, methods, and outcomes. Yet, policymakers often do not recognize the gendered impact of conflict and the critical role women play in building peace; in turn, relevant decision-making circles rarely include women's voices. However, policy shapers are more likely to design inclusive, gender-sensitive peace processes and implement policies that truly address communities' needs when provided with practical solutions from conflict-affected local actors, especially women. To address these barriers and increase women's inclusion in peace processes—with the ultimate goal of effecting more sustainable, lasting peace—the Institute mobilizes women leaders to develop unified advocacy platforms, equips them to deliver concrete recommendations around peace and security issues, and forges relationships between these women and policymakers to facilitate information sharing and dialogue.

Using this model, Inclusive Security and PAIMAN sought to build a coalition of women leaders that would advance a concrete advocacy agenda for moderating extremism in Pakistan. By creating a national platform around which to mobilize, the Institute and PAIMAN also hoped to increase the impact of Pakistani women's existing peacebuilding

efforts, which had largely been conducted in isolation.

Over the two-year program, Institute staff traveled to Pakistan four times to convene a diverse group of Pakistani women for trust-, capacity-, and coalition-building workshops.<sup>2</sup> Inclusive Security designed three five-day workshops and one two-day meeting to allow sufficient time for coalition members to form relationships, coalesce as a group, and increase their substantive knowledge on women, peace, and security issues, as well as their leadership and advocacy skills. Ultimately, the program resulted in the formation of Amn-o-Nisa, a highly equipped coalition that operates on two levels: (1) members advocate for policies at the national and international level to address the drivers and consequences of extremism, and (2) they conduct peacebuilding activities at the local level to promote tolerance and curb radicalization within their communities.

Inclusive Security's main role was that of convener, third-party facilitator, and trainer. The Institute was responsible for designing and implementing the overall program (in collaboration with PAIMAN), facilitating and training during the workshops, and supporting members between gatherings. As the local partner, PAIMAN was responsible for coordinating the workshops and coalition activities in Pakistan, which included managing all logistics, hosting the gatherings, and liaising with all members before, during, and after the workshops to ensure that the coalition functioned smoothly. However, as the leader who spearheaded the initiative, Executive Director Qadeem also played a significant role in designing the program, selecting participants, and providing overall direction and guidance.

The following sections outline the key phases and components of the program that both organizations undertook to build and support a coalition of Pakistani women moderating extremism in their country.

## Phase 1—Exploring the Context

To ensure the formation of a diverse, committed—and ultimately sustainable—coalition, Inclusive Security and PAIMAN carried out a rigorous selection process from September 2010 to February 2011. The Institute first mapped existing peacebuilding efforts in Pakistan to identify gaps that the program could fill. Second, with input from PAIMAN, Inclusive Security identified Pakistani women’s organizations and activists they could contact for programmatic guidance and participant nominees. Inclusive Security also contacted various regional and content experts, Pakistani members of the Institute’s Women Waging Peace Network,<sup>3</sup> and partners in the peace and security field to solicit recommendations for participants and insight on the program’s conceptual design. Through this outreach, they identified approximately 60 potential candidates and received more than 30 nominees for the program.

Next, the Institute carried out a targeted application and interview process to evaluate:

- Potential members’ personal and professional experience with moderating extremism;
- Their ability to work with others toward a common goal;
- Their interest in joining a coalition; and
- Their willingness and ability to dedicate two-plus years to attending workshops, building a coalition, and conducting collective advocacy with other members.

To find participants who met these criteria, the Institute created an application and disseminated it to the women identified during its mapping, outreach, and research efforts. In total, the Institute received more than 40 applications for the program.

Following an in-depth review of the applications with its local partner, the Institute selected 31 women to interview for the program. To ensure the group’s diversity, Inclusive Security

and PAIMAN took into account the candidates’ professions as well as their provincial and ethnic backgrounds. (So that there was equal representation of women from across the country, they aimed to select two to five members from each province based on variables such as population size and security situation.) The Institute therefore scheduled interviews by provincial group to allow for comparisons between candidates from each region, which helped the Institute evaluate the presence of strong candidates from a certain region and adjust outreach efforts accordingly. Staff then conducted in-depth interviews with selected applicants, informing them about the program’s goals and requirements and asking questions to evaluate their experience with peacebuilding, coalition building, and advocacy. Following the interviews, Inclusive Security and its local partner discussed each potential participant’s qualifications. Keeping in mind the need for a diverse group, the Institute and PAIMAN ultimately selected 16 women to participate in the *Women Moderating Extremism* program. Participants came from all four provinces of Pakistan, as well as from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They also represented a variety of professional sectors, including academia, civil society, government, and the media.

To prepare for the first workshop, participants completed a survey to establish a baseline of their capacity on topics related to peace and security, advocacy, and coalition building. Inclusive Security then used these results to design the workshop program and training materials; these also served as a baseline to measure the program’s impact in subsequent evaluations.

## Phase 2—Convening and Coalescing

For coalition members to find common ground, identify their priorities related to peace and security, and develop a collective advocacy platform, it was necessary to build and foster relationships among women who hadn’t previously known or



Coalition members map where they are from and where they work across the country. (Photo by Inclusive Security, 2011.)

worked with each other, came from diverse backgrounds, and were experiencing different kinds of conflict. During each trip to Pakistan, the Institute dedicated significant time for participants to get to know and increase trust in one another. At the workshops, participants often repeated that Pakistani women had never had a national platform for addressing issues related to extremism, peace, and conflict. The *Women Moderating Extremism* program was thus groundbreaking because it provided women an opportunity to unite around these issues. Just convening the group for four workshops was significant for participants because it allowed women who had previously been working in isolation in very insecure situations the chance to share their stories, meet other women facing similar dilemmas, and find allies in their fight against extremism.

