



Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Meaningful Inclusion of Policy in Practice

By: Jessica White, PhD

Executive Summary

There has been an increase of attention to the need for inclusion of women in peace and security processes since the passing of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 and its introduction of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.¹ Donors, including the European Commission (EC), have been working over the last two decades to improve their WPS policy approaches and more recently their focus on gender-mainstreaming across preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) platforms.² This paper highlights some practical challenges for implementation of high-level policy into on-the-ground programming and recommendations for meaningful gender-mainstreaming in the design, implementation and evaluation of P/CVE programming. Examining lessons learned from past programming helps to inform current policy conversations and improve P/CVE moving forward.

A case study is used to illustrate how focusing narrowly on the empowerment of women in challenging cultural contexts is often not enough to induce meaningful change for the equal participation of women in peace and security processes. Instead, there needs to be a shift to focusing on addressing gender inequality as a driver of violent extremism. This paper argues that, in order for there to be meaningful positive progress for women's inclusion in all matters related to peace and security, the focus needs to be on wider gender equality. A gender-responsive approach not only allows for gathering of the gender-related data to indicate how gender-equality programming measures up to other components of P/CVE programming, but also allows for programming to examine the underlying socialised expectations of both masculinities and femininities and how they contribute to the way in which individuals experience insecurity and potentially contribute to violence.

After an introduction to the EC's P/CVE policy and their Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) programming platform³, an in-depth case study examination is conducted on the STRIVE in the Horn of Africa programme.⁴ This particular STRIVE programme was chosen as it featured a component focused on the empowerment of women. Examples are

¹ UN, Security Council Resolution 1325, [2000]).

² See EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024, EEAS(2019)747, (July 4, 2019); EU Council, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 Publications Office of the European Union, [2016]).

³ This is the EC's platform for a range of P/CVE programming that is implemented through various funding streams in external locations around the world, as well as global community initiatives that have been established. See STRIVE brochure: RUSI, *STRIVE for Development* European Commission, [2019]).

⁴ This programme was implemented by the Royal United Services Institute from 2014-2017.



taken from the documentation and evaluations of this programme, as well as an interview with the Team Leader, to illustrate some of the challenges and practical limitations which can occur between donor policy and practical on-the-ground implementation. The case study also highlights how gender impacts programming in all initiatives, not only ones specifically devoted to the empowerment of women. There are examples of how underlying masculinities and femininities can contribute to how and why people engage in VE. Finally, the paper concludes with specific recommendations on how to meaningfully include gender equality as a key element of preventing future terrorism.

Recommendations:

1. **A gender-responsive approach needs to be taken in all P/CVE program design, implementation and evaluation.** This gender lens would allow for gender data to be gathered and thus an evidence base can be created for how gender inequalities impact security and P/CVE outcomes. The gender-responsive approach needs to be applied across the whole of P/CVE programmes, not only to the components which might be focused on the empowerment of women. On-the-ground implementation of the EU policies on gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, or even gender-transformative perspectives needs to be consistent, with systematic collection of and reporting on gender disaggregated data, and a results-based management structure with a gender approach.⁵
2. **Gender analysis should be included in P/CVE programme monitoring and evaluation frameworks.** Women's empowerment, as indicated in the EU's Gender Action Plan II policy, needs to be supported by appropriate theories of change, results frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation processes. Reporting success that is not meaningful does not accurately reflect achievement of results. Context-based and intersectional analysis to understand and address the underlying factors of VE, find allies to counter VE, and encourage gender equality as a solution to VE must be an essential part of the programming framework.⁶
3. **P/CVE programming must be supported comprehensively.** Donors cannot provide implementing organisations with short programming cycles and small budgets and then expect them to be able to make meaningful changes to deeply engrained social issues. The structures of power in patriarchal societies need to be challenged, fostering women's and girls' empowerment and men's and boys' non-traditional roles. Traditional norms and stereotypes and oppressive masculinities must change, in order to promote respect for diversity. This can be aided by policy dialogue with leaders and governments to promote inclusive and representative governance systems.⁷ If P/CVE is to be defined as a long-term,

⁵ EU Council, *EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*.

⁶ GAP II requires a mandatory gender analysis for all priority sectors to be used throughout the programming cycle. In conflict contexts, a gender and conflict analysis should be done. Gender analysis for all priority sectors is one of GAP II's minimum standards of performance and falls into objective 4 of the GAP II implementation framework. Practical resources for gender analysis, i.e. the EU Resource package are available at: http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_html5.html?lms=1
http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/SWAP/1-2_SWAP.pdf
http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/PROJECT/1-1_Project.pdf

⁷ For more practical recommendations see: EU, "Gender Equality and Extremist Religious Fundamentalisms: Which Challenges? which Entry Points?" 2019) at <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/88890/download?token=GaUQQbdP>



holistic preventative solution to terrorism then it needs to be given the tools, time, budgets and institutional support to seek meaningful changes.

4. **Empowerment of women is not enough, equality is key.** While empowerment needs to remain an element of P/CVE programming, the overall perspective needs to be adjusted to viewing gender inequality as a driver of violent extremism. This allows for consideration of the social constructions of masculinity and femininity and how they impact people's experience of peace and security. The WPS agenda encourages equal inclusion of women; however, this needs to be part of a larger gender mainstreaming strategy. The conversation needs to be about gender equality – and gender should not be equated to women. In the EU's Action plan on WPS, women's empowerment is a prerequisite for P/CVE and gender mainstreaming strategies are laid out.⁸ However, there is still a gap between this policy and implementation of gender equality as part of the theories of change used to build the results frameworks for P/CVE programming.
5. **Gender essentialisms hinder the outcomes of P/CVE programming.** Assumptions about the peaceful or nurturing nature of women that underpin some mother's programmes and expectations of women's peacebuilding abilities are essentialising. While women may in some situations be able to contribute in these ways, the expectation that this is inherent robs them of the recognition they deserve for their skills. Full consideration of the value of women's roles, both in the public and private spheres, needs to be taken into account and encouraged. Also, the assumption that men are inherently more violent and thus at greater risk of radicalisation is essentialising. P/CVE needs to use a gender-responsive perspective to examine underlying socio-culturally imposed masculinities and femininities and see how they contribute to people's participation in VE. EU policy has prioritised the need to combat gender stereotypes, but this still needs to be carried through to on-the-ground programming design and evaluation.
6. **Youth should not be considered as gender-neutral.** Youth comprise a significant portion of the focus population for much P/CVE programming, yet the term is often left gender-neutral in programming design, implementation and evaluation. Lack of recognition of the different experiences of male and female youth and their motivations for participation in VE ultimately leaves programming lacking in its approach and impossible to evaluate. Programming design and evaluation, as well as theories of change and reporting structures must include recognition of the differences of the male and female youth experience, due to underlying socialised expectations of masculinity and femininity in their cultural context.

