QUARTERLY RESEARCH REVIEW

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CT	Counter-terrorism
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, etc.
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence

INTRODUCTION

This Quarterly Research Review (QRR) summarises the current state of research in relation to the topic of setting policies and programmes to ensure that gender becomes mainstreamed in the counter-terrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) agenda. The aim of this review is to provide policymakers with a compilation of the most relevant publications and their key messages concerning the definition and implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies, how they can help in assessing the threat and structuring the response, and the importance of empowering women through these strategies.

This QRR centres on the following subtopics and is structured as follows:

- **Methodology**: This section outlines the research methods, specifically the criteria for the inclusion of publications and limits of the review.

- **Defining and Implementing Gender Mainstreaming Strategies**: This first section includes papers addressing the overall definition of what a gender mainstreaming strategy is and should include. This includes themes such as:

  > the complexity of gender and how the gender lens must be applied across contexts and to all individuals; and

  > the gender-blind and often patriarchal nature of security institutions and how this can lead to resistance to meaningful commitment to gender mainstreaming strategies.

- **Mainstreaming Gender to Help Assess the Threat**: The second section includes literature looking at the gendered nature of radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremist groups, as well as the gendered nature of the roles that people play within these groups. This includes the following topics:

  > how men and women find agency even within ideologically strict gender role interpretations within violent extremist groups; and

  > how violent extremists are good at exploiting gendered grievances in the recruitment of all individuals.

- **Mainstreaming Gender to Help Shape the Response**: The third section includes literature and reports that highlight practical advice on how to design and implement gender mainstreamed P/CVE programmes. This includes the following topics:

  > the mainstreaming of gender must take place through all steps of P/CVE program design, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; and,

  > P/CVE programming that is not grounded in a gender and human right-based framework can exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination.

- **Empowering Women and Women-Centric Programming**: This fourth and final section includes papers looking at programming focused on the empowerment of women. This includes the following topic:

  > it is essential to empower women to participate in P/CVE solutions, but this must be done without essentialising them or securitising women's rights efforts.

- **Strategic summary**: This section highlights the key takeaways from the literature review.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher for this paper conducted targeted searches in English to identify relevant literature with a view to include:

- Sources published since 2019; and,

- Sources that are accessible either as open-source publications through inter alia academic journals or as a grey literature publication (i.e., research published outside traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels). The included grey literature has, for the most part, been written by leading academics in this field and represents high-quality, academic, peer-reviewed open-source reports.

Additionally, due to the limited amount of literature focused on gender mainstreaming in the P/CVE context, two books have also been included. The selected books are seen as invaluable knowledge contributions to this space, which supports their inclusion in this review.

Relevant search terms applied include keywords related to gender mainstreaming, preventing and countering violent extremism, countering terrorism, and policymaking.

The researcher extracted the core findings of each paper, focusing on the following four subtopics selected for this review:

- Defining and implementing gender mainstreaming strategies;

- Mainstreaming gender to help assess the threat;

- Mainstreaming gender to help shape the response; and,

- Empowering women and women centric programming.

This review spans a significant range of relevant and contemporary sources related to the topic of 'Gender Mainstreaming in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism' and proposed subtopics. However, this is not an exhaustive review of the literature. Several resources were chosen for each sub-topic, aiming to prioritize gender mainstreaming activities within the EU or funded by the EU. All chosen resources represent lessons that are relevant to the European policymaking environment.

Finally, the design of the QRR drew on the findings of the following past RAN PS deliverables:

- ICF S.A (2021), "Incorporating gender aspects into training for professionals dealing with returning foreign terrorist fighters and their family members", RAN PS Ad hoc paper (nº4, prevent), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

- Lubrano, Jersakova and Solfrini (2022), "Radicalised women: successful examples of handling radicalised women in adjacent fields to Islamist radicalisation (case studies from Germany and Sweden)", RAN PS Consolidated overview (nº4, prevent), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

- Winterbotham, García-Calvo (2022), "Radicalised Women", RAN PS Quarterly Research Review, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

In addition, it is linked to two RAN PS events that will take place in 2023:

- Training (nº1, June 2023) on "Good Practices for Mainstreaming Gender across Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism Efforts".

- Thematic Research Meeting (October 2023) on gender mainstreaming in P/CVE.

SELECTED PAPERS

DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES

Brown, Katherine & Iman Sayed Taha (2022), '**Policy Framework: UN Women's Engagement in Support of Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism (CT and PVE)**', *UN Women.* https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-womens-engagement-in-support-of-counter-terrorism-and-prevention-of-violent-extremism

KEY MESSAGE:

- A proactive gender-responsive framework to P/CVE is essential, with a focus on a human rights-based and people-centred approaches.

- Appropriate risk assessment procedures are needed, with subsequent responsiveness to challenges that are identified.

- It is a necessary element of mainstreaming gender to build the capacity of women's meaningful participation in security solutions.

This brief emphasises the importance of having a **proactive gender-responsive framework** to P/CVE. UN Women's framework encourages promotion of women's rights in contexts impacted by terrorism and violent extremism. The authors draw on discussions from a UN Women community of practice virtual workshop, as well as conducting analysis of UN Women engagement in CT and P/CVE at all levels.