“We are thankful to Inclusive Security for providing brave and courageous sisters from across Pakistan the opportunity to come together, share our experiences, and join hands in the fight against extremism...We will try our best as members of this coalition to achieve sustainable peace in our country.”

—Member from KPK

Each workshop focused on the following objectives to increase interactions among members and help the coalition overcome differences to work toward a common goal:

- **Develop common purpose and trust**—At the beginning of each gathering, Inclusive Security facilitated introductions, trust-building, and “getting to know you” exercises to establish group cohesion. In small groups and pairs, the women shared their stories and discussed topics such as how they’ve been affected by extremism in Pakistan, difficulties they’ve faced as peace-builders, reasons for why they wanted to join the coalition, and internal tensions the group was experiencing. While this led to deeper and sometimes uncomfortable conversations, such discussions helped members recognize their commonalities and shared experiences. Further, they allowed the coalition to address difficulties and find solutions to manage them as a group. Finding common ground during each gathering ultimately reminded members why they were working together, which helped them collaborate better.
- **Identify mutual concerns and advocacy priorities**—Through plenaries and small group work, the women identified their mutual concerns about increasing instability and the rise



*A participant from Balochistan explains the security situation in her province and challenges women are facing due to rising extremism. (Photo by Inclusive Security, 2011.)*

of extremism in Pakistan. This allowed them to narrow their priorities and develop a platform around which to unite.

- **Outline the coalition’s mission statement and long-term vision for change**—During the first workshop, members discussed their collective vision and described the long-term change they wanted to see result from the coalition’s work. The group also developed a mission statement outlining its goals. This proved useful to refer to during subsequent meetings to keep the group focused and mission driven, particularly in instances where members expressed competing, or diverging, interests and priorities.
- **Report back on activities and lessons learned**—At the end of each workshop, the coalition developed action plans at the provincial and federal level for their advocacy and community engagement activities. Thus, during each subsequent trip, members reported on activities they had completed to date, discussed the progress made on their action plans, and shared lessons learned about their successes, challenges, etc. This allowed the provincial and national coordinators,<sup>4</sup> in partnership with Inclusive Security, to monitor and evaluate their efforts. It also kept members focused and accountable to the group. Additionally, sharing lessons learned allowed the women to see how they could collaborate across provinces, replicate their successes, and prioritize certain activities to maximize impact.

### Phase 3—Capacity Building and Collaboration

In addition to building trust and fostering group cohesion, Inclusive Security sought to increase members’ capacity to advocate for women’s inclusion in peace processes. Using the Institute’s unique training methodology, each workshop combined content on peacebuilding topics with the development of skills, such as the mapping of advocacy targets or the tailoring of messages for different audiences. This ensured that members had a strong foundation in peace and security issues as well as the necessary skills to advocate effectively. The coalition also created action plans that outlined activities to carry out *collectively* at the national and provincial level. By developing plans that centered on group collaboration, members were reminded of the importance, value, and necessity of working together to advance the coalition’s overall mission. Ultimately, these consultations resulted in the creation of targeted, concrete policy recommendations to address the drivers and consequences of extremism, as well as community engagement plans to promote social cohesion at the local level.

To achieve these goals, Inclusive Security and PAIMAN focused on the following activities:

#### Grounding

- **Introduce key aspects of the women, peace, and security framework**—To increase coalition members’ understanding of why women’s inclusion is vital to building sustainable peace, Inclusive Security grounded participants in the field of women, peace, and security. This included reviewing the global WPS policy frameworks (such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325) as well as sharing case studies of how women have effectively contributed to peace processes in places such as Bosnia, Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Rwanda.
- **Highlight the contributions of Pakistani women**—Using the WPS framework, the group discussed Pakistani women’s

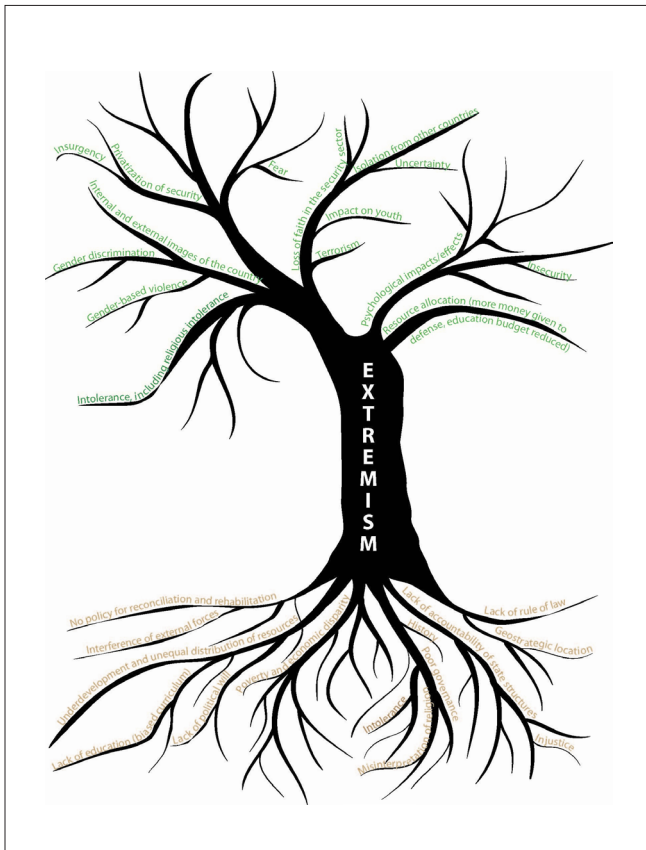
peacebuilding efforts and developed arguments for why women’s inclusion in Pakistan’s peace and security processes is vital to reducing radicalization and moderating extremism.