⁸ See Objective 2 of *EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024*.



Introduction

Over the last two decades, progress has been made on the inclusion of women in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programming. The passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000 and the nine follow-up resolutions, all the way to 2493 in 2019, introduced the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to the international community and focused attention on the importance of women taking an equal role in security.⁹ The European Commission (EC) has implemented various policies during that time oriented around the WPS agenda. These have included policy related to increasing the participation of women in security processes, protecting all people from gender-based violence and discrimination in conflict settings, and delivering programming with gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches.¹⁰ However, while there is significant international policy focus on the issue, it does not always filter down to on-the-ground commitment to meaningfully changing the way in which P/CVE programmes are designed, implemented and evaluated.¹¹ There are still gaps in policy and approaches to including women in P/CVE programming, as well as there being a fundamental gap between the inclusion of women and the consideration of gender. This paper looks at some of the challenges facing gender-mainstreaming within P/CVE programming and highlights the need to look at the underlying security impacts of socialised expectations of masculinity and femininity. Lessons learned from past programming can help move policy and practice forward. It also uses case study examples from a P/CVE programme to illustrate how gender equality is a necessary element for peaceful societies. The evidence gathered in this paper indicates why it is necessary to take a gender-responsive approach to P/CVE programming, so that data can be compiled to further test and support the importance of gender-equality to effective P/CVE solutions.

Key Terms

The three terms fundamental to this paper are P/CVE, gender and equality. Each of these concepts are complex and subject to extensive debates; therefore, they need to be defined for the purposes of this paper.

⁹ UNSCRs 1325(2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

¹⁰ Example EU policies which include elements related to the WPS agenda and gender mainstreaming: the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2019-2024; the EU Gender Action Plan II 2016-2020 (GAP II) (GAP III policy is currently being prepared) ; the Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Counter-terrorism (19 June 2017); the Council of the European Union, Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism (19 May 2014); the Council of the European Union, 2008: Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on WPS (2008); European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Combating Terrorism and Replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and Amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA.

¹¹ Thania Paffenholz et al., *Making Women Count-Not just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations* UN Women, 2016.; Katherine Brown, "Gender and Counter-Radicalization: Women and Emerging Counter-Terror Measures," in *Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives*, eds. Margaret Satterthwaite and Jayne Huckerby (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 36-59.



P/CVE

P/CVE is a term which has come to prevalence as the necessary preventative pillar of many counterterrorism (CT) strategies. There is some debate over the differences between preventing and countering strategies, but for the purposes of this paper these terms will be used together to define the three-tier public health model approach.¹² This model breaks P/CVE down into the following tiers:

- **Primary:** Addressing the base-level societal drivers of violent extremism (VE) such as: human rights violations (including inequality), lack of education and employment opportunity, poverty, poor governance, etc.
- **Secondary:** Engaging with those populations specifically 'at-risk' of radicalisation and VE recruitment and trying to deter this process.
- **Tertiary:** Focusing on de-radicalisation, disengagement and reintegration of those who have already been participants in VE.¹³

The concern over securitisation of associated programming, such as women's rights, development or peacebuilding programming, has led some to suggest that PVE should refer to the primary tier and CVE refer to the secondary and tertiary tiers – in order to disassociate PVE from some of the negative connotations of CT programming.¹⁴ However, for the purposes of EU programming P/CVE is used to cover all three tiers and is tied to the development strategy.¹⁵

Gender

Gender is about more than the biological distinctions between men and women. It is a term that is commonly used to describe the complex sociocultural constructions of masculinity and femininity and the roles which men and women are expected to fill in society.¹⁶ While WPS focuses on the inclusion of women in security, this paper is recommending that women not only need to be included but that gender equality needs to be sought. Therefore, the focus on gender in P/CVE needs to examine both the constructions of masculinity and femininity, as well as how they impact security. This perspective highlights the inadequacy of allowing the term gender to simply end up being equated to women and gender equality being

¹² Jonathan Chalgren et al., "Countering Violent Extremism: Applying the Public Health Model," *Georgetown Security Studies Review, United States* (2016), 523-538.

¹³ James Khalil, *Deradicalisation and Disengagement Programming in Prisons and Rehabilitation Centres*, CT MORSE, [2020]).

¹⁴ William Stephens, Stijn Sieckelincx and Hans Boutellier, "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2019), 1-16. doi:10.1080/1057610X.2018.1543144.; Rosemary Foot, "The United Nations, Counter Terrorism and Human Rights: Institutional Adaptation and Embedded Ideas," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2007), 489-514.; Georgia Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective," *Usip Special Report*, no. 336 (September, 2013).

