PAKISTAN EXPANDED REGIONAL STABILIZATION INITIATIVE (PERSI)
A GENDER ANALYSIS

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MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

A SUBSIDIARY OF COFFEY INTERNATIONAL, LTD

600 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024, USA

Tel: +1.202.484.7170 | Fax: +1.202.488.0754

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Fatima Abbasi[1] is a young woman from a very poor, rural Northern Sindh family. She is studying computer science (database design) at one of the top-ranked business institutes in Pakistan (and in Sindh).

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[1] This is not her real name.

CONTENTS

Figures and Tables

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS

BHU	Basic Health Unit
BISP	Benazir Income Support Program
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCB	Citizens Community Board
CNIC	Computerized National Identification Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMEC	Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Contract
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LHV	Lady Health Visitor
LHW	Lady Health Worker
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSI	Management Systems International
NADRA	National Database Registration Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTI	USAID Office of Transition Initiatives
PERSI	Pakistan Expanded Regional Stabilization Initiative
PFF	Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PRWSWO	Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VTT	Voice Tel Tech

FIGURE 1: MAP OF PERSI GENDER ANALYSIS RESEARCH TARGET SITES
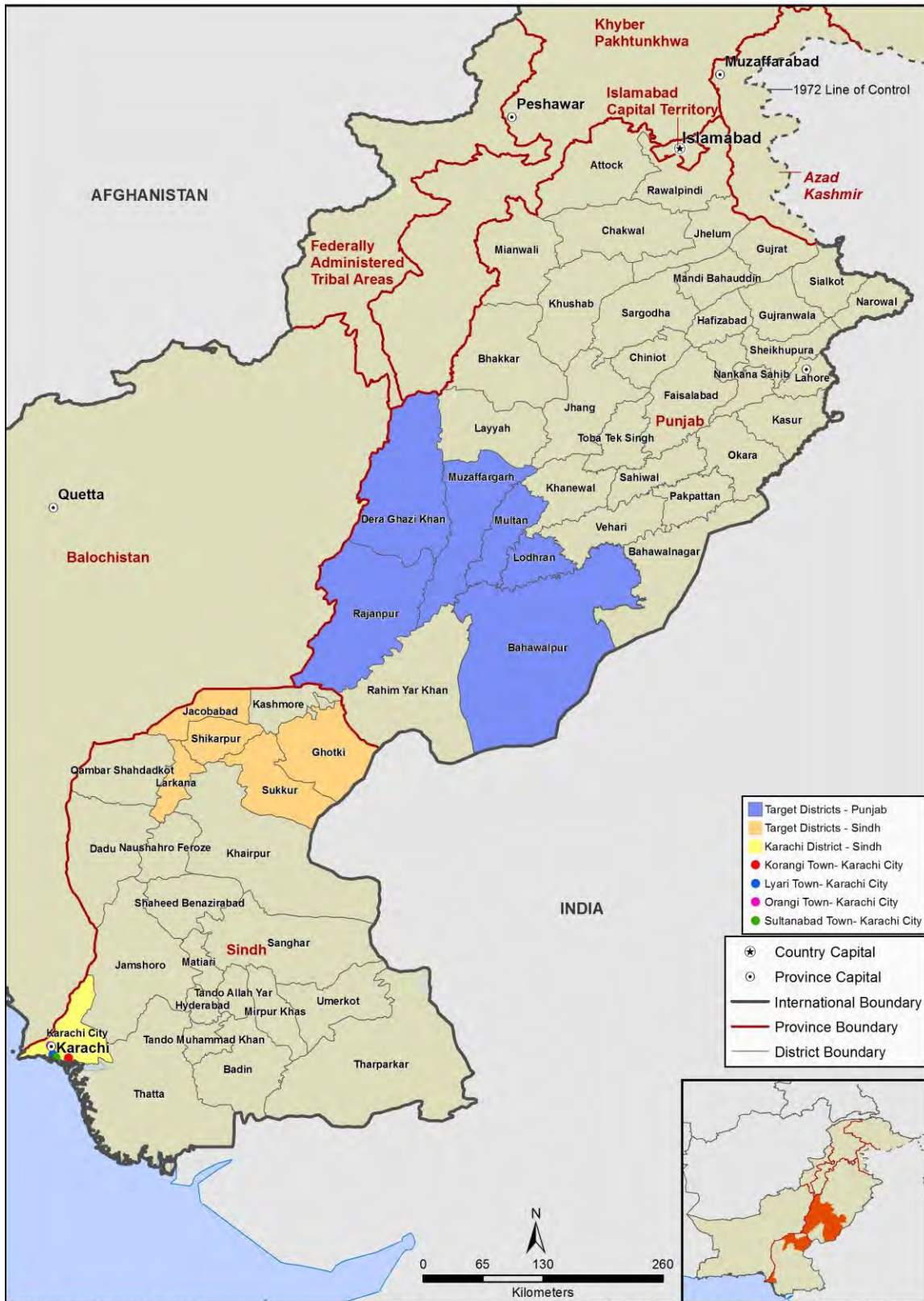
March 14, 2013 - MSI Pakistan