- **Analyze the underlying causes of extremism**—To develop an advocacy agenda that would effectively address extremism, participants conducted conflict analysis exercises that examined its causes and effects in Pakistan. Relying on their personal experiences and collective expertise, coalition members identified certain drivers of conflict they could address and areas on which they could focus—such as the media and education—that would help prevent and respond to extremist violence. This enabled the coalition to narrow and define its advocacy priorities and create a targeted, pragmatic platform.

- **Review and explore the conflict cycle**<sup>5</sup>—To prepare for the recommendations crafting process, the Institute reviewed the conflict cycle in-depth, focusing on areas the coalition identified as critical for moderating extremism: reconstruction and rehabilitation, reconciliation and reintegration, and security-sector engagement. This helped participants better understand the various phases of insecurity in Pakistan and identify relevant interventions to address it.

### Facilitated Planning

- **Craft an advocacy platform with policy recommendations**—To create their advocacy platform, members narrowed their priorities, conducted research on extremism and relevant security policies and processes, mapped key stakeholders and policymakers, and identified strategies for increasing women’s inclusion to moderate extremism. Through small-group work and plenary sessions, the coalition drafted 19 recommendations<sup>6</sup> for provincial and national policymakers that provide solutions for moderating violent extremism and promoting social harmony in Pakistan. Toward the end of the program, the Institute revisited the advocacy platform with members to determine if it still held relevance or if it needed to be adjusted to changing priorities.
- **Create and adjust action plans to promote advocacy recommendations**—After identifying the key policymakers and entities best placed to implement their recommendations, the coalition designed provincial and federal activities to promote their platform collectively at both levels. These action plans were very specific and included details such as the point person for arranging meetings, the meeting’s target audience, recommendations to cover, and the timeline for activities. Again, these action plans enhanced group collaboration and kept members focused and accountable.



Members of Amn-o-Nisa created a problem tree to analyze the root causes and consequences of extremism in Pakistan. (Design by Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2011.)

- **Develop community engagement plans to promote peace at the local level**—Given that many members were already doing peacebuilding work at the grassroots level through their organizations, the coalition identified the need to address extremism by promoting social harmony and tolerance in communities across the country *in addition to* doing top-level advocacy. Members therefore created community-level plans to conduct outreach with youth groups, civil society organizations, the media, religious leaders, and educators to promote tolerance, pluralism, interfaith harmony, and civic engagement.
- **Discuss long-term plans for the coalition**—During the final gathering, Inclusive Security facilitated a conversation with the coalition about moving forward as a group. Members acknowledged the increased responsibility they would need to assume for carrying their mission forward with the Institute’s reducing its engagement when the grant expired. They also discussed challenges they would face. Ultimately, this conversation proved very productive, as the coalition reaffirmed its commitment to working together and strategized mechanisms for sustaining the coalition with the Institute’s and PAIMAN’s input.



*Coalition members from Punjab map key policies and stakeholders in their province to craft the group’s advocacy platform. (Photo by Inclusive Security, 2011.)*

## Training

- **Learn about coalition building, advocacy, and messaging**—To lay the groundwork for creating an advocacy coalition, Inclusive Security sought to increase members’ understanding of how and why to build coalitions, different advocacy tactics, how to craft an advocacy platform through research and policy/stakeholder mapping, and how to conduct effective advocacy. Using presentations and interactive simulations, the Institute explored these topics with participants prior to their undertaking them as a group.
- **Learn effective strategies for messaging and practice delivering advocacy messages**—Inclusive Security discussed tailoring messages to different audiences and provided strategies for conducting meetings with policymakers. Inclusive Security also facilitated mock advocacy meetings where members practiced delivering their recommendations in front of the group. This not only enhanced members’ skills, but also demonstrated how much practice is required to advocate effectively.
- **Learn tools for monitoring and evaluating, and designing impact-oriented activities**—To assist the coalition in tracking and adjusting their efforts, Inclusive Security provided training on monitoring and evaluation and planning for impact. Members then designed impact plans for their activities that included outputs, outcomes, indicators, and specific action items that would help achieve their desired goals.
- **Provide additional training opportunities**—Separate from the USIP grant, Inclusive Security continued to build the coalition’s capacity by supporting selected members’ participation in the School for International Training’s South Asia CONTACT (Conflict Transformation Across Cultures) Program and the Institute’s annual Colloquium.<sup>7</sup>

## Phase 4—Coordinating, Communicating, and Following Up

Over the course of the program, the Institute helped PAIMAN coordinate the coalition's efforts, facilitate and improve communication, and provide follow-up support between gatherings. While this proved time-consuming for staff, it ultimately allowed Inclusive Security to develop personable rapports with members since it demonstrated the Institute's commitment and continued dedication to the coalition's work. As in any coalition, the group experienced moments of tension. Given their role as third-party facilitators, Institute staffers were able to serve as sounding-boards, liaise with the local partner and members, and provide insight when needed. Without an in-country presence, Inclusive Security had to remain in close contact with the coalition to support its work from afar and help advance its efforts.

