

Foreign Policy
at BROOKINGS



**A Gendered Approach to
Countering Violent Extremism**
Lessons Learned from Women in
Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention
Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and
Morocco

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CENTURY SECURITY
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POLICY PAPER
July 2014

Foreign Policy at BROOKINGS

The views expressed in this monograph are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Counterterrorism Center, Director of National Intelligence, U.S. Intelligence Community, or U.S. Government.

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PREFACE

Given the opportunity to do a fellowship at the Brookings Institution, I planned to research and publish on an issue relevant to the United States and its counterterrorism strategy. Professionally to date, I had focused on the reactive side of terrorism – evaluation and analyzing the failures. My approach during this year was to recognize, identify and analyze successes in the proactive, preventative sphere of the paradigm. With a deeper understanding of the reactive and proactive strategies to counter violent extremism, I strove for a more comprehensive picture of what might produce positive outcomes in which peace, security and continued success are achievable and sustainable.

With the understanding that women everywhere influence their families and communities daily in very unique ways, some of my preliminary research revealed that women have been identified as a significant resource in the sphere of peacebuilding and conflict prevention since the mid-twentieth century. Although their potential in the countering violent extremism paradigm was still relatively innovative, there were examples in which women were identified either directly or indirectly at the forefront or participants in counterterrorism programs. Even as critical influences postured uniquely in families and communities to participate proactively in the counterterrorism realm, women were underutilized and sometimes simply overlooked. The empowerment of women and gender equity as indicators of positive impacts on violent extremism is where I decided to focus my research.

My time and experiences at Brookings have been some of the most inspiring and motivational of my career. At times I have felt inundated with solutions and possibilities; at others, overwhelmed with the equation of counterterrorism and the cultural, societal and religious implications that the world must determine and resolve. I express my humble gratitude for the individuals who I have met this year. They have enriched my thoughts, my ideas and my understanding of terrorism and counterterrorism. Many of them have become lifetime mentors for their progressive and positive thinking as well as their willingness to engage and interact with me.

First and foremost, I want to thank Brookings Institution Senior Fellow and Director of the Intelligence Project, Bruce Riedel, and Fellow and Director of U.S. Relations in the Islamic World, Will McCants, PhD. They have consistently been available, willing to find the time to listen, mentor, and brainstorm with me.

To my esteemed fellow Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence colleagues and managers, specifically the Federal Executive Fellows at Brookings – Col. Kenneth Ekman (USAF), Col. Johnnie Johnson (USA), Col. Ryoji Shirai (JASDF), Cmdr.

Thomas King (USCG), Cmdr. Robert DeBuse (USN), Cmdr. Gregory Knepper (USN), and LtCol. Aaron Marx (USMC)—I want to thank you all for your camaraderie and guidance. It is encouraging that your forward-leaning perspectives will be at the forefront of our future military and political strategies. I am very grateful to Research Assistant Bradley Porter and Center Manager Brendan Orino for their unwavering assistance and guidance. I need to thank Scoville scholar Ariana Rowberry for her dialogue, availability, friendship, and input into my research. And a special thanks to senior fellows and management at the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence at the Brookings Institution for this opportunity.

There are several U.S. Government officials at the White House, State Department headquarters, and U.S. Embassies in Morocco and Bangladesh who have been incredibly supportive and provided invaluable insight into the issues and research captured in this work. Thank you to Director of Partnership and Engagement on the National Security Staff, George Selim, for your willingness to meet with me and share personal insight and vision on the solutions to combating terrorism. Thank you to State Department’s motivated countering violent extremism team. Thank you to the U.S. Embassy Dhaka’s Political Officer and the U.S. Embassy Rabat’s political team, which was kind enough to meet with me in Rabat and share invaluable understandings and perspectives.

This project took me to Morocco for a week of field research and interviews that would have not been possible without the support and encouragement of Chairman of Maroc Telecommunication and Board of Directors member at the Atlantic Council and the Search for Common Ground, Ahmed Charai. I am eternally grateful for your insight, friendship, and for your unwavering commitment and optimism in the fight against extremism across the world through *open dialogue, tolerance, and moderation*. The United States and the world need more *friends* like you.

Although I was unable to travel to Bangladesh, profound situational insights, information, and efforts in-country were made possible through the willingness of representatives at the Bangladeshi Embassy in Washington, DC, Director of Research at the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, Faiz Sobhan, and Professor Robert Boggs at the National Defense University.

I was fortunate to receive continued guidance from my home agency—the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). Thank you, specifically, to U.S. Government officials Dr. Terry Carrillo, Jason Kane, Audra Bray, and NCTC Director Matt Olsen for your mentorship, encouragement, and opportunity.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their support, reassurance, and inspiration to pursue this fellowship. I must thank my mother, who was simply *always there*, and my father, who continues to make *everything possible*. To my sister, thank you for *being unwavering in your belief in me and always making time for*

me in between saving lives (literally) on 30-hour shifts. And last but not least, I would like to thank my husband and children, who made this journey a reality. Through their laughter and insights, I am confident that the next generation will be even better positioned in its understanding of how to make the world a more peaceful, compassionate and tolerant place than we could ever imagine.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“If you train a man, you train one person. If you train a woman, you train an entire community.”

—Fatima Nezza, Moroccan *Mourchidate* (female imam) in Rabat, Morocco

As the United States and world transition from a reflexive and hard approach in counterterrorism to a more reflective and soft one for the *prevention* of terrorism, the search for best practices and lessons learned is more critical than ever. While programming related to countering violent extremism (CVE) continues to grapple with the adoption of official definitions, priorities, evaluation methodologies, and qualitative and quantitative metrics, there is a growing awareness of the importance of harnessing female actors as positive, operational agents of change. Women continue to be an underutilized and under-tapped resource in the fight against extremism. This research identifies best practices through lessons learned from efforts that utilize women to encouragingly affect catalysts and circumstances that drive individuals to engage in or support terrorism.

Currently, the gendered approach to preventing recruitment and radicalization to violence has been based on assumptions rooted in lessons learned from women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution. This translates in real world applications to the supposition that *an increase in women empowerment and gender equality has a positive effect on countering extremism*, as it does similarly in peacebuilding. I examine whether this assumption is valid based on the evaluation and comparative study of CVE approaches and programming in two countries that are considered to have marked success in reducing sympathy and support for violent extremism.

The empowerment of women not only makes practical sense, but also is a good investment in economics, business, and counterterrorism. In micro lending, for every \$1US a woman earns, she reinvests 90 percent back into her family and/or community; men reinvest only 40 percent. When a woman has an education, she marries *on average* four years later, enters into non-abusive relationships, and has 2.2 children who are healthier and better educated. Violent extremism is most effectively countered through increased education, better critical thinking, and enhanced opportunities. These empowerment scenarios and positive outcomes manifest in the impact a woman has within her family and community. In the words of former Secretary to the United Nations Kofi Annan, “There is no development strategy more beneficial to society as a whole—women and men alike—than the one which involves women as central players.”¹

Morocco and Bangladesh were selected as successful examples because of their direct and indirect emphasis on women empowerment to fight terrorism and its perceived factors that drive recruitment and radicalization to violence. Although strikingly different in culture, region, and economic standing, these two countries have comparative status on the World Economic Forum Gender Equality Index indicator scales, are democracies, and are Muslim-majority countries that practice moderate versions of Islam, making tolerance an essential element in policy implementation and social planning. Country and culturally specific programs have strategically identified women as critical components in counterterrorism strategies. Both countries have had marked success in curbing terrorism as shown by the decrease in the number of ideologically motivated attacks. Bangladesh has experienced no significant ideologically motivated attacks for non-political purposes since 2005, and on average Morocco has had less than one terrorist attack per year and none since 2011.

The Bangladesh case study was selected because of the government's gendered CVE approach in empowering women to affect the drivers and catalysts of extremism. Bangladesh identifies poverty as one of the country's main sources of radicalization to violence and terrorism, declaring that a lack of economic opportunity has the potential to provide a ripe breeding ground for recruitment into *madrassas* and possibly violent extremist activity.

To effectively counter violent extremism and poverty, a representative at the Bangladeshi Embassy in Washington, DC, revealed that the empowerment of women featured prominently in local CVE efforts. Specifically, Bangladesh has focused on empowering women through micro-lending programs, primary school attendance, and ready-made garment factory jobs. These three initiatives are presented in the Bangladesh section of this paper. The case study also identifies unique and noteworthy programming—with female participation—conducted by the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka in collaboration with the Bangladeshi Government to address violent extremism.

Experts and government officials identify women empowerment as a measurement of effective CVE programming in Bangladesh. According to Bangladesh's Bureau of Statistics, "women constitute half of the population [in Bangladesh], therefore without the participation of women in all spheres of life, the comprehensive sustainable social and economic development could not be achieved."² By aligning with and working towards the UN Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh has prioritized improving quality of life for women in the hope that such action will contribute to increased security and result in the reduction of terrorism incidents and rate of radicalization.

Morocco is the second case study presented in this research paper. Morocco's successful counterterrorism approach over the last decade is an exception in the Arab

world. Like Bangladesh, Morocco has determined that poverty definitively exacerbates radicalization, and the country has made considerable efforts to address this issue. The integration of women in Morocco's counterterrorism efforts was a strategic decision to ensure long-term sustainability, development, and efficacy of the nation's CVE strategy. Specifically, the effectiveness of its programs relies on the inclusion of women because of their critical cultural role in Moroccan families and communities.

The Morocco case study in this paper reviewed two CVE relevant efforts. On the heels of deadly terrorist attacks in Casablanca in 2003—referred to as Morocco's "9/11"—Morocco's king passed progressive revisions to the *Moudawana* (family code) in 2004 that empowered women socially and economically. The *Moudawana* was considered a landmark development towards the goal of gender parity and increased female empowerment.

The other initiative explored in the Morocco case study focuses on empowering women in the religious and political sphere. In 2005, Morocco's Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs began certifying female preachers (imams), known as *mourchidates*. These women are charged with promoting religious moderation and tolerance with the objective of curbing radicalization. This program has been hugely successful. Fifty *mourchidates* were trained and certified in 2005, and as of 2014, there were more than 500 *mourchidates* working in communities and prisons with women and youths in Rabat and Casablanca - a 1000 percent increase in less than a decade.

In both Morocco and Bangladesh, women have been identified as a critical resource in *imagining* and *imagining* a future for their children to understand tolerance, moderation, spirituality, and democratic values, and to encourage and act as examples to others. Since both countries identified poverty as a contributing factor to radicalization to violence, this paper compared poverty alleviation between the two countries. Each country has realized impressive strides in lessening this identified cause of terrorism. A portion of each country's programming has been influenced by and/or is a consequence of the UN Millennium Development Goals. Chapter Four also assesses gender and empowerment as it relates to culture and its influence on promoters of violent extremism.

Recognizing that empowering women socially, economically, and politically has a positive impact in the CVE realm, this paper identifies indicators and compares programming from both case studies in Chapter Four. In both Bangladesh and Morocco, the level of education and literacy has increased and is indicative of enhanced gender equality and female empowerment resulting from governmental and private programming and supportive efforts. The statistics also reveal improving trends in health and quality of life indicators for women. Additional indicators included in Chapter Four demonstrate the encouraging trend of women empowerment and the positive correlation to a reduction in acts of violent extremism.

Politically and economically, Bangladesh and Morocco demonstrated progress in the levels of empowerment when relevant indicators were compared. These two case studies demonstrate a positive trend in culturally relevant and country-specific indicators. These indicators, which affect catalysts and drivers of extremism, paint an encouraging picture of efforts to eradicate conditions conducive to terrorism through nuanced gendered approaches.

While originally intended to only bring awareness of the role of women in preventing terrorism, this research reveals several additional important findings. Most notably, as is the case with their impact on peace and stability, women play a critical role in the security realm, and CVE is no exception. Empowering women in culturally and country-specific ways enables them to be valuable players in the violent extremism paradigm.

Notes

¹ Alanna Ford, "Celebrating Women's History Month by Mobilising Your Resources," *The Guardian*, March 20, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2014/mar/20/womens-history-month-gender-lens-investment>.

² "Women's Administration Bangladesh," Assignment Point, <http://www.assignmentpoint.com/other/women-administration-bangladesh.html>.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Achieving our objectives for global development will demand accelerated efforts to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. Otherwise, peace and prosperity will have their own glass ceiling.”

– Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, January 2012

Despite its global prioritization and the allocation of considerable resources to combat it, the threat of terrorism worldwide has shifted and even increased by some accounts. The dialogue continues as to what resources may most effectively counter dynamic terrorist threats. Women have been identified as one of these resources.

In research, women in terrorism and counterterrorism are categorized as a *participant, enabler* or *preventer*. Women in prevention roles have been studied less than women as actors or enablers. Because women are uniquely positioned as purveyors of affirmative change, they could be extremely effective in detecting early warning signs of mobilization as well as affecting factors that contribute to radicalization.¹ Understanding the roles women play in the prevention of terrorism is crucial for national security in the United States.

In a review on women in counterterrorism, author Becky Carter noted that despite being ignored in the past, gender is increasingly considered in the study of extremism.

...gender tends to be excluded from literature on terrorism and political violence. However, the gender perspective of violent extremism has recently received academic attention as a result of increased awareness of the role women have in preventing, promoting, and participating in violent extremism.²

As attention in academia focuses more on this new “preventer” role, there will be a need to allocate resources to further understand how gender can affect catalysts and drivers of radicalization.

We learn from both successes and failures in countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies and programs. This research focuses on identifying and assessing the ways in which women can and do commendably serve in the *prevention* role. The United States’ efforts to educate mothers to identify early warning signs of radicalization, Morocco’s program for female imams, Bangladesh’s education and micro-credit programs, the

UK's education and training programs, and Saudi Arabia's counseling program are but a few women empowerment strategies.

In policy and programming, women have been leveraged to *prevent* and respond to radicalization and extremism according to lessons learned from women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. These lessons translate in the real world to a reduction in conflict—leading to more lasting peace and stability—when women are increasingly empowered (economically, politically, and socially) within their families and communities to make positive, sustainable impacts. Research and policies indicate that female empowerment and gender equality indicators continue to be valuable gauges in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.³

The United States and many other countries continue to explore the most effective ways to respond to and manage terrorist activities and threats, aware that as tactics in the terrorist paradigm change, the responses must meet a new set of challenges. Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the U.S. Department of State's former coordinator for counterterrorism, explains the challenge.

...to turn the tide of violence and extremism, we need to expand our frame of reference to that large pool of individuals, including women, who in times of conflict can be critical advocates for moderation by focusing on 'normalcy' and societal resilience—feeding families, educating children, caring for the sick and most vulnerable. Those trying to preserve stability and resolve conflict deserve to be recognized for their courage and more fully integrated into our countering violent extremism efforts.⁴

These ideals can include “social programs, counter-ideology initiatives, working with civil society to de-legitimize the al-Qa’ida narrative, and providing possible alter-narratives” in an effort to “stop those at risk of radicalization from becoming terrorists.”⁵

Political space is opening up for a strategic approach that is more nuanced, focusing on ideals that inspire “hearts and minds.” Women have a pivotal role to play in influencing at-risk members of a community. Harvard Kennedy School professor Joseph Nye argues, “Gender does matter in Foreign Policy. Women are more attuned to the balance of hard and soft power; the essence of ‘smart’ power.”⁶ This approach is what the State Department now calls “civilian power.” As Nye implies, as the members of society most often responsible for informing and shaping families, women frequently build the bridge between “hard” and “soft.”