Boundaries and names representation are not necessarily authoritative.

Source: MSI/IMEC

FIGURE 2: MAP OF PERSI GENDER ANALYSIS RESEARCH TARGET SITES--KARACHI

March 14, 2013 - MSI Pakistan
Source: MSI/IMEC

Boundaries and names representation are not necessarily authoritative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Methodology

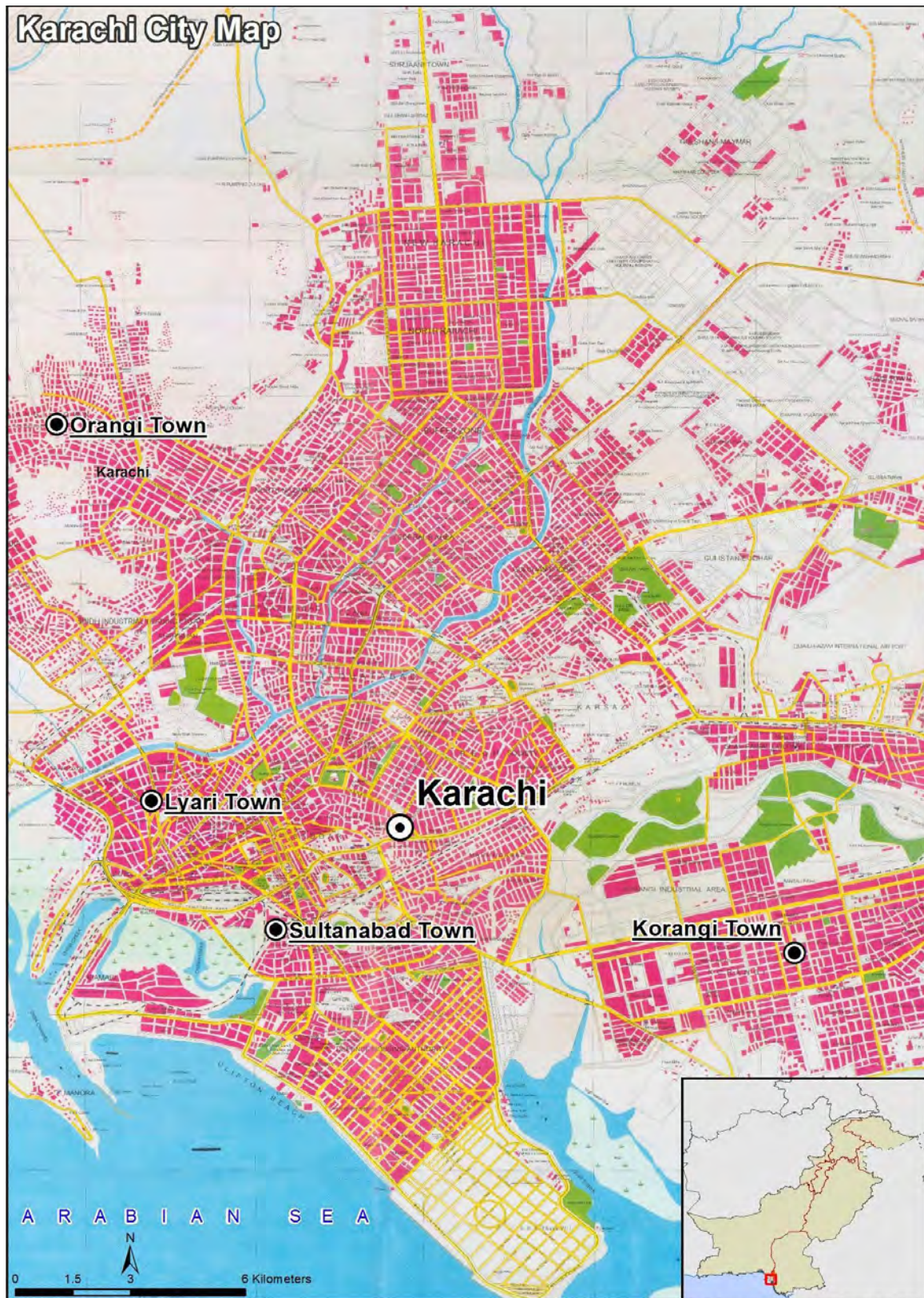This report captures the key findings, conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from an in-depth gender analysis of the localities being targeted by a new initiative: the Pakistan Expanded Regional Stabilization Initiative (PERSI). An interagency initiative spearheaded by USAID/Pakistan's Office of Transition Initiatives, PERSI aims to integrate security, political and assistance efforts in selected geographical regions of Pakistan. The objectives of the 3-5 year initiative are to promote security and stability, counter violent extremism and help build the foundation for longer-term economic, political and social development.

