



PROMOTING INCLUSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Bridging Theory and Practice:
A Pakistani Policewomen Case Study

BY ALLISON PETERS AND JAHANARA SAEED, DECEMBER 2016

About GIWPS

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security examines and highlights the roles and experiences of women in peace and security worldwide through research, global convenings and strategic partnerships. The Institute seeks a more stable, peaceful and just world by developing evidence-based research on how women strengthen conflict prevention and resolution initiatives, foster democratic political transitions, counter violent extremism, combat climate change, and expand economic opportunities in fragile states. Housed within the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, the Institute is headed by the former U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues, Melanne Verweir.

Bridging Theory & Practice

The Institute hosts a series of symposia that aim to improve communications and build closer ties among academics, practitioners, and policymakers. Each event results in a set of Occasional Papers that captures new thinking and important trends, identifies challenges, and maps solutions in various aspects of women, peace and security. This set of Occasional Papers follows a symposium about countering violent extremism.

About Inclusive Security

Inclusive Security is transforming decision making about war and peace. We're convinced that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. Together with these allies, we're making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

Written by Allison Peters and Jahanara Saeed | Edited by Anna Applebaum

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REUTERS/Abdul Rehman

Children wade through the ruins of their Swat Valley school, blown up by the Taliban in January 2009.

Introduction

Pakistan continues to face threats of violent extremism as the government grapples with political and social instability. Numerous terrorist organizations operate within the nation's borders and continue to launch devastating attacks against the Pakistani people and those in neighboring countries.¹ Despite the launch of the government's military counterterrorism operation, Zarb-e-Azb, in 2014, the country has suffered numerous large-scale attacks targeting children and families, police trainees, and the legal community, among others.

While research shows that police operations are more effective at combating terrorism than military force,² Pakistan's police forces are historically under-resourced and plagued by corruption, heavy handedness, and civilian mistrust. Negative experiences with criminal justice sectors corrode public trust in rule of law institutions, hindering their effectiveness and generating grievances. These conditions are conducive to violent extremism and bolster terrorist recruitment.³ To strengthen trust between police and communities, police forces must be representative of the populations they are tasked with protecting and able to access, communicate with, and respond to the needs of local communities. They must also reduce corruption and abuses committed by security sector actors. Building inclusive law enforcement institutions—where women are recruited in greater numbers and elevated into decision-making within these structures—must be prioritized within an overall framework to counter violent extremism (CVE).⁴

Yet women represent only one percent of Pakistan's police forces. This gap in the Pakistani security sector remains a challenge to efforts to stabilize the country against terrorist threats.

This case study documents Inclusive Security's project in Pakistan that brought together a diverse group of women leaders from civil society, police, and parliament to impact processes and dialogues focused on countering terrorism and violent extremism. It highlights a methodology to develop local-led initiatives aimed at creating inclusive CVE programs and policies while aiming to protect the safety and security of participants. By promoting inclusive security frameworks and enhancing the participants' advocacy skills, the project aimed to increase women's inclusion as a core component of efforts to stabilize Pakistan and the region.

Definitional Framework for Countering Violent Extremism

While CVE is currently a central focus for policymakers, there remains a lack of global consensus around the definition of the concept and practice itself. This dearth of definitional consensus presents numerous challenges for practitioners and policymakers alike in conceptualizing, implementing, and resourcing targeted programs designed to prevent or counter violent extremism.⁵

Throughout the academic and policymaking sphere, there is little agreement around what separates counterterrorism strategies from CVE efforts and, as CVE becomes more all-encompassing, how it is different from development initiatives more generally.⁶ There also is a lack of consensus around defining the phenomenon of violent extremism itself. This is best exemplified in the United Nations' Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which acknowledges that "violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition," and emphasizes that developing a definition of violent extremism is the prerogative of each member state.⁷

Some scholars and practitioners have attempted to develop their own working definitions of CVE. For example, William McCants and Clinton Watts advocate for a relatively broad definition whereby CVE entails "reducing the number of terrorist group supporters through non-coercive means."⁸ Other experts have opted to create a distinction between measures that are CVE-specific or CVE-relevant. CVE-specific measures refer to actions taken to "prevent or suppress violent extremism in a direct, targeted fashion." In contrast, CVE-relevant measures are meant to reduce one's vulnerability to violent extremism indirectly, often through education and development initiatives.⁹

This fluidity in definition also manifests itself in country-specific national CVE strategies, the creation of which is called for under the United Nations' Plan of Action. Inclusive Security analyzed accessible national CVE strategies or CVE components of counterterrorism strategies and assessed further summaries provided by national governments of non-public strategies. The assessment found that national governments have

varying definitions of CVE, particularly whether military action should be encompassed under this framework. Importantly, the assessment found that only a select few plans mention the importance of women or attention to gender in this space and none pinpoint detailed actions their governments will take to facilitate women's inclusion in CVE strategies.

Due to the lack of consensus on what CVE entails, this case study relies not on one single definitional framework but on ongoing conflict analyses conducted with local partners. This analysis prioritizes the various drivers of CVE within a local context; the push or pull factors that drive individuals into violent extremism;¹⁰ and a mapping of decision-makers. The authors' definitional framework thus addresses the dynamics, relationships, and issues at play in terrorism-threat environments.

The Case for Women's Participation

Recognizing that military force alone is not a long-term solution to eliminating the threat of terrorism, attention within the international community has shifted toward promoting whole-of-society strategies aimed at addressing the underlying conditions that create breeding grounds for terrorism recruitment and empowering local partners to prevent and counter violent extremism.