¹⁵ EU, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, [2016].; "EU Global Strategy," accessed August 24, 2020

¹⁶ Terrell Carver, "Sex, Gender and Sexuality," in *Handbook on Gender in World Politics*, eds. Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe (Cheltenham, England ; Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), 58-65; Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*, 1st ed. (GB: Zed Books, 2007); Jill Steans, *Gender and International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2013).



reduced to a limited concept of women's empowerment. The EU has established a definitional framework for gender across their policy platforms.¹⁷

Equality

Equality is another complex concept. Gender inequality often intersects with many other forms of inequality – women are often not only disadvantaged because they are women but also because they might come from a certain clan or tribe, live in a certain region, have a certain skin colour or a myriad of other differences by which they are defined.¹⁸ Intersectionality emphasises the need to avoid gender essentialism, or the homogenisation of groups of people (even women), in P/CVE programming.¹⁹ While definitions of equality can be impacted by cultural interpretation, the inclusion of equality in P/CVE programming can be grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.²⁰ Equality is a core principle of human security, therefore should be a priority for programming seeking to prevent future insecurity from terrorism.²¹

Background

Generally speaking, some of the most common challenges to the meaningful inclusion of gender in P/CVE begin at the very roots of the terminology used in policy language. WPS is focused on equalising the role of women in peace and security processes. However, the challenges of policy interpretation and implementation can leave some fundamental gaps in the approach to gender in P/CVE programming.

Gender Mainstreaming: There is a whole body of research around the meaning and context of this term, but it is often used to describe the policy approach to the inclusion of women or gender equality. It is important to recognise that women have been systematically excluded from security processes, largely due to the patriarchal ideological roots of the international relations system.²² Therefore, it might be necessary to enforce their inclusion in P/CVE

¹⁷ See Article 3(c) of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; Articles 2, 3(3) and 21 of the Treaty on the European Union, Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and Articles 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

¹⁸ Ronald Inglehart, Pippa Norris and Christian Welzel, "Gender Equality and Democracy," *Comparative Sociology* 1, no. 3-4 (2002), 321-345.; Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier, "Framing Gender Equality in the European Union Political Discourse," *Social Politics* 15, no. 1 (2008), 101-129.; Steans, *Gender and International Relations*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ EU, *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights* EU,[2012]); Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).; Jack Donnelly, "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1984), 400-419. doi:10.2307/762182.; Emanuela Lombardo, Petra Meier and Mieke Verloo, "Stretching and Bending Gender Equality: A Discursive Politics Approach," in *The Discursive Politics of Gender Equality* Routledge, 2009), 21-38.

²¹ P. Mlambo-Ngcuka and R. Coomaraswamy, "'Women are the Best Weapon in the War Against Terrorism': Fifteen Years Ago, the U.N. Enshrined the Idea that Equality between Men and Women is Inextricably Linked with Peace. It's Time to Act on that.," *Foreign Policy* (10 February, 2015).

²² Cynthia Enloe, "Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations," *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (1996), 186-202.; J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992).; Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland, eds., *Gender and International Relations* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991).



programming through policy requirements for gender components.²³ Although, it is important to note that gender mainstreaming should ultimately be about fostering gender equality, which is one of the necessary elements in creating a secure environment where VE cannot thrive.²⁴ Unfortunately, the term 'gender' in P/CVE programming is often equated with 'women'. Therefore, it is essential to highlight that gender equality is about all genders and not just women.²⁵

Gender Essentialism: Some approaches to including women in P/CVE programming can encourage misrepresentation of women and gender stereotypes. This is often due to justifying their insertion into the security process based on special roles they are uniquely able to fill. Often the inclusion of women is justified because they are labelled as natural peacemakers. This assumption is essentialising gender roles, which are in no way inherent.²⁶ It also withholds recognition from those women who have developed excellent skills in the field of peacebuilding.²⁷ Women are also often asked to play a special role in P/CVE due to their position in the private sphere – the family, home, and local community. Again, this is essentialising an entire gender as being inherently nurturing and able to wield some unique sway over their family, which is an unproven and often unsuccessful approach.²⁸ The focus on empowerment of women must be non-essentialising and advocate for the equal inclusion of women at all levels.²⁹ Gender equality must be acknowledged in successful approaches to the inclusion of women in P/CVE solutions.

Gender-Responsivity: There is a significant gap in gender data. Often there is a paradox with gender data – due to the gender-blind nature of most research there is no data, and without the data it is hard to prove that gender data needs to be gathered.³⁰ However, there has been work done on showing how gender equality improves stability of societies, as well as looking at how gender inequality feeds into VE and can be an early warning sign of VE.³¹ This work

²³ Jacqui True, "How Effective is Gender Mainstreaming in International Peace and Security Policymaking?" in *Handbook on Gender in World Politics*, eds. Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe (Cheltenham, England ; Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016a), 457-466.; Brooke A. Ackerly, "Women's Human Rights Activists as Cross-Cultural Theorists," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, no. 3 (2001), 311-346. Gender mainstreaming is Objective 2 of the EU's Action Plan on WPS 2019-2024.

²⁴ JustSecurity, May 1, 2018b.; Just security, May 3, 2018a.

²⁵ For example: women, men, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Plus all others).

²⁶ Emily Winterbotham, *Do Mothers Know Best? how Assumptions Harm CVE* (London: Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, [2018]).

²⁷ Nicole George, Katrina Lee-Koo and Laura J. Shepherd, "Gender and the UN's Women, Peace and Security Agenda," in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Security* Routledge, 2018), 311-322.

²⁸ Martine Zeuthen and Gayatri Sahgal, *Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism* (London: RUSI, [2018]).

²⁹ The EU's existing framework on P/CVE and gender equality promotes either the empowerment of women or their voice and participation. The EU's Action Plan on WPS reaffirms the empowerment of women and gender equality as a prerequisite for dealing with the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. The EU GAP II calls for supporting women's voice and participation, at all levels, in policy and governance processes, including as mediators, negotiators and technical experts in formal peace negotiations. Addressing and combating discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes at family and community level is part of this support.

³⁰ Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives* Cornell University Press, 2016).