USAID policy increasingly recognizes the importance of gender equality and female empowerment and addresses it as a cross-cutting issue in all of its programming. Therefore, USAID/Pakistan requested Management Systems International, under the Monitoring and Evaluation Project (MSI/MEP), to carry out this gender analysis to inform the work of PERSI. In accordance with that request, the study focused its attention on the city of Karachi (four towns/neighborhoods), Northern Sindh Province (four districts) and Southern Punjab Province (four districts).

The purpose of the study was: "To produce a thorough meso- and micro-level gender analysis of PERSI targeted locations and a set of recommended principles and lessons learned that can be used to integrate gender into PERSI programming."[2] The key questions for investigation and analysis were defined as:

1. What are the gender relations, roles and norms for women and girls and men and boys in Karachi, Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab?

2. What other elements of an enabling environment for gender equitable access and participation are or are not present in the above-mentioned locations? [3]

3. What civil society organizations and any notable international organizations are undertaking programming addressing gender and violent extremism and insurgency (or gender and peace and conflict)? What are the interventions and the characteristics of these interventions?

4. What are the recommendations for enhancing gender equitable access and participation in PERSI programming?

A qualitative research methodology was used to investigate these questions in PERSI targeted locations. Individuals (1,035 including 467 women and 568 men) from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences were interviewed through focus group discussions (FGDs), key participant interviews, and informal group discussions. Direct observation of sites and secondary source research were also used. The key findings and conclusions for each major section of the report are presented below, followed by a summary of the most important recommendations.

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[2] See Annex 1: Statement of Work.