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has also identified the need to transition from a “reflexive” and “hard” power approach in counterterrorism to one that is more balanced. Clinton’s “smart” power calls for the use of “the full range of tools at our disposal—diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural—picking the right tool, or combination of tools for each situation. With smart power, diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy.”⁷ Smart power can and should also

be at the frontline of CVE. Without proper use and application of “smart” power that leverages women, CVE will not be nearly as effective.

Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

A historical and longitudinal body of research confirms the correlation between increased female empowerment as well as reduced gender gaps and their positive implications for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. In a publication by the United States Institute of Peace’s Center for Gender and Peacebuilding, Senior Program Officer Georgia Holmer argues that the lessons learned in the peacebuilding community can positively contribute to the discussion in identifying best practices for CVE.⁸ The research and focused programming consistently reveal that an increase in female empowerment and gender equality reflect positively in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention realm.⁹ This paper argues that the same correlation exists for the success, impact, and sustainability of countering violent extremism programming. *The lessons learned from women’s role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention should continue to be applied to CVE.*

An examination of the best practices learned from the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention is critical. This research paper extrapolates the relevant leading indicators behind proven best practices and their subsets (social, economic, political), including those from the World Economic Forum (WEF), World Bank (WB), and United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (UN MDG), and then uses them to gauge the success of specific CVE programs in Morocco and Bangladesh.

Elise Boulding was a pioneer in the praxis of peace beginning in the 1950s, stressing the importance of a “space for ‘new voices’...exploring the place of women, children, and the family in the everyday practices of peacemaking” within “a global civic culture of peace.”¹⁰ Boulding was inspired by the Dutch sociologist Friedrich Polak, the author of *Image of the Future*. The book introduced the concept “imaging a better future as a way of empowering people to bring it out.”¹¹ Polak writes, “the idea that what we must understand is that we live in a social space which reaches back into the past and on into the future,” and we must include, “non-traditional voices in traditional discourses of nation-state politics.” Boulding’s “praxis of peace” also included the concepts of globalism and a global civic culture.¹²

In her book *The Underside of History*, Boulding expands the phrase, “equity feminism,” a concept included in the violence and oppression component, but also identifies “women’s culture historically as a resource for development and peace building.”¹³ She depicts a peaceful and tolerant global culture, using “social imagination and the idea of imaging the future.” In circumstances in which a woman may feel desperation and hopelessness, where she is a prisoner to past generations’ values and ways, interventions whereby she can imagine something “different” introduce hope and empowerment. This could be peace in a culture that is at war; it

could be tolerance where there is oppression. It could be the “imaging” of a better future for her children. The possibility of a culture of choice and questions about intolerance and change can initiate the beginning of a journey towards social change, gender equality and empowerment.

Culturally, women are especially well positioned within their traditional and non-traditional familial and community roles to stand at the forefront of change. In her book *Women Building Peace*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Senior Fellow Sanam Naraghi Anderlini highlights this role as the following:

The international community, dominated by multilateral bureaucracies and major industrial countries, has begun to take notice of women but seems incapable of addressing the complex reality of their experiences. The pendulum swings to extremes. On the one hand, women are vulnerable, passive, unable to protect themselves, inevitable victims of physical and sexual abuse, and in need of protection. On the other hand, women are the panacea, the internal bulwark against extremism; their political participation is the solution to all evils – particularly those of religious militancy.¹⁴

Focused, strategic programs that at the very least consider the needs and assets of women within their communities and families add more “human-power” for achieving the best possible outcomes in the counterterrorism paradigm. Optimally, individuals with unique perspectives, perceptions and positioning within family and community would become empowered to participate fully in the prevention of extremism. An uneducated woman who labors daily with no image or hope for the future of her children sees only what is visible, not what can be imagined. The use of ideologies is not novel and has been used by both sides in extremism. And while engaging meaningfully and appropriately on an intellectual and emotional level with women in at-risk communities will be more protracted, enhanced perception and alternative possibilities has the potential to be more enduring.

Polak’s and Boulding’s theories may provide the foundation for a nuanced “hearts and minds” approach in addressing violent extremism, one in which women can:

...provide alternative narratives, paths, activities, and perceive outcomes to their children, youth and adult community members...women tend to think more long-term than men: how will this affect my children? How will this affect my grandchildren? ... If women are therefore empowered, self-reliant, and respected enough to challenge dominant thought processes to events, they can contribute significantly to ending violence by offering to their family and community members more peaceful ways of resolving conflict.¹⁵

Complement this narrative with a country’s goals and initiatives for female empowerment and gender equality, and there is a significant resource for both peacebuilding and CVE programs and initiatives. Social, political and economic empowerment of women improves quality of life and enables women to think beyond

the fulfillment of basic needs like shelter, food and health. When basic needs for a woman, her family, and her community are satisfied, she will want to learn how to sustain those standards and may even desire to teach others how to achieve them. The woman thus becomes a contributing member of her society, distinguishing and realizing what is better for her family and community.

Morocco and Bangladesh: Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, and Preventing Radicalization

Morocco and Bangladesh are excellent examples of how female empowerment and gender equality indicators have the potential to influence the success of CVE programming and strategies. These countries have a comparable status in the ranking of the impact of terrorism: Bangladesh was 139th and Morocco was 140th in 2011, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index.¹⁶ Morocco has experienced, on average, less than one attack per year in the past decade and none since 2011.¹⁷ Bangladesh has not experienced any ideologically motivated terrorist attack in the last five years.¹⁸ In addition, both Morocco and Bangladesh have similar status on the WEF and Gender Equality Index indicator scales.

Morocco's Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs began certifying female preachers known as *mourchidates* in 2005. These women are charged with being representatives of positive change in their communities by promoting religious moderation and tolerance in a direct, progressive approach to curb radicalization. With self-esteem, empowerment, education, and relevant skills, women can "image the future" for themselves, husbands and children, but also benefit from the feelings of influence, authority and power in that transformation. During an interview with two female *mourchidates* in Morocco in February 2014, one of them said it perfectly: "If you train a man you just train one person, if you train a woman you train a whole community."¹⁹ These women are images of the future, equipped to fight and beat extremism.

First Secretary (Political) Monica Shahanara at the Bangladeshi Embassy in Washington, DC, discussed the "vision" Bangladesh is trying to instill within its counterterrorism framework. She stated that when women are empowered through education, they are "able to go into better jobs [with an education], sending their children to better schools. They have busy days, and are able to dream big dreams."²⁰ It is this vision of a positive future impact for future descendants and populations that transcend cultural and time constraints.

Notes

¹ See Appendix for definitions of radicalization and mobilization.

² Becky Carter, "Women and Violent Extremism: Helpdesk Research Report," GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services, March 13, 2013, <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ898.pdf>.

³ Nicola Pratt and Richter-Devroe, "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 4 (December 6, 2011).

S. Beever, "Women's Role in Peacebuilding: Nicaragua, El Salvador, And Guatemala Compared," MA Dissertation, 2010, University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security."

See Appendix for definitions.

⁴ Carter, "Women and Violent Extremism."

⁵ "U.S. Government Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism," U.S. State Department, Testimony of Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Testimony Before the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 10, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/rm/2010/138175.htm>.

⁶ Joseph Nye (@Joe_Nye), "Gender does matter in Foreign Policy. Women are more attuned to the balance of hard and soft power; the essence of 'smart' power," Twitter post, March 30, 2014, 9:31 AM EST, <https://twitter.com/CSIS/status/450309354194214912>

⁷ "Clinton: Use 'Smart Power' in Diplomacy," *CBS News*, January 13, 2009, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/clinton-use-smart-power-in-diplomacy/>.

⁸ Georgia Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Peace Building Perspective," United States Institute of Peace, August, 29, 2013, <http://www.usip.org/publications/countering-violent-extremism-peacebuilding-perspective>.

⁹ Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, "OP-ED: Women's Empowerment Builds International Peace and Security," *Inter Press Service News Agency*, October 18, 2013, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/10/op-ed-womens-empowerment-builds-international-peace-and-security/>.

¹⁰ Elise Boulding, Tom Woodhouse, and Irene Santiago, "New Voices in Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Conflictology* 3, no. 2 (2012), abstract.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why it Matters* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2007), p 2.

¹⁵ Maureen E. Fielder and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Words* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010), foreword.

¹⁶ "2012 Global Terrorism Index: Captioning the Impact of Terrorism from 2002-2011," Institute for Economics and Peace, December 2012, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2012-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf>.

¹⁷ David Pollack, "The Moroccan Exception," *The Journal of International Security Affairs* (Fall-Winter 2013), p 63, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/Pollock20131216-IISA.pdf>.

¹⁸ While attacks have occurred since 2005, they have all been attributed to escalating political violence.

¹⁹ Fatima Nezza, interview with the author, 2014, Rabat, Morocco.

²⁰ Monica Shahanara, interview with the author, Washington, DC, Bangladeshi Embassy, January 6, 2014.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology and Background

Methodology

This paper utilizes both primary and secondary sources and applies both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Using the descriptive method, this paper employs a comprehensive review of existing print and seminar sources with a juxtaposition of newly acquired data from interviews and on-site visits. New information is presented within indicator scale conceptual and functional parameters either side-by-side or stand-alone for each country studied, sometimes without systematic comparison.

The qualitative interview approach (structured and unstructured) explored direct and indirect CVE efforts with women in Morocco—training female *mourchidates* and implementing the Moudawana Code. In Bangladesh, the focus is on micro-lending and micro-credit to women, female garment workers, and educating girls. Country-specific perceptions of the root causes of terrorism and counterterrorism programming are discussed. A country’s perceived outcomes of reduction in the number of ideologically motivated attacks influence their continued implementation of programs with women. In addition, these outcomes improve a country’s position and numbers on objective gender equality and female empowerment indicator scales.

Quantitative indicators from gender equality and female empowerment scales are extracted for the purposes of analysis, description and comparison of direct and indirect counterterrorism programming in Morocco and Bangladesh.

TABLE 1. Key Female Empowerment Indicators

| Social Indicators | Political Indicators | Economic Indicators | Quality of Life Indicators |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Female literacy rate | Females as head of state | Female unemployment | Female mortality rate |
| Female teachers | Women in parliament | Female percentage in workforce | Female HIV prevalence |
| Legal marriage age | Quota of reserved seats for females in political positions | Women’s right to inherit land | Female access to healthcare |
| Female enrollment in primary/secondary/tertiary education | Women in religious figure positions | Women’s access to credit | Female access to birth control |

The conclusions highlight the importance of country-specific programming that focuses on women in counterterrorism efforts. Programs where women are active participants moderate the intent and action of extremism at varying stages of radicalization. They

also serve to increase women empowerment within homes and communities in both secular and religious realms. Possibilities for the sustainability and improvement of the causes and effects of violent extremism within each country's context and culture are also discussed in this paper.

Background

Radicalization and Why It Matters in Prevention Efforts

Understanding the radicalization process is fundamental to identifying solutions that seek to prevent mobilization in the direction of violence. According to the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), radicalization is a potential outcome when individuals strive to right perceived wrongs. A wide array of catalysts can lead to radicalization, "some factors—grievances, exploratory violent narratives—are common among the radicalization paths of most individuals, by themselves they do not explain why one individual turns to violence and another does not."¹ Factors contributing to radicalization often interact, which is why "if examined independently they usually fail to provide insight into the most likely causes of terrorist violence."² This unsystematic interaction also diminishes any model's determinism: "Though stories, pathways, or trajectories toward extremist violence can be carefully analyzed and understood in retrospect, no models of radicalization are predictive."³

In addressing radicalization, the desired outcome must be accomplished with tailored, locally based solutions; *there is no one size fits all*. A Global Center on Cooperation Security publication by Naureen Fink, Rafia Barakat and Liat Shetret captures the need for a multifaceted approach, "As the international community shifts from a reactive to a more preventative approach regarding terrorism and violent extremism, the need for a more comprehensive multi-stake holder approach to addressing this challenge has become apparent."⁴ CVE is a complex problem set requiring an approach that is multidimensional, contextually relevant, and agile enough to respond to the changing dynamics and environments affecting potential catalysts.

The History and Complexity of CVE

In August 2011, when the "War on Terror" was nearly a decade old, the Obama Administration released the United States' first CVE strategy—highlighting the Homeland, as opposed to overseas—to address "forces that influence some people living in the United States who hold radical or extremist beliefs that may eventually compel them to commit terrorism."⁵ This step officially recognized that prevention was less expensive and potentially more effective than a reactive approach. It also formalized the need to support efforts to understand "the behaviors, tactics, and other indicators that could point to potential terrorist activity within the United States, and the best ways to mitigate or prevent that activity."⁶ The strategy's goals included a need

to understand violent extremism, support local communities, and support local law enforcement efforts to deter recruitment and mobilization.⁷

On May 29th, 2014 during a speech to the graduating class at West Point, President Obama revealed the U.S.'s new counterterrorism strategy. The updated strategy focuses more on empowering partners to fight terrorism through training local security forces and bolstering CVE capabilities than previous iterations.⁸ Finding partners that are already "getting it right" will be essential to the U.S.'s success in combating terrorism from this point forward.

According to Holmer, the study of CVE is focused on "countering the pull of terrorist recruitment and influence by building resilience among populations vulnerable to radicalization," and its policies and programs are "designed to prevent individuals from engaging in violence associated with radical, political, social, cultural, and religious ideologies and groups."⁹ One challenge stifling a cohesive approach in CVE is the lack of formal acceptance of the definition even by agencies (or combinations thereof) involved in the actual programming and implementation of civil engagement, development, religious tolerance and moderation. Senior Fellow William McCants at the Brookings Institution captures this challenge.

Although US Government documents frequently employ the term CVE, there is not a shared view of what CVE is or how it should be done. Definitions range from preventing people from embracing extreme beliefs that might lead to terrorism to reducing active support for terrorist groups. The lack of a clear definition of CVE leads to conflicting and counterproductive programs, and also makes it hard to evaluate the CVE agenda as a whole and determine whether it is worthwhile to continue.¹⁰

In some cases, the lack of agreement on a definition has stove-piped CVE-relevant programming and organizations' ability to effectively evaluate and measure effectiveness.

The complexity of identifying effective programming to address extremism is also captured by Associate Professor of Public Policy at Purdue University Daniel Aldrich: "A different approach, based on the recognition of multiple pathways to radicalization and the externalities of the use of violence, may have fewer negative side effects but will require a longer time horizon and deeper connections with civilian populations in countries of interest."¹¹ Investing in civilian populations is critical to the success of curbing violent extremism. An essential element of effective CVE programs mandates long-term sustainability.

These programs' longevity primarily depends upon funding. However, individual interactions and relationships among the "players" both influence and impact this funding. Sustaining a program depends on nurturing, developing and encouraging the interactions and relationships of people. Sources of funding are essential, but so is the intent and vision of those involved; they require a "smart"

investment in the people, the programs, and ongoing review and strategies focusing on dignity, development, education and positive vision.