The authors highlight six areas of significance to the proactive gender-responsive framework:

- Strengthen gender-responsive approaches that address known drivers of violent extremism;

- Promote women's leadership and active participation in P/CVE programmes and policies;

- Promote gender equality in societies and communities to minimize vulnerabilities;

- Security sector development and gender-mainstreaming within the security sector;

- Fostering women's peacebuilding initiatives; and,

- Support gender-responsive and human rights-compliant normative frameworks.

UN Women supports capacity building, inclusive processes, and people-centric approaches to P/CVE. The authors emphasise the importance of whole-of-government and whole-of-society engagement. However, the brief acknowledges that there are **normative, policy-related, and programmatic challenges and risks attached to CT and P/CVE engagement**. Thus, there is a focus on upholding and promoting women's rights within this complex and dynamic thematic and on applying the principles of **conflict sensitivity and risk awareness**, which include accounting for how conflict dynamics are gendered and impact violent extremism, as well as assessing and addressing the risks of CT and P/CVE efforts themselves jeopardising human rights-centric approaches.

Finally, the recommendations of the authors advocate for the **building of capacity for women's meaningful participation** in security-related processes and mechanisms and the **strengthening of P/CVE goals towards gender-equal, just, peaceful and inclusive societies**.

Kapur, Amrita, Callum Watson & Anna-Lena Schluchter (2020), '**Gender, Preventing Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism'**, *Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance.* https://www.dcaf.ch/gender-preventing-violent-extremism-and-countering-terrorism

KEY MESSAGE:

- Security and justice institutions have an imperative to utilise a gender perspective to better understand drivers of violent extremism and the roles that people take up in these groups.

- States need to integrate a gender perspective to ensure that their policies and programmes do not violate human rights or have unintended consequences.

- Mainstreaming gender across collaborative and capacity building efforts for security sector engagement and reform is essential to successfulness.

This policy brief has a particular focus on the security and justice sector and explains **the importance of integrating a gender perspective** into CT and P/CVE efforts. The authors advise that this is not a comprehensive analysis of the entire field of research and policy discourse. Rather, it is an accessible overview, aimed at audiences particularly interested in mainstreaming gender into security and justice sector responses.

Military, police, judicial, penitentiary, and other security and justice sector institutions have a legal obligation to protect and promote human rights, including gender equality. **Mainstreaming gender helps to ensure that states' P/CVE programmes are effective, do not violate human rights, account for the gendered nature of victimisation, and do not have unintended adverse consequences**.

Additionally, the drivers of violent extremism, the roles people take up within terrorist groups, the impacts of violent extremism and terrorism, and state responses to them vary between men, women, boys, and girls and across time, region, and ideology. Therefore, **security and justice institutions also have a practical imperative to focus on gender roles and gender equality.**

The authors emphasise that P/CVE efforts can be **designed and implemented to amplify women's voices, participation, and leadership and strengthen their protection**, to better prevent conflict.

Finally, the authors outline a range of strategies to integrate a gender perspective into security and justice sector approaches to P/CVE, including:

- Integrate a gender perspective in criminal law and processes concerning violent extremist and terrorist offences;

- Embed collaboration with and respect for civil society in national P/CVE policies and strategies;

- Increase the capacity of security sector actors working on P/CVE and CT to apply a gender perspective; and,

- Initiate and maintain gender-sensitive engagement with local communities on P/CVE.

By suggesting strategies to integrate a gender perspective into criminal law and processes, policy-making, collaboration with civil society, capacity building for the security sector and community engagement, the authors of this policy brief set out a range of concrete steps that state actors can take to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism more effectively.

Pearson, Elizabeth, Emily Winterbotham & Katherine Brown (2021), *Countering Violent Extremism: Making Gender Matter,* Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-21962-8

KEY MESSAGE:

- Gender matters to the ways in which people become radicalised, it is not just about women, but about taking an intersectional analytical approach.

- It is essential that the security policy which governs P/CVE programming is enhanced and implemented in ways that reduce the risks of harms to men and women and to communities and learns from their experiences.

- There is a clear need for more gendered evidence to be gathered which is focused on the particular ideological concerns of the local contexts and which captures where P/CVE programming is working well and where it is not.

This book presents original research on gender and the dynamics of diverse forms of violent extremism and efforts to counter them. It utilises an **innovative milieu research approach**, gathering insights from communities affected by radicalisation and violent extremism. The authors base their analysis on focus group and interview research with some 250 participants in Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK in 2015 and 2016.

The study introduces the concept of **gendered radicalisation**, exploring how the multiple factors of paths to violent extremist groups—social, local, individual and global—can differ for both men and women, and why. For example, the places men and women are recruited from might be different, as well as the recruitment appeals used to draw them in. These gendered dynamics of radicalisation must be accounted for in P/CVE programming.