[3] The research team used the framework developed by Brinkerhoff to analyze the enabling environment for gender equitable access and participation in the PERSI targeted areas. The framework includes commonly agreed-upon features of the enabling environment, including the economic, political, administrative, and socio-cultural situation. A list of the main features under those headings is included at Annex 5. The results of that analysis are incorporated in this report in a cross-cutting manner. Brinkerhoff, Derrick (2004). The Enabling Environment for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Government Actions to Support NGOs. Washington, DC: Research Triangle Institute. Available at: http://www.rti.org/pubs/brinkerhoff_pub.pdf

Gender Relations, Roles and Norms

This analysis of gender relations, roles and norms in the targeted areas is based on USAID's six gender domains. The findings are largely based on views of FGD participants and key informants.

Key Findings

- Access

    - Access to basic services is problematic for many residents who are looking for solutions from government, civil society, and the private sector

    - Across locations, and particularly in Karachi, lack of access to safe and reliable transportation is a fundamental barrier to accessing other services and jobs

    - Mobile telephony and the internet have boosted access to information across the country, though women tend to have less access to both forms of media

    - Many active networks and groups of varying degrees of formality exist, including among youth and women

    - Women overall still have limited interaction with those beyond their immediate family circle, although this varies by age, location and ethnic and religious background

- Knowledge, Beliefs, Perceptions

    - Many people feel that they lack the necessary knowledge to get ahead in life

    - Women view themselves as very capable; young women, in particular, are frustrated with the cultural and familial constraints on their personal agency

    - The government, politicians and elites in general are seen as overwhelming forces that work against the interests of the people in most cases; corruption is endemic and continues to block opportunities for many people

- Practices and Participation

    - The age of marriage for both males and females, particularly in Karachi, is increasing; however early/under-age marriage of females is still problematic in many areas. Marriages performed by the court are increasing significantly in Karachi; participants feel this is an indication of young people breaking away from traditional marriage norms, including arranged marriages

    - People are keen to participate in development activities, but most believe there are few opportunities available; civil society organizations are conduits for participation

- Legal Rights and Status

    - Customary laws and tribunals still predominate, especially in rural areas;

    - Vigilante justice and honor killings (or lesser punishments) are widespread

    - The police are not well-respected overall; legal assistance is very limited

    - Inheritance rights of women are often blocked, contrary to the law

- Work is difficult to secure without paying bribes or using connections; even these methods are not fail-safe

- Power and Decision-Making

    - Older men have the most power at all levels of society – from household decisions to the national government; young men are sometimes allowed a minor role in decision-making

    - Older women have a certain influence in the household, while young women have virtually no personal agency; men control most aspects of women's lives

    - At the community level, *waderas* [4] exercise a significant amount of power

    - While men predominate in politics, some elected women exercise significant power

- Time and Space

    - There is a general lack of public spaces for people to spend leisure time

    - Women tend to have extremely limited free time, and spend little time outside of their homes and workplaces; even those with jobs normally take a primary role in domestic tasks

    - Young men, including those with an education, are un-employed and have the most time on their hands; they are reported to create problems by harassing women on the streets, using drugs and getting involved in crime

Key Conclusions

- Gender relations, roles and norms are not homogeneous in the targeted areas; women educated beyond primary school are increasingly showing resistance to discriminatory gender practices

- In some cases, entrenched decision-making hierarchies are being challenged by new forces; there are entry points for positive change even in the most conservative communities

- Economic woes and educational advances are driving a reduction of gender biases in work

- Important barriers remain: limited female agency, heavy societal pressures to conform, lack of positive counter-narratives, lack of transportation, lack of suitable work, etc.

- People's common interest in basic services is an asset that can be built upon in programming; transportation is a fundamental service that underpins all other services and work opportunities. Addressing transportation as a cross-cutting service sector in PERSI activities can be strategic, practical and cost-effective.

Gender and Education

Key Findings

- There was a clear pattern among informants of feeling that educating females is a "good thing," especially among women; men's views about the type and level of education are more varied, but no one in any FGD expressed the view that girls should not be educated

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[4] A *wadera* is a feudal landlord.

