

A Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism in Asia and the Pacific

We know that women and girls are both the victims of terrorism and violent extremism, and are also recruitment targets for extremist groups.

However, there is little research focusing on what role women and girls play in preventing this violence and as key stakeholders in countering the threat of extremism.

This innovative program examined the impact of women's empowerment on preventing and countering fundamentalist or extremist ideologies in Asia. It tested the theory that 'more empowered women make for more peaceful communities' in Indonesia and Bangladesh – and subsequently the Philippines.

The research led by Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre (GPS) looked at varying dimensions of gender and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) including; attitudes toward violence, perception of the causes of the problem of violent extremism, willingness and confidence to participate in PVE initiatives and to report signs of violent extremism.

The team developed participatory and community action research methods to build trust and capacity in the research sites on a highly sensitive, political issue. The project analysed how age, religiosity and socio-economic status impacted gender-based violence and gender inequality and then compared these results in urban and rural locations. This allowed the team to isolate factors that are most associated with lessening the influence of fundamentalist ideologies and countering their spread

The research developed an evidence base on the gendered dimensions of preventing and countering violence extremism to inform United Nations [programming](#) and [policy making](#) and that of other stakeholders.

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