Women as Actors in CVE

The assumption that women are inherently more “peaceful,” and therefore better positioned to prevent terrorism, has recently come under scrutiny.¹² Women have acted—and continue to act—as suicide bombers or supporters and active members of terrorist groups. According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):

...a woman should not be assumed to be more or less dangerous [than a man], nor more prone to peace, dialogue, non-violence and co-operation than a man. In fact, the very image of the peaceful woman has been used by terrorist groups to recruit women and claim an innocent and non-violent character by highlighting the involvement of women in their organizations.¹³

During a lecture at Georgetown University on “Women in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism,” Director of Duke University International Rights Clinic Dr. Jayne Huckerby asserted, “there tends to be a presumption of women being very peaceful, very motherly, as them being the ones to persuade individuals against terrorism. We need to move beyond that and look at the wide range of roles woman can play both in terrorism and terrorism prevention.”¹⁴ While women can and most certainly do partake in terrorism and violence, they are in the minority.

According to the State Department’s “Counterterrorism Strategy on Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism,” “historically, girls and women have not been viewed as a terrorist problem or solution, so are not looked at through a counterterrorism lens...women represent an enormously under-utilized resource in the struggle against violent extremism.”¹⁵ The reality is that “resolving conflicts and building peace, particularly in situations of internal war, are too complex and clustered to be left to any one sector. The international community and those in the formal political sector need to understand the work of women, what the potential impact could have if supported and sustained.”¹⁶ Women’s positioning in society offers a unique opportunity to affect the multidimensional factors that contribute to an individual’s trajectory into radicalization and mobilization. Former deputy secretary at the Department of Homeland Security Jane Hall captured the perspective that women bring to this issue when she indicated that “women approach [terrorism] differently and bring different assets to it. Structurally, we know that when we invest in adolescent girls and her understanding of child bearing that societal indicators move in the right direction.” Hall also remarked on the role women play as solvers in peacekeeping, noting that they bring a different orientation to problems.¹⁷ This unique, alternate perspective is essential to identifying approaches that address conditions conducive to radicalization.

The different orientation Hall referenced above is a direct reflection of the need

to harness women to act in the security realm precisely because of their pulse on communities and families. Programming and initiatives focusing on the impact of empowered women positively affecting the catalysts and drivers of radicalization are being identified and supported in various countries. Strategists believe that when women are empowered socially, politically, and economically in culturally appropriate and relevant ways, they will become contributing members of society who hold the answers and solutions to complex aspects and issues inherent in CVE. Saudi Arabia's CVE program, titled, "The Saudi Counseling Programme," is a good illustration. One expert writes, "it could be extrapolated from [the Saudi Counseling Programme] that women, as central figures in every culture, could hold the key to developing societal answers to a given society's terrorism problem, or at least to grounding each initiative in the appropriate culture."¹⁸ Women have the potential to contribute positively to CVE in their "traditional" and "lesser-traditional" roles.

In their "more traditional" roles as mothers, wives, sisters, and caregivers, women can serve as effective voices to counter the extremist narrative, speaking either as victims of terrorism and/or as family members who sustain the adverse, injurious impact of terrorist actions. As primary caregivers, they are well situated to identify early warning signs and indicators of radicalization and/or mobilization thoughts, behavior and actions in those close to them—whether within their nuclear families or larger communities. Women in the role of "mothers" can act as ambassadors of constructive change with their children by teaching (and modeling) moderation, tolerance, and acceptance. Women tend to invest more back into their families than men, and when they have more to invest in terms of an education, money, or health, their families will feel the benefits of this empowerment.

CVE programs focusing on family relationships—particularly on mothers—are gaining popularity. As these programs attest, "if extremism can start with a family's involvement, it can end that way, too."¹⁹ Hearne notes that, "a spate of new programmes centered on mothers' preventing the radicalization of their children supports this, and suggests that women have a role to play in actually preventing a new generation of extremists."²⁰ When women are educated and aware of these indicators and catalysts, it empowers them to intervene. When emboldened through education and/or social and economic programs, women are more vigilant to critically evaluate situations that could indicate or predict a vulnerability or propensity towards violence. Sisters Against Violent Extremism's (SAVE) Elaine Hargrove has written on this role.²¹

Women have a key role to play in finding and implementing new, alternative approaches to ending violent extremism. Their voices, experiences, and ideas have been utterly neglected to date, but their close proximity to potentially vulnerable youth through their roles as the main caretaker in most societies provides them with a unique point of view that can lead to vital insights into how to steer youth away from violence.²²

In their "lesser-traditional" roles as teachers, politicians, and community leaders, women have had considerable success in leveraging their positions to bring awareness

to the issue of terrorism and a woman's ability to inhibit it. By communicating with others in their communities, women are able to voice their concerns, raise their status amongst others, and feel a sense of confidence to address concerns and issues with those who have power and influence. Empowering women in religious positions, such as politicians in government and as teachers, allows them to act as powerful agents of change in counterterrorism by affecting catalysts and intervening early.

Dr. Huckerby notes that while there is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest women are effective preventers of terrorism in both their "traditional" and "lesser-traditional" roles, more qualitative studies are needed. This is, in part, because gender has not been as fully documented or studied until recently. The lack of gender indicators in measuring CVE programming has contributed to this dearth of statistical information. As movement continues to shift towards rule of law, development and human rights, gender begins to stand out as an aspect to be considered and examined closely. Women can and do have a powerful role to play in affecting contributing factors and circumstances of radicalization, but additional research is needed.²³

Notes

¹ Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer, June 2012, p 6.

² Ibid., p 5.

³ Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism," p 3.

⁴ Naureen Fink, Rafia Barakat and Liat Shetret, "The Roles of Women in Terrorism, Conflict, and Violent Extremism Lessons for the United Nations and International Actors," Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, April 2013, <http://www.globalct.org/publications/the-roles-of-women-in-terrorism-conflict-and-violent-extremism-lessons-for-the-united-nations-and-international-actors/>.

⁵ J. P. Bjelopera, "CVE in the United States," Congressional Research Service, May 31, 2012.

⁶ "DHS' Approach to Countering Violent Extremism," U.S. Department of Homeland Security, July 5, 2012, <http://www.dhs.gov/dhss-approach-countering-violent-extremism>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ David Rhode, "Obama's Counterterrorism Doctrine: Let Locals Lead the Fight," *Reuters*, June 4, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/04/us-usa-security-doctrine-analysis-idUSKBN0EF2EK20140604>.

⁹ Holmer, p 2.

¹⁰ Will McCants and Clinton Watts, "U.S. Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment," Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 2012, https://www.fpri.org/docs/McCants_Watts_-_Countering_Violent_Extremism.pdf, accessed 10 January 2014.

¹¹ Daniel P. Aldrich, "Mightier than the Sword: Social Science and Development in Countering Violent Extremism," *Frontiers in Development* (March 23, 2012), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2028009>, accessed October 2013.

¹² Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, "Women, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism," The McCain Institute, November 4, 2013, <http://giwps.georgetown.edu/story/1242744755472.html>.

¹³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Women and Terrorist Radicalization Report," February 2013, Vienna, Austria, p 2, <http://polis.osce.org/library/f/4061/3772/OSCE-AUT-RPT-4061-EN-3772>.

¹⁴ "Women, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism," The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security and the McCain Institute, November 4, 2013, <http://giwps.georgetown.edu/story/1242744755472.html>

¹⁵ "Counterterrorism Strategy on Women and Counterterrorism," U.S. State Department.

¹⁶ Anderlini, *Women Building Peace*, p 3.

¹⁷ "Women, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism."

¹⁸ Ellie B. Hearne, "Participants, Enablers, and Preventers: The Roles of Women in Terrorism," Research paper presented at the British International Studies Association annual conference, Leicester, UK, December 2009, p 10, http://www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task=view_public_papers&Itemid=126&search_criteria=participants,+enablers,+and+preventers:+the+roles+of+women+in+terrorism¤t_year=2012.

¹⁹ Ibid., p 11.

²⁰ Ibid., p 10.

²¹ SAVE is "the world's first female counter-terrorism platform. Headquartered at the Women without Borders offices in Vienna, Austria," it "brings together a broad spectrum of women determined to create a united front against violent extremism. SAVE provides women with the tools for critical debate to challenge extremist thinking and to develop alternative strategies for combating the growth of global terrorism."

²² Lori Poloni-Staudinger and Candice D. Ortobals, *Terrorism and Violent Conflict: Women's Agency, Leadership, and Responses* (New York: Springer, 2013), p 66.

²³ "Women, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism."

CHAPTER THREE

Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Identifying best practices from successful CVE initiatives is becoming more critical as global terrorist threats persist. In a report on lessons learned from peacebuilding being applied to CVE, Holmer made the following astute and applicable recommendation:

Suggested best roles for the peace building community in countering violent extremism are to support a non-securitized space for and build the capacity of civil society and to help reform the security bodies charged with counterterrorism and countering violent extremism...policy and global security efforts, in turn, may help provide the impetus and enabling conditions for effective peace building. Closer collaboration between the two domains...would advance efforts to prevent extremist violence.¹

These experiences are already being applied to counterterrorism with remarkable success in a myriad of scenarios. However, *how* these practices are affecting or affected by women in CVE is less apparent. What is quite clear is that there is value in the lessons we can and should learn from the roles that women are playing in peacebuilding. Policies that address women in security—and lessons and experiences derived from their implementation—are currently being applied to women’s roles in CVE.²

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is a ground-breaking document that paved the way for international recognition of the essential role women have in resolving conflict and sustaining peace and security. UNESCO outlined lessons learned from a comprehensive study on best practices on the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and non-violent resolution in African nations. Several best practices that are also applicable to women in CVE include:

- “Women, with their multiple responsibilities in the community—particularly in the management of natural resources such as water and food—are well positioned to feel and see early warning signs of conflict;
- Women must participate in all aspects and at all levels of the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the processes of peace building and peace maintenance;
- Extensive consultation and outreach should be made with women at all levels in society. The participation of women representing all political and social groups is

at the core of successful peace initiatives. Broad consultation will enable peace movements to harness different skills and experiences;

- Women have been shown to have the particular ability to listen to all sides with compassion and understanding, thus contributing to a non-threatening environment for dialogue;
- Post-conflict reconstruction must include the empowerment of women through education, income generating activities, the teaching of leadership skills, mediation and negotiation skills, fund raising, designing project proposals, lobbying, and advocacy;
- Programs to sustain peace through peace education in schools and the community must be initiated and strengthened;
- After hostilities have ceased, women's continuing role in sustaining peace must be acknowledged and maintained, they should not be relegated to the domestic area;
- Women must advocate for social change to set aside patriarchal values and structures that oppress women and inhibit their participation in social, economic, and political spheres—ideally, these principles should be constitutionally-protected...the women's movement should then meet the challenge of informing and educating women to take full advantage of these rights;
- Women's peace movements should promote peace amongst neighboring countries—regional peace and stability will enhance the likelihood of continued national peace.”³

Global programs in peace and security with women as key players have yielded positive and sometimes prolific outcomes.⁴ The lessons learned are being similarly implemented on a variety of platforms around the world for CVE and are yielding promising results. This awareness of the importance of women's education, economic empowerment, religious tolerance and political representation are essential elements in the provision of alternatives and direction for women as members of their communities and families.

The White House's National Action Plan drives the U.S. Department of State's CVE strategy - as applicable to women - on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP) and the Implementation Plan of the NAP. The goal of this policy is “to empower half the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by war, violence, and insecurity.”⁵ The NAP is guided by five principles, three of which are relevant to this paper:

1. “The engagement and protection of women as agents of peace and stability will be central to the United States' efforts to promote security, prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict, and rebuild societies;
2. By building on the goals for gender integration...the United States' efforts on Women, Peace, and Security will complement and enhance existing initiatives to

advance gender equality and women's empowerment, ensure respect for human rights, and address the needs of vulnerable populations in crisis and conflict environments;

3. In executing this policy, the United States will be guided by the principle of inclusion, seeking out the views and participation of a wide variety of stakeholders—women and girls, men and boys, and members of marginalized groups, including youth, ethnic, racial or religious minorities, persons with disabilities, displaced persons and indigenous peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and people from all socioeconomic strata.”

The NAP captures the influence of peacebuilding by asserting that “deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.”⁶ Building on the foundation of the NAP and women's roles within it, the State Department also has a specific policy on women in terrorism and counterterrorism.

The State Department's “Counterterrorism Strategy on Women and Counter-Terrorism” strives to recognize the role of women in countering violent extremism and their position as an “essential function of harnessing their response to building healthier, more resilient communities.” The strategy, which supports the NAP and its implementation strategy, notes that “women's power in the promotion of conflict prevention and peace building movements has also been demonstrated in areas suffering from terrorism, such as Northern Ireland, Colombia, and to a lesser publicized extent, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen.”⁷ The policy's objectives include:

- 1) Capacity building – women's involvement and inclusion in capacity building in civil society and security sectors;
- 2) Participation – women's participation and feedback in counterterrorism policies and programming;
- 3) Protection – ensuring women's rights are not negatively affected by counterterrorism policies;
- 4) Engagement – engagement with women in counterterrorism dialogues.

Through these objectives, the State Department works to “turn the tide of violence and extremism” by expanding its “frame of reference to that large pool of individuals, including women, who in times of conflict can be critical advocates for moderation by focusing on ‘normalcy’ and societal resilience—feeding families, educating children, caring for the sick and the most vulnerable.”⁸ This strategy captures the essence and importance of including gender in counterterrorism programming.

Policymakers continue to grapple with the intricacies of CVE. In reality, CVE “emerged and does, for the most part, remain static—programmatically and

conceptually—in the international and national security policymaking community as part of a broader effort to counter terrorism.”⁹ This presents an exceptional challenge to policymakers; the required “soft” approach to CVE does not align instinctually or culturally with the United States’ traditionally “hard” counterterrorism approach. CVE’s nuanced application of a “soft” solution to a “hard” problem has forced the debate into the “development *and* security nexus.”¹⁰ In CVE particularly, women are uniquely situated in families to apply a powerful “soft” solution to a “hard” problem.

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Indicators

“The United States understands that successful conflict prevention efforts must rest on key investments in women’s economic empowerment, education, and health. A growing body of evidence shows that empowering women and reducing gaps in health, education, labor markets, and other areas is associated with lower poverty, higher economic growth, greater agricultural productivity, better nutrition and education of children, and other outcomes vital to the success of communities.”