The Institute carried out the following activities to improve coordination, communication, and follow-up:

- **Facilitate flow of communication**—In between workshops, Inclusive Security helped coalition members share information and maintain communication. To do so, the Institute created and managed a listserv to interact easily with participants. Staff also regularly emailed members as well as set up monthly phone calls to assess their progress.
- **Conduct research**—Inclusive Security assisted the coalition in conducting research to inform its advocacy platform. For example, the Institute helped draft guidelines and questions for coalition members to use in focus-group discussions they held in their communities. Inclusive Security also provided technical guidance on how to map policies and stakeholders in their provinces.
- **Document workshops**—Following each gathering, Inclusive Security provided the coalition with detailed reports that included an overview

of the workshop, notes and presentations from each day's sessions, outcome documents, and action plans. This helped document the substantive matter covered during each gathering, to which the members and staff could reference and refer back. Importantly, it also allowed Inclusive Security to track the group's progress over the grant period. Additionally, these reports informed or reminded members of what occurred in each workshop, which was useful for those unable to attend all sessions.

## Program Impact

Based on the Institute's and PAIMAN's staff observations, interviews with participants, and workshop evaluations,<sup>8</sup> Inclusive Security tracked the overall outcomes and major impacts of the *Pakistani Women Moderating Extremism* program. These sources indicate that the program increased the interaction, trust, and sense of common purpose among the participants and helped build a solid foundation for a sustainable coalition. Inclusive Security conducted a survey in January 2012 in which 90 percent of the members either agreed or strongly agreed that "being a member of this coalition provides me a sense of trust that I have women allies who are also working to combat extremism." One-hundred percent of respondents in that same survey either agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of joining the coalition in April 2011, they were "more aware of extremism's impact on women and their role in moderating it" and are now "a stronger advocate for women's inclusion in moderating extremism."

Similarly, in March 2012, all coalition members in attendance reported in a post-workshop evaluation that they were more likely to take action to increase women's inclusion in peace processes, that they strengthened their relationships with one another, and that they improved their ability to advocate for women's inclusion as a result of the program. Even after the final workshop, coalition members continued to advocate jointly around their policy





Senior representatives of the Al-Huda Foundation gather with Amn-o-Nisa members to discuss the religious community's role in fueling radicalization. (Photo courtesy of Amn-o-Nisa, 2012.)

recommendations and promote social cohesion in their communities.

The types and scale of advocacy meetings and community-level outreach activities the coalition conducted are worth noting. During the two years, the coalition encouraged dialogue about extremism, increased awareness about its devastating consequences, and took concrete actions to reduce radicalization and promote peace in their communities. While various factors contributed to their being well organized and strategic, the women's admirable leadership and sheer dedication to peacebuilding played a significant role in their effectively mobilizing around the coalition's agenda and having an impact at the local, national, and international levels.

Examples of their efforts to moderate extremism include:

- Members advocated for curriculum reform to replace primary- and secondary-level education materials that reinforce extremist values with ones that promote tolerance and diversity. They also provided policymakers with existing peace curricula and supplemental education materials, which many members had already developed through their organizations. Coalition meetings with the provincial minister for education and the chair of the Punjab Textbook Board

resulted in the introduction of slogans and concepts that promote peace in all Punjab textbooks for the 2013–2014 school year;

- Members spoke with religious leaders and scholars to promote better understandings of peaceful Islamic values and dispel misinterpretations about ideologies. The coalition met with senior members of the Al-Huda Foundation (a network of conservative Islamic schools for Pakistani women) to discuss the religious community's role in promoting radicalization. The women pressed the scholars to condemn terrorist violence more actively. The Al-Huda representatives agreed to highlight the Quran's peaceful elements in their future lectures. Similarly, they held consultations with the *mohtamims* (administrators) of various *madrasas*, religious scholars, and various NGO representatives to discuss the need for peace education in the *madrasa* education system;
- Members from Balochistan formed an alliance with the provincial women's parliamentary caucus, who agreed to support the coalition's recommendations in the Balochistan Provincial Assembly;
- Members facilitated more than 20 dialogues with women's and youth groups, teachers associations, political parties, and religious leaders to talk about extremism and its impact on their communities. During these gatherings, they



Coalition members participate in a radio talk show to introduce Amn-o-Nisa and discuss extremism's impact on their communities. (Photo courtesy of Amn-o-Nisa, 2011.)

highlighted the important role that women can play in moderating extremism and discussed indigenous, culturally-sensitive solutions for how to address extremism in their homes, schools, and society;

- Members hosted television and radio talk shows to draw attention to the effects of extremist violence. KPK members hosted two television talk shows in Pashto about terrorism's impact on women; both shows were well received and reached a wide audience. Members in Sindh and Punjab broadcast radio programs to introduce the coalition's work and discuss alternatives to the extremist discourse;
- The federal group hosted a roundtable with 15 prominent Pakistani academicians titled "Extremism versus Moderate Pacifism: Which Discourse is Winning in Pakistan?" to discuss how academics and researchers can better address extremism. The closing speaker remarked that it is scholars' "moral responsibility to play a proactive role in bringing peace and pluralism to the country." Numerous media outlets widely covered the event; and
- Throughout the program, the coalition's activities received significant media coverage, both nationally and internationally. For instance, when the coalition held a press conference in October 2011 to announce its public debut, the event was featured in eight English and Urdu newspapers, and the members received numerous responses from readers eager to support their work.<sup>9</sup>