Within this context, there has been an increase in the development of multilateral policy frameworks aimed at advancing women's inclusion and integrating gender into CVE and counterterrorism efforts. However, within many national-level debates and strategies, the inclusion of women and recognition of the broad spectrum of roles they play in violent extremism continues to be undervalued. This is particularly striking as women-led civil society in many parts of the globe have reported challenges in meeting with leading government institutions in the development stage of such strategies, despite their localized insight on drivers of violent extremism.¹¹ When national CVE strategies mention the importance of women's participation and attention to gender, they rarely include details on implementation. This gap in CVE strategies and initiatives must be addressed.

For decades, researchers and practitioners have documented the important role women play in enhancing the efficacy and long-term sustainability of conflict prevention and resolution strategies.¹² Evidence shows that when women are present in peace processes, they broaden discussions to address the underlying drivers of conflict and the structural barriers that contribute to violence.¹³ Studies indicate that women's empowerment and gender equality are associated with more sustainable peace and stability in society.¹⁴ Georgia Holmer echoes this research in the context of violent extremism noting that "A community that promotes tolerance and inclusivity, and reflects norms of gender equality, is stronger and less vulnerable to violent extremism."¹⁵

CVE practitioners have also highlighted the roles of women within CVE initiatives. Many argue that the impact and sustainability of CVE programs and policies is dependent on the inclusivity of those efforts, along with recognition of the broad range of roles women play in supporting and countering violent extremism.¹⁶ The Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral counterterrorism platform, echoed these calls by adopting a good practices document for member states on women and countering violent extremism in September 2015.¹⁷ The document notes, "As a core part of families and communities, women and girls have vital contributions to make to a more expansive understanding of the local context for CVE, including violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, and its underlying factors. They can help formulate and deliver tailored CVE responses that are more localized, inclusive, credible, resonant, and therefore sustainable and effective."¹⁸

While much of the evidence supporting these assessments is based on field consultations and practitioner input, some research has found that women are already playing myriad roles in the space of CVE. The argument has been made that women may be able to strengthen the ability of families and communities in certain contexts to reject terrorist recruitment and violent extremist influence.¹⁹ Some experts contend women can play a role in detecting early warning signs of radicalization in some communities and contexts, intervening before individuals become violent, and delegitimizing violent extremist narratives.²⁰

Policymakers tend to view women either as solely victims of violent extremism or as stalwart custodians of peace within their communities. However, the past decade has seen a growing recognition in terrorism studies of the numbers of women, and the diverse roles they play, within terrorist movements.²¹ Terrorism experts have long pointed out that counterterrorism and more recent CVE policies and programming have thus far failed to adequately address gendered differences in the manifestation and motivations of female militancy, inhibiting the effectiveness of these efforts.²²

"As a core part of families and communities, women and girls have vital contributions to make to a more expansive understanding of the local context for CVE."

THE GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM FORUM'S
"GOOD PRACTICES ON WOMEN AND COUNTERING
VIOLENT EXTREMISM"

Many contemporary violent extremist organizations from across different spectrums have also strategically manipulated and exploited gender norms and stereotypes to advance their objectives. For instance, Da'esh has employed targeted recruitment efforts to bring women into the group who can then serve as key propagandists, recruiters, fundraisers, and enforcers of strict penal codes.²³ Yet, within the space of CVE and counterterrorism, women continue to be underrepresented in key sectors, particularly in decision-making positions that are key to addressing the push and pull factors that drive individuals into violent extremism.

Role of Female Law Enforcement

Women police officers and gender-sensitive community policing approaches are an important component to preventing security sector-related push factors towards violent extremism. Negative experiences with the criminal justice sector corrode public trust in rule of law institutions, hindering their effectiveness and generating grievances that bolster terrorist recruitment.²⁴ Communities often have little opportunity for safe dialogue with the criminal justice sector. A 2009 assessment of the drivers of violent extremism by the US Agency for International Development finds “brutal and degrading treatment at the hands of police”²⁵ as a key political driver in the agency-supported assessment.²⁶

Studies show that grievances generated by security sector abuses committed against populations and institutional corruption is a significant push factor across many different contexts. A recent study out of Nigeria found that former Boko Haram members cited desire for revenge for abuses committed by state security forces as a strong factor in Boko Haram recruitment.²⁷ A study on the drivers of Somali youth joining al-Shabab found that revenge for the treatment of women at security checkpoints was a contributing push factor.²⁸

However, research also indicates that police forces can be more effective at combatting terrorism than military forces.²⁹ They have distinct advantages over traditional military forces due to their permanent presence in local communities. This can also make them better positioned to support a more community-centric and non-securitized approach to CVE.³⁰

A representative police force able to respond to local needs is a critical component of reducing conditions that allow violent extremist organizations to thrive. Women police officers are critical to enhancing the operational effectiveness of police forces and strengthening trust between police and civilians. Women are less likely to use excessive force, and can more efficiently de-escalate potentially violent confrontations than their male counterparts.³¹ They can reach certain marginalized populations that male counterparts may be prohibited from or have difficulty accessing.³² Women have also been shown to reduce corruption that can generate grievances.³³ Moreover, survivors of sexual assault and domestic

violence are more likely to report these crimes to women police officers,³⁴ and in some contexts, only women first responders are allowed to care for women victims of terrorist attacks.³⁵ Women police officers can strengthen local involvement in police strategies and enhance trust between police officers and the communities they are tasked with protecting.

Women police officers are critical to enhancing the operational effectiveness of police forces and strengthening trust between police and civilians.

However, women police officers remain uncommon. It is estimated that women represent approximately nine percent of police forces worldwide.³⁶ This percentage is dramatically reduced for leadership positions and in many contexts where terrorism rates are high.