—United States’ National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

Progress of female empowerment and gender equality can be measured by social, political and economic indicators on scales that are generated by the World Bank, World Economic Forum, and the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals. Research suggests that when women are empowered, and when movement to gender equality is highlighted (as shown on the above indicator scales), there will be positive impacts in all of the above CVE outcomes.¹¹ In addition, there is a positive spiritual effect. These measures are arguably the most relevant to the challenge of preventing violent extremism. Investing in women to be better positioned to identify, intervene, and prevent factors that can and do increase chances of individuals engaging in violence based on ideological motivations cannot be undervalued.¹² According to the OSCE, “gender equality and women empowerment should not be valued only to the extent that it helps national security and counter-terrorism. Gender equality should be promoted in its own right and women should be empowered to participate fully in society...”¹³

Essentially, *when women are empowered socially, politically and economically and when there are higher levels of gender equality, the chances of peace and conflict prevention should increase.* The correlation between gender equality and female empowerment is one worthy of exploration for CVE. Holmer reasons, “by viewing the problem of extremist violence using the broader and more neutral lens of conflict prevention, peace builders can help extract a deeper understanding of the drivers of violent extremism.”¹⁴ Policymakers must recognize and acknowledge this correlation when supporting effective CVE. As with women in peace and stability, the inclusion of women in CVE is

absolutely essential. Policies that recognize this correlation will be more successful and sustainable than those that do not.

The definitions of empowerment vary, but this paper uses the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) definition: "female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment."¹⁵ This definition is extensive and applies to the case studies of Morocco and Bangladesh, their respective CVE strategies and programming, and approaches relevant to the integration of women.

The list includes social, political and economic empowerment indicators. Gender parity is also included to demonstrate efforts to increase women's influence and empowerment as participants and partners in the social, political and economic spheres. Examples are taken from the World Bank, World Economic Forum, and United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

- Gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary enrollment (socio-economic).
- Seats held by women in parliament (political).
- Unmet need for family planning (social).
- Contraceptive use by women (social).
- Unemployment rate for women (socio-economic).
- Literacy rate for women (socio-economic).

Notes

¹ Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Peace Building Perspective."

² Lessons of women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention are being applied to CVE efforts by private organizations and governments to address counterterrorism. Examples of this include the work being done by groups such as Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) and the U.S. State Department's policy on Women in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, which supports the "U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security" and its lessons learned from women in peace building and security.

³ "Best Practices in Peace Building and Non-Violent Conflict Resolution," United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1997, <http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/projects/bestpract.pdf>.

⁴ According to the "U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security," "a growing body of evidence shows that empowering women and reducing gender gaps in health, education, labor markets, and other areas is associated with lower poverty, higher economic growth, greater agricultural productivity, better nutrition and education of children, and other outcomes vital to the success of communities." The NAP also cites several noteworthy examples of women being active participants in

successful peace processes in Northern Ireland in 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement; Guatemala in the 1990s to end the 36-year civil war; Liberia in 2003; post-apartheid South Africa; and in Uganda in 2006 when women shed critical perspective on issues that would have otherwise been ignored by negotiators.

⁵ "United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security," The White House (U.S. Government), December 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/emailfiles/US_National_Action_Plan_on_Women_Pea ce_and_Security.pdf.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Counterterrorism Strategy on Women and Counterterrorism," U.S. State Department.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Holmer, p 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Women and Terrorist Radicalization Final Report," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, February 2013, <http://polis.osce.org/library/f/4061/3772/OSCE-AUT-RPT-4061-EN-3772>.

¹² According to the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), these factors that contribute to violent extremism can include concerns about political and social grievances, economic struggles, a person's identities, social network, encountering extremist ideologies, and a lack of parental guidance and community support. Common risk factors that can contribute to a person's motivation to move toward violent extremism can include, "the emotional 'pull' to act in the face of injustice; thrill, excitement, and 'coolness;' status and internal code of honor; peer pressure; and the lack of alternatives."

¹³ "Women and Terrorist Radicalization Report," Organization for Security and Co-operation.

¹⁴ Holmer, p 7.

¹⁵ *Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment*, USAID, March 2012, p 3, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf>.

CHAPTER FOUR

Successful CVE Approaches and Programming Involving the Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh and Morocco

Bangladesh

“You and your Government are doing an excellent job in empowering women and in countering terrorism.”

– President Obama commenting to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, New York, 2013

“When a destitute mother starts earning an income, her dreams of success invariably center around her children. A woman’s second priority is the household. She wants to buy utensils, build a stronger roof, or find a bed for herself and her family. A man has an entirely different set of priorities. When a destitute father earns an extra income, he focuses more attention on himself. Thus money entering a household through a woman brings more benefits to the family as a whole.”

– Muhammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*

Overview

Bangladesh’s approach to CVE is noteworthy. Since 2005, it has not experienced a significant ideologically motivated, non-political terrorist attack. This success has been attributed to the government’s zero-tolerance policy, introduced in 2005 after nearly six years of significant violence. Along with the zero-tolerance policy, the country continues to prioritize and focus on democracy and modernization to develop and nurture a culture that will not be easily swayed by terrorist ideologies and tactics.

In 1947, Britain divided British India into the independent countries of India and Pakistan. East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was separated from West Pakistan (now Pakistan). In 1971, East Pakistan became Bangladesh. In the adoption of its first constitution in 1972, the country chose “secularism as a state principal and prohibited the political use of religion.”¹ In 1975, hopes for secularism were dashed by the assassinations of key political leaders. Those who seized power aligned themselves with

the Islamists. It was during this time that political forces began establishing thousands of *madrassas* that “produced religiously indoctrinated youths who would be the front-line activists of the Islamist parties. Poor, jobless students from the *madrassas* were singled out by recruiters from militant Islamist organizations.”² By the early 1990s, extremism in Bangladesh was pervasive, nourished by political turmoil, lack of alternatives, and extreme poverty. Today, Bangladesh is home to 9.2 percent of the world’s Muslim population, easily making it a Muslim-majority country, with approximately 90.4 percent of the population adhering to Islam.³

Immediately following a grenade attack in 2005 that killed 22 people and wounded Bangladesh’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country adopted a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. Countless arrests, executions, strictly enforced counterterrorism legislation and policies, and enhanced regional partnerships quickly followed. Emerging from these actions was a proactive CVE strategy that continues to shape programs and policies focused on the root causes of terrorism today.

Bangladesh considers political turmoil and poverty the main drivers of extremism in the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed “reiterated the importance of the initiatives in poverty alleviation for eradicating terrorist and militant activities from Bangladesh and the region. She said that poverty had the potential for continued terrorism and militancy, asserting that poverty and peace could not live together, noting the importance of establishing democracy and human rights.”⁴

During a 2013 interview, the First Secretary (Political) Monica Shahanara at the Bangladeshi Embassy in Washington, DC, explained why the Government of Bangladesh’s is tackling poverty as one of several catalysts driving individuals to violent extremism. She made the point that, “families make the decision to send their children to *madrassas*—as opposed to private, expensive or public schools—because the *madrassas* are the only schools that pay living expenses. The *madrassas* prey on the poor for recruitment into religious extremism.”⁵ She explained that when “poor” people have means and opportunities, they will no longer have a reason to join extremist groups. Assuming that poverty is one of the driving factors of extremism, Bangladesh has fully integrated a number of anti-poverty and women empowerment programs (micro-credit, employment, and education) into the foundation of its CVE strategy.

First Secretary Shahanara noted that the greatest success of the Awami League political party in Bangladesh (in power since 2008) has been its counterterrorism efforts. Women and their empowerment have featured prominently in this strategy, with efforts focusing on three specific areas: micro-lending programs; primary school attendance; and garment factory jobs. The Bangladeshi Government emphasizes women’s economic, educational, and social empowerment, and their objectives and efforts link directly to the UNDP’s Millennium Development Goals.⁶ Bangladesh believes that women empowerment and gender equality will have a positive impact on curbing extremism in the long-term.

As noted earlier in this paper, measuring the effectiveness of CVE is a complicated undertaking. However, according to Bangladesh Enterprise Institute scholar Faiz Sobhan, Bangladesh gauges the success of its CVE efforts using the following indicators: “abomination of terrorism in a society; democratic traditions are firmly established; where women’s empowerment and their voices in society has become increasingly important.”⁷ According to these indicators, Bangladesh has made significant progress in meeting its CVE objectives and goals, and empowered women in Bangladesh are considered crucial to the success.

It is important to mention that in 1971, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) lagged behind Pakistan (then West Pakistan) in nearly every development indicator. Today, although its lower economic status has endured, Bangladesh has surpassed Pakistan in significant developmental indicators, including infant and maternal mortality rate, women’s attainment of secondary-level education, and female empowerment.⁸

According to Bangladesh’s Bureau of Statistics, “women constitute half of [the] population; therefore, without the participation of women in all spheres of life, the comprehensive, sustainable social and economic development could not be achieved.”⁹ Article 28 of Bangladesh’s constitution ensures equal rights and privileges to both women and men, stating, “Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of state and public life.” Aligning with and working towards achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh has prioritized improving the quality of life for women, which will contribute to increased security and stability in Bangladesh.

Micro-Credit and Micro-Lending Programming for Women

The goal of the Grameen (Village) Bank founded in Bangladesh in the 1970s by Muhammad Yunus was to offer micro-loans to the very poor, so that they could become self-sufficient. Yunus’ ingenuity, compassion, and efforts have greatly improved so many lives, that in 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Micro-lending and micro-credit began in Bangladesh with Grameen Bank in 1983. The Bank defines micro-credit as programs that “extend small loans to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their families.”¹⁰ According to *The New York Times*, micro-lending has “helped millions of poor women start and sustain small businesses around the world and especially in Bangladesh.”¹¹ What’s more, many scholars have “come to the conclusion that micro-credit loans encourage women and significantly increase their self-esteem and self-worth and thereby empower them.”¹² In Bangladesh, roughly eight million women account for 98 percent of borrowing.¹³

In 2013, the Bangladeshi Government considered dismantling the Grameen bank through nationalization after a campaign by Sheikh Hasina’s party against Yunus. The Bangladeshi Government was warned against taking over the bank given fears that “turning Grameen into an arm of the state would jeopardize the bank’s core mission by

subjecting it to destabilizing political interference.”¹⁴ Sheikh Hasina’s actions – allegedly retaliation against Mr. Yunus’ 2007 announcement that he would seek public office, which never came to pass, are examples of the tenuous political environment that could disadvantage millions of women if allowed to continue. Given Bangladesh’s successes in women empowerment and counterterrorism, the government may lose authority in the long run if it continues to allow political instability to prevail over the good of its citizenry, particularly women.

The success of the micro-lending programs in Bangladesh has not only resulted in women’s economic participation, but greater “education, family planning, and personal empowerment.”¹⁵ Family planning in Bangladesh is an example of the impact of economic and social empowerment on a family. Since micro-credit began, there has been a significant increase in the use of contraceptives in rural Bangladesh, an indicator of socio-economic empowerment for women.

A study by the World Bank’s Rural Development Research Group, focused on how micro-credit programs affect women’s empowerment, evaluated data from surveys conducted in rural Bangladesh from 1998 to 1999. The study assessed the impact of micro-credit programs on women and men, concluding that women’s participation in these programs does assist in boosting women’s empowerment.¹⁶ According to the findings, micro-credit programs led to women:

- “Taking a great role in household decision making
- Having greater access to financial and economic resources
- Having greater social networks
- Having greater bargaining power compared with their husbands
- Having greater freedom of mobility
- Increased spousal communication in general about family planning and parenting concerns”¹⁷

Allocating resources and political support for micro-credit programs has had a significant impact on women and their empowerment in Bangladesh. Economic independence, realized through micro-credit, not only results in the fulfillment of a woman’s basic needs but allows her to look forward in imagining her future role in the family and what her community *could* be. Increased independence also extends a woman’s ability to contribute to CVE; when she can protect her individual rights and safety, she can better protect the rights and safety of those who are close to her. And over the last two decades, Bangladesh female political leaders have provided images and role models that contribute to the notion that a strong female leader is acceptable.

Female Employment in the Ready Made Garment (RMG) Industry

The Bangladeshi Government views employment in the RMG industry as a pathway for women to become economically and socially empowered through financial

independence. The RMG industry in Bangladesh is the second largest in the world and is the largest employer of women in the country.¹⁸ Approximately 80 percent of the workforce is women, the majority of whom are from rural, poor, and undereducated populations. Working in the RMG industry provides an opportunity for women to elevate their economic standing within their families and communities. According to Naila Kabeer and Simeen Mahmud, “it is certain that the RMG industry has resulted in economic growth and poverty reduction.”¹⁹

Ongoing debate questions whether this industry has truly empowered women given the relatively low wages. What may be worse, however, are the questionable safety conditions that have led to severe industrial accidents, such as the April 2013 building collapse that killed 130 garment workers.²⁰ It is also difficult for women to sustain employment in the RMG industry because of intensive work and long hours. But in November 2013, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina successfully negotiated a 77 percent increase in minimum wages for garment workers (the minimum wage will now be 45 euros per month), a momentous victory for women empowerment and the Bangladeshi Government.

Female RMG workers have been empowered both by their participation in this industry and the support of the Bangladeshi Government. According to Kabeer and Mahmud, this empowerment includes women’s “capacity to negotiate with dominant family members, to postpone their age of marriage and to exercise greater choice in who they marry, to contribute to their families and thus to be perceived and valued as earning family members.”²¹ In addition to the social and economic benefits for women from the RMG industry, there is evidence to suggest that garment factory workers are far more likely to “vote in national and local elections than other women.”²² In 2008, the level of poverty in matriarchal households was considerably lower than patriarchal households: 29.5 percent for women and 40.8 percent for men, despite the fact that women were paid less, on average, than men. According to Bangladesh’s Bureau of Statistics, “of the total education expenditure per household, 43.8% is incurred for women as against 56.2% for men.”²³

Despite criticism of female inclusion in the garment industry, it has undeniably presented opportunities that would otherwise have never been afforded to this sector of the Bangladeshi population – its uneducated, poor women. The social and economic empowerment derived from this type of work can be leveraged and capitalized to empower families and women to further their roles in society and to help serve as a deterrent against violence.²⁴

Education for Girls

Bangladesh considers poverty one of the root causes of terrorism because impoverished individuals lack safe and viable means to improve themselves. The country also highlights the importance of education because it creates alternatives and

has taken substantial steps to improve education quality and access. The Awami League (current ruling party) has mandated that 60 percent of primary school teachers in remote areas must be women. According to the UNDP, Bangladesh has already met several noteworthy Millennium Development Goals, one of which is the attainment of gender parity in education for both primary and secondary schools. This success is noteworthy: First (Political) Secretary Shahanara captured this achievement, stating, “if you send your children to school, they will have distance from radical ideas and the allure will fade.”

According to UNICEF, “Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world with an estimated 16.4 million primary school aged children (six to ten years old). There are 365,925 primary school teachers (approximately 53 percent of teachers and 23 percent of head teachers are women) who work in more than 82,218 schools including *madrassas*.²⁵

TABLE 2. Bangladesh Primary Student Enrollment (UNICEF)

| | Total | Boys | Girls |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Child population (aged 6 to 10) | 16.4 million | 7.9 million | 8.5 million |
| Total enrolment Grade 1 – 5 | 16.0 million | 7.9 million | 8.1 million |
| Enrolment aged 6-10 year in Grade 1-5 | 14.9 million | 7.5 million | 7.4 million |
| Net enrolment rate in primary school | 90.8% | 87.9 % | 94.0 % |
| Primary school children reaching Grade 5 | 55.0 % | 53% | 57% |
| Completion rate of the 5 year primary school cycle | 50.7% | | |
| Stipend recipients | 4.8 million | | |
| Average no. of years to complete primary school | 8.6 | 8.7 | 8.5 |
| Teacher : student ratio | 1:49 | | |
| Number of schools with at least 900 contact hours per year | 10% | | |
| 2008 public expenditure on education as % of GNP | 2.14% | | |

Source: Directorate of Primary Education, 2008 Annual Sector Performance Report (published in 2009)

While major strides have been made in education in Bangladesh, there remains “poor quality of education, high dropout rates, promotion of equity and accessing education, decentralization of education administration, and special needs education.”²⁶ The Bangladeshi Government recognizes these problems and the need for improvement to enable social mobility, which will contribute positively to security within the country.