In April 2012, the program culminated in a delegation that exemplified the ultimate success and impact of the coalition's work. With funding from the US Embassy in Islamabad, 12 Amn-o-Nisa



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton greets delegates from Amn-o-Nisa during a meeting in Washington, DC. (Photo by Inclusive Security / Swanee Hunt, 2012.)

members traveled to the US to promote awareness of women's ongoing efforts to advance social cohesion and eradicate extremism in Pakistan. During a week in Washington, DC with Inclusive Security, the group participated in 16 meetings and 2 public events to share the recommendations they crafted for US policymakers<sup>10</sup> and increase US support for Pakistani women's peacebuilding efforts. These included meetings with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Ambassador-at-Large for the Bureau of Counterterrorism Daniel Benjamin, among many others. USIP also hosted a roundtable with prominent think tanks and policymakers, during which three members of Amn-o-Nisa spoke about the coalition and their initiatives to moderate extremism. The delegates had several media opportunities and were featured on NPR's *Morning Edition*, the *PBS NewsHour*, and in the *Global Post*.<sup>11</sup> It was clear from the massive interest and positive responses the delegates elicited from influential US policymakers that not only were they seen, *they were heard*.

"Hello, my Amn-o-Nisa sisters!"

— Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

## Conclusion and Lessons Learned

“To be greeted by the Secretary of State, and to have her recognize our coalition, makes me realize that we have become a real force. Wherever we go from here, please know that...this [program] has made a difference.”

— Sameena Imtiaz, Founder and Executive Director of the Peace Education and Development (PEAD) Foundation

Overall, the Institute considers the program a success. Not only did coalition members increase their capacity to advocate for women’s inclusion in moderating extremism, but they were also visible to the media and policymakers—both at home and abroad. The group was still largely intact and active by the close of the grant period, and members were seeking continued funding for their work after August 2012. As evidenced by their courageous efforts to address the root causes and consequences of violent extremism, women in Pakistan are a critical resource for preventing, resolving, and transforming their country’s conflicts. Importantly, the *Pakistani Women Moderating Extremism* initiative provided them with a platform to amplify their peacebuilding work and mobilize collectively to curtail extremism.

As coalitions from around the world have shown, there is clearly no one-size-fits-all model for how to build, sustain, and mobilize a group around an advocacy agenda, especially in conflict-affected areas. This depends largely on the country’s context, shifting conflict dynamics, and a coalition’s priorities. Depending on the conflict at hand, it may take years of building trust for coalition members to work together effectively. Even when members appear to trust each other, interpersonal, ethnic, religious, professional, and personal differences may boil to the surface over time. Membership will likely wax and wane depending in part on the leaders’ interest, availability, and ability/willingness

to maintain ties with the group. However, despite the various factors that can make or break a coalition, the Institute drew the following lessons that specifically apply to its program in Pakistan.

1. **Partner with a local organization but understand the benefits and challenges of being affiliated with one group**—Having a highly capable and reliable local partner that Inclusive Security trusted and with whom it worked well was vital to the program’s success. Without having Institute staff based in country, partnering with a local organization was crucial to helping the coalition function effectively between its trips as well as for the group to establish local ownership of its mission. However, peace practitioners must be aware of and willing to balance the challenges that being affiliated with one organization can present. Namely an organization sacrifices a degree of neutrality—or perceived neutrality—when it is so closely affiliated with another.
2. **Continue to build trust during each gathering**—No matter the context, one can never build enough trust among members of a diverse group working towards a common goal. Even during the Institute’s final trip, it needed to address grievances to help the coalition move forward.
3. **Be present**—Without having staff based in country, Inclusive Security made a concerted effort to check in regularly with members. “Being present” from afar not only increased trust between the Institute and the coalition, as it showed continued dedication to their work, but it also held members accountable to their action plans and allowed Inclusive Security to track their efforts and provide guidance when needed.
4. **Be clear about your agenda**—Pakistani civil society actors often face the risk of being perceived to promote a “Western agenda.” Similarly, US actors have historically imposed

their priorities at the expense of local ownership. From the outset, Inclusive Security was clear that its role was to support the coalition, but that its members should shape its mission and advocacy agenda as they saw fit. The Institute also made sure to seek group consensus before making major decisions or finalizing documents, such as the recommendations, to ensure that members didn't feel imposed upon and were comfortable with decisions that leaders made.

5. **Be clear about roles**—While the Institute was meant to serve as a third-party facilitator and the local partner as the national coordinator, Institute staff spent a significant amount of time coordinating the coalition, especially in the first year. This was mainly due to Inclusive Security's struggle to decide if it should get involved in certain aspects of coordination. By the end of the program, the Institute was able to transfer full ownership to PAIMAN, but it was a difficult balancing act that potentially could have been avoided had the Institute been clear about its role from the outset and about where and when it would intervene.
6. **Acknowledge internal and external tensions**—Over the course of the program, unforeseen political events changed the dynamic of US-Pakistan relations<sup>12</sup>, requiring additional footwork on the Institute's end to build trust with coalition members and maintain close ties during particularly tense times. But, the Institute largely eased these tensions when it acknowledged them outright and clarified its agenda and intentions. Similarly, Inclusive Security spent a large portion of the third workshop facilitating conversations and helping the group work through internal challenges. Had the Institute and its local partner not recognized and addressed these issues, tensions would have continued to boil, which could have jeopardized the coalition's cohesion.