Yet the inclusion of women in local police forces broadens the capability of counterterrorism forces. An analysis of women’s inclusion in CVE efforts in Nigeria emphasized that women police officers could conduct body searches of women and girls at checkpoints in a culturally appropriate way. Policewomen were also able to collect different information about security threats due to their access to spaces where men are traditionally not allowed.³⁷ This became particularly important in Nigeria as women began to conduct violent attacks more frequently.³⁸

Increasing numbers of women officers must be accompanied by structural and cultural changes to the police force. Women must be elevated into leadership positions where they have decision-making power to impact any CVE strategies and initiatives developed by their institutions to bring a different and important lens to this issue and to enhance effectiveness. Additionally, integrating gender into security sector policy and programming prevents and reduces civilian grievances by providing all police officers with the proper knowledge and skills to assess and respond to the differential needs and roles of men, women, boys, and girls. Kristin Valasek of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces notes about security sectors that “a balance of women and men

at all levels of institutions creates greater possibilities for identifying and addressing the different impacts of policy and programming on women and men. Having both male and female personnel is an operational necessity.”³⁹

Female Law Enforcement in Pakistan

Nowhere have these lessons been more apparent than in Pakistan. Police-community relations remain strained with high levels of mutual mistrust and suspicion. Pervasive corruption and abusive behavior at the hands of police forces have negatively impacted public trust in law enforcement, which in turn impacts the ability of these forces to keep communities secure.⁴⁰ Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has relied predominantly on its military to shoulder much of the burden for internal security. Military forces have long fought militant groups with limited long-term success,⁴¹ while Pakistan’s police forces remain under-resourced.

Force Composition and Barriers

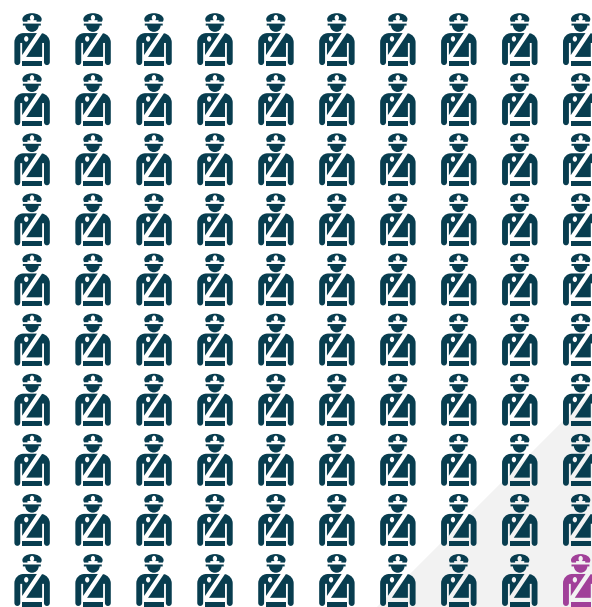
Women’s participation in the Pakistani police has historically been low.⁴² Pakistani leaders have not prioritized the recruitment and retention of policewomen, with a few exceptions. In 1994, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto launched the first Women Police Station (WPS) in the country, with the goal of increasing reporting of crimes by women. At the time of writing, this model has been expanded to 19 such stations nationwide.⁴³ However, these police stations are not only severely under-staffed and under-funded, but also have limited authority, hampering their efficacy.⁴⁴ The WPS also resulted in women officers often being sidelined in police functions, preventing male colleagues from seeing women as capable of performing critical, operational roles.⁴⁵ As a result, several donor entities in Pakistan are now prioritizing the integration of women-staffed units or desks within “mainstream” police stations.

Progress has been made in recruiting women police in Pakistan, but slowly. In 2007, the Federal Government of Pakistan issued a memo directing a 10 percent quota for the employment of women to “all posts across the board in Federal Government Services.”⁴⁶ This quota



US Embassy/Pakistan

Approximately one in 100
Pakistani police is a woman



SOURCE: National Police Bureau of Pakistan (December 2011)

now applies to the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), which is the officer corps of provincial police forces.⁴⁷ This allows women recruited into the PSP to receive specialized training and achieve higher ranks. However, based on a gender audit released by the National Police Bureau in 2011, the number of policewomen across the country is just shy of one percent.⁴⁸ Moreover, despite more women entering the PSP in the last decade, women are severely underrepresented at higher levels of authority and decision-making positions, with almost 98 percent of them serving in the lower cadres of the police forces.⁴⁹

Over the last two decades, several legal and policy efforts have been undertaken to reform Pakistan's law enforcement into more community-oriented police institutions.⁵⁰ The results have been uneven, with a gap around the recruitment, retention, and professionalization of women police officers. The recruitment gap stems from numerous, multi-faceted issues, including the lack of a standardized recruitment process across provinces for women police, absence of gender-sensitive recruitment criteria, a dearth of women's representation on recruitment selection committees,⁵¹ and cultural barriers that can present hurdles for potential recruits.

ONCE RECRUITED, WOMEN FACE CHALLENGES TO BEING PROMOTED TO SENIOR RANKS.

They often do not receive specialized and mandatory skills training and do not have access to resources for their personal and professional development.⁵²

Moreover, even when training opportunities are available they often take place for long periods of time at training institutes that are located very far from their homes. This discourages women from participating, particularly if childcare is not present.⁵³

In recognition of these shortcomings, the Government of Pakistan approved a Gender Strategy of Police in 2012.⁵⁴ Among other things, the plan aimed to improve the representation of women in police by recommending more targeted recruitment efforts, prioritizing women's personal and professional development, and including gender-responsive curriculum in police training.⁵⁵ However, as then-Director General of Pakistan's National Police Bureau Ihsan Ghani acknowledged at the 2014 Roundtable Conference on the State of Women Police in Pakistan, this strategy has not been fully implemented.

Moreover, despite the growing threat of violent extremism in the country and the need to generate more representative police forces, the Pakistani government's 2015 National Action Plan for combatting terrorism does not mention women police nor structural and cultural reforms to these forces.⁵⁶

INCLUSIVE SECURITY CASE STUDY

Inclusive Security works to increase women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes globally. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision-makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. The organization focuses on bolstering the skills and influence of women leaders around the world around issues of war and peace.