- People want schools closer to their communities, especially for girls to attend

- Public and private schools as well as madrasahs[5] are offering different types of schooling at widely varying costs; quality and relevance of education are seen as major problems; return on investment is uncertain – especially for females who often do not work after being educated

- University student populations are increasingly female, but there is limited representation of women in non-traditional fields; men increasingly opt for more technical training associated with greater earning potential

Key Conclusions

- There is widespread awareness of the importance of education, as well as generalized support of and desire for education opportunities, including for females

- The distance of schools from students' homes, lack of secure transport and costs of schooling continue to be significant barriers, for females and poor families in particular

- There is a need to strengthen females' access to and participation in secondary education through secondary schools close to homes or safe and affordable (free) daily transport, and support male and female high school and university graduates to gain access to suitable employment

Gender and Health

Key Findings

- A big shift is perceived in the past decade in people's awareness of the importance of health issues, particularly related to reproductive health (family planning for married couples, maternal and child health)

- There is some public health infrastructure in most communities, including a network of Basic Health Units, though workers and medicines are often lacking; transportation is a significant obstacle

- Lady Health Workers and Visitors provide valued services at the community level, especially for women

- Costs for private care are prohibitive; various models for providing low-cost services exist

- Women's health is jeopardized by factors such as poor nutrition, gender-based violence, restricted mobility, limited access to information and adolescent pregnancy); many informants lamented the fact that women giving birth were often unable to access professional services, and every focus group discussion includes references to recent deaths of women due to childbirth complications

Key Conclusions

- The desire for accessible, affordable and quality health care is widespread, and there is greater appreciation of the importance of maternal and child health

- Rural areas suffer from lack of health services; the situation in urban areas is not necessarily better

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[5] A *madrassah* is Muslim school, college or university that is often part of a mosque.

- Proximity, affordability and quality of care are priority concerns regardless of sex, age or location

- The impact of domestic violence reaches beyond the mental and physical damage to the individual woman and affects her children's development and Pakistan's economic development;

- Recent changes in attitudes toward healthcare, particularly for women, provide PERSI with a solid platform to build on

Gender and Livelihoods

Key Findings

- Many men and women are interested in training and marketing opportunities to improve their chances to find paid work.

- Educated people, particularly young men, want jobs that match their education level; otherwise, they would rather remain unemployed

- The types of work in rural areas are not closely linked to perceptions of gender-appropriateness

- In urban areas, educated women may run small businesses, educated men work in administrative jobs and trades; less educated women work in or from the home while less educated men work as guards, drivers, factory laborers and vendors

- The formal sector is most lucrative for women, but very few are employed in it; much of women's work is still unpaid or inequitably remunerated. Centers (for example, for embroidery and stitching) are highly regarded. Private businesses or CSOs establish these centers to bring women together, pay them a consistent wage, enable them to learn and to produce goods, and protect them from exploitation; however, these centers struggle to remain viable and to access broader markets

- Many opportunities for income generation exist, especially through service provision in urban areas; frequently mentioned gaps in labor include shortages of trained health care workers, educators and other sorely needed service providers.

Key Conclusions

- Society as a whole suffers from the under-utilization of human capital, including educated individuals

- Serious barriers to livelihoods improvement include: lack of education/information, especially among women; lack of finances; corruption and nepotism; insecurity; and lack of transportation

- Additional barriers for women include their restricted mobility and access to resources

- Men tend to make more money and have greater opportunities than women

- More women are working alongside men in various sectors, especially in urban areas; economic downturns can provide openings for changes in traditional gender stereotypes and roles

- Pakistan's economic downturn can be a boon to livelihoods development activities that seek to mitigate gender inequality and empower females, if based on rigorous ongoing gender analyses

- Increasing numbers of women work in government jobs and medical and educational services; this has led to increased harassment of working women, both on the street and at work