Other CVE Efforts with Women in Bangladesh

The U.S. State Department also works closely with its Bangladeshi counterparts to provide support to the country’s CVE programming. They “provide key Bangladesh security agencies with training and equipment to reduce insecurity, to improve governance and accountability, to support efforts to secure borders and to prevent attacks in Bangladesh and elsewhere.”²⁷

TABLE 3. CVE-Specific Programming In Bangladesh (U.S. Embassy, Dhaka)

| | |
|---|--|
| ACCESS Micro scholarships | “Provides cost-free two-year after school English courses for equal numbers of male and female students from low income families aged 14-18-years old.” In 2004, the US Mission in Bangladesh became the first Post to “devote this funding exclusively to disadvantaged madrassa students. This program is active in Dhaka and Chittagong. More than 450 students have been trained to date.” |
| Dhaka Metropolitan Police Youth Co-operation Workshops | “Increase cooperation between leadership from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and university students at various public and private universities in Dhaka Metropolitan Area. Project will focus on teaching about communication techniques, generating solutions to increase dialogue amongst police and youth.” |
| University Counter Radicalization Media Series | “Design, develop, pretest, and disseminate a series of 25-minute variety television shows, a series of 25-minute variety/call-in radio shows, and advertisements on TV, radio, and posters in and around the universities. Each TV episode shall have a celebrity guest or Subject Matter Expert that is tied to the particular theme, as well as a musical act. Themes will emphasize: patriotism, religious tolerance, support to the democratic processes, importance of decision making, choosing non-violence, peer pressure, peaceful alternatives, problem-solving skills, and contemporary social issues.” |
| University Counter Radicalization Workshop Series | “Gather participants views on radicalization on campus, predominate economic and social concerns, and perceptions of campus violence. The curriculum shall be based on: inter-faith dialogue, moderate Islam, social media/blogging, public speaking, role of youth in civic and community development, bringing change through non-violent means.” |
| Filmmaking for Religious Peace and Tolerance | “Train selected students from five universities in Bangladesh on filmmaking techniques that emphasize production techniques...at the end of the training, groups of students will produce films. Story topics may illustrate people and events—contemporary as well as historical—that serve as role models for religious tolerance, counter-extremism and conflict resolution among Bangladeshis of different sects, religions, political affiliations and economic backgrounds.” |
| Community Based Policing Program | Supports Bangladesh’s “budding community-based policing initiative to identify, attack, and neutralize extremist movements at the grass-roots level.” |
| Madrassa Teacher and Imam English Training Program | Teaching madrassa teachers and imams English, the program has “reached 2000 madrassa teachers and imams in Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox’s Bazaar, Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj to impact 30,000 students in 300 m adrassas across Bangladesh.” |

Morocco

“How can we hope to achieve progress and prosperity while women, who constitute half of society, see that their interests are ignored, regardless of those rights that our holy religion has given them...even though they...[can] compete with men...in science or employment?”²⁸

– King Mohammad VI of Morocco, day of ascension to the throne, 1999

Overview

Morocco’s monarchy has been in power since the 1700s and can trace its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad. The current ruler, King Mohammed VI, is designated the “Supreme Commander of the Faithful,” a title bestowing him command and control over the country’s counterterrorism policies across the religious spectrum (Muslims, Christians, and Jews). With its strong historical and religious foundation, Morocco has - since the mid-twentieth century to the fall of the Soviet Union - adopted a modern approach to CVE. According to Jamestown Foundation’s Matthew Chebatoris, at a time when many countries in the region began to tighten controls domestically, “Morocco began a gradual process of social liberalization that included the release of political prisoners, an expansion of civil society, and a dialogue with the country’s various political factions.”²⁹ This process of social liberalization has undoubtedly contributed to Morocco’s success in controlling extremism.

Morocco also stands apart in the Arab world for its successful approach to counterterrorism over the last decade. Unlike other countries in the region, Morocco weathered the Arab Spring relatively unscathed by offering (minimal) concessions to opposition voices in accordance with its democratic values. As other Arab countries struggled with violence, “Moroccans were accelerating their decades-old process of political and social renewal through precedent-setting constitutional and institutional reforms.”³⁰ This “political and society renewal” has been the linchpin of Morocco’s success in the CVE arena. In an article from the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Yonah Alexander presents some of the reasons for the relative stability in Morocco.³¹

- 1) “First, King Mohammed VI, the country’s hereditary monarch, is still seen as legitimate by the vast majority of the population.
- 2) Second, gradual political reform, greater economic and investment progress, increased employment opportunities, more social and civic equality for women, and some crackdowns on corruption have all contributed to improved internal stability.
- 3) And third, counterterrorism efforts at home and strategic cooperation and partnerships in the Maghreb, Sahel, and elsewhere have been strengthened.”

This strategic renewal of legal reforms and other subsequent progressive CVE programs to empower women socially, politically, and economically is contributing to Morocco's success.

The integration of women into Morocco's counterterrorism efforts was strategized to ensure long-term sustainability. Specifically, the effectiveness of its programs relies on the inclusion of women because of their critical role in the family and communities. In 2004, King Mohammed VI passed progressive revisions to the *Moudawana* (Moroccan Family Code) that have been instrumental in empowering women socio-economically.³² Under the *Moudawana*, women in Morocco are given the right to:

- Be considered equals to their husbands in the home;
- Request a divorce;
- Receive financial support after a divorce;
- Obtain custody of children in the event of a divorce;
- Inherit money.

While this type of legislation may appear inconsequential, it is actually quite extraordinary in the Arab world. According to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, the *Moudawana* was a "landmark reform of the status of Moroccan women as it put them on equal footing with men in regard to marriage and children."³³

Another element of Morocco's CVE strategy focuses on the religious and political spheres. In 2005, Morocco's Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs began certifying female preachers (imams), known as *mourchidates*. The *mourchidates* are charged with promoting religious moderation and tolerance to curb radicalization. This revolutionary development for the advancement of women in Morocco offered an opportunity for women to act as agents of positive change in their communities throughout Morocco.

While there have not been any significant terrorist attacks in Morocco since 2011, the country is no stranger to extremism. Bombings in cities across the country in 2003, 2007 and 2011 rocked the country to its core. These incidents became the primary motivators for Morocco to swiftly enact a multi-pronged approach to countering terrorism. Rather than impose a set of initiatives and policies upon its citizens, the government initially focused on core religious and cultural beliefs and value sets.

Morocco's predominate form of Islam is a moderate version called Malikism, with strong support from adherents to Sufism. Sufism is dominated by the belief in open dialogue, mysticism, tolerance, and moderation, all of which are natural counterbalances to radical messaging. The Moroccan Government initiated a program of countering extremist views and interpretations of Islam by reaching the wider population with moderate Islamic narratives.

Following the 2011 bombing of a café frequented by Westerners in Marrakesh that killed 17 and wounded over 20 people, Morocco adopted an aggressive approach to CVE, vigorously addressing what it views as the root causes of violent extremism – poverty. Several of the participants in the 2003 and 2007 attacks in Morocco and the 2004 Madrid bombings hailed from an economically depressed area called Sidi Moumen in Casablanca. The Moroccan Government concluded that slum neighborhoods were breeding grounds for terrorism, and it identified poverty as one of the leading motivators. In a 2012 report by the U.S. Department of State, Morocco determined that “disaffected and marginalized youth in urban and peri-urban environments” are “vulnerable to radicalization by and recruitment into violent extremist groups.”³⁴ Poverty and the lack of access to opportunities, which may lead to feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement, have become significant aspects of Morocco’s CVE policies and programs.

Measuring the effectiveness of CVE strategies is a complex, long-term effort, yet the Moroccan Government has identified several ways to view success. The reduction in the number of attacks is perhaps the most simple. The impact of its CVE relevant programs, such as alleviation of poverty through the “Cities without Slums” initiative, in addition to women empowerment and gender equality, are also a measure of success in the long-term battle against radicalization.

The Moudawana: Morocco’s Family Code

The *Moudawana* is a progressive family code under which women are given rights not held by many others in the Arab world. Despite some criticism of its implementation, it provides a basis for empowering women in Morocco socially and economically by allowing for additional rights in the family, including equal access to inheritance and property. Social and economic empowerment of women in Morocco have been key components of the country’s strategy of offering increased gender equality as a means to battle extremism.

Rights afforded to women under the revised *Moudawana* include: 1) equal status in the household; 2) the power to initiate divorce; and 3) the rights to inherit equally. This legislation paved the way for empowerment of traditional roles in a social context, which were reflected in changes to the family code in 2004.

- “Minimum age of marriage raised to 18 for women
- Sharing of property between married couples
- Polygamy strictly controlled
- Repudiation and divorce can be initiated by women and are subject to judicial supervision
- Possibility of women to retain custody of children
- Inheritance rights improved for women

- Recognition of children born out of wedlock and simplified proof of paternity procedure
- Removal of degrading language toward women in the family code
- Provisions on children’s rights in accordance with the international instruments ratified by Morocco.”³⁵

This sweeping legal reform on the heels of the 2003 attacks in Casablanca, which are referred to as Morocco’s “9/11,” demonstrates a strategy and commitment to female empowerment in fighting terrorism. According to American Foreign Policy Council Vice President Ilan Berman,

In the Muslim world, few issues are as accurate a barometer of societal dynamism as the status of women. As recent scholarship convincingly shows, women have consistently been at the forefront of societal change in the region. Whatever their political orientation, countries that reward (or at least permit) this behavior, such as Tunisia and post-Saddam Iraq, tend to be vibrant and hopeful places. Those that do not, like Saudi Arabia, are stagnant and sclerotic...Morocco unequivocally falls into the former camp. Under the *Moudawana*...women have been endowed with rights not present – or even conceivable – in other parts of the Muslim world.³⁶

The updated *Moudawana* makes women equal to men legally in regards to family matters. Empowerment in this manner affords women a more robust standing in the family to address issues that have the potential to materialize into catalysts of radicalization.

Women play a vital role in Moroccan society and families. During an interview with Yasima Sbihi, a leading Sufi expert and architect in Rabat, she stated, “women are the first school. Women are the secret of God. Women are the past, present, and future of our civilization.”³⁷ Women do image *and* imagine a future for their children; women are the guardians of not only their families, but also of future generations through their imag(ing) a future for their children and their communities. Morocco understands this concept exceptionally well.

Morocco’s Female Mourchidates

In 2005, Morocco’s Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs embarked on a program to develop a group of female preachers known as *mourchidates* (“guides” in English). These spiritual guides are charged with promoting religious moderation and tolerance to “counter extremist ideology within Koranic schools and mosques.”³⁸ In 2005, fifty female *mourchidates* were certified by the Moroccan Government. By 2014, the number of certified female *mourchidates* increased by 1,000 percent. These women work in mosques, communities, and prisons in Rabat and Casablanca.

Female *mourchidates* are tasked with the same responsibilities as male *mourchidates* with the exception of leading prayer, because Islam strictly forbids it. All

mosques in Morocco require imams and *mourchidates* be certified in order to work. The Moroccan Government's certification process for female *mourchidates* is 12 months of training. This course's prerequisite for aspiring female *mourchidates* is a bachelor's degree. Their coursework—computer skills, psychology, religious training, etc.—is the same as that of their male counterparts. Certification mandates that they receive regularly scheduled rigorous, continuing education and training every two weeks. According to the Special Advisor to the Minister of Habous and Islamic Affairs, the salary of female *mourchidates* is the same as that of their male colleagues. These women are empowered politically as they enter into the religious sphere and are given the necessary focus and training to spread, teach, interpret, and promote Maliki Islam.

During an interview with two female *mourchidates* in Rabat, it became apparent that their roles were similar to that of social workers. These women had authentic authority, power, and resources to support the country's vision and their efforts. In their own words, their job is to “correct any misconceptions on the Quran through a new way of teaching. We try to explain the information without any misunderstanding to make it clear.”³⁹ This translates into programs that focus mainly on women and youth. The work takes place in mosques, communities, and prisons. The ability to deliver social services and outreach to at-risk communities by the *mourchidates* is unprecedented and is a key component of Morocco's CVE program.

The *mourchidates'* work in the community focuses on teaching women about the Quran, specifically the Maliki interpretation that emphasizes messages of peace, tolerance, and moderation in Islam. Female *mourchidate* Fatima Nezza noted that one of the program's goals is to “teach principles of Islam and apply those to society at large. We want women to understand their roles as women and others in relation to others as well.” Another element of the female *mourchidates'* work is to guide and educate women in good parenting techniques. The old adage of “peace starts at home” is the foundation of this initiative. The *mourchidates* arrange field trips with women and youth to places such as hospitals, prisons and youth centers for enhanced exposure. The women's programs always focus on what the women in the community feel they need to make themselves successful mothers and members of their communities. The *mourchidates* then arrange appropriate training to achieve this goal.

Instruction provided by the female *mourchidates* includes working with youth (ages 8-22) after school, teaching women to read and write, hosting doctors to speak to women about health issues, and coordinating training through local vocational schools to provide skills to women so they are able to best provide for their families. Examples of vocational training for women include cooking and hairdressing. The female *mourchidates* also coordinate with local businesses to hire these women after they are trained, which provides greater stability for them and their families.

In addition to their work with women and youth, the female *mourchidates* also work in the prison system with female inmates in Rabat and Casablanca. Their duties

include presenting female prisoners with an awareness of social issues, religion, culture, and health. They invite doctors to come and speak about the dangers of AIDS and cigarette smoking. They also teach the prisoners to read and write and also provide vocational training for when they are released. Though the original intent of the *mourchidate* program was to spread tolerant Islam, the program has reached much deeper into Moroccan communities. *Washington Post* columnist Robin Shulman wrote about the reach of the *mourchidates*: “People want to talk about marital problems, AIDS, rape, teen pregnancy. They come to them [the *mourchidates*] in crisis...”⁴⁰ *Mourchidates* also work as counselors in the prison systems, helping on issues ranging from psychological concerns to health (sexually-transmitted diseases and breast cancer). Nassi—a *mourchidate* who works with prisoners—said she focuses on “integrating them into society to get them jobs and an education.”⁴¹

The *mourchidates* have also increasingly hosted fairs in the prisons that teach about culture, art, and Sufism. During religious festivals and national feasts, they bring in musicians and performers and buy presents for the inmates’ children, providing a semblance of normalcy through acts of kindness that they hope will set a positive example. The Moroccan *mourchidates*’ influence and power, driven by their optimism and tireless efforts, greatly impact their ability to positively affect drivers of radicalism. By educating women and mothers, providing a safe and productive outlet and activity for youths, and providing positive alternatives and choices for prison inmates, female *mourchidates* are changing the tide of terrorism by blunting potential catalysts.