It is within this context that Inclusive Security implemented its program "A Cross-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan," which built upon an existing partnership between the organization and local partner PAIMAN Alumni Trust. The project brought together a diverse group of Pakistani women leaders in parliament, the police, and civil society for a series of workshops over two years. The project's long-term goal was to decrease violent extremism in Pakistan by ensuring women's priorities and perspectives are represented in national and provincial security policies and processes related to countering violent extremism. By equipping women with the skills, knowledge, and tools to develop and advocate for inclusive security policy frameworks, the project aimed to increase women's inclusion in efforts to stabilize Pakistan.

A previous Inclusive Security and PAIMAN partnership resulted in the formation of Amn-o-Nisa,⁵⁷ a diverse coalition of women leaders from all areas of civil society who mobilized against increased intolerance and violent extremism in Pakistan through advocacy, public outreach, and community engagement. This coalition developed and advocated to policymakers on a wide range of policy recommendations targeting multiple factors associated with the spread of radicalization and violent extremism.⁵⁸ They identified that the lack of women in the Pakistani police forces was a major gap in the country's efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The women noted that the dearth of women police officers prevented the force from adequately responding to the needs of the population, and, therefore, allowed terrorist groups and violent extremists to fill that vacuum.

To further explore this concept, Inclusive Security conducted in-depth research, including a series of focus groups with law enforcement, security sector and counterterrorism experts, civil society actors, community leaders, and donors. This research⁵⁹ confirmed Amn-o-Nisa's assessment and demonstrated that integrating women into police forces is a vital component of the country's CVE efforts. Additionally, this research helped Inclusive Security assess the key actors to include in a targeted intervention and the areas of focus for program curriculum.

Project Overview

The long-term goal of the project was to decrease violent extremism in Pakistan by ensuring that women are represented in CVE-related security policies and processes. By working with a core group of women from across three sectors (parliament, police, and civil society) who do not often have an outlet for dialogue, the project aimed to increase the capacity of these leaders to access and include their voices in policymaking related to security issues, particularly within the law enforcement sector.

THE PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES INCLUDED:

- ▶ Assessing participants' understanding of violent extremism in the context of Pakistan;
- ▶ Deepening participants' understanding of women's roles in CVE, particularly within the police, security sector institutions, and CVE-focused security sector development needs;
- ▶ Increasing participants' advocacy knowledge and skills;
- ▶ Providing technical assistance to participants to conduct research, consultations, and policy meetings regarding CVE-related policies and processes;
- ▶ Increasing policewomen's understanding of civil society perceptions and vice versa; and
- ▶ Connecting participants to policymakers and security sector officials in Pakistan to share policy recommendations.

The project involved in-country workshops over a period of two years with sustained interaction and ongoing support in between workshops. A Pakistani security sector expert and former law enforcement official advised the project. This support helped the participants maintain communication and share information between workshops and assisted in undertaking key activities in the interim. The workshops took place over three to four days and included a variety of activities aimed at building trust between the participants, addressing grievances among the sectors, and strengthening their knowledge-base of CVE and national security processes.

The final workshop of this project included advocacy meetings with Pakistani security officials and various international ambassadors. Throughout the length of the project, the facilitators and the security sector expert helped the women develop a set of policy recommendations through a rigorous process supported by Inclusive Security's training tool *Inclusive Security: A Curriculum for Women Waging Peace*. By consensus, the women prioritized two main objectives that their recommendations would aim to achieve:

- ▶ Increase women's recruitment, retention, promotion, and professionalization in the police forces with an eye toward elevating their roles in decision-making around CVE.
- ▶ Increase a focus on CVE within, and women's participation in the design and implementation of the components of, the country's National Action Plan to counter terrorism, and any further national strategies developed to counter violent extremism and terrorism, within two years.

Through the program, participants increased their knowledge of national and provincial security sector institutions and processes and built the necessary skills to advocate for their inclusion in these processes.

Participant Selection

The project identified and recruited a diverse group of Pakistani women leaders from within civil society, parliament, and the police. These three sectors do not often have the opportunity for dialogue but rather identify grievances and mistrust with each other. Each sector has a critical advocacy role to play within institutions on countering violent extremism. Women police officers, in particular, rarely have the ability and access to advocate for changes related to CVE within their institutions, but civil society and political leaders have the potential to push for the changes the police officers identify.

These 20 women leaders also came from diverse regional, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. Participants included the first female attorney from her Hazara community in Balochistan, a federal cybercrimes investigator in the police, and an elected member of the Pakistan Hindu Council. The project did not include any language restrictions and provided translation and simultaneous interpretation during the workshops. The program partners prioritized civil society individuals who were established in their local communities in areas impacted by radicalization and violent extremism.

To ensure the involvement of women police officers, the program partners followed Pakistani National Police Bureau (NPB) protocol and worked with them to secure the nomination of officers from various law enforcement entities around the country. The support of the NPB allowed these trainings to occur.



To protect their identities, these photos are not of the individuals who took part in this specific project.