³¹ Mary Caprioli, "Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (2005), 161-178. doi:10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00340.x.; Katherine Brown et al., *Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia* UN Women, [2020].



needs to encourage the shift to a gender-responsive approach across P/CVE programming.³² Use of a gender lens allows the gathering of gender data throughout entire P/CVE programming cycles to further build evidence for why it is key to effective programming.³³ Addressing fundamental societal issues, such as gender inequality, will always be a challenge within the common current policy approach to P/CVE programming of limited budgets and short programming cycles. UN Women has done some pioneering work on implementing gender-sensitive programming, in an effort to start building an evidence base for how it compares to gender-blind interventions.³⁴

Gender Roles: Another fundamental gender issue which needs to be considered in P/CVE programming is the impact of deeply engrained and socialized roles of masculinity and femininity, which can factor into people's choice to participate in VE.³⁵ P/CVE policy often does not account for the gender specific challenges of men and boys. Due to the socialised nature of gender roles, societies often expect men to take on the role of head-of-household, which comes with the associated burden of providing for the family. In situations where alternatives are scarce, this often drives proportionally more men into a life of crime, gangs or even VE groups because they are trying to provide for their families as society has taught them to do. Therefore, being male places the burden on them of traits associated with masculinity, including violence.³⁶ If gender mainstreaming in P/CVE policy focused more on equalising social roles, rather than just leaving men in their current role and inserting women into the 'peacemaker' role, then it could potentially redistribute the burden of care and challenge these fundamentally socialised traits.

³² The GAP II, the EU's Action Plan on WPS, and the EU's Gender Equality Strategy request the systematic collection, and use of data which are, at least, sex and age disaggregated. See also "Manual of Outcome Indicators for the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)", 2015. Notwithstanding these framework and tools, a contextualised gender and conflict analysis should be undertaken to inform any programming cycle.

³³ For some EU examples, see GAP II reports highlighting examples of gender-sensitive gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches in preventing the rise of VE, i.e. the action 'Preventing violent extremism: a gender sensitive approach' in the annual action programme 2017 for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and conflict prevention; the 'Ms President' initiative in Kenya aiming to build sustainable capacity for peace-building, conflict management and crisis preparedness, while specifically enabling women and girls to become empowered as key players in preventing the spread of violent extremism and radicalization; the nine IcSP's thematic guidance notes; the 'Women's Dialogue in al-Atareb'; the 'Somalia Social Contract', etc.

³⁴ Mohamed Abdilatif, *Engaging Women in Preventing and Countering Extremism Violence in Kenya* UN Women, [2017].; Jacqui True, *Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific: Emerging Issues in National Action Plans for Women, Peace and Security* UN Women, [2016b].

³⁵ Linn Egeberg Holmgren and Jeff Hearn, "Framing 'men in Feminism': Theoretical Locations, Local Contexts and Practical Passings in Men's Gender-Conscious Positionings on Gender Equality and Feminism," *Journal of Gender Studies* 18, no. 4 (2009), 403-418.; Catherine I. Bolzendahl and Daniel J. Myers, "Feminist Attitudes and Support for Gender Equality: Opinion Change in Women and Men, 1974-1998," *Social Forces* 83, no. 2 (2004), 759-789.; Sandy Ruxton, ed., *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice* (Great Britain: Oxfam, 2004).

³⁶ Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart, *The "Man" Question in International Relations* Routledge, (2019).; Robert William Connell, *Masculinities* Polity, (2005).; Belquis Ahmadi and Rafiullah Stanikzai, "Redefining Masculinity in Afghanistan," *USIP Peace Brief*, no. 243 (February, 2018).



EU P/CVE Policy

The EU approach to P/CVE is governed by the *Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* and other relevant bodies of policy such as *Countering Violent Extremism* and the *Results and Indicators for Development*.³⁷ These policies provide a number of key principles to guide coherent design and implementation of EU P/CVE interventions. The EC's Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) programme represents a significant portion of their P/CVE platform. The *STRIVE for Development* document gives a summary of their approach, as well as the programmes currently being implemented under the STRIVE logo.³⁸ The following section briefly highlights some of the main points from that brochure, as the basis for the case study example examined in the next section.

STRIVE was set up in 2013 due to the EC's commitment to countering VE at least partially in connection with its development programming. This approach is in line with and potentially influenced the 2016 UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which focuses on the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the underlying drivers of VE.³⁹ The need for a holistic response was acknowledged as the only way to improve long-term CT successfulness. The types of interventions covered under the STRIVE logo span eight themes: development of education; media awareness; empowerment of women; youth work; socioeconomic inclusion; governance capacity building; transitional justice; and inter-communal activities including sport and inter-faith dialogue.⁴⁰ Empowerment of women is, therefore, one of the main priorities of the EC's approach and yet, if you look further into the brochure you can see that its implementation is somewhat limited. It must be acknowledged, however, that this field is developing quickly and often publications do not keep up with advancements in programming, so there may be as-yet undocumented progression on this theme.

The EC broke down P/CVE initiatives into three categories: public engagement – which focuses on reaching broad audiences; targeted interventions – aimed at vulnerable groups, including women; and P/CVE capacity building – which focuses on governmental and non-governmental actors engaging in the field.⁴¹ There is some mention of women throughout the P/CVE initiatives covered by the STRIVE platform. For example, some projects in the P/CVE initiative in the Sahel-Maghreb Region focuses their programming emphasis on human rights, including women's rights.⁴² In Southeast Asia the P/CVE initiatives included strengthening the capacity of women to work together to advocate for peace, tolerance and mutual respect – most notably through development of counter narratives. Trainings were also conducted to

³⁷ EU, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*; See: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy_en, <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/results-and-indicators/countering-violent-extremism>, and <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/results-and-indicators/99831/results-indicators>.

³⁸ RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*

³⁹ UN, "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism," , accessed July 24, 2019.