This study also offers one of the first **gendered comparative analyses of P/CVE programming aimed at jihadist and far-right extremism**. While Muslim communities were intimately familiar with the impacts of P/CVE programming targeted at them, the authors found that communities dealing with challenges of far-right extremism at the time did not identify with the terminology of violent extremism or P/CVE. The assumption in these communities was often that extremism is only related to Islamist ideology, and far-right ideologies (e.g., racism, etc.) were considered mainstream or even criminality by communities. These ways in which communities understand extremism impacts on the effectiveness of P/CVE efforts.

Finally, the authors offer a chapter of recommendations for how to better mainstream gender in P/CVE policy and programming, including but not limited to the following:

- Gender is not just about women, but about men also and power dynamics – based on this, gendered assumptions about violent extremism and P/CVE need to be reconsidered;

- The milieu approach matters because it is gendered and allows co-creation of knowledge with communities, who have important knowledge of violent extremism and P/CVE;

- Gather gendered and disaggregated data as part of monitoring and evaluating P/CVE programming;

- Recognise that gendered approaches reveal differences in experience of violent extremism and help to increase understanding of why (i.e., the gendered nature of culture, norms, faith, ideologies, etc.); and,

- Raise public awareness of different gendered and ideological manifestations of extremism.

With a summary of current policy in the five countries of study and some of the core gendered assumptions prevalent in interventions to P/CVE, the authors offer a critical analysis of gender and terrorism and find that **common assumptions have damaged community perceptions of P/CVE programming, as well as effectiveness.** They emphasise the importance of local community ownership of P/CVE goals and programming.

White, Jessica (2019), **'Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Meaningful Inclusion of Policy in Practice,** *CT Monitoring Reporting and Support Mechanism.* https://ct-morse.eu/resource/gender-in-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism/   - As it contributes to: White, Jessica (2022), *Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy: Building Transformative Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism*, Routledge, London. https://www.routledge.com/Gender-Mainstreaming-in-Counter-Terrorism-Policy-Building-Transformative/White/p/book/9781032048826

KEY MESSAGE:
- Gender mainstreaming strategies must be comprehensive, running through the design, implementation, and evaluation of P/CVE programmes.

- Gender mainstreaming strategies need to be supported conceptually, financially, and with the time required.

- Gender applies to all individuals and P/CVE gender mainstreaming strategies must consider gendered dynamics of violent extremism and participation, without reliance upon assumptions about gender roles.

In this study, the author emphasises the importance of a **comprehensive gender mainstreaming approach** that goes beyond just the focus on inclusion or empowerment of women, to addressing gender inequality as a driver of violent extremism for all individuals. The author utilises a case study approach to compare gender mainstreaming efforts across organisations and over time as learning on gender mainstreaming has evolved.

The author finds that the main challenges to the effectiveness of mainstreaming gender are twofold. First, there are often **challenges around institutional commitment and support within the security sector**. If there is a lack of commitment to or understanding of how and why gender equality can improve successfulness of security policy and programming, then there will continue to be half-hearted approaches to gender mainstreaming that do not commit the needed funding, resources, time, etc. When only partially supported gender mainstreaming strategies show little success or lack obvious contributions to security goals, this reinforces lack of commitment.

Second, the author emphasises, that security institutions and those implementing security goals have **historically approached this in a gender-blind fashion**. There has not been data gathered on the gendered nature of security and on the gendered implications and impacts of security policy and programming. Therefore, there is a lack of data with which to prove the importance of mainstreaming gender in P/CVE approaches.

The study highlights how a multidimensional **gender analysis framework needs to be employed in P/CVE programming** in order to account for the gendered dynamics of participation in violent extremism for all individuals and to shape P/CVE programming to effectively work towards gender equality. This should include considering gender as a power relationship, considering it as part of social institutions, considering it as a discourse and normative framework, etc. Without considering all these ways in which gender shapes identity and interaction, understanding of the gendered nature of violent extremism and terrorism remains limited.

Finally, the author concludes with policy recommendations, as well as practical advice on how to design a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy for a P/CVE programme, including but not limited to:

- Ensure institutional commitment to closing the "say-do" gap between policy and practical implementation of P/CVE on-the-ground, including supporting P/CVE programming comprehensively;

- Apply a multi-faceted gender analysis framework across P/CVE program design, implementation monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that programming is meaningfully mainstreaming gender; and,

- Recognise that gender does not equal women – gender identities are complex and intersect with other forms of identity. Remember that gender essentialisms hinder the outcome of P/CVE programming.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER TO HELP ASSESS THE THREAT

Veilleux-Lepage, Yannick, Alexandra Phelan & Ayse Lokmanoglu (2022), **'Gendered Radicalisation and 'Everyday Practices': An Analysis of Extreme Right and Islamic State Women-Only Forums',** *European Journal of International Security, pp. 1-16.* https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2022.32

KEY MESSAGE:
- Gendered dynamics shape both women and men's motivations and participation and the similarities and differences between them.

- Women often enforce and reinforce gendered practices within extremist movements. However, they also often find ways to exert agency, even in the face of ideological constraints.

- Deradicalisation and disengagements strategies, which are currently overwhelmingly gender neutral, must work to mainstream gender in order to fully account for motivations and participation.