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Major Themes of the Project

SEVERAL KEY THEMES PRIORITIZED IN THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS—OR THAT EMERGED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION— ARE WORTH HIGHLIGHTING FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING:

1

Trust building and cross linkages

The project's cross-sectoral approach brought women leaders from three important sectors together—civil society, parliament, and the police. Participants noted that they have never had the opportunity to collaborate and work together on security issues. Structural barriers, such as low numbers of women officers in operational and leadership roles, and the lack of trust between the three sectors created an environment where many civil society leaders and parliamentarians had never even met a women police officer before, let alone worked closely with one. In addition to working across sectors, the participants were also able to meet and work with an ethnically, religiously, and geographically diverse group of women across a broad age range with varying levels of experience and expertise.⁶⁰

Given preexisting mistrust, the workshops aimed at facilitating constructive exchange and building cohesion. Participants shared personal reflections on conflict and violent extremism in Pakistan and considered the contributions of women in their own sectors. Initially, there were significant disagreements, including around the definition of CVE, the role of the media in perpetuating radicalization, and women's roles in radicalization processes. It was through reflection activities that the participants found one another relatable and as allies working towards the same goal. Due to the impact of conflict on the participants, facilitators incorporated elements of trauma healing curricula into the workshops. For example, the participants were invited to share how conflict and violence has personally impacted them in their geographical locations, as well as to share positive examples of resilience.

The multi-sectoral approach allowed participants to build on the strengths of each sector. When tasked with developing research questions to explore in their communities, members of civil society were able to assist police officers and parliamentarians. Given that civil society is more accustomed to doing research and advocacy, they supported other sectors to develop research action plans on Pakistan's security institutions. In addition, the parliamentarians assisted the other participants in securing certain high-level meetings for their advocacy. This cross-sector coordination and information sharing has continued even after the program's end.

Investing time on trust building broke down siloes between the participants, particularly civil society and law enforcement. Not only did women share their perspectives and listen to others, but they eventually were able to come to an agreement on a coordinated policy platform. Despite previously entrenched grievances, by working together, the three sectors created policy recommendations aimed at ensuring that women's exclusion is addressed in a comprehensive manner.

2

Enhancing security knowledge

A core element of the project was enhancing knowledge of institutions that make decisions concerning CVE and terrorism and assessing how those decisions impact women. The participants were provided with a comprehensive overview of institutions that develop and implement security policy, budgetary processes that guide them, and the components of the country's national counterterrorism policies. The facilitators and a Pakistani security expert helped the participants conduct a mapping of formal and informal security, justice, and oversight actors. Participants were asked to assess what they envisioned a secure community would look like to them as well as their perception of gendered differences of security threats. Many participants indicated that a secure community included the following: democracy, the implementation of laws, freedom from fear and freedom of movement, no discrimination, and the protection of civil liberties.

Participants were asked to assess the Pakistani security sector based on four internationally recognized components of security sector reform—civilian control, accountability, transparency, and rule of law—and make initial recommendations on how shortcomings could be improved. The women made these assessments based on their analysis of the localized drivers of violent extremism within their communities. They worked in groups to evaluate the four factors and to share their analysis. The assessments in this activity led to rigorous debates among the participants, revealing deep schisms in opinions that typically broke down by sector.

Participants were also asked to explore the various roles that women can play, based on their own personal experiences. These exercises demonstrated that women's roles are not binary but fall across a spectrum of activities as drivers, victims, and preventers of violence. It was critical for the women themselves to take the lead in mapping specific examples of positive and negative roles women have played to further underscore the importance of their involvement in CVE policies and processes in Pakistan. For example, participants analyzed instances where women contributed to the radicalization of family and community members or committed terrorist attacks. The women police officers shared examples where they felt they contributed to moderating violent extremism or were hurting efforts to do so. Many of the women touched upon personal experiences, allowing them to connect their stories to data points and recommendations.

3

Policy advocacy capacity building

The workshop aimed to further develop participants' capacity to excel in strategy and policy development. At the end of each workshop, participants broke into groups to discuss ways to engage with their communities and leaders in their respective sectors between workshops. They developed research and advocacy plans as a sector (after workshop one) and as a province (after workshop two). The goal was for the participants to identify gaps in their knowledge around national security-setting institutions and to gather input on their policy recommendations from key leaders in their sectors and communities.

After the first workshop, the participants developed sectoral research plans to enhance their understanding of the CVE and security sector space in Pakistan. The women faced different challenges in accessing the information they needed. For the police participants who work within chain-of-command institutions, it was a challenge to secure meetings with senior law enforcement officials. Participants also highlighted challenges in finding publicly available information regarding the country's National Action Plan on counterterrorism and National Counter Terrorism Authority. However, participants from civil society conducted community consultations that aided in the development of policy recommendations. Talking to leaders in a variety of professions from areas under high threat of violent extremism, they learned that very few people knew what was in the National Action Plan and most lacked any trust in Pakistan's security agencies to transparently implement its components. Civil society research also underscored that women victims of terrorism lacked any input around these issues. At the end of this process, many participants identified that their biggest hurdle in implementing their plan was their fear of talking about security-related issues. This research helped guide the conversation around advocacy skills and policy development that dominated the second workshop.

At the end of the second workshop, participants broke up by province to develop cross-sectoral provincial action plans about research and advocacy meetings. These provincial action plans included goals for meetings with senior police leaders, civil society leaders, and community consultations. Developing action plans across sectors allowed the women to leverage one another's skills and networks to successfully achieve their advocacy objectives. The participants again faced numerous hurdles in implementing these plans but, in several cases, were able to coordinate to achieve their objectives. For example, the parliamentarians had policy contacts that were challenging for civil society and police to access. By working together, the women were able to secure some high-level meetings and continue building trust as a group.

Putting the workshop lessons into practice included learning to target advocacy messaging for different actors. For example, one team had a meeting in-between the workshops with a high-level official who was not receptive to their messaging. During the workshop debrief, participants discussed how to

remain composed when interacting with unresponsive stakeholders, how to further tailor their messaging for different actors, and how their cross-sectoral partnerships could help to gain legitimacy.

