

SHE - The Peacebuilder



Women Inclusion in Transforming Violent Extremism

Project Overview

Project Duration: September 2021 to September 2024

Collaborators: Search for Common Ground, Aurat Foundation, Kadam Communications and Consultants Private Ltd

Goal: Enhance women's role and influence in peacebuilding and transforming violent extremism

Objectives:

- Increase the capacity of Women Peace Architects (WPAs) to participate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes
- Increase collaboration among WPAs, government, civil society stakeholders, and cultural influencers in responding to violent extremism and conflict

Participants:

- **75 WPAs** from across Pakistan representing **different religions, ethnicities, professions, and political parties, women with disabilities and transwomen**
- **552 Transforming Violent Extremism stakeholders**, including government officials and leaders of the civil society

Webinar

Search organized a webinar on August 29, 2024, to highlight the impact of women's participation in conflict resolution and violent extremism in Pakistan and share best practices and lessons learned with practitioners around the globe:

- 72 attendees
- 60% women, 40% male
- 51 countries, including Pakistan, US, Kenya, Nigeria, and UK
- 83 organizations represented

Context

Women in Pakistan: Make up 52% of the population but are often excluded from policy and decision-making on countering violent extremism

Barriers: Strong gender norms and institutional obstacles limit women's participation

Critical Needs:

- Equip women with the skills and confidence to address violent extremism, enabling their contributions to policy and decision-making.
- Highlight the importance of women's involvement in peacebuilding and policy spaces

Context of implementation: Project implemented during a period of political and economic instability in Pakistan



Webinar Link

<https://cnxus.org/resource/she-the-peacebuilder-stories-of-women-peace-architects-in-pakistan-thursday-talk-recording/>



Key Achievements/Recommendations

- **75 WPAs trained in transforming violent extremism and conflict resolution**
- **Support network** across Pakistan built among **WPAs** with diverse backgrounds and **key stakeholders** involved in conflict resolution and transforming violent extremism
- **WPAs' peacebuilding efforts** in their communities **reached over 13,000 people** through the implementation of **33 community action grants**
- **Over 1.5 million people** gained knowledge in transforming violent extremism, conflict resolution, and the importance of women's inclusion through various project activities, including radio shows and online media campaign.
- **WPAs developed a set of recommendations** to enhance women's role in transforming violent extremism and conflict resolution, including:

- Recommendations that focus on **changing the ecosystem to be more favorable towards women's inclusion**, such as:
 - Revise the education curriculum to challenge stereotypes and discrimination and feature female figures who played critical roles in Pakistan's history
- Recommendations that focus on **directly increasing women's role in transforming violent extremism and peacebuilding**, such as:
 - Including women on Dispute Resolution Councils, with **7 WPAs** already being **nominated** and 11 others with applications under process

[The full list of recommendations can be seen here](#)

Successful Approaches

Inclusive Participation: the 75 women from diverse religious, ethnic, geographical, linguistic, and professional backgrounds, collaborated to promote peacebuilding.

Capacity Building: WPAs, trained in the Common Ground Approach and Transforming Violent Extremism, applied their skills and knowledge in their communities through seed grants, empowering them as agents of change in Pakistan.

Consultative Working Groups: Created opportunities for WPAs to collaborate with a variety of state and non-state actors, engaging in discussions that encouraged critical thinking about women's roles in TVE strategies and policies.

Positive Media Campaign: Live radio shows and social media posts featuring videos, songs, illustrations, animated stories, and public service messages expanded the project's message of the importance of women's involvement, reaching over 1.5 million people.

Experience from WPAs

WPA, Co-founder of College for Youth Activism and Development in Balochistan

- **Improved skills** as a peace practitioner
- **Gained network** of inspiring women dedicated to social change
- **Learned** how to **facilitate effective collaboration**
- **Found motivation in** the project's commitment to **elevating women's roles in peacebuilding efforts.**

WPA, Nun and Head Teacher from the Catholic Church in Sindh:

- **Built confidence** as a Christian minority in a Muslim-majority country
- **Gained unique experiences** in connecting with people from different backgrounds
- **Learned how to prevent conflict** and **promote peace** through positive and inclusive engagement with others

"I am integrating all of these learning from which are key takeaways from this program to take and integrate into my existing programs, where I am multiplying the effects of engaging young people through different programs" - WPA from Balochistan