This article focuses on how **gendered dynamics can shape differences in the motivations and participation of women and men**. The authors provide evidence of how women navigate agency in these spaces, while also challenging the stereotype that women in extremist movements are typically passive actors confined to traditional roles.

By employing feminist methodology to critically analyse ideological gender constructs in two women-only online extremist forums:

- the Women's Forum on Stormfront.org

- Women Dawah, a Turkish-language pro-Islamic State group chat on Telegram

This article demonstrates how **gendered online spaces influence women's 'everyday practices' within extremist movements**.

The authors argue that women-only online spaces facilitate gendered practices by allowing women to share everyday experiences, hold ideological discussions, and engage in debate. Additionally, these spaces provide an important means for women to navigate experiences and ideology within the wider movement.

Women-only forums are actively used by women within extremist movements to exert greater agency in the face of otherwise constraining gendered ideological constructs.

In turn, **gendered everyday practices are reinforced by virtual communities** that strengthen a sense of meaning – and purpose – in the movement.

This study sheds light not only on the differences in participation between women and men, but also on how such virtual communities can serve as spaces to frame and reinforce gendered practices in extremist movements.

The authors show how this has **key implications for deradicalisation and disengagement strategies**, which they determine are at present overwhelmingly gender neutral.

Perliger, Arie, Catherine Stevens & Eviane Leidig (2023), **'Mapping the Ideological Landscape of Extreme Misogyny'**, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.* https://www.icct.nl/sites/default/files/2023-01/Mapping-the-Ideological-Landscape-of-Misogyny%20%282%29.pdf

KEY MESSAGE:
- Gender norms shape recruitment and radicalisation into violent extremist groups and communities, as well as being used to define the ideological outgroup.

- There are distinctions between different misogynist communities of concern that must be better understood, including their processes of legitimising violence.

- Gender norms can form strong and dangerous connection points between groups that are more mainstream and groups advocating for violent extremism.

This paper highlights the **distinctions between the various relevant misogynist communities** in terms of their rhetorical, operational, and social facets. Through this the authors are addressing a historically limited understanding of the complexities of the online misogynist landscape.

The authors utilise a comprehensive literature review of the current body of work on the concept of extreme misogyny and the ideological narratives and spaces within which it thrives. Then, they **sample the online ecosystem of extreme misogyny** both within and across these communities while utilising a multicategory tool in order to identify the discursive, organisational, and operational distinctions between various misogynist communities.

The findings from this multi-layered analytical framework reflect substantial differences between the various misogynist communities, including:

- the terms of their legitimacy to violence;

- the conceptualisation of their adversaries;

- their ideological vision's time orientation (i.e., whether it was deterministically focused on the permanent nature of the status quo or dynamically focused on altering the status quo in future); and,

- their overall operational discourse.

This analysis reveals that while in some groups there might be a greater inclination to use more derogatory language the **propensity for violence is likely more connected to the ideological and emotional frameworks of the communities**, rather than the language itself.

The authors concluded that a **gender lens must be mainstreamed across groups to understand how they use gender norms to both recruit people into these groups and how they also use them to define the outgroup**, which is the object of their ideological grievance.

Finally, they offer some recommendations on where more research can be gathered to understand better the evolution of gender dynamics within violent extremist groups, as well as to **better understand their connection to extreme and more mainstream communities** as well.

Dier, Aleksandra & Gretchen Baldwin (2022), '**Masculinities and Violent Extremism**', *UN CT Executive Directorate and International Peace Institute*. https://www.ipinst.org/2022/06/masculinities-and-violent-extremism

KEY MESSAGE:

- Violent extremist and terrorist groups across the ideological spectrum are very good at exploiting gendered norms and grievances to recruit and radicalise members.

- Hypermasculine violence is increasingly promoted as a way to defend against perceived outgroups, such as immigrants, feminists, LGBTQ+, and racial justice movements.

- Masculinities produced by state actors implementing highly securitised and militarised CT and P/CVE responses can further radicalise communities and undermine human rights and gender mainstreaming goals.

This policy paper emphasises how **masculinities are both wielded as a recruitment and retention tool by violent extremist and terrorist groups**, but also how poor understanding of masculinities have damaged CT and P/CVE responses.

The authors draw upon desk research and a three-day, virtual, closed-door expert workshop co-hosted by the International Peace Institute (IPI) and the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

They argue that as long as current CT and P/CVE gender mainstreaming strategies focus only on women and the role of women shortcomings of this type of programming will only continue. **A masculinities focused approach must be utilised and grounded in a robust human rights framework to avoid perpetuating gendered harms.**

There needs to be an increased understanding of the links between extremist violence and gender inequality at the societal level, including harmful gender norms and practices perpetuated by the state and their CT and P/CVE actors.

There is **increasing promotion of hypermasculine violence** as a way to defend against perceived outside threats, including immigrants and the feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+), and racial justice movements.

The **masculinities exploited by violent extremist groups interact with the masculinities perpetuated and actions taken by state actors**, especially CT institutions, which are themselves shaped by masculine norms.