⁴⁰ RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 32.



help develop National Action Plans focused on human rights and gender-equality frameworks.⁴³ In wider global efforts the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) provides for community level initiatives for women's advocacy.⁴⁴ Also, EU P/CVE trainings for in-country staff are based on core principles of human rights, with some trainings tailored more so than others to include focus on the WPS agenda.⁴⁵

Ultimately, the STRIVE platform has thus far only included some focus on the empowerment of women and often not considered the full scope of gender impact. This paper, therefore, illustrates how gender inequality is a multi-faceted, deeply engrained social issue which needs to be addressed as part of P/CVE, including how it interconnects with many other forms of inequality. The complexity of inequality can make it seem a daunting issue to address through P/CVE programming. However, there are some positive steps which can be taken by implementing an informed and meaningful focus on gender equality in P/CVE programming processes. Programming needs to be designed, implemented and evaluated with a gender-responsive perspective. Most P/CVE programmes, even those which have a gender component such as STRIVE HoA, have thus far tried to approach their overall programme with a gender-blind perspective.⁴⁶ This has largely led to failings of gender components or inconclusive results on the benefits of including gender. That is because the gender-blind approach does not allow for gathering of gender data, factoring in of gendered drivers of violence and insecurity, or gender-responsive goals in the theories of change or evaluation strategies of program cycles.⁴⁷ A gender-responsive approach encourages consideration of the impact of gender throughout the programming cycle and in all programme components; therefore, it will lead to more meaningful and successful gender mainstreaming in P/CVE policy.⁴⁸

In spite of the initiatives and policies to include women and support gender equality, programming is not always finding meaningful solutions for equal inclusion of women in the peace and security process and is generally not focused on gender equality as part of the solution to VE. Gaps remain between high-level policy and on-the-ground implementation. Therefore, this paper will make some recommendations on areas where improvements can be made.

⁴³ Ibid., 37-38.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁶ STRIVE Kenya has, however, collected gender data.

⁴⁷ Jacqui True and Sri Eddyono, "Preventing Violent Extremism: Gender Perspectives and Women's Roles," *Monash University Policy Brief*, https://docs.wixstatic.com/Ugd/b4aef1_5780b931ae164ace83e5377c490f05e1.Pdf (2018).; Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives*

⁴⁸ Katherine Brown, Jayne Huckerby and Laura Shepherd, *Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVEUN Women*, [2019].



Case Study Example: STRIVE HoA

STRIVE in the Horn of Africa (STRIVE HoA) was implemented by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) from 2014-2017 and was the project which included women in the most significant way, with an entire component of the programme focused on the empowerment of women. Therefore, it is being used as a case study example. STRIVE Kenya is the second iteration of that program and is currently wrapping up.⁴⁹ It removed the focus on the empowerment of women but included a more substantial gender lens in its key mentorship component. This included consideration of gender in the selection and pairing of mentees/mentors, as well as considerations for conducive environments based on gendered considerations and expectations.⁵⁰ STRIVE Kenya also included gender more in the research on causes of conflict, including understand the roles of women in VE.⁵¹

This section will highlight how and where a gender-responsive approach could have benefitted STRIVE HoA programming and more meaningfully addressed gender inequality. STRIVE HoA included four main programming Result Areas:

1. Building the regional capacity of security sector and law enforcement authorities to engage with civil society in fighting violent extremism.
2. Strengthening the capacity of women's organisations in Puntland and Somaliland to fight violent extremism.
3. Increasing understanding of the challenges faced by EU-born Somali youth in Somaliland.
4. Increasing understanding of the drivers of radicalisation among youth in Kenya.⁵²

This section illustrates how gender is present throughout all of the Result Areas – even the ones not overtly designed for engagement with women. Evidence is drawn from the independent final evaluation of the project as well as RUSI's lessons learned publication and the STRIVE brochure.⁵³ This evidence is supplemented by research featuring an interview with Martine Zeuthen, the STRIVE HoA Team Leader.⁵⁴ First, the overall STRIVE HoA perspective on gender will be addressed. Then the program will be broken down by Result Areas to highlight the ways in which gender is impacting each area – not just Result Area 2 which focused on the empowerment of women.

Perspective on Gender

⁴⁹ This iteration focuses only on Kenya because it is funded by a different funding stream, which does not allow cross boarder programming.

⁵⁰ Tina Wilchen Christensen, *Lessons Learned from P/CVE Youth Mentorship* RUSI, [2019]., 11.

⁵¹ RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*; Zeuthen and Sahgal, *Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism*. Please see for further publications on this topic: <https://rusi.org/rusi-news/new-compendium-research-gender-and-violent-extremism-kenya>.

⁵² RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*, 25.

⁵³ Tana Copenhagen and Conflict Management Consulting, *STRIVE HoA - Evaluation Report* (Brussels: EU,[2017]); RUSI, *STRIVE Lessons Learned: Horn of Africa* (Brussels: EU,[2017]); RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*

⁵⁴ Martine Zeuthen, Skype conversation with Jessica White, 16 October, 2018.; Jessica White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy," PhD thesis, University of Birmingham [2020]).



P/CVE programming often defines gender as women.⁵⁵ However, this perspective overlooks the elements of both socialized masculine and feminine gender roles which contribute to the problem of insecurity and conversely could help in P/CVE. Ultimately, this means that programmes are often approaching the majority of their components with a gender-blind perspective and then struggling to fit a limited gender lens into a small portion of programming devoted to including women. This leaves the overall approach disjointed and inadequate. The STRIVE HoA programme focused one component on the empowerment of women. Gender equality was not the goal of Result Area 2, rather it was about finding the best ways in which women could contribute to the fight against VE, either in the home or the community. The research for Result Area 2 looked at how women potentially assisted in the facilitation of movements of fighters or recruitment as well as determining that they played a special role in the home and civil society. RUSI's lessons learned concluded that women can effectively disseminate the message of radicalisation and extremism through their networks or equally promote engagement in civil society as an alternative path.⁵⁶ This was the foundation and the theory of change for Result Area 2.