It is likely the Moroccan Government is unaware of just how much of an impact the *mourchidates* have had through their newfound political and religious empowerment in the fight against extremism. Mothers, wives, and sisters with questions, and who are perhaps “in need,” are now able to turn to other women with authority who can help and offer guidance. For example, if a woman feels a family member is becoming radicalized, it is now a real possibility that such a concern can be conveyed to a *mourchidate* when that avenue for action never existed before.

While there are some that question the success of the program given the lack of empirical data, researchers familiar with CVE are quick to point out that measuring success in this arena is very difficult and takes years longitudinally and horizontally to determine the impact on curbing violence. Ellie Hearne highlighted Morocco’s initiative to “feminize the face of Islam” for the purpose of “recruiting them as messengers to present the moderate mainstream Islam as a counterweight to fundamentalist ideology,” which had been measured with some success in 2009.⁴² Curbing violence can essentially be boiled down to a change in ideology, which can take an entire generation of teaching moderate Islam and tolerance through education and communication within a community.

In Morocco, women are the gatekeepers to their families, children, and communities. Providing an education, fulfilling basic needs, and affording

opportunities to women are what Morocco has deemed necessary to counter violent extremism effectively. In an interview with two female *mourchidates* in Morocco, they explained the way that women are viewed in Morocco. They recounted the roles of Muhammed's wives: "Hadija was a wife and businesswoman; Aisha was a wife and a doctor and scholar; and Hafsa was a wife and politician." Women have played and will continue to play a pivotal role in families in Morocco.

The *mourchidate* initiative has been hailed as a success both within and beyond Morocco. In April 2009, the U.S. Department of State offered explicit praise to the *mourchidate* program, commenting on its ability to counter terrorism and spread tolerant Islam.⁴³ There has been discussion about replicating this program in other parts of the world. The *mourchidates* have taken the opportunity in their leadership positions to collaborate with other religious figures, which is an indicator of the initiative's success. When asked about where she envisioned her role in the community as a religious figure evolving next, female *mourchidate* Madam Nezha Nassi responded, "to the moon!"

Notes

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² Ibid.

³ Pew Research (Religion & Public Life Protection Project), "The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Sunni and Shia Muslims," *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 27, 2011, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-sunni-and-shia/>.

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⁴ "The State of Terrorism in Bangladesh 2010-2011," Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, September 2011, Dhaka, Bangladesh, p 38.

⁵ Monica Shahanara, interview with the author, 2013, Washington, DC.

⁶ "The Millennium Goals: Eight Goals for 2015," United Nations Development Programme, 2014, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html>.

⁷ Faiz Sobhan, "Countering Violent Extremism in Bangladesh," *The Dhaka Tribune*, May 28, 2013.

⁸ "Human Development Index 2013," New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2013.

Bangladesh's infant mortality rate in 2010 was 38 per 1,000 live births, while Pakistan's was 70/1,000. For children under five, Bangladesh's mortality rate was 48/1,000 while Pakistan's was 87/1,000. Bangladesh's maternal mortality rate in 2010 was 240/10,000 and Pakistan's was 260/10,000. In Bangladesh, 31 percent of women received a secondary education compared to only 18 percent in Pakistan.

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¹² Lex Loro, “Women’s Empowerment as a Result of Microcredit Loans in Bangladesh,” American University, September 2013.

¹³ “Bangladesh Takes Aim at Grameen Bank,” p 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Loro, p 1.

¹⁶ Mark Pitt, Shahidur Khandker, and Jennifer Cartwright, “Does Micro-Credit Empower Women? Evidence from Bangladesh,” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2998, March 2003, <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-2998>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Fauzia Ahmed, “The Rise of the Bangladesh Garment Industry: Global, Women Workers, and Voice,” *NWSA Journal* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2004), pp 34-45.

¹⁹ Naila Kabeer and Simeen Mahmud, “Rags, Riches, and Women Workers: Export-Oriented Garment Manufacturing in Bangladesh,” in *Chains of Fortune: Linking Women Producers and Workers With Global Markets* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004), pp 133-158.

²⁰ “Horrified by Bangladesh Factory Collapse: Want to Know What You Can Do,” Ethical Fashion Forum, <http://source.ethicalfashionforum.com/digital/horrified-by-bangladesh-factory-collapse-want-to-know-what-you-can-do>.

²¹ Kabeer and Mahmud, pp 133-158.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2008,” Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Planning Division, Ministry of Planning Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

²⁴ Kabeer and Mahmud, p 155.

²⁵ “Quality Primary Education in Bangladesh,” UNICEF Bangladesh, February 22, 2014, p 1, [http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education(1).pdf).

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²⁷ U.S. Embassy Dhaka Political Section, interview with the author, 2013, Washington, DC.

²⁸ “Plan Operationnel de la Strategie Nationale de Lutte Contre la Violence a L’Egard des Femmes,” Royaume du Maroc Secrétariat d’Etat Chargé de la Famille, de l’Enfance et des Personnes Handicapées, June 2005, <http://www.social.gov.ma/MdsfsFichiers/pdf/Po-final3.pdf>.

Translated text: <<Comment espérer atteindre le progrès et la prospérité alors que les femmes, qui constituent la moitié de la société, voient leurs intérêts bafoués, sans tenir compte des droits par lesquels notre sainte religion les a mises sur un pied d’égalité avec les hommes, des droits qui correspondent à leur noble mission, leur rendant justice contre toute iniquité ou violence dont elles pourraient être victimes, alors même qu’elles ont atteint un niveau qui leur permet de rivaliser avec les hommes, que ce soit dans le domaine de la science ou de l’emploi?>>

²⁹ Matthew Chebatoris, “Morocco’s Multi-Pronged Counterterrorism Strategy,” *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 13, May 18, 2009, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5D=35004.

³⁰ J. Peter Pham, “Morocco’s Vital Role in Northwest Africa’s Security and Development,” The Atlantic Council, November 12, 2013, p 2, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/morocco-s-vital-role-in-northwest-africa-s-security-and-development>.

³¹ Yonah Alexander, “Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel in 2012: Global Reach and Implications,” Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies, International Law Institute and Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, February 2013, p 16, http://www.potomacinstitute.org/attachments/article/1358/Terrorism_in_North_Africa_and_the_Sahel.pdf.

³² There is debate about the success of the implementation of the Moudawana in Morocco. Some note that obstacles remain. According to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “procedural obstacles in legal proceedings in cases involving women’s rights are often hampering effective implementation...cultural norms, tradition, high illiteracy rates, and lack of knowledge of their legal

rights in many cases prevent women from invoking their rights or reporting crimes against them, such as rape, child abuse, sexual exploitation and domestic violence.”

³³ “The Moroccan Family Code: ‘Moudawana’,” Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, October 2012, <http://www.euromedrights.org/eng/2012/10/10/the-moroccan-family-code-moudawana/>.

³⁴ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2012,” U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism (U.S. Department of State Publication), p 136.

³⁵ “The Moroccan Family Code “Moudawana,” Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network.

³⁶ Ilan Berman, “A Counterterrorism Ally in North Africa,” *Forbes*, June 15, 2010, <http://www.forbes.com/2010/06/14/morocco-islam-counterterrorism-opinions-columnists-ilan-berman.html>.

³⁷ Yasima Sbbihi, interview with the author, Rabat, Morocco, February 17, 2014.

³⁸ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2006,” U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism.

³⁹ *Mourchidates* interview with the author, Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous, Rabat, Morocco, 2014

⁴⁰ Robin Shulman, “Morocco’s New Guiding Force,” *The Washington Post*, May 30, 2009, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-05-30/news/36882265_1_women-s-islamic-initiative-status-of-muslim-women-faiths.

⁴¹ Fielder and Townsend, *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling*, p xx.

⁴² Hearne, “Participants, Enablers, and Preventers.”

⁴³ “Morocco’s Muslim women leaders in US combat extremism,” *Al Arabiya News*, May 30, 2009, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/05/30/74307.html>.

CHAPTER FIVE

Women and CVE: Comparative Analysis of Indicators

Poverty Alleviation

The focus on women as integral components of both Bangladesh’s and Morocco’s CVE strategic objectives includes economically, socially and politically empowering women through initiatives and programming addressed to counter radicalization and violent extremism. Each country has experienced impressive strides in confronting identified causes of terrorism and violent extremist strategies. A portion of each country’s programming has been influenced by and/or is a consequence of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In 2000, the United Nations presented these goals, comprised of seven global objectives for achievement by 2015. MDGs were approved by the United Nations’ 191 members, of which Bangladesh (1974) and Morocco (1956) are member states.¹ With the “galvanization of unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest,” the MDGs identified “specific targets and indicators” along with their social, economic and political implications and desired outcomes. MDG Goal 7D is to “achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.”²

Within their respective CVE strategies, Morocco and Bangladesh both cite poverty as a factor that exacerbates and promotes opportunities for radicalization and recruitment by violent extremists. Bangladesh’s Multidimensional Poverty Index ranking is 57.8 percent of its population (83,207) and Morocco’s is 10 percent (3,287).³ Bangladesh is ranked 146th and Morocco 130th on the Human Development Index. On the World Bank Index, Bangladesh is rated as a *Low Income* country and Morocco as a *Lower Middle Income* country.⁴

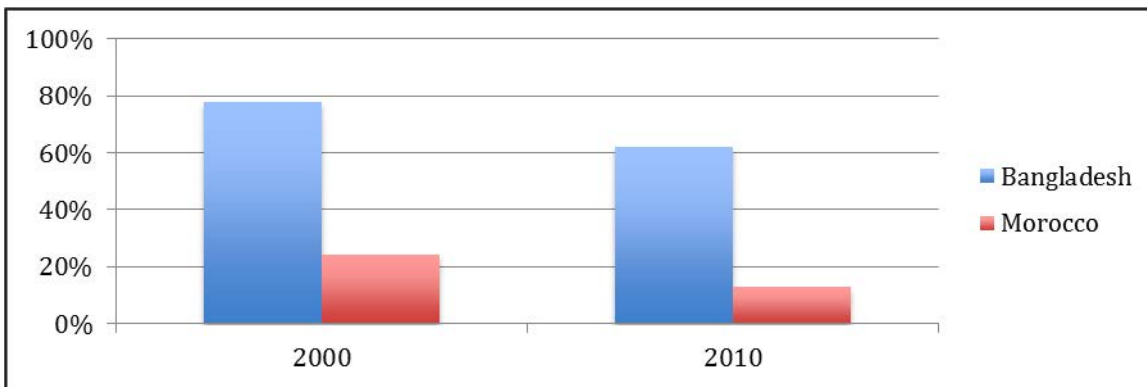
TABLE 4. 2007 UNDP MPI Measures (2012)⁵

| Country | Headcount | | Population In Severe Poverty | Population Below Income Poverty Line | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Thousands | | Percent Living On \$1.25 Per Day (PPP) 2002-2011 | National Poverty Line 2002-2011 |
| Bangladesh | 57.8% | 83,207 | 26.2% | 43.3% | 31.5% |
| Morocco | 10.6% | 3,287 | 3.3% | 2.5% | 9.0% |

A portion of Morocco’s CVE efforts has been directed at slum areas and populations living at the poverty level. The country identified the Sidi Moumen slum in Casablanca as a breeding ground for recruitment and radicalization.”⁶ Their “Cities without Slums” (2004-2012) initiative – a royal directive – planned to reduce the number of slums like Sidi Moumen in Morocco to “fight insecurity and poverty [due to the assumption that] rehabilitation and socio-economic underdevelopment go hand in hand.”⁷ Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council remarked in the U.S. State Department’s 2008 Country Report on Terrorism that “[Morocco]...continued to implement internal reforms aimed at ameliorating the socio-economic factors that terrorists exploit.”⁸ In a working paper published by Harvard University’s School of Public Health, Morocco is highlighted as one of twelve countries worldwide where an estimated 48 percent of the slum population is being “lifted out of slum conditions.”

Bangladesh has acknowledged poverty as both a CVE issue in its country and as a critical component of the United Nations’ MDG statement. Bangladesh experiences a much higher percentage of poverty (57.2 percent of the population) and “legal” slums (62 percent of the population) than Morocco. Bangladesh has worked alongside international governments, agencies and NGOs to focus on alleviating these issues. One of its most effective strategies has been empowering poor women through micro-credit and increased wages in the RMG industry.

CHART 1. Proportion Of Urban Populations Living In Slum Areas (World Bank)⁹



Females: Culture, Gender and Empowerment

Females are shaped by gender roles throughout their lives. In a UNESCO paper on gender inequality and women’s rights, Kimani Njogu and Elizabeth Orchardson-Mazrui note:

The gender roles assigned to men and women are significantly defined – structurally and culturally – in ways that create, reinforce, and perpetuate relationships of male dominance and female subordination. Through the process of socialization within the family, in educational institutions and other social spheres, boys and girls are conditioned to behave in certain ways and to play different roles in society. This

conditioning and stereotyping could easily have the effect of questioning the capability of girls and women to perform certain tasks. Repeated regularly, it may solidify and become difficult to uproot from the mental frames of people.¹⁰

Goal three of the MDGs is to “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women.” In Islamic countries such as Morocco and Bangladesh where gender rules can be deeply embedded, it has taken visionary leaders such as King Mohammed VI, committed individuals and agencies such as SAVE, and pioneers such as Mohammed Yunus of Grameen Bank, to work within existing systems to generate innovative ideas and solutions. Women are fully capable, but they need the economic, social and political support to participate as fully as possible in the CVE paradigm. In the words of Mohammad Yunus, “Human creativity has no limit..It’s only a question of how we apply it.”

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

In GRB, an entity budgets with the goal of improving gender inequities and advancing the rights of women to “reflect needed interventions to address gender gaps in sector and local government policies, plans and budgets. GRB also aims to analyze the gender-differentiated impact of revenue-raising policies and the allocation of domestic resources and Official Development Assistance.”¹¹ The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women also notes:

For the last three years the Government of Bangladesh has included an additional document with the submission of the budget that explains the activities Ministries are doing that have implications for women’s advancement and rights. In the first year there were three Ministries participating, and by year three twenty-five Ministries submitted budgets that took into account women’s rights and advancement concerns.¹²

Morocco’s GRB initiative began in 2003 and was part of the public financial management reform process. Beginning in 2007, the Gender Report was produced by individual agencies and was presented to Parliament. In 2005, four agencies participated, and in 2008, there were 28 participants—a 70 percent increase in three years. In 2006, the Moroccan Government proposed to “integrate gender in the context of developing performance objectives and indicators [gender analysis and sex disaggregation] ‘in so far as possible’.”

MDGs, Women Empowerment, Gender Equality

Decades of lessons learned from women empowerment and its positive influence in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention domain are being applied on a variety of platforms to help bolster CVE efforts. Research and policies note that female empowerment and gender equality indicators continue to be valuable gauges in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.¹³ Progress and achievements in these CVE programs are guided, supported, financed and evaluated by a variety of actors. These

include, but are not limited to, the individual country's government and non-government agencies, international agencies such as the World Bank and United Nations (including various UN agencies), and the U.S. Government (State Department and USAID).