The final workshop focused primarily on finalizing policy recommendations. Aided by facilitators and the Pakistani security expert, the women developed targeted policy recommendations to address the gap of women's participation in countering violent extremism efforts, particularly in the security sector. After a consensus-driven process, they established one objective concerning the recruitment, retention, and professionalization of women police officers, and one objective aimed at building a more inclusive national strategy on combatting terrorism that includes CVE components.⁶¹

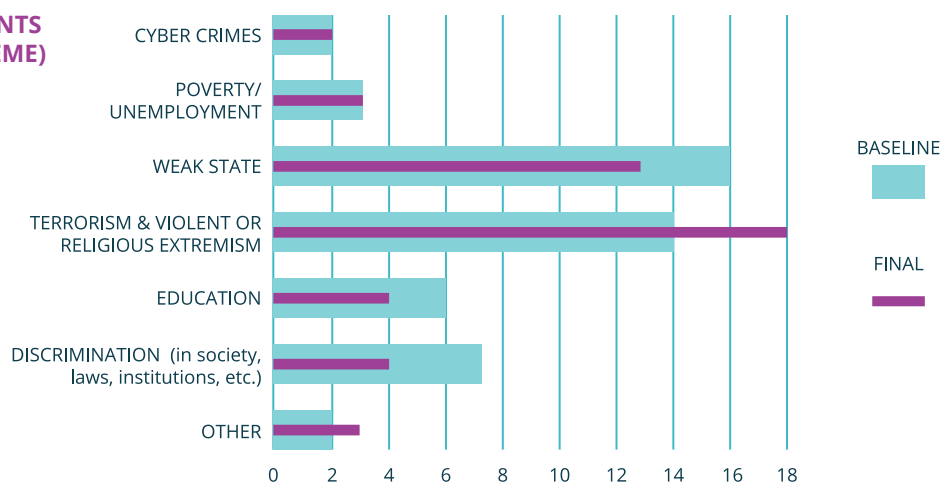
An important component of this project was the participants' opportunity to meet with national and international actors whom they often cannot access. These meetings included several Pakistani security officials, law enforcement actors, and ambassadors. The participants advocated for a greater role for women in security efforts in the country and connected their recommendations to personal stories and data points. Prior to each meeting, the group analyzed their advocacy target and customized their talking points accordingly, as well as divided talking points and responsibilities within the meeting. Following each meeting, they identified opportunities for improvement. Due to the nature of their representation in security positions, most of these meetings were with male actors. Therefore, the participants became more comfortable discussing security issues with men in

positions of authority and identifying potential champions for inclusion.

During these advocacy meetings, the participants made considerable progress towards their goals. All of the people they met with committed to reviewing the recommendations and determining what type of support they can provide. Several promised to take specific actions, and the women have remained in discussion with some of them. Several ambassadors committed to raising the issue of women police officers as a diplomatic priority, and some have taken action to do so. For example, since the group's meeting with the US Ambassador to Pakistan, the Department of State is supporting new initiatives aimed at strengthening attention to gender within Pakistan's National Police Bureau.

The women remain in contact with one another and the facilitators on a regular basis to discuss security issues and share information and policy developments. Some of the women have coordinated follow-up from these policy meetings to push forward their recommendations. Several have conducted media activities discussing issues of violent extremism and elevating their voices as leaders in this space. Two of the policewomen received promotions, which they attributed to their strengthened advocacy skills. Most importantly, monitoring and evaluation assessment tools revealed a dramatic increase in trust between the sectors and wholly changed perspectives of each other's roles. Several civil society participants said they now trust the policewomen they worked with to report security threats and could ask them directly for assistance.

ISSUES PARTICIPANTS WORK ON (BY THEME)



Monitoring and Evaluation Results

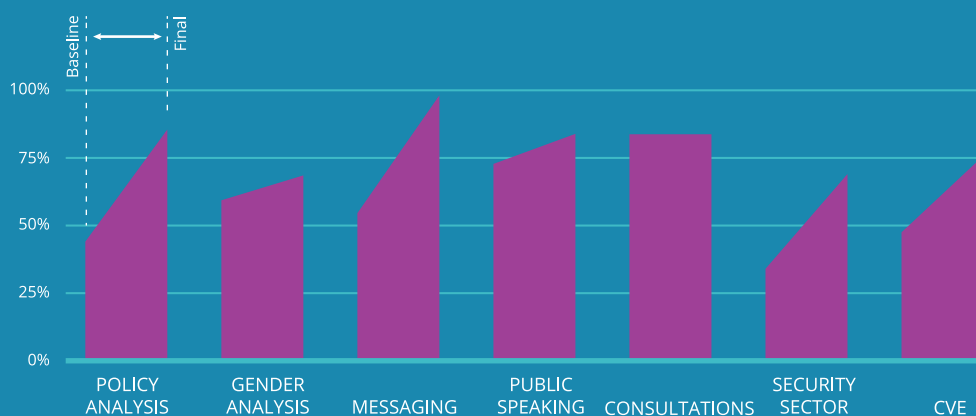
The Inclusive Security team conducted surveys and employed social network analysis tools to assess the impact of the program on the participants' capacity for CVE-related advocacy. Participants were asked to provide responses to a baseline survey at the first workshop followed by an end line survey after the final workshop.