This perspective can be interpreted to perpetuate common assumptions in the field of practice where women are often trained to use their roles as wives and mothers to stop recruitment in their homes or to encourage community engagement over radicalisation as natural peacemakers.⁵⁷ This type of gender essentialism not only overlooks the many other roles women can play in society, but also the way that they themselves actively participate in VE.⁵⁸ It can also dangerously perpetuate the cultural status quos which encourage gender inequality. However, the most significant challenge the programming for Result Area 2 encountered was push-back due to cultural perceptions of women and their place in society, therefore showing that RUSI was successful in challenging cultural gender perceptions to some degree. RUSI's partner organisations working in Somaliland, where Result Area 2 was ultimately implemented, struggled against a high level of reticence by the local community leaders – especially traditional and religious leaders – to include women in discussions of peace and security issues.⁵⁹

RUSI determined that some of the negative perceptions were due to traditional leaders considering the programming as foreign interests trying to subvert local customs. They found that including the leaders in the process from the beginning of the research and development phases could help with overcoming that negative perception. Another thing that could be helpful was to clearly explain the purposes of CVE programming, so that it was not misunderstood as being anti-Islam or anti-traditional values. However, even with these measures to counteract the negativity, STRIVE HoA ultimately determined that the STRIVE

⁵⁵ Emily Winterbotham, *What can Work (and what has Not Worked) in Women-Centric P/CVE Initiatives: Assessing the Evidence Base for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism* (London: RUSI, [2020]).

⁵⁶ RUSI, *STRIVE Lessons Learned: Horn of Africa*

⁵⁷ Winterbotham, *Do Mother's Know Best? how Assumptions Harm CVE*

⁵⁸ Zeuthen and Sahgal, *Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism*.

⁵⁹ Tana Copenhagen and Conflict Management Consulting, *STRIVE HoA - Evaluation Report*



program should not be connected too closely to gender-mainstreaming initiatives. They found that challenging the local leadership on gender inequality detracted support from other more traditional CVE measures.⁶⁰

Due to the resistance at the community level to empower women to engage in peace and security conversations, the final evaluation report recommended that the pilot programs needed to be located within the local community structures.⁶¹ Zeuthen indicated this meant trying to challenge local community leaders on allowing discussions that they would consider taboo. This is something that they felt was a potential threat to their power in the community. Zeuthen said:

Of course the taboos are there because it is about power. You are also asking a group of old guys to give up their platform that they are so comfortable with, because they get to choose who gets married, who gets what land, how many camels, you know; so it comes from a place where you need to push a conversation about more equal and fair distribution of resources, and who would want to give that up for free, right?⁶²

This type of resistance displays how the underlying socialised gender roles leave people reluctant to give up their seats of power. Because only men are allowed to become community leaders in this cultural context, they can perpetuate their own authority by keeping women out of the positions of power in the community. Without challenging this root element of gender inequality, all efforts to empower women in these contexts will be met with resistance. However, STRIVE HoA did not have the resources or time to engage in an initiative focused on this kind of meaningful social change.

This highlights an institutional perspective that other elements of CVE are more important than the empowerment of women or gender-equality. This illustrates how viewing gender-inequality as a driver of VE would help cement its importance to P/CVE programming and require institutional commitment to allowing programming enough time and support to challenge deeply engrained social issues such as gender inequality. It has been found that more equal societies are more stable societies.⁶³ Allowing gender inequality to remain increases the insecurity of approximately half of the population, therefore leaving a window open to extremism and radicalization. While interpretation of gender equality is subject to some cultural legal interpretation, the foundation for this perspective can be grounded in the majority acceptance of the UDHR and its core inclusion of equality.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ RUSI, *STRIVE Lessons Learned: Horn of Africa*

⁶¹ Tana Copenhagen and Conflict Management Consulting, *STRIVE HoA - Evaluation Report*

⁶² Zeuthen, Skype conversation with White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy"

⁶³ Although stable societies are not immune to extremism. Caprioli, "Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict," 161-178

⁶⁴ Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*; Donnelly, "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights," 400-419.



The following are some practical examples of where gender has impacted, either overtly or covertly, the program design, implementation and evaluation of STRIVE HoA.

Result Area 1: Building the regional capacity of security sector and law enforcement authorities to engage with civil society in fighting violent extremism.

This Result Area was approached with a gender-blind perspective. While the capacity building was aimed at all security forces regardless of gender, Zeuthen indicated that women simply don't have much of a presence in these positions of power and this was not something that STRIVE HoA challenged. There are relatively few female security personnel, such as in the military, intelligence or police forces. Even the ones that are present often do not engage in issues of P/CVE.⁶⁵ While this component is not overtly gendered, as it is simply about building capacity – there is certainly a gendered impact due to the socialized roles assigned to men and women in this cultural context. Gender determines who is encouraged to join the security forces, who leads them, who gets to engage in conversations related to VE, and thus who gets access to these trainings and capacity building programmes.

Another way in which gender impacted this Result Area, as well as others, was simply in the practical considerations of how, when and where trainings were held. This is another element of STRIVE HoA that was approached from a gender-blind perspective – although this is something that Zeuthen indicated was explicitly addressed with more gender sensitivity in the extension STRIVE Kenya iteration. Practical considerations such as what time of day meetings or trainings were held affected men and women differently, due to the gendered impacts of who had competing time constraints. Whether or not there was childcare offered might also impact whether female participants could attend, as childcare duties often fall to the women in this cultural context. This could prevent them from having equal access to trainings or sometimes even meant that women had to bring their children with them to the trainings, which could be distracting to them and others.⁶⁶ The underlying gendered social roles certainly impacted access to STRIVE HoA programming in all the Result Areas.

Result Area 2: Strengthening the capacity of women's organisations in Puntland and Somaliland to fight violent extremism.

As discussed in the above section, this Result Area had a gender-sensitive approach but was still unable to overcome all the challenges of gathering enough gender data and overcoming contextual obstacles. This component focused on pilot programs which encouraged engagement between women and leaders, raised awareness of the concerns of VE and trained women to consider security issues and participate in Somaliland's existing security systems.⁶⁷ Zeuthen indicated that they met a lot of resistance when trying to gather data on how women in these cultural contexts engaged in the public space and even on security.