7. **Build in funding for coalition activities**—Halfway through the program, the coalition indicated that financial resources would help the group carry out its community engagement activities. For instance, members noted that to host roundtables or meetings with larger groups, they needed to reserve meeting spaces in secure locations and that it was customary to provide tea for participants. (Note: Since the coalition did not begin to explicitly function on this level until after the first workshop, funding was not built into the original grant to cover the costs of community outreach activities.) Because the cost for such activities was relatively minimal, Inclusive Security set aside a small portion of funds from non-grant sources to support them. Ultimately, this helped the coalition carry out their activities at a relatively minimal cost to Inclusive Security. To maximize impact, the Institute therefore recommends building in monies that support supplemental collective activities and is separate from travel/training expenses when designing coalition-building programs.

For audiences seeking a more in-depth analysis of lessons learned from the *Pakistani Women Moderating Extremism* program, the following appendixes outline major challenges the Institute faced (Appendix 1) as well as critical factors that affected the success of this coalition-building endeavor (Appendix 2). Inclusive Security drew these conclusions based on reflections from staff, input from other Institute coalition coordinators in Israel, Palestine, South Sudan, and Sudan, discussions with local partner Mossarat Qadeem, and participant surveys, workshop evaluations, and interviews.

## Appendix A — Major Challenges to Program Implementation and Success

During the grant period, Inclusive Security encountered the following major challenges that affected the program's implementation and outcomes. This explains why and how these difficulties arose, as well as steps the Institute took to handle them.

- **Requirement for knowledge of English**—As a condition for joining the coalition, Inclusive Security required that participants comprehend and speak proficient English. The purpose was so that staff could build trust, directly interact with, and more effectively train the coalition members. Based on years of field experience, the Institute felt that involving translators would have added a barrier to interacting personally with members, and thus to building trust and group cohesiveness. It also would have limited staff's ability to facilitate five-day workshops, small-group discussions, etc. Given that many women in the provinces have limited English skills, this restricted the pool of qualified applicants, who surely would otherwise have had the relevant experience and capacity to participate in the program.
- **Tensions between coalition members**—Over the course of the program, tensions arose between members largely related to interpersonal differences. Inclusive Security was able to help the group work through some of their issues by facilitating open dialogues and small group discussions during the workshops. However, this was very difficult at times for the facilitators, who had to delicately balance addressing individual women's concerns while also supporting the coalition's overall mission and interests. Unfortunately, some rifts were still tangible by the close of the program and the Institute struggled to entirely resolve this challenge. However, the Institute has encountered this issue in its other coalition-building programs; this challenge is therefore not unique to the women themselves, but appears to be an inherent aspect of bringing together actors from diverse backgrounds in conflict-affected countries. Those looking to implement coalition-building programs in such environments should therefore be aware of these challenges and prepared to facilitate difficult conversations to help the group overcome barriers and internal tensions.
- **Political context**—Due to a political climate in which accusations of corruption are prevalent, the coalition prioritized establishing accountability, legitimacy, and transparency. Even though the group created action plans during the first workshop, members struggled with internal coordination and communication to carry out their assigned activities, largely because they felt unable to move forward without these structures and guidelines in place. (According to a participant survey, the vast majority of members felt that the group fundamentally needed this structure and these guidelines for functioning effectively, and it needed to formalize them in writing before carrying out activities.) Members therefore developed a formal structure, membership charter, communication guidelines, and a public statement after the first gathering. As such, there was an initial delay in members implementing the action plans they created during the first workshop because they were focused on solidifying group protocol. Once the coalition agreed on this protocol, it began picking up momentum; however, these processes did pose an initial challenge for carrying out activities and moving agendas along in a timely fashion.
- **Deteriorating US-Pakistan relations**—Over the course of the grant period, significant events greatly increased tensions between the US and Pakistan. Following these developments, the Institute checked in with coalition members to show its continued support for their work. Staff also openly acknowledged these tensions during the workshops to build trust and foster people-to-people connections. In fact, one of the main reasons Inclusive Security traveled to Pakistan

unexpectedly in July 2011 was to reconvene the coalition and build up relations despite bilateral tensions after the May 2011 US raid that killed Osama bin Laden. Fortunately, the Institute and coalition members maintained good ties throughout the program. However, rising anger on both sides and waning US support for aid to Pakistan continues to pose challenges for American workers there, particularly in terms of security risks and complications with visas to travel between countries.

## Appendix B — Key Contributing Success Factors

Inclusive Security identified the following factors that were critical to the program's success. This first section outlines ones directly related to the Institute's interventions:

