
Women's Alliance on Countering Extremism & Promoting Peace, Rights and Pluralism

Preliminary Fact Sheet

The Alliance will bring together existing women's networks, practitioners, and organizations with long-standing experience in addressing extremism and promoting pluralism to enable greater synergy, and more systematic and strategic collaboration and impact. The alliance will:

1. Facilitate access for women-led organizations to engage substantively in the international countering violent extremism (CVE) debate by linking them more effectively to governmental processes and to enable them to inform and shape state and multilateral policies and programs based on ground realities and needs;
2. Facilitate information sharing and analyses from the ground to increase the knowledge of the gender dimensions of violent extremism, focus on solutions to root causes, and contribute to preventive action;
3. Enable lessons learning vertically between local CSOs, INGO and governmental partners and horizontally between grassroots/civil society actors from different countries facing similar manifestations of extremism including 'know-how' and good practices for scaling up efforts;
4. Avoid duplication of efforts and provide a means of coordination and mutual development and support based on a division of labor and core strengths;
5. Develop a comprehensive overarching strategy drawing on each sector and organization's unique competence including articulating economic, security, and socio-political policies and ensuring innovative mass public outreach to build wider public participation in disseminating the vision, values and messages of alliance members;
6. Ensure allocation of resources to support innovative solutions locally and internationally in a range of spheres - notably practical community based work, messaging and communications, production of knowledge etc.; and
7. Initiate country level processes such as public surveys to tap into the aspirations of potentially vulnerable populations and use that to articulate realistic alternatives for socio-economic and security policies with attention to improvements in education, justice, economic, and other human security policies.

The Alliance is reaching out to organizations and practitioners active in these spheres:

- Direct involvement in de-radicalization and demobilization of extremist youth, using a variety of strategies drawing on the trust and legitimacy they have established in their communities;
- Promoting peace and pluralism and providing alternative avenues for youth and communities to express grievances and fulfill their aspirations through community activities;
- Empowering those who challenge violent and extreme understandings of religious texts, and infuse universal human rights norms into the discourse;
- Fighting to widen space for women including preserving past gains, and progressing on women's rights and protection in legislative and political arenas, as well as through service provision;
- Leading local efforts to highlight and address forms of violence against women evident with the rise of conflict and spread of extremism and militarism. Depending on the context and the political space available to them, issues range from early child marriage, honor killings, and sexual violence, to prevention of recruitment of women by extremist groups;

- Highlighting religious theory that encourages human rights, especially women's rights, pluralism, non-violence, and coexistence in religious texts and cultural/historic narratives;
- Highlighting women's experiences and perspectives on political and security developments in mainstream and social media (such as perspectives of Syrian and Iraqi women); and
- Leveraging the international spaces for advocacy to generate changes in national and multilateral defense, development ,and diplomacy policies.

Entities interested in joining the Alliance must be committed to the following core values:

- Nonviolence and active support of positive inclusive peace;
- Pluralism, social cohesion, equality, and non-discrimination;
- Social, political, and economic justice;
- Adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);
- Transforming gender power relations to realize equality and rights;
- Amplifying the voice of the community and building a progressive majority;
- Building on the history and legacy of women's activism and leadership; and
- Mutual empowerment, support, and respect for each others' expertise and avoiding duplication of work.

For information about the Alliance and forthcoming activities
please contact info@icanpeacework.org