The third MDG goal, to “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women,” in addition to targeted areas of other goals noted in Table 5, highlight women’s essential role in development. CVE goals, initiatives, strategies and programs for women empowerment and gender equality in Bangladesh and Morocco have included, directly or indirectly, many of the MDGs and made them components of their programs.

TABLE 5. United Nations MDG Objectives Relevant to Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

| MDG 1 | MDG 2 | MDG 3 | MDG 5 | MDG 7 |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| a) Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people | c) Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling | d) Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 | e) reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio | g) Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers |
| b) Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling | | | f) Achieve universal access to reproductive health | h) * Wage-earning jobs * Gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government; less secure jobs with less social benefits * Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals. * Poverty is a major barrier to secondary education, especially among older girls. * Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment.” |

Social Empowerment

Education and Literacy for Women Empowerment CVE

Bangladesh

Historically in Bangladesh, education has always been an important component of the country’s cultural and value system for both sexes. Bangladesh has one of the largest primary education systems in the world with an estimated 16.4 million primary school-aged children. From 2009 to 2012, there was a 19.31 percent increase in female completion of primary schools. In secondary school enrollment, there has been an

increase of 7.32 percent. As the enrollment of females in primary and secondary education in Bangladesh increased, so did the literacy rate of 15-24-year olds. And female literacy rose 11.4 percent from the start of the millennium as the nation moved toward greater gender parity.

From 2008 to 2012, there was also a 14.16 percent increase in the number of female teachers.¹⁴ According to the Awami League, 60 percent of primary school teachers are female, although the requirements to teach are lower for females than for their male counterparts to encourage increased female participation.¹⁵

Education is a pathway to a better future for females in Bangladesh, both in terms of potential for higher positions in the RMG and other employment and the opportunity to better provide for their families. However, education for women has not been consistently accepted over recent decades, and there have been challenges with more fundamental Islamic groups that have attempted to curtail female education. The madrassas in Bangladesh have provided a more conservative educational option for girls. In 2010, the Bangladeshi government introduced several programs for girls from different social and economic strata, providing subsidies for them to attend school. In the words of the Political Undersecretary at the Bangladesh Embassy, “if you send your children to school, they will have distance from radical ideas and the allure will fade.”¹⁶

Morocco

Morocco has focused on female education as a way for women to contribute to the country’s MDGs and their CVE strategies. Collaterally, this priority will increase female contributions to society and create a more vibrant gender dynamic. Although there has been an insignificant decrease in female enrollment in secondary school (0.01 percent), female completion of primary education in Morocco has increased 20.71 percent from 2009 to 2012, and the number of female teachers in primary education has increased 3.53 percent from 2008 to 2012. Overall, women’s literacy increased 4.3 percent between 2000 and 2010.

Not reflected in these statistics are the other educational endeavors Morocco is pursuing that are directly related to female involvement in CVE goals. King Mohammed VI’s response to the 2003-2004 terrorist attacks was to counter the fundamentalist message by strengthening moderate Islam. The *mourchidate* program was created to “promote religious moderation and tolerance to counter extremist ideology with Koranic schools and mosques.” Female “imams” are trained and certified in a 12-month program that includes courses in computer skills, religion and social programming. Salaries are the same for men and women, as are all the course requirements with the exception Koran memorization. These female imams educate women and vulnerable youth on critical thinking skills as well as tutoring and guidance on education and other life proficiencies in vulnerable environments.

TABLE 6. Education Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (UNICEF)

| Country | Female Completion Primary Education 2009 b | Female Completion Primary Education 2012 b | Female Completion Primary Education Change 2009-2012 | Female Enrollment Secondary School 2008 b | Female Enrollment Secondary School 2011 or 2012 b | Female Enrollment Secondary School Change 2008-2011/2012 | Female Teachers Primary Education 2008 b | Female Teachers Primary Education 2012 b | Female Teachers Primary Education Change 2008-2012 |
|------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| Bangladesh | 60.52% | 79.83% | +19.31% | 47.17% | 54.49% (2011) | +7.32% | 41.82% | 55.98% | +14.16% |
| Morocco | 77.04% | 97.75% | +20.71% | 45.59 | 45.58% (2012) | -.01% | 48.5% | 52.03% | +3.53% |

TABLE 7. Literacy Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (UNICEF)

| Country | Female Literacy Rate 15-24y/o 2000 a | Female Literacy Rate 15-24y/o 2010 a | Female Literacy Rate Change 2000-2010 | Adult Literacy Rate Gender Parity Index 2000 a | Adult Literacy Rate Gender Parity Index 2010 a | Adult Literacy Rate Gender Parity Index Change 2000-2010 |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Bangladesh | 40.8% | 52.2% | +11.4% | .76 | .85 | +.09 |
| Morocco | 39.6% | 43.9% | +4.3% | .60 | .64 | +.04 |

Health and Quality of Life for Women Empowerment/CVE

Female life expectancy has increased from 1990 to 2011 in both Bangladesh and Morocco by 11 years and eight years, respectively. There has also been an almost 3 percent decrease of women living with HIV in both countries and the two show female access to birth control at over 60 percent.

TABLE 8. Quality of Life and Health Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (UNICEF)

| Country | FEMALE/Male Life Expectancy at Birth 1990 e | FEMALE/Male Life Expectancy at Birth 2011 e | FEMALE Life Expectancy Change 1990-2011 | Est # People Living With HIV f | Est # Women 15+ Living With HIV 2012 f | Unmet Need for Family Planning e | Female Access to Birth Control c |
|------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bangladesh | 59/60 | 70/69 | +11 years | 8,000 | 2,700 | 12% | 61.2% |
| Morocco | 66/63 | 74/70 | +8 years | 30,000 | 11,000 | No statistic | 67.4% |

The legal age to marry for women in both countries is 18 for females. Child marriage in Bangladesh is slowly diminishing, however 29 percent of females are still married by age 15, and 66 percent of girls are married before they turn 18. Dropping out of school and limiting social interactions outside of their husbands' households are obstacles to female empowerment. In Morocco, 2.5 percent of females are married by age 15, and 15.9 percent of girls marry by age 18.

TABLE 9. Marriage Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (UNICEF)

| Country | Legal Marriage Age Female/Male | Child Marriage 2002-2012 Married by 18 | Child Marriage 2002-2012 Married by 15 |
|------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Bangladesh | 18/21 | 64.9% | 29% |
| Morocco | 18/18 | 15.9% | 2.5% |

Political Empowerment

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has elected female heads of state (two prime ministers) for 20 out of its 43 years since independence in 1971. There is also a reserved quota for female seats in Parliament. Women are continuing to make strong progress and are increasingly perceived as leaders in their communities and recognized nationally as members of Parliament. There are varying degrees of approval for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s women’s rights successes, but she has received accolades from UNESCO’s Inspector General Irina Bokova for her “commitment to women empowerment and girls’ education.”¹⁷ The first female speaker of Parliament took office in 2013, and she has an impressive record supporting women’s rights. As of this writing, women hold the positions of Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of Parliament, and the Ministers of Agriculture, Posts and Telecommunications, and Foreign Affairs.

To ensure that women are fairly represented, the government reserved 30 percent of directly elected positions for women beginning in 1997. One important outcome of these direct elections is that women now have their own constituency, boosting their legitimacy as females and as politicians. In the 1997 and 2003 elections, more than 12,000 women were directly elected. Although challenges remain, women are not only gaining footholds into spaces previously dominated by men, but they are also having an impact in policy making and budget discussions, which affect Union Parishad decisions to “support the government of Bangladesh in meeting the MDG goals through effective, inclusive, participatory, and democratic local governance.”¹⁸

These elected women’s roles also translate to influence in their communities. They are involved in the resolution of family and community disputes, especially conflicts related to marriage and divorce customs and issues. According to experts from the BRAC Development Institute, “The general perception is that women members are more likely to relate to the difficulties faced by women in society.” Direct election “legitimizes their right to act on behalf of other women. Given that male members are not in a competing position with the women members regarding settling family disputes, there is little male resistance to women playing a prominent role.”¹⁹

Women and their stronger political voices are supported by ongoing training from NGOs such as CARE and the Khan Foundation. They also receive support for more difficult and sensitive issues from more “movement-oriented” NGOs such as Nijera Kori and the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. These support systems, as well as their own constituencies, can potentially not only strengthen the influence of women but also foster a dependence on women to function in pivotal roles.

Morocco

King of Morocco, Mohammed VI (1999-present), is a perceptive and intuitive leader in his modern approach to CVE and radicalization challenges. In lieu of “tightening controls” during the Arab Spring (2011-2012), the King opted for social liberalization, introducing a renaissance of Morocco’s moderate Islam belief system. He also established the *mourchidate* program in which women are trained to work as female imams with vulnerable populations including women and youth. Morocco’s unique inclusion of women in CVE is a unique, sustainable, and symbiotic dynamic in the arena of women empowerment and CVE, which was discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Despite these gains, Morocco has never had a female head of state, and incorporating women into the political realm has not been a focus. From 2009 to 2013, there has been a 6.5 percent increase in women in Parliament, and in 2013 the following ministries within the cabinet had female leaders: Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development; Crafts and Social and Solidarity Economy; and Energy, Mining, Water and Environment.

The strong focus on the *mourchidate* program has placed women in religious leadership positions and increased the number of female imams from 50 to 500 women between 2005 and 2014, a 1,000 percent increase which turned both youth and women on to moderate Islam and CVE.

TABLE 10. Political Empowerment Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (World Bank)

| Country | Females as Head of State 1991-Present/Total Years Served | Women in Parliament 2009/2013 h | Women in Parliament Change 2009/2013 | Quota of Reserved Seats for Females in Political Positions | Women in Religious Figure Positions |
|------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Bangladesh | 2/2- years prime minister | 6.3%/19.7% 2009 figure excludes the 45 reserved seats | +13.4% | 18/21 | No |
| Morocco | 0/0 | 10.5%/17% | +6.5% | 18/18 | Moudawana Program 2005: 50 2009: 250 2014: 500 |

Economic Empowerment

Bangladesh

Micro-financing empowers poor people – especially women – toward opportunity, self-sufficiency, influence and self-esteem. Greater access to financial and economic resources leads women to expanded social networks, increased bargaining power compared to their husbands, and a greater freedom of mobility. This practice helps women meet basic personal and family needs, find their voices, and to provide alternatives to children through dialogue by reinvesting in families and communities.

Female participation in the RMG industry is a pathway to social and economic empowerment. This industry is the second largest in the world and the largest employer of women (80 percent of women in Bangladesh). Sheikh Hasina won a 77 percent increase in the minimum wage in 2013, but the present reality in the RMG industry is one of poor working conditions and long hours. The possibility for improvement in other areas remains, however, as women and the rest of the labor force are perceived as “earning” family members with the capacity to negotiate with dominant family members in order to postpone marriage.

There has been a 1 percent increase of females in the labor force from 2008 to 2011. Women’s right to inherit land is regulated by Islamic sharia law in which daughters and wives inherit half as much as sons or husbands. USAID has conducted research and advocated for the inheritance right for women through the Centre for Development Services (CDS). Locally, the Khan Foundation has supported locally-elected woman to increase awareness on inheritance and property rights.

Morocco

As a result of the 2003 terrorist attacks, Morocco has revised its Moudawana Code via a unanimous adoption by Parliament. The revised code has direct CVE implications. Laws directly affecting women include:

- Shared property between couples;
- Strictly controlled polygamy;
- Repudiation and divorce can be initiated by women and are subject to judicial supervision;
- Possibility of women to retain custody of children;
- Inheritance rights improved for women;
- Recognition of children born out of wedlock and simplified proof of paternity procedure;
- Removal of degrading language towards women in the family code;
- Provisions on children’s rights in accordance with the international instruments ratified by Morocco.

Although statistics in the “Economic Empowerment” table below do not reflect significant strides in Morocco with respect to labor force participation, the greater economic empowerment and increased rights of women through the Moudawana Code are substantial improvements that have contributed to greater possibilities and realities of women’s participation in CVE efforts.

TABLE 11. Economic Empowerment Comparison, Bangladesh and Morocco (World Bank)²⁰

| Country | Labor Force Participation Rate Females (% of female population 15-24 y/o) 2008/2011 | Labor Force Participation Rate Females (% of female population 15-24 y/o) change 2008-2011 | Female 15-24 y/o % in the Workforce 2008/2011 | Female 15-24 y/o % in the Workforce Change 2008-2011 | Labor Force, Female - % of Total Labor Force 2008/2011 | Women’s Right to Inherit Land |
|------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Bangladesh | 56.29%/57.29% | +1% | 44.5%/46% | +1.5% | 39.42%/40.1% | Islamic Sharia Law (V) Daughters & wives inherit half as much as sons or husbands (W) |
| Morocco | 44.2%/42.2% | -2% | 17.79%/15.69% | -1.59% | 53.2%/52% | Yes (2004) Moudawana Code |

A Review of Timelines, Programs and Terrorism

Bangladesh

- 1976 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
Mohammed Yunus’ first loan of \$27 to a poor woman for her business

- 1983 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
Yunus forms the Grameen Bank for micro-lending in Dhaka

- 1998 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
Grameen Bank reaches \$2 billion in total loans disbursed

- 1995-2004 **Terrorist Attacks**
Bangladesh marred by Islamist attacks, most notably an attack on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her first term at a political rally in Dhaka in which 19 people were killed; a hardline approach to terrorism and CVE immediately adopted

- 2004 **CVE- Women Empowerment: Education**
Madrasahs for disadvantaged youth, Dhaka Metropolitan police workshops, university counter-radicalization workshops, English training programs

- 2005 **CVE- Political zero tolerance policy towards terrorism**
- 2006 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
 Muhammed Yunus and Grameen Bank jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering micro-credit and microfinance
- 2008 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
 Level of poverty for women-headed households less than men by 11 percent, and Yunus rated as #2 in Foreign Policy magazine list as one of the “Top 100 Global Thinkers”
- 2009 **Women Empowerment: Political**
 Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury elected MP from one of the parliamentary seats reserved for women
- 2010 **Women Empowerment: Economic/Political**
 Shirid Sharmin Chaudhury awarded Asia Society’s Humanitarian service award recognizing her leadership role in advocating the elimination of violence against women and mainstreaming women’s empowerment and employment in Bangladesh
- 2013 **Women Empowerment: Social/Economic**
 Following tragic factory accident that led to the death of over 1,000 RMG workers, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wins major victory to raise minimum wage of RMG workers by 77 percent (to 45 euros/month)

Morocco

- 2000 **Women Empowerment: Economic**
 UN Millennium goals (MDG)
- 2003 **Terrorist Attacks**
 Bombings throughout Casablanca are deadliest attack in Morocco’s history; 45 people killed in what is considered Morocco’s 9/11
- Feb 2004 **CVE- Women Empowerment: Social/Economic**
 Changes to Family Code, *Moudawana*; more women’s rights and empowerment/gender equality
- Mar 2004 **Terrorist Attack**
 Simultaneous bombings in Madrid, Spain on commuter train that killed 191 people and wounded 1800; Moroccans involved in the bombing
- 2005 **CVE- Women Empowerment: Social/Economic**
 Decision to certify female preachers – Mourchidates