The graph above highlights that, by the end of the program, greater numbers of participants now assessed that they work on issues related to terrorism and violent/religious extremism. This indicates that the program may have influenced the focus of many participants; many seem to have shifted from working on other topics—such as education and discrimination—to issues related to CVE. Coupled with the fact that most of the participants report

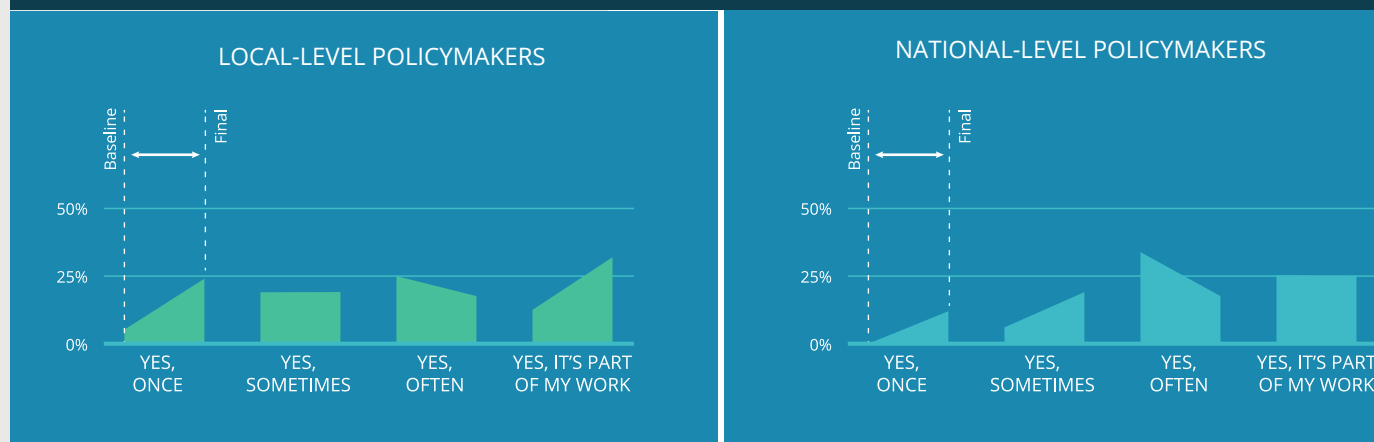
an increased knowledge of policy analysis, this is a tremendous success. One of the goals of the program was to have more women in the field of policymaking related to CVE.

Analyzing policy frameworks related to CVE, counterterrorism, and the security sector to assess how they can be improved and how women's participation, particularly women police, can be incorporated was an important goal of the program. In policy analysis, only 25 percent of participants rated themselves as highly competent at the beginning of the program, while 81 percent rated themselves 7 or higher out of 10 by the end. This level of improvement is an indication of the success of this program. Additionally, 44 percent of participants assessed that they were highly competent at messaging initially, which increased to 94 percent by the end of the project. There were also considerable increases in percentages of participants whose knowledge of the security sector and CVE increased.

PARTICIPANTS RATING THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AS A 7 OR HIGHER ON A 1-10 SCALE



PARTICIPANTS REACHING OUT TO LOCAL- AND NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICYMAKERS BY FREQUENCY



The graphs above reflect that more participants are meeting policymakers at the local level and at least once at the national level. Further, more women believe that meeting policymakers at the local level is part of their work. However, there is a decline in the number of participants who meet with policymakers often at the national level. This could be due to several factors that have made accessing national-level officials more difficult for certain sectors. While the Pakistani government has released a national-level counterterrorism strategy known as the National Action Plan, women were wholly missing from the development of this strategy and it lacked a comprehensive plan to address the push and pull factors of violent extremism. At the time of writing, reports indicate the government is assessing what components could be included in a separate CVE strategy.⁶² An increase in meetings between participants and national-level actors would allow the women to advocate for a CVE strategy that includes a gendered perspective, particularly around the need to recruit and elevate more women in law enforcement around these issues. This would ensure any strategy incorporates more of a whole-of-society view on addressing the threat of violent extremism to strengthen its effectiveness.

Policy Lessons Learned

Building inclusive law enforcement institutions—particularly by increasing the number and strengthening the role of women police officers in decision-making—must be a CVE priority. Research indicates that security sector abuses and grievances are generated by a lack of rule of law, transparency, and accountability in the security sector. When women meaningfully participate, police forces can better access and engage local communities to reduce the push or pull factors that drive individuals into violent extremism. However, if women are not elevated within those forces-and security institutions overall—the strategies developed and measures employed by these institutions to build resiliencies and capabilities to prevent the spread of violent extremism will overlook their critical perspectives.

As countries, including Pakistan, are developing national CVE strategies, these plans must make the development of inclusive law enforcement institutions a priority and include women—both from government institutions and civil society—in the development and review of new structures. Multilateral mechanisms to provide support to governments in drafting and assessing these strategies must also prioritize this issue within their assessment frameworks and diplomatic engagement.

Police often occupy a “grey,” or in-between, zone as they are not viewed as being part of the government, such as parliamentarians, nor outside it, like civil society leaders. This unique position often hinders their ability to advocate around issues related to women’s recruitment, retention, and promotion—or offer their perspectives on addressing security threats—without a public platform for doing so and little internal measures for discussing these issues with superiors. Addressing this issue requires enhanced skills for conducting advocacy within their law enforcement institutions, and external advocates in government and civil society supporting their calls.

Inclusive Security’s program is one approach toward addressing this gap. Programmatic evaluation data demonstrated that the project helped participants grow their networks beyond their sectoral silos and strengthened trust among them; built their capacity to advocate to a multitude of national and international actors; and deepened their knowledge of the security sector and CVE in Pakistan. While important outcomes in and of themselves, if women police officers are supported in leadership development and advocate for issues related to the security sector, CVE, and CT, and civil society and political actors will be sensitized to the role these officers can play. In turn, women police officers may be elevated in decision-making around CVE and counterterrorism issues and be able to more meaningfully contribute to these efforts. As a result, police corruption and abuse may be reduced and public trust strengthened, thus possibly reducing grievances that create conditions conducive to violent extremism.

This project also highlighted the importance of connecting perspectives of women on the ground to advise on the policies and programs of donor governments and multilateral institutions that operate in that country. Inclusive Security’s research, programming, and policy work in Pakistan has provided the organization with a platform to highlight the important role women police play in CVE both in Pakistan and more broadly around the globe. The organization has used that platform to advocate for changes, based on the recommendations of the participants, to donor country and United Nations policies to increase support for the recruitment, retention, and professionalization of policewomen and elevate their CVE and counterterrorism roles to enhance the responsiveness of police forces to the threat of violent extremism.