- **Rigorous selection process**—The Institute carried out an extensive application and interview process to select participants. While this excluded women who could have added value to the coalition, the short length of the program limited the amount of time the Institute could dedicate to relationship- and capacity-building. As such, the Institute experimented with this application process to start the program with a baseline of capacity—and solid foundation on which to build—by selecting a diverse group of women already experienced in moderating extremism, working in coalitions, and advocacy. A key factor that contributed to the group's success was that all of those selected to participate joined because they personally identified with the coalition's mission to moderate extremism and were dedicated to working with others to achieve it—even before the coalition's first meeting—which helped keep the group focused and motivated throughout the program. It also produced buy-in from each selected member and set expectations for the participants, Inclusive Security, and PAIMAN before the program even began.
- **Intensive workshops**—Inclusive Security designed five-day workshops to allow sufficient time for coalition members to build trust, coalesce as a group, and increase their skills. While the length of the workshops prohibited some women from joining or from fully participating due to personal and work commitments, each intensive workshop helped foster relationships between members, strengthened ties between staff and the participants, and visibly increased members' capacity. The content of each workshop was also significant. Each was designed to create and mobilize an advocacy coalition so that over the course of two years, members were able to build trust, identify common priorities, conduct research to support their advocacy campaign, craft policy recommendations and an advocacy platform, develop advocacy messages, and create concrete action plans with time-bound objectives. While labor-intensive for participants and staff, the length of, and content covered in, each workshop proved critical for building an advocacy coalition within a two-year time frame.
- **Program support and follow-up**—Institute staff dedicated a large portion of time to maintaining communication between coalition members, providing them programmatic guidance and support (for instance, Inclusive Security helped draft and edit the coalition's charter and press release in collaboration with the national coordinator) and carrying out thorough workshop follow-up. Keeping in regular contact with members helped hold them accountable to the group and notably improved the implementation of their action plans. Further, had the Institute not regularly been in touch with members, staff might have remained unaware of the coordination and communication challenges the group faced following the first workshop. In fact, the check-ins alerted staff to these issues, which provided more reason to reconvene the group unexpectedly between the first two USIP-funded workshops.

- **Funding**—To support the implementation of the coalition’s community engagement activities, Inclusive Security provided them a small quantity of funds that were not originally allocated for in the USIP grant. To make the funding as transparent and fair as possible, the Institute designed a budgeting and application process, whereby each provincial and federal group had to apply for funds and justify how such activities would advance the coalition’s overall mission. The provincial and federal coordinators were then responsible for disbursing funds and reconciling expenses. To note, however, this originally created some additional challenges. It required the Institute to design and implement the process; as Inclusive Security transferred ownership of disbursing the funds to PAIMAN for logistical reasons, it also added a layer of bureaucracy for their staff to review and process the paperwork. This also initially created tension between members who felt the disbursement process wasn’t properly explained or transparent enough. Inclusive Security then evenly divided funds and allocated equal pots to each provincial group. But, while initially burdensome, the funding ultimately improved the coalition’s efficacy at a relatively minimal cost to Inclusive Security.

The following factors improved the program’s success but are not directly related to the Institute’s interventions:

- **Strength of the local partner**—The Institute collaborated with PAIMAN and jointly applied for the USIP grant based on a relationship they had formed with Mossarat Qadeem during its 2010 Colloquium. She played a significant role in designing the grant proposal and program from the outset, as well as selecting participants. PAIMAN’s excellent ability to host trainings, organize logistics, and coordinate members in-country between workshops greatly contributed to the program’s success. While it took one year of relationship-building to establish a solid working partnership prior to applying for the

grant, PAIMAN proved to be an exceptionally capable, committed, and reliable local partner.

- **Political context**—While some factors discussed in Appendix A proved limiting for taking quick action, the guidelines, charter, and structure the group designed did lend it a certain level of authority and credibility. The charter also held members accountable to the entire coalition, and the mission statement, which they presented during a press conference they hosted in October 2011, held them accountable to the public. The guidelines ensured that members advocated in an efficient and transparent way, which also made it easier for Inclusive Security to monitor and evaluate the coalition’s efforts. Ultimately, these measures increased group accountability, enhanced communication flow, and designated leaders within the coalition to move agendas forward.
- **Strong leadership of members**—While the application process helped the Institute identify strong women leaders for the coalition, some members in particular demonstrated exceptional leadership capacity and were vital to strengthening the coalition’s work. These leaders provided brilliant insight and expertise, and played a critical role in helping mobilize the group and execute activities.
- **Conducting research to inform advocacy**—During the July 2011 meeting, the Institute discussed the importance of conducting research to create informed advocacy platforms. So, at their own behest, the coalition held focus-group discussions with academics, civil society actors, youth groups, women activists, religious leaders, government officials, and the media to gain firsthand insight about the impact of extremism in Pakistan and assess conflict-affected communities’ needs and security priorities. These discussions produced rich findings about how Pakistanis define extremism, how it affects communities differently, and which interventions key actors feel are necessary to combat it—insight

critical to their advocacy platform's creation. By conducting such thorough research in their communities, the coalition not only gained legitimacy, but their policy recommendations also truly reflected Pakistanis' everyday needs and concerns.

- **Top-down and bottom-up approach**—The coalition operates on two levels: (1) members advocate for policies to better moderate extremism, and (2) they engage with communities to promote peace at the local level. This was not the original program design, however, as Inclusive Security set out to build an *advocacy* coalition. But, because many participants selected for the program are civil society actors who already do peacebuilding at the community-level, it naturally evolved that the work they do with their organizations—such as meeting with religious leaders to promote interfaith harmony—supported the coalition's mission. Thus, the coalition itself chose to implement a dual-level approach to engage with communities to promote social cohesion while also seeking change from the top down through advocacy to policymakers. This was the first time Inclusive Security had supported a coalition that explicitly functioned on these two levels *as a group*.

Thus far, this holistic approach appears to have increased the coalition's success because it mobilized grassroots support for its advocacy campaign against extremism while promoting peace at the local level.