⁶⁵ Zeuthen, Skype conversation with White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy"

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ RUSI, *STRIVE for Development*



There was a dual layer difficulty because conversations about security were already somewhat taboo in these contexts and then trying to add women into the conversation made it doubly taboo. The programme did not have a long enough programming cycle or enough resources to really be able to challenge these deeply engrained perspectives on gender in society.⁶⁸

Planned programming in Puntland was abandoned due to security concerns, as it was deemed not to be worth the risks of challenging gender norms in this location for the limited amount of programming that was being offered. Due to the security challenges, some sites in Somaliland were chosen. These locations were more sensitised to the concept of “empowerment of women” because there were already organisations in these areas using women’s networks as part of peace processes.⁶⁹ However, this is an instance of where programming lost some of its diversity. By cutting out programming in more rural Puntland and focusing on more urban areas of Somaliland, the intersectionality of inequalities was unfortunately narrowed. Different levels of urbanisation, poverty, class and tribal considerations all contribute to different ways in which gender inequality persists. Therefore, this was a limitation of programming and which women it reached.

The choice of using organisations already employing women as part of their peacebuilding strategies also encouraged gender essentialisms to be perpetuated by STRIVE HoA programming. Many of these partner organisations based women’s participation on the assumption that they are naturally more peaceful. However, this is an invalid assumption and can also rob women, who are excellent peacemakers, of proper recognition of their skills. Another significant challenge to the gender sensitivity of this component was that it had to be almost entirely implemented through male gatekeepers. Zeuthen indicated this was due to almost all of the English-speaking liaisons available to RUSI being men. The two organisations that RUSI partnered with for implementation were led by men, who had to relay all conversations to the female staff. These men didn’t necessarily hold the gender-equality values themselves but ran these organisations based on the interested expressed by donors in women’s inclusion.⁷⁰ Therefore, all the programming content that was intended for the empowerment of women was filtered through the voice and translation of men. There was simply not enough time or resources for RUSI to spend looking for other implementing partners run by women; however, this limits the gender-sensitivity of programming.

One of the initiatives for this Result Area was to increase the percentage of women serving on the Somaliland police forces. While the implementing partners reported success in this area, because there was some increase in levels of women’s employment in local forces, the meaningfulness of this success can be challenged.⁷¹ Zeuthen indicated that although there are more policewomen they are often not allowed to deal with issues of VE even if they are

⁶⁸ Zeuthen, Skype conversation with White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy"

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Tana Copenhagen and Conflict Management Consulting, *STRIVE HoA - Evaluation Report*



brought to them, they are not issued weapons or even handcuffs, and do not have the authority to address security concerns. The women are often relegated to being traffic wardens or even administration and cleaning positions in the police stations.⁷² Therefore, this does not indicate that there were meaningful changes in the expectations of cultural gender roles, rather just a superficial increase in numbers of policewomen. However, this can be seen as an entry point for future upscaled actions to be considered.

Another of the initiatives was focused on trying to empower women to engage in the security conversation and limit recruitment and radicalisation within their homes and communities. It proved difficult to get women to engage in these conversations, as VE is such a taboo topic in this cultural context. Zeuthen indicated that they had to try to begin the conversation from less direct approaches, often limiting it to basic examination of how women might be inadvertently facilitating recruitment and radicalisation. They asked women questions such as: “Would you feed the extremists? Would you host them? What would you do if your local Imam called you and asked you to host some of his friends and you didn’t know who they were, would you question it?”⁷³ While this encourages women to consider how their actions might be connected to spreading VE, it is limited in meaningful empowerment of women to be equal partners in peace and security solutions.

Ultimately, while many of the initiatives of the STRIVE HoA Result Area 2 were not extremely successful in empowering women, they were helpful in allowing the field testing of theories of change. Much of the conversation about the inclusion of women in security had been theoretical up to this point, STRIVE HoA allowed for practical implementation and highlighted the multitude of challenges that exist to meaningful gender mainstreaming in P/CVE programming.

Result Area 3/4: Increasing understanding of the challenges faced by EU-born Somali youth in Somaliland / Increasing understanding of the drivers of radicalisation among youth in Kenya

Result Areas 3 and 4 were focused on engaging youth and also implemented with a gender-blind perspective. This offers another prime example of initiatives that do not appear overtly gendered – and yet social expectations of masculinity and femininity are also impacting how male and female youth experience and become engaged in VE. It is a significant gap in P/CVE programming that often the largest target audience of this type of programming is “youth”, and yet often there is no consideration given to the gendered ways in which they experience and contribute to insecurity. In the very practical sense of identifying youth that might be more “at-risk” of radicalisation there are many considerations which have gender implications. For example, Zeuthen indicated that female youth rarely go to mosque as much as male youth, and certainly don’t attend the same mosques or mosque on a Friday as much. This is partly due to the fact that only the large mosques have Friday prayers for both genders.

⁷² Zeuthen, Skype conversation with White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy"

⁷³ Ibid.



Thus, here is a situation where the gender of the youth is impacting what messages they might be exposed to at the mosque.⁷⁴

This potential increase of exposure for male youth to radicalising narrative, compounded by expectations of masculinity in that particular cultural context, might lead them to be more “at-risk” of radicalisation and violence than female youth. These contributing factors need to be considered at each stage of programme design, implementation and evaluation instead of allowing gender essentialisms – such as assumptions that male youth are naturally more violent – to drive P/CVE theories of change. Youth is a term that is too discursively gender-neutral to delineate the complexity of gender which impacts each individual youth being considered. It also makes it impossible to effectively measure and evaluate programming targeting youth, because the programme design is not taking into account the different experiences which might contribute in varying ways to male or female youth susceptibility to VE.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The STRIVE HoA case study offers multiple examples of the ways in which P/CVE programming is gendered, whether or not it includes a specific component focused on the empowerment of women.⁷⁵ The challenges it experienced and shortcomings it had also support the perspective that gender inequality needs to be seen as a driver of VE. Socialized gender expectations of masculinity and femininity in various cultural contexts impact the way that each individual experiences and contributes to insecurity. It has been shown that gender inequality contributes to VE and why people join VE organisations.⁷⁶ Therefore, gender perspective is needed throughout programming. Gender data needs to be gathered in each context and used to examine how gender expectations and inequality contribute to VE. This inclusion of a gender lens in P/CVE programming design and implementation will ultimately improve its long-term successfulness. The EU has developed multiple policies governing their WPS agenda and established a gender-responsive perspective as a requirement of their programming frameworks. However, gaps remain between high-level policy and on-the-ground implementation. The following are some recommendations on how to close these gaps.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ This case study is also examined by the author in article “Gender in Countering Violent Extremism Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation: Beyond Instrumentalism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (2020), DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1818435.