- 2007 **Terrorist Attack**
String of bombings in Casablanca between March and April 2007

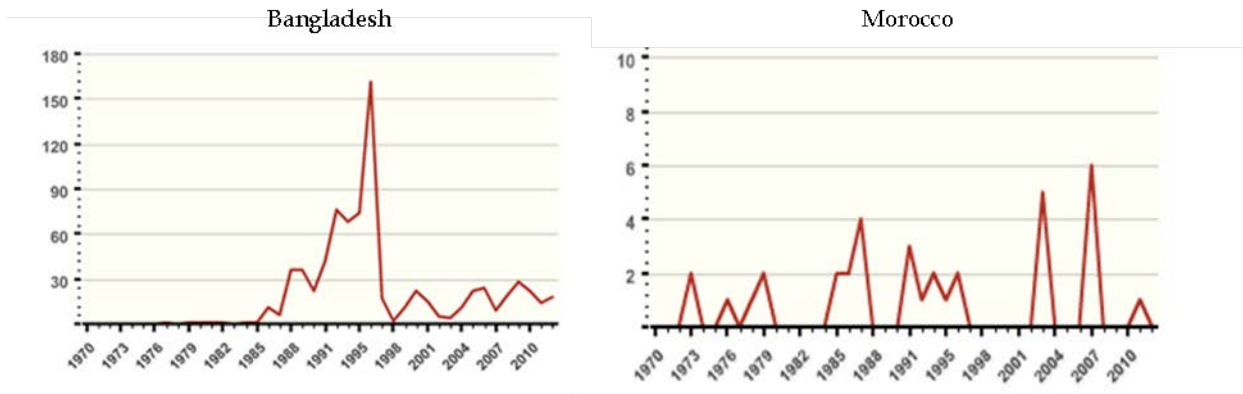
- 2009 **CVE- Women empowerment: Social/Spiritual**
Morocco’s initiative to feminize face of Islam

- 2011 **Terrorist Attack**
Bombing of a café frequented by Westerners in Marrakesh kills 17

- 2011+ **CVE- Women Empowerment: Economic**
Aggressive approaches to combat root causes of poverty

Future Forecast

CHART 2. Incidents of Terrorism in Bangladesh and Morocco (World Terrorism Database)²¹



Bangladesh

The World Terrorism Database reveals a spike in terrorist incidents in 1995 in Bangladesh and a significant decrease in 1998, followed by a handful of attacks from 1999 to 2005.²² During the years 1999 to 2005, there were efforts in Bangladesh that focused on women empowerment strategies in the social and economic realms. In 2008, the level of poverty in women-headed households was 29.5 percent for women as compared to 40.8 percent for men.

Morocco

In a 2012 report, the Moroccan Government notes a continuation of its broad counterterrorism strategy comprising vigilant security measures, regional and international cooperation, and counter-radicalization policies. According to U.S. Department of State’s “Country Reports on Terrorism 2012,” the second tier of Morocco’s three pillar strategy focuses on the expansion of legal rights, political

empowerment of women, and youth education.²³ The components of this strategy are intertwined on a variety of levels. Women have been increasingly involved in social and professional positions, many of which directly impact youth education and development. The third pillar promotes a moderate Islamic belief system (Maliki) with the ultimate objective to counter extremist religious ideologies. The social outreach of both belief systems and education/counseling has been a vital component of women empowerment and education that has interrupted potential radicalization and recruitment in vulnerable populations such as those in prisons and disaffected and marginalized youth.

Notes

¹ “Multidimensional Poverty Index,” United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report, 2014, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/mpi>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Indicators,” The World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.

⁵ PPP stands for “purchasing power parities.”

⁶ Michael Cohen, “The City is Missing the Millennium Developing Goals—The Power of Numbers: A Critical Review of MDG Targets for Human Development and Human Rights,” Harvard School of Public Health, Working Paper Series, May 2013, <http://fxb.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/09/Cohen-PoN-0924.pdf>.

⁷ “Cities Without Slums: General Formation and Impact,” WikiMaroc, December 29, 2012, http://www.wikimaroc.com/english/Cities-without-Slums-general-formation-and-impact_a134.html.

⁸ J. Peter Pham, “Morocco: Willing and able in Africa,” *The Hill*, Congress Blog, February 19, 2013, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/198635-morocco-willing-and-able-in-africa>.

⁹ “Morocco: Data,” The World Bank Group, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/morocco>.

¹⁰ Kimani Njogu and Elizabeth Orchardson-Mazrui, “Gender Inequality and Women’s Rights in the Great Lakes: Can Culture Contribute to Women’s Empowerment?” UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Culture-Womens-Empowerment.pdf>.

¹¹ “Gender Response Budgeting,” UN’s Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2012, <http://www.gender-budgets.org>.

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¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ While Morocco saw a decrease in female labor participation, it is important to note that there was also a comparable decrease in male labor force participation during the same period.

²¹ “World Terrorism Database,” University of Maryland, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=19> and <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?country=136>.

²² “Global Terrorism Database,” University of Maryland (START), 2014, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

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CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

—Proverb

This research intended to bring awareness to the roles women can and do play in preventing terrorism. As mothers, sisters, wives, teachers, and politicians, women offer a unique, essential perspective when addressing and identifying CVE problems and solutions. When empowered in relevant and culturally appropriate ways, women can serve as extraordinarily effective bulwarks against extremism.

The impact of women in peace and stability in countries such as Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Liberia serves as a reminder of the critical role women have in the security realm. CVE is no exception. Women *must* be fully included and integrated in CVE efforts in order to ensure not only success, but also sustainability. Preventing radicalization and extremism in communities will require government and private sector efforts to continue to understand the relevance and importance of a gendered approach to CVE programming and strategies. Previous successes involving women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention hold valuable lessons for the future of CVE and women. There is no need to reinvent a wheel, just repurpose it.

Applying lessons learned from peacebuilding to addressing terrorism is the essence of what Nye and Clinton refer to as “smart” power. Bridging the gap between “soft” and “hard” power results in a highly-effective approach to preventing extremism. “Smart” power also means leveraging *all* of the resources available in a multi-pronged defense net to be able to identify warning signs or indicators *before* they become unpreventable problems. Women, who typically invest more in their families, can be the best defense against ignorance, intolerance, and a lack of opportunities.

There is no better long-term, sustainable deterrent against terrorism and radicalization than educated, prosperous, safe, resilient, and empowered communities. CVE efforts should continue to allocate appropriate resources to empower women and strive for gender equality. As in the cases of Morocco and Bangladesh, there is benefit to be had when women are given access to financial assets, education, improved health and family planning, and leadership positions – all of which support gender equality.

Further research is warranted on the topic of women acting as preventers of terrorism, specifically in terms of collecting gender-specific metrics to determine the impact of gendered approaches to CVE. Additional work is also needed to measure

how programs are affected by women's involvement. Another element that should be incorporated with gender-specific metrics is changes in attitudes and behaviors, the essence of CVE strategy. Measuring changes in ideologically motivated attacks is not the optimal way to gauge the effectiveness of CVE programming and its long-term impact. Finally, programs that have successfully empowered women as a means to decrease radicalism should be identified and systematically evaluated to extrapolate lessons for possible replication.

When successful programming involving women is identified, duplication may not always be possible; however, elements of the program may be translated across countries and regions. For example, Morocco's female *mourchidate* program may be replicated in areas of North Africa such as Mali and Senegal. Bangladesh's CVE strategy to educate girls could certainly be adopted by other governments, as could its efforts to provide access to micro-credit. The addition of courses and topics that emphasize the importance of tolerance and moderation are also essential. Women's involvement in CVE programming—and other programs not labeled "CVE" yet still deter violent extremism—are worth identifying and replicating when contextually relevant.

Due to the complexity of CVE, a cadre of experts must be identified and retained by governments to address this problem set. Within the umbrella of cultures and radicalization, topics such as security, development, women's rights, democratization, and moderation are paramount. The impact of these factors in CVE initiatives is crucial for achieving optimal results. Developing long-term, sustainable relationships with local, grassroots organizations is vital for effective programming. Challenging fundamentalist messaging and ideology is the next phase of the War on Terror; fortunately, many of the resources needed to win this next phase are already in place, waiting to be leveraged appropriately through "smart" power.

Protecting people from violent extremism is *everyone's* problem. Terrorism does not recognize gender, but counterterrorism does, and both sexes can serve as powerful counterterrorists. Given that women stand to rise in the empowerment realm, *imagine* what the *image* of the future could be when 50 percent of the world's population is able to positively influence the next generation through tolerance, moderation, and education. In the words of Hillary Clinton, "Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world." *Their talent is a crucial key to triumphing over terrorism.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Recommendations for Action

The President of the United States

1. Continue to prioritize the importance of denouncing violent extremist interpretations of Islam.
2. Publically recognize Morocco and Bangladesh for their remarkable progress in CVE—especially through the use of women empowerment programming.
3. Host a public event with women who are championing education for girls, since it is one of the best and most sustainable weapons against violent extremism.
4. Draft and pass an official national policy that supports the NAP and WPS on “Women in CVE” to provide the necessary policy guidance and momentum to leverage women in this sphere.

Congress

1. CVE is often a long-term venture that aims to “win hearts and minds,” which in turn requires long-term sustainability of programming and consistent funding to targeted populations through agents of positive change. Legislation must account for sustainable CVE programming, otherwise more damage could be done than good.
2. Provide additional, ample funding to the State Department and the Department of Defense’s CVE programs to increase their current permanent and contracting staffing levels given their critical roles and responsibilities around the world.
3. Bangladesh’s Awami League has made remarkable progress on the counterterrorism front. To demonstrate the United States’ support of its efforts, it may be prudent to review the trade tariffs levied against the country.
4. Allocate additional funding to the State Department and the Department of Defense for CVE programming overseas, recognizing that prevention is much less expensive than the cost of a terrorist incident.
5. Programming is oftentimes context driven, which makes a one size fits all program or initiative nearly impossible in CVE. Congress needs to recognize this fact when appropriating funding.
6. When drafting legislation, recognize that CVE programming crosses many spheres: development, poverty reduction, civil society, countering extremist messaging, etc.
7. When providing funding, recognize that many programs are not labeled “CVE” for security reasons that would put local actors on the ground in danger or could be counterproductive.

8. Recognize that America's soft power lies in its culture; ensure adequate funding for cultural programs abroad to create CVE impact on civil society, women, and youth.

U.S. Government Programming and Initiatives on CVE

1. Education that promotes critical thinking for children ages three and older is a—if not the most—critical component in countering violent extremism and radicalization. Education is a foundational building block to supporting and sustaining communities resilient to recruitment. Education should be funded in areas where people are susceptible to violent extremism.
2. Increase funding for programs identified as grassroots efforts to empower women politically, economically, and socially in communities.
3. Increase funding and support of programs that focus on open dialogue and communication on issues surrounding terrorism.
4. For the offices at State Department and USAID that cover the CVE portfolio, ensure there is consistency in the mission, roles, and responsibilities of CVE officers at missions abroad. These officers play a critical role in various posts around the world and have the potential to make significant impacts in networking and building partnerships with local governments and grassroots organizations.
5. Ensure American officials are taking the host nation's input into consideration when funding and implementing CVE programming. While bound by the values and ethics of the United States, it must recognize that programming that works in one region of the world may not be applicable to another.
6. Recognize countries effectively managing counterterrorism and CVE programs. Morocco's counterterrorism record and efforts make it an ideal partner in the region. Identify ways to reward Morocco and signal the United States' approval of its efforts. For example, updating the U.S. position on the Western Sahara, which has not been addressed since 2006, would go a long way in signaling enhanced trust between the United States and Morocco.
7. Initiate a study on best practices and lessons learned from current CVE programming that involves women and female empowerment as a key component. Women are an enormously under-tapped resource that is comparatively inexpensive. While there have been several reports on CVE in the U.S., there are no such reports on CVE or the role women play in these efforts overseas.
8. Provide a single point-of-contact on CVE at missions abroad who can take on the responsibilities of the portfolio for continuity and partnership purposes.
9. In the State Department's annual "Country Reports on Terrorism" report, have officers enhance reporting uniformity across countries and regions. This report serves as an invaluable resource to academics.

10. Identifying areas for increased counter-narrative opportunities is critical. Leverage the voices of women as both victims of violent extremism and also as prominent figures in communities and families.
11. Continue to recognize and reward overseas posts in which officers are working diligently to promote CVE efforts and programming, such as Bangladesh, which has a robust CVE program that has made a significant contribution throughout the country.
12. Support programming that aims to empower mothers, since they often have the potential to impact their children's lives and provide alternatives and opportunities.
13. CVE requires substantial agility in programming when responding to the needs of an at-risk community or group. The agility needed for these programs to be effective must be integrated into the culture of CVE programming, leadership, and funding.
14. Ensure women are adequately represented in CVE working groups and initiatives, as they offer a unique perspective that must be carefully considered.
15. U.S. Government officials tasked with conducting CVE programming and duties should have specific expertise (i.e. regional, cultural, counterterrorism, and development). CVE work requires a deep understanding of the aforementioned elements in order for programming and partnerships to be effective, productive, and sustainable.

CVE Practitioners

1. Account for gender indicators in measuring CVE programming, as it is essential to understanding women's impact in this arena.
2. Women must be included and participate in all levels of CVE implementation and programming given their unique perspective that is often overlooked.
3. Continue to educate policymakers and academics on the role socio-economic development plays in effectively countering violent extremism.

Future Research on Women in CVE

1. Conduct research to discern the effects of early education on youth aged three and up and the ways in which women/mothers can be engaged to help informally advance lessons learned in schools.
2. Recognizing the parallels between lessons learned from women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, academic research and practitioners should conduct in-depth, quantitative research on how these lessons can and are applied effectively to CVE.
3. Measuring a decrease in ideologically motivated attacks is not the only way to gauge the effectiveness of CVE programming; there must be a combination of indicators to determine long-term and/or sustainable impact. An increase in the social, political and economic factors of women empowerment discussed in this paper contribute directly and indirectly to the goal/measurement/indicator of decreases in ideological attacks.

APPENDIX

Glossary

Gender Equality: “Concerns women and men, and it involves working with men and boys, women and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles, and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, and in the community. Genuine equality means more than parity in number or laws on the books; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females.”¹

Female Empowerment: “Achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment.”²

Radicalization: “The process by which individuals come to believe that their engagement in or facilitation of non-state violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified.”

Mobilization: “The process by which radicalized individuals take action to prepare for or engage in violence or material support for violence to advance their cause.”

A Violent Extremist: “A person who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically-motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a *foreign* terrorist organization.”

Catalyst: “Factors, such as the Internet, family networks, and personal relationships with other extremists, that enable or facilitate the mobilization of individuals by physically or virtually providing the space and opportunity to take action.”

Inhibitors: “Factors that can prevent or stall the progression of individuals committed to engage in violence, such as a family member or law enforcement.” It is possible for some factors to be considered by catalysts and inhibitors.

Credible Voice: “Any influential figure that can undercut the appeal of violent extremists with a specific audience.”³

Notes

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