- **Increasing support for WPS and countering extremism initiatives**—Over the past few years, support for the women, peace, and security agenda has gained momentum, both in the US and internationally. In Pakistan, civil society is also increasingly focusing on the “W3Ps,” or women's protection, participation, and prevention. Similarly, the topic of extremism in Pakistan has gained significant national and international attention and is now a major focus of foreign policy, aid, and development work. It is also a pressing concern within Pakistan itself. Given the increasingly urgent need to address this issue combined with mounting support for women's participation in peace processes, the *Pakistani Women Moderating Extremism* program came to fruition at a ripe time, in a relevant political context and country, and on a “hot” topic. The program was successful in part due to increased interest, support, and receptivity from policymakers seeking unique solutions to counter violent extremism.



## Endnotes

- 1 PAIMAN Alumni Trust is a Pakistani non-governmental organization dedicated to peacebuilding, transforming conflicts, and empowering women and marginalized communities. For more information, visit <http://www.paimantrust.org/>.
- 2 The Institute designed the workshops based on *Inclusive Security: A Curriculum for Women Waging Peace*, an innovative training tool that integrates skills building (including advocacy, coalition building, and message management) with educational content on peacebuilding topics such as negotiations, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction. Inclusive Security's training programs are highly interactive and designed to assist leaders in building coalitions and advancing advocacy agendas to promote women's participation in peace and security processes.
- 3 The Institute for Inclusive Security includes The Women Waging Peace Network, a network of more than 1,000 women peacemakers from conflict areas around the world. The Network was launched in 1999 to connect these women with each other and with policy shapers. Network members—all demonstrated leaders among women peacebuilders—are elected and appointed government officials, directors of nongovernmental organizations and movements in civil society, scholars and educators, businesspeople, representatives of multilateral organizations, and journalists. With varied backgrounds, perspectives, and skills, they bring a vast array of expertise to the peacemaking process. Numerous women from Pakistan are some of its founding members.
- 4 During their second gathering, the coalition formalized a group structure. They designated local partner Mossarat Qadeem as the official national coordinator of the coalition and nominated one leader from each province to serve as provincial coordinators, who would act as liaisons with the national coordinator and be responsible for maintaining communication and coordinating activities within the larger group.
- 5 The conflict cycle consists of various stages, ranging from durable and stable peace to armed conflict and war. Depending on the stage of conflict, different interventions can either help prevent escalation to crisis and war, such as diplomacy, bring an end to war, such as negotiations and peacekeeping, and help resolve conflicts and prevent recurring ones in the post-conflict stage through reconciliation and peacebuilding activities. Because the types of violence plaguing Pakistan falls along different phases of the conflict cycle, it was necessary to review this with the coalition to help them identify the phases and interventions on which they wanted to focus.
- 6 “Developing Recommendations with Women Leaders in Pakistan to Moderate Extremism.” *The Institute for Inclusive Security*. October 2011. [http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8871\\_pakistan.cfm](http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8871_pakistan.cfm).
- 7 In December 2011, Inclusive Security supported the participation of four members from Amn-o-Nisa in the two-week SIT CONTACT South Asia Program. Through this program, these coalition members enhanced their understanding of and skills in conflict analysis, conflict management, intergroup dialogue, transitional justice and reconciliation, and negotiation and mediation. Following the program, they reported applying these skills to their provincial-level work with the coalition, and during the March 2012 workshop, they gave a presentation on their experience with the CONTACT program, sharing major lessons and tools learned with the full coalition. In January 2012, Inclusive Security hosted its 13th annual colloquium, bringing together women leaders connecting across ethnic, religious, or other divides. Representing coalitions supported by the Institute in Afghanistan, Israel, Pakistan, Palestine, South Sudan, and Sudan, 12 women traveled to Cambridge, MA, for a week of teaching, speaking, and exchanging ideas at Harvard University. Two members from Amn-o-Nisa were selected to participate in the colloquium program. As coalition representatives, they shared lessons they've learned from Amn-o-Nisa's collective advocacy and community engagement efforts. They also discussed challenges and successes with other women working in coalitions around the world, which provided them the opportunity to learn fresh strategies and tools that they applied to Amn-o-Nisa's initiatives.
- 8 Inclusive Security solicited evaluations from participants following each workshop to get feedback, track participants' progress, and monitor the success of the Institute's trainings. These were used to plan and design subsequent workshops, and adjust the program's course when needed.
- 9 “Pakistan Women's Coalition Against Extremism Launches Publicly—October 2011.” *The Institute for Inclusive Security*. October 2011. [http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8881\\_pakistan\\_women\\_s\\_coalition\\_against\\_extremism\\_launches\\_publicly.cfm](http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/8881_pakistan_women_s_coalition_against_extremism_launches_publicly.cfm)

- 10 Hall, Shereen. "Recommendations for the US Government from Pakistani Women Leaders." *Inclusive Security Blog*. April 24, 2012. <http://blog.inclusivesecurity.org/recommendations-for-the-us-government-from-pakistani-women-leaders/>.
- 11 For more information about the delegation, please visit: <http://blog.inclusivesecurity.org/>; <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/26/151417951/pakistani-group-tries-to-keep-sons-from-being-radicalized>; <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/rights/pakistani-women-waging-peace-the-world-over>
- 12 Such events included the Raymond Davis murder case; the killing of Osama bin Laden by US forces on Pakistani soil; US Admiral Mike Mullen's openly accusing the Pakistani government of harboring terrorists; and an accidental US raid on a Pakistani border check-post that killed 24 of their soldiers.