⁷⁶ Katherine Brown et al., *Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia*, UN Women, [2020]; Melissa Johnston and Jacqui True, “Misogyny & Violent Extremism: Implications for Preventing Violent Extremism,” (2019); Caprioli, “Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict,” 161-178.



Recommendations

- 1. A gender-responsive approach needs to be taken in all P/CVE program design, implementation and evaluation.** This gender lens would allow for gender data to be gathered and thus an evidence base can be created for how gender inequalities impact security and P/CVE outcomes. The gender-responsive approach needs to be applied across the whole of P/CVE programmes, not only to the components which might be focused on the empowerment of women. On-the-ground implementation of the EU policies on gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, or even gender-transformative perspectives needs to be consistent, with systematic collection of and reporting on gender disaggregated data, and a results-based management structure with a gender approach.⁷⁷
- 2. Gender analysis should be included in P/CVE programme monitoring and evaluation frameworks.** Women's empowerment, as indicated in the EU's Gender Action Plan II policy, needs to be supported by appropriate theories of change, results frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation processes. Reporting success that is not meaningful does not accurately reflect achievement of results. Context-based and intersectional analysis to understand and address the underlying factors of VE, find allies to counter VE, and encourage gender equality as a solution to VE must be an essential part of the programming framework.⁷⁸
- 3. P/CVE programming must be supported comprehensively.** Donors cannot provide implementing organisations with short programming cycles and small budgets and then expect them to be able to make meaningful changes to deeply engrained social issues. The structures of power in patriarchal societies need to be challenged, fostering women's and girls' empowerment and men's and boys' non-traditional roles. Traditional norms and stereotypes and oppressive masculinities must change, in order to promote respect for diversity. This can be aided by policy dialogue with leaders and governments to promote inclusive and representative governance systems.⁷⁹ If P/CVE is to be defined as a long-term, holistic preventative solution to terrorism then it needs to be given the tools, time, budgets and institutional support to seek meaningful changes.
- 4. Empowerment of women is not enough, equality is key.** While empowerment needs to remain an element of P/CVE programming, the overall perspective needs to be adjusted to viewing gender inequality as a driver of violent extremism. This allows for consideration of the social constructions of masculinity and femininity and how they impact people's experience of peace and security. The WPS agenda encourages equal inclusion of women; however, this needs to be part of a larger gender mainstreaming strategy. The conversation needs to be about gender equality – and gender should not be equated to

⁷⁷ EU Council, *EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*.

⁷⁸ GAP II requires a mandatory gender analysis for all priority sectors to be used throughout the programming cycle. In conflict contexts, a gender and conflict analysis should be done. Gender analysis for all priority sectors is one of GAP II's minimum standards of performance and falls into objective 4 of the GAP II implementation framework. Practical resources for gender analysis, i.e. the EU Resource package are available at: http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_html5.html?lms=1
http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/SWAP/1-2_SWAP.pdf
http://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/PROJECT/1-1_Project.pdf

⁷⁹ For more practical recommendations see: EU, "Gender Equality and Extremist Religious Fundamentalisms: Which Challenges? which Entry Points?" 2019) at <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/88890/download?token=GaUQQbdP>



women. In the EU's Action plan on WPS, women's empowerment is a prerequisite for P/CVE and gender mainstreaming strategies are laid out.⁸⁰ However, there is still a gap between this policy and implementation of gender equality as part of the theories of change used to build the results frameworks for P/CVE programming.

5. **Gender essentialisms hinder the outcomes of P/CVE programming.** Assumptions about the peaceful or nurturing nature of women that underpin some mother's programmes and expectations of women's peacebuilding abilities are essentialising. While women may in some situations be able to contribute in these ways, the expectation that this is inherent robs them of the recognition they deserve for their skills. Full consideration of the value of women's roles, both in the public and private spheres, needs to be taken into account and encouraged. Also, the assumption that men are inherently more violent and thus at greater risk of radicalisation is essentialising. P/CVE needs to use a gender-responsive perspective to examine underlying socio-culturally imposed masculinities and femininities and see how they contribute to people's participation in VE. EU policy has prioritised the need to combat gender stereotypes, but this still needs to be carried through to on-the-ground programming design and evaluation.
6. **Youth should not be considered as gender-neutral.** Youth comprise a significant portion of the focus population for much P/CVE programming, yet the term is often left gender-neutral in programming design, implementation and evaluation. Lack of recognition of the different experiences of male and female youth and their motivations for participation in VE ultimately leaves programming lacking in its approach and impossible to evaluate. Programming design and evaluation, as well as theories of change and reporting structures must include recognition of the differences of the male and female youth experience, due to underlying socialised expectations of masculinity and femininity in their cultural context.

Dr Jessica White is a Research Fellow in RUSI's Terrorism and Conflict group. Her expertise encompasses counterterrorism and countering violent extremism methods, as well as gender mainstreaming in programme design, implementation and evaluation. She conducts research on a range of topics, including the far right and terrorism in the media. Jessica completed her PhD in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham. She holds an MSc in Conflict Resolution from Kingston University London and a BA in Political Science and International Studies from the University of Kansas. Before beginning her PhD, Jessica spent six years as an intelligence and Arabic language analyst in the US Navy.

Disclaimer - This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

⁸⁰ See Objective 2 of EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024.