The authors offer several policy-oriented recommendations, including advocating for more gendered research around masculinities and violent extremism. They focus on the need for **better understanding of positive or peaceful masculinities** – in other words, how to better promote individual and societal understanding of the peaceful nature of men rather than essentialising them as inherently violent or as a threat.

They also focus on the need to **address the harmful role masculinities play within CT and P/CVE institutions** and how a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy must look inward at these dynamics, as well as outward to the context of the programming.

Johnston, Melissa & Sara Meger (2022), **'Policy Brief: The Linkages Between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism'**, *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.* https://www.osce.org/secretariat/525297

KEY MESSAGE:
- Expressions of violent misogyny are increasingly evidence to strongly overlap with attitudes supporting violent extremism.

- There remains the need for increased training and capacity building with state CT and P/CVE actors to understand and account for violent misogyny in policy and practice.

- Comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies must consider gender power relations at their core.

This policy brief highlights the growing body of research indicating that **violent misogynistic attitudes and attitudes supporting violent extremism strongly overlap**.

The authors base their analysis on research of violent extremism related policies and interviews with key Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) stakeholders, focused on the links between violent misogyny and violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

They found that while the evidence is mounting, **violent misogyny and its potential roles in violent extremism is still often overlooked and misunderstood by many states**.

The authors highlight how, at the individual level, violent misogyny can motivate men and women to participate in violent extremism. Misogyny can play a key element in ideology, as well as be part of the appeal or even the location for recruitment. Additionally, exposure to violent misogynist behaviour can reduce individual resilience to violent extremism. At the group level, violent misogyny plays a role in the operation and ideology of violent extremist groups, as well as potentially in their internal structures, governance, and retention practices.

Gender mainstreaming strategies must be comprehensive in considering the impacts of gender on how and why both men and women get involved in violent extremism and terrorism and these **strategies must consider gender power relations at their cores. This requires going beyond looking at the roles played by and participation of women**.

The authors argue that violent misogyny and violent extremism overlaps are evidence in three major areas:

- the backlash against gender equality as part of the ideology and mobilization strategies of violent extremist groups;

- the role of thwarted or frustrated masculinity being exploited in recruitment strategies; and,

- the less examined area of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including gender-based hate crimes, as a factor in recruitment to violent extremist groups.

Comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies can and should include the identification and understanding of violent misogyny and its role in violent extremism.

As part of recommendations, the authors advise that a variety of CT and P/CVE stakeholders across state institutions likely require **training and capacity building in order to strengthen the gender perspective in P/CVE policy and programming**.

Additionally, they argue that **women's civil society organizations (CSOs) are uniquely positioned to recognize, understand and address violent misogyny** as it manifests in different contexts. Therefore, attention should also be paid to the building of their capacity and meaningful inclusion of their voices.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER TO HELP SHAPE THE RESPONSE

Praxl-Tabuchi, Franziska, Matthew Schwartz & Adele Westerhuis (2022), **'Gender and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Policy Toolkit'**, *Global Counterterrorism Forum.* https://www.globalcenter.org/resource/gender-and-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-policy-toolkit/

KEY MESSAGE:
- *Practical advice on how to implement gender mainstreaming strategies is essential for practitioners and policy makers.*

- *Gender mainstreaming strategies need to cover, policy and programming design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.*

- *Mainstreaming gender in P/CVE programming contributes to its successfulness.*

This toolkit was developed in response to UN Security Council calls to **integrate a gender perspective into P/CVE approaches**, including greater participation and leadership by women, amplifying the work of women and women's organizations, and addressing the role of gender stereotypes and masculinities. The toolkit provides guidance and advice to support use of the *Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism* and its addendum. It was developed through an extensive desktop survey of key research and good practices, as well as a consultation process with more than 165 policy professionals from nearly 30 countries across the globe, including independent experts, and practitioners from 24 governments, 13 multilateral entities, and 42 CSOs.

The authors designed the toolkit to **provide practitioners and policymakers with concrete examples of relevant frameworks and good practices on integrating gender-related considerations into P/CVE interventions**, as well as case studies, guiding questions, and recommended resources. The toolkit's chapters are broken down to provide top-level guidance applicable to all P/CVE efforts, research and development of an evidence base for policy and programming, guidance for the design and development of gender-responsive policy and programming, and guidance for gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation efforts. Some of the relevant recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Identify a diverse range of stakeholders, including policy makers and the individuals and organisations that support the design and implementation of P/CVE programming;

- Ensure policymakers receive gender-sensitivity training to familiarize themselves with the most effective ways to perform a gender analysis or incorporate a gender lens in policies;

- Work with donors to ensure that international and high-level policies on gender and human rights are connected to and guide the project;

- Commit to inclusive programme participation, ensuring recruitment of women and diverse and marginalised identities as participants and partners; and,

- Design P/CVE interventions to be gender and age responsive, as well as based on respect and cultural sensitivity.

This toolkit represents a compilation of global knowledge on the topic of gender mainstreaming and provides relevant and essential **practical advice on how to design, implement and monitor and evaluate P/CVE programming with a gender mainstreaming strategy**.