The project’s goals were to affect policymaking related to violent extremism and law enforcement. The participants began to build policymaker awareness of the roles of policewomen in CVE and counterterrorism and began to address the trust deficit between civil society and police forces within their multi-sectoral group. Moving forward, the authors recommend funding for multi-year programming that allows trainers to work with a set group of participants for a longer period of time to maximize their impact and further strengthen their policy frameworks. The authors also recommend that opportunities for building advocacy capacity and leadership development around CVE and counterterrorism issues across female security sector actors are prioritized in donor country security assistance programs and policy initiatives.

Conclusion

For CVE policies and interventions to be effective, the global lack of inclusive security sectors must be addressed. This means not just prioritizing female law enforcement recruitment, but developing pathways for their leadership in decision-making around security threats. Women’s participation is a critical element of addressing security sector grievances that create conditions conducive to violent extremism, yet this issue is rarely targeted within CVE strategies and programming.

Inclusive Security’s efforts in Pakistan represent one methodology for addressing this security concern. By bringing together a diverse group of women leaders from the police, civil society, and parliament to impact processes and dialogues in Pakistan focused on countering terrorism and violent extremism, participants were provided with knowledge, skills, and tools to advocate for changes within the confines of their institutions.

The research documented in this case study and insights for future programming must be accounted for by policymakers and practitioners working to address the evolving threat of violent extremism if their efforts are to be effective.

Appendix

The following is a reflection of programmatic lessons learned for CVE practitioners:

This project allowed participants to grow their networks from beyond their sectoral silos, build their capacity to advocate to a multitude of national and international actors, and deepen their knowledge of the security sector and CVE-related issues in the country. Over the course of the program, Inclusive Security drew a range of insights that may be helpful for CVE actors to account for.

This project further exemplified the importance of having a well-known local partner with the breadth and depth of experience to attract a diverse group of participants, facilitate workshops, and help manage logistics. Additionally, it is essential to look for ongoing ways to engage all participants between workshops to provide support in implementing action plans, including assessing security risks. Given the numerous activities that participants were engaged in both within their jobs and externally, it is critical to ensure that all participants often hear from facilitators and the local partner to push for their continued engagement and involvement to meet the program objectives.

The importance of the local context cannot be understated for both curriculum development and the general management of the project. Utilizing and hiring a local security adviser who has relationships with key institutions helps add legitimacy to programs of this nature and ensures that all topics discussed are relevant and applicable to the participants. Similarly, as facilitators, it is also essential to be cognizant of the security situation in the country and the risks associated with discussing CVE issues publicly. A rigorous evaluation of such risks—including consultations with each participant at the beginning of the project, and ongoing reassessments—must guide how public information

about the program can be. (For example, will participants' names and/or their specific stories be shared publicly? Will partners describe the project on their websites? Will photos of individual participants or their outputs be shared online?) It is important for facilitators to exercise discretion to ensure that all participants are comfortable with the subject matter and the way it is being discussed. Facilitators should also be aware of the different ways in which the security situation may have personally impacted participants and their communities. By including a component within the curriculum allowing the participants to acknowledge shared trauma with a focus on healing and moving forward, the program created a safe and comfortable space for women to share their experiences and humanize one another.

As indicated by many participants, the key to this project's success was the cross-sectoral approach. By facilitating cross-sectoral coordination, the program enhanced trust and understanding between law enforcement and the citizens they are tasked with protecting. Almost all civil society and parliamentary participants indicated that they had never met a policewoman before the workshops. Through sustained interaction, participants grew to develop a shared understanding and perspective of the security threats in Pakistan and the important role each sector plays in tackling them.

Ensuring the availability of local interpreters and translators was key to facilitating this cross-sectoral interaction and strengthening relationships with facilitators, even when some facilitators spoke conversational Urdu. Moreover, it is important to be cognizant of how travel expectations limit women's participation due to the burden of unpaid labor, such as childcare, that often befalls women, and to establish an open dialogue around these challenges at the start of the project.

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About the Authors

ALLISON PETERS

Until recently, Allison Peters was Director of Policy and Security Programs at Inclusive Security, where she focused on advancing the inclusiveness of peace and security processes around the globe. She led Inclusive Security's policy team, regularly advising and providing technical support to policymakers on how they can more effectively address women's integration into diplomacy, defense, and development. Additionally, Ms. Peters led Inclusive Security's advocacy, programming, and research on countering violent extremism and terrorism. She regularly traveled to terrorism-affected regions to build the capacity of security sector and civil society leaders to devise policy recommendations and advocate for women's inclusion. Previously, Ms. Peters spent seven years in the United States Senate advising on foreign policy, national security, and intelligence issues for a senior senator. Ms. Peters holds a master's in international security studies from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and a bachelor's in political science and psychology from Rutgers University.

JAHANARA SAEED

While working with Inclusive Security, Jahanara Saeed researched and reviewed numerous national strategies for countering violent extremism and documented Inclusive Security's engagement in Pakistan, including their program working with Pakistani policewomen, parliamentarians, and civil society leaders. Ms. Saeed previously worked as a research associate at the Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE), a Pakistan-based nonprofit focusing on education quality and access. While at SAHE she worked on projects pertaining to the conceptualization of citizenship in Pakistani history textbooks and the use of public-private partnerships in education delivery, culminating in a co-authorship on a research report for the organization. Ms. Saeed graduated with honors with a master's in international relations and international economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and received her bachelor's in economics from Smith College.

For more information contact

Sarah D. Rutherford

Sarah.Rutherford@georgetown.edu