Additionally, the authors emphasise case studies and examples in each chapter where the **mainstreaming of gender contributes to successfulness of P/CVE programming**.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (2020), **'Gender Brief for UNODC Staff: Mainstreaming Gender in Terrorism Prevention Projects'**, *UN Office on Drugs and Crime.* https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Thematic_Gender_Briefs_English/Terrorism_brief_23_03_2020.pdf

KEY MESSAGE:

- There are no gender-neutral interventions when the ultimate goal is equality and improvement of the lives of all people with diverse identities.

- Gender mainstreaming should be intersectional, considering intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as being child-sensitive where children are involved.

- Mainstreaming gender in P/CVE programming requires tailoring to the specific contextual and situational analysis of the target group and of available partners and allies.

This brief emphasises first and foremost that **there are no gender-neutral interventions** when the ultimate goal is to improve the lives of all people, women and men, girls and boys, as well as individuals of bodily characteristics, diverse sexual orientation and/or diverse or plural gender identities.

The authors argue that **gender mainstreaming significantly strengthens the effectiveness of CT and P/CVE efforts and respect for human rights.** This is a guidance briefing, rather than a research paper, but it was included here as it offers useful practical approaches on how to mainstream gender across programming.

Additionally, the authors frame the guidance briefing with the perspective that gender equality cannot be achieved without recognizing and addressing the fact that individuals face different, often contextually specific, forms of discrimination. These forms of discrimination could be due to gender identity, sexual orientation, class, religion, caste, ethnicity, age, disability, location, among others. Thus, **gender mainstreaming should be intersectional,** with sensitivity and responsiveness to all diverse and intersecting forms of discrimination that individuals face.

Those designing gender mainstreaming strategies should also bear in mind that given the specific physical, mental, and psychological developmental needs and vulnerabilities of children it is important to distinguish them from adults and to **adopt both a gender and child-sensitive approach**.

The authors divide the gender mainstreaming effort into three main sections:

First, they highlight the need to conduct a **gendered situational analysis in the development phase** to ensure reflection of gender perspective into the design. An engendered situation analysis requires sex-disaggregated data and ensures that development projects and programmes incorporate roles, needs, and participation of women, men, girls, and boys. Design must also consider the capacity of counterparts for gender mainstreaming, the potential synergies with other programming occurring in the target context, and the gendered dynamics of the target groups themselves.

Second, the programme needs to be **designed with a gendered logical framework**, using the gender analysis to devise and monitor theories of change.

Finally, mainstreaming gender requires that the **programme's own staffing, budget, and evaluation frameworks are considering gender equality** as an essential goal of P/CVE.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2019), '**Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism Good Practices for Law Enforcement**', *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.* https://www.osce.org/secretariat/420563

KEY MESSAGE:
- Whole-of-society approaches are needed to P/CVE, therefore trust and communication needs to be built between security actors and communities.

- Lack of commitment within the security sector to embracing diversity and gender mainstreaming often has a damaging effect on their relationships with communities.

- Communities and law enforcement should work together on debunking common gender stereotypes in order to build and reinforce positive role models and narratives.

This handbook is centred around the argument that **a whole-of-society approach is needed to P/CVE**. For this to be possible, **trust and communication between security actors and communities must be improved**.

Successful civil society efforts to P/CVE commonly take into account the importance of families, women, youth, educators, and religious and community leaders. However, the security sector has historically been slower in embracing diversity, including aspects related to gender.

The authors base this handbook upon an extensive review of the existing evidence and literature on mainstreaming gender in security sector spaces. However, the evidence remains limited, therefore they also take a case study approach to highlighting good practices where they find them.

The **lack of security sector commitment to embracing diversity or mainstreaming gender** can be seen in the low percentage of women working in the security sector, as well as in the common lack of gender sensitivity in police services that engage directly with communities.

This handbook reflects the OSCE's commitment to **supporting a gender-aware approach for the security sector** in P/CVE. The authors suggest that some of the key components in achieving a gender-sensitive response to the threat of violent extremism are to:

- ensure adequate representation of women in the security sector;

- ensure adequate representation of women around the table when policy and programming are being defined;

- ensure adequate representation of women in operational law enforcement roles; and,

- ensure that both men and women in law enforcement are aware of the different experiences and challenges violent extremism presents to women and men, as well as girls and boys.

Gender perspective in assessment of violent extremism must include assessing how different people are targeted for recruitment, how they work to P/CVE, and how they **may differently experience victimization by violent extremist groups**. Additionally, better understanding of how gender stereotypes are exploited by violent extremists is needed.

Finally, the authors focus on exploring why it is **important that communities and law enforcement work together to debunk gender stereotypes**. This shared goal can promote positive role models and narratives that serve to strengthen tolerance and resilience to violent extremism.

Brown, Katherine (2019), **'Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE'**, *UN Women.* https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/09/gender-mainstreaming-principles-dimensions-and-priorities-for-pve

KEY MESSAGE:
- P/CVE programming that is not grounded in a gender and human right-based framework can exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination.

- Without a gender and human rights-based framework, P/CVE programming can instrumentalise gender equality and women's rights work, as well as harm grassroots P/CVE efforts.

- Mainstreaming gender in P/CVE ensures that programming identifies root causes of violent extremism, includes diverse actors in the response, and prevents adverse gendered impacts.

This report offers guidance on a **gender mainstreaming model that can be applied to P/CVE efforts in a human-rights compliant, gender-responsive, bespoke, and locally derived way**. To shape the report, the author draws upon interviews with practitioners and policymakers in the field of P/CVE from around the globe, as well as utilising an extensive review of UN policies related to P/CVE and gender mainstreaming and the wider body of literature on mainstreaming gender in P/CVE. The model has four key dimensions:

- Inclusivity: highlights focus on local ownership and the inclusion specifically of women;

- Comprehensive Security Approach: links human security and 'whole-of-governance' approaches to P/CVE policy-making;

- Gender-Sensitive Situational Assessment: emphasises importance of gendered research on local drivers of violent extremism, and that the research informs the policy and programming design; and,

- Gender-Responsiveness: responses to the differentiated impacts of violent extremism on people.

Because many P/CVE initiatives are insufficiently grounded in a gender and human rights-based framework, they can exacerbate existing gender inequalities, forms of discrimination, and other adverse gendered dynamics. The author shows how the **lack of gender and human rights focus can securitise gender equality efforts**, it can instrumentalise women's human rights, and this often in turn means that local grassroots P/CVE work is put at greater risk and potentially undermined.

Therefore, the author highlights that gender mainstreaming – within the context of human rights and other commitments that bind P/CVE programming – is needed in order to:

- **accurately identify root causes**, potential recruits, targets, and victims of violent extremism;

- **leverage diverse actors** as part of a comprehensive and holistic approach to P/CVE; and,

- **prevent adverse gendered impacts**, and to counter those effects that do occur.

Finally, the author gives practical guidance on the necessary requirements for designing and implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy within P/CVE. Three main commitments are needed at policy and programming levels:

- Integration of gender equality in interventions in general.

- Targeting specific groups or issues through special interventions.

- Dialogue with partners on gender-sensitive issues and aspects.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND WOMEN CENTRIC PROGRAMMING

UN Women (2022), '**Preventing Violent Extremism: Integrating Gender Perspectives (Global, Jordan and Pakistan)**', *UN Women*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/10/preventing-violent-extremism-integrating-gender-perspectives

KEY MESSAGE:
- Political sensitivity around security, CT, and P/CVE efforts can often lead to resistance to mainstreaming gender at the national level.

- Knowledge from local community partners and sustained engagement can help to overcome resistances to mainstreaming gender.

- Promoting and empowering women to lead community discourse on violence and gendered power dynamics can lead to positive forms of locally driven P/CVE.

This is the final narrative report from a UN Women project called 'Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE): Integrating Gender Perspectives (Global, Jordan, and Pakistan)'. This project supported the **promotion of women's rights through the integration of gender perspectives in P/CVE efforts**.

The authors wrote this report based on evidence gathered throughout the duration of the project at multiple levels of engagement and utilised the findings to develop recommendations for future efforts to empower women in CT and P/CVE spaces and further mainstream gender.

The project ran for three years (2019-2022) and operated at the global, national, and community levels:

- At the global level, the project supported increased women's participation in CT platforms and gender mainstreaming in UN relevant policies informed by the knowledge generated in country.
- At the national level, the project was piloted was in Pakistan and Jordan and supported these partners in mainstreaming gender in their respective PVE efforts corresponding to their national contexts.
- At the local level, the project conducted localized research and systematic awareness-raising activities to encourage inclusion of women-led grassroots and CSOs in various inter-governmental P/CVE processes.

The authors identified major challenges to the project goals due to political sensitivity related to engagement in security issues, CT, and P/CVE. This **political sensitivity often led to resistance to mainstreaming gender** within these efforts.

However, they were able to **overcome some of this resistance due to the knowledge generated at the local level, as well as systematic engagement with national institutions**.

Engagement with civil society and communities, because of activities delivered in partnership with local communities, women, girls, allowed the broader community to have a **more open discourse at the local level on violence in general, gender power dynamics, systemic vulnerabilities and its linkages to violent extremism**.

The authors emphasised the positive results of capacity building activities, workshops, dialogues, and awareness-raising sessions.

Winterbotham, Emily (2019), **'What Can Work (And What Has Not Worked) in Women-Centric P/CVE Initiatives: Assessing the Evidence Base for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism'**, *Royal United Services Institute.* https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/occasional-papers/what-can-work-and-what-has-not-worked-women-centric-pcve-initiatives-assessing-evidence-base

KEY MESSAGE:
- There is still an extremely limited amount of evidence, due to the small number of gender mainstreamed P/CVE programmes and the limited gathering and/or publishing of gendered data.

- P/CVE programmes commonly base their design and implementation on assumptions or essentialisations about the nature and abilities of women.

- Mainstreaming of gender across a programme shows more promise than a singular focus on the empowerment of women in addressing gender inequalities and improving effectiveness of P/CVE programming.

This paper reviews women-centric P/CVE efforts – in other words, interventions that seek to work with, or target, women and girls specifically. At the time of this study, interventions and accompanying literature on the gendered roles of men in P/CVE were very limited.

Thus, the use of 'women-centric' rather than 'gender-centric' is deliberate. While understandings of gender norms, relations and behaviours underpin many of the assumptions explored in this paper, the explored initiatives all focus on engaging women.

For this paper the author reviewed 42 English-language studies that explored P/CVE interventions involving women. This was part of a larger project called 'The Prevention Project', which explored the evidence base for multiple emergent themes across hundreds of evaluations of P/CVE projects.

The paper concludes **that the evidence base is still extremely limited, both due to the limited amount of gendered data gathering/publication that is happening and to the limited amount of gender mainstreamed P/CVE programming that exists overall**.

Many of the P/CVE programmes reviewed based their design and implementation on assumptions or essentialisations about the nature and abilities of women and their corresponding roles in society.

This is not to say that there are not gender norms and roles defined by society. However, the author concludes that P**/CVE programming seeking to do no harm should mainstream a gender lens in order to interrogate these norms and inequalities instead of perpetuating them**.

The author also **emphasises the importance of avoiding unintended consequences with P/CVE programming focused on empowerment of women**, as a subordination of women's rights efforts to CT and P/CVE efforts can also do harm.

Finally, the author concludes that **the mainstreaming of gender across a programme, rather than the focusing of a specific component within a programme on the empowerment of women, shows more success in addressing gender inequalities and improving effectiveness of the P/CVE programme itself**.

Where programming is focused on the empowerment of women, it has a greater chance of impact when capacity and confidence-building initiatives are integrated with a range of other measures, such as economic and educational empowerment.

STRATEGIC SUMMARY

This QRR investigates the topic of mainstreaming gender in P/CVE programming. Despite the growing high-level acknowledgment of the importance of mainstreaming gender in these efforts, there remains a gap in understanding of what this should include or how it can be practically implemented. This QRR compiles and examines recent literature and practical resources across the following four subtopics in order to help increase awareness and offer useful recommendations and guidance to encourage the mainstreaming of gender across all P/CVE programming. Key takeaways identified by this review include the following:

- **Defining and Implementing Gender Mainstreaming Strategies**: The literature in this section emphasises the erroneous nature of the common assumption that gender equals women. The sources identify the complex nature of gender and normative gender roles and how P/CVE programming must not base assessment or response on assumptions about gender. Policy and programme designers must employ a gender lens or a gender analysis framework to design and develop responses that are accounting for the complex contextual gender dynamics of local target areas. Additionally, there is a need to grapple with the often diversity resistant nature of security institutions that might be responsible for P/CVE programming and to ensure meaningful commitment to mainstreaming gender within a human rights-based approach in order to reduce potential harms of CT and P/CVE programming.

- **Mainstreaming Gender to Help Assess the Threat**: The compiled literature in this section emphasises the importance of gendered analysis of femininities and masculinities and how these socio-culturally interpreted expectations can impact radicalisation, recruitment, and retention of individuals. Gendered motivations and participation apply to everyone, and men and women alike often find unique pathways to agency even within sometimes strict ideological gender role constraints. As there has been a historical lack of gender perspective within security and justice institutions, better gender-based assessments need to inform investigation, conviction, and subsequent disengagement and/or deradicalisation programming. Gender norms can form strong and dangerous connection points between groups that are more mainstream and groups advocating for violent extremism. Several of the sources dive into how expressions of violent misogyny are increasingly evidenced to strongly overlap with attitudes supporting violent extremism and how hypermasculine violence is increasingly promoted as a way to defend against perceived outgroups, such as immigrants, feminists, LGBTQ+, and racial justice movements.

- **Mainstreaming Gender to Help Shape the Response**: This section focuses on the practical advice of how to implement gender mainstreaming strategies that is essential for practitioners and policy makers. Gender mainstreaming strategies need to cover, policy and programming design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Authors in this section emphasise that there is no such thing as gender-neutral P/CVE programming, as all interventions where the goal is equality and improvement of the safety and security of individuals must account for the intersectional and diverse identities of target populations. Mainstreaming gender in P/CVE programming requires tailoring to this specific contextual and situational analysis of the target group and of available partners and allies. Without a gender and human rights-based framework, P/CVE programming can instrumentalise gender equality and women's rights work, as well as harm grassroots P/CVE efforts and potentially exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination. Authors argue that whole-of-society approaches are needed, thus trust needs to be built between security actors and communities. It is recommended that communities and law enforcement work together on debunking common gender stereotypes to build and reinforce positive role models and narratives.

- **Empowering Women and Women-Centric Programming**: This section examines literature emphasising the importance of empowering women's participation in P/CVE efforts without essentialising them or their roles. There is often political sensitivity around security, CT, and P/CVE efforts which leads to resistance to mainstreaming gender. This can sometimes result in a narrow focus on the empowerment of women rather than a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy. However, evidence shows that while empowerment of women is a key element of gender equality, the mainstreaming of gender across a programme shows more promise than a singular focus on the empowerment of women in addressing gender inequalities and improving effectiveness of P/CVE programming.

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