- Drawing on the proven local models and lessons learned as well as international research on livelihoods initiatives, targeting women will avoid unintended adverse effects, such as exacerbating sexual and gender based violence (SGBV); any programming targeting women's employment should also consider working with husbands or male guardians not only on vocational training and employment but, also on domestic relationships.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)

Key Findings

- Female informants, as well as many males, showed a strong desire to counter SGBV

- People believe it is essential to change the attitudes of men towards women in general, to achieve greater equality and combat SGBV effectively; (older) males' near-absolute control of most aspects of women's lives is deeply entrenched in societal norms and presents a fundamental challenge

- SGBV is thought to be particularly prevalent in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, including domestic violence and honor killings; however, SGBV is endemic across the country

- Among the forms of SGBV, domestic violence (against women) was mentioned the most participants (by both female and male),

- Regardless of demographics; many female informants stressed the widespread violence against women in their workplaces, whether the workplace was a field, factory, university, hospital or government office

- The effects of SGBV go beyond the damage to the victim--there is damage to the family and to individual family members and to any individual who witnesses such violence; research shows that the brain development of children who witness (and/or experience) domestic violence is negatively affected, which, in turn has repercussions for education achievement and eventually for the country's social and economic development

- In an effort to avoid the shame to the family's honor that is associated with the violation of a female, men tend to become even more restrictive of women's mobility; many female participants noted that they try to find ways around these restrictions, even if it involves lying (pretending they are participating in an event or helping a female friend approved of by the male guardian or the mother-in-law, taking along children, waiting until everyone is out of the house and then leaving, etc.)

- Access to justice and other services for victims and preventative programming are limited

Key Conclusions

- In Pakistan, SGBV is both the seminal expression and a cause of gender inequality and female (and male) oppression; the forces of SGBV inhibit girls and women from developing in virtually every aspect of life

- The normalization of violence (including SGBV) in society, along with other factors, may well contribute to instability

- It is crucial that efforts to promote stabilization take SGBV into account across all activities as a fundamental building block for projects' success, and that PERSI programming overall and sector-

specific projects incorporate targeted efforts to reduce SGBV by mitigating both its causes and effects.

Gender, Peace and Conflict

Key Findings

- Disruptors of peace range from government and political parties to feudal landlords, other ethnic groups and the police. Unemployed and drug-abusing males are also disruptive

- Levels of violence in Karachi are reported to have risen dramatically in the past decade; victims include many women and children – either intentionally or accidentally

- Younger and older women have largely remained on the sidelines of conflict and peace issues; their level of awareness and resistance is low

- There is evidence of rising radicalization in parts of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, but informants there did not describe any overt violence related to violent extremism and insurgency

- Youth groups in even the most conservative districts are potential positive connectors

- Experience with the police in keeping the peace and managing conflict is mixed; reports of positive engagement are generally outnumbered by incidences of corruption and inattention

Key Conclusions

- PERSI sites fall along a stabilization continuum, from an uneasy negative peace in much of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh to war-zone-like/violence-affected neighborhoods in Karachi

- All of these communities are characterized by deeply entrenched cultures of violence

- Negative push factors, such as relative deprivation, inadequate education systems and unemployment, increase the likelihood of radicalization; negative pull factors include the extensive militant presence and militants' recruitment tactics

- The lack of aware, educated and content male youth is one of the most important barriers to countering radicalization, violent extremism and potential conflict

- Investment in boosting the education levels and productive employment of young women and men are essential for stabilization, but for different reasons—educated women able to earn a decent living are integrally linked to a nation's development, and young men who are able to find gainful and appropriate (in their eyes) employment are able to be productive and to establish families of their own

- Awareness of alternate religious narratives, of "positive peace", and of women's potential roles as peace-builders is lacking

- negative perceptions about other ethnicities is increasingly widespread according to Karachi participants

- the generalized support for education and positive opinion about their own communities are positive signs; these attitudes can be used as rallying platforms for civic actions for peace

Civil Society Organizations

Key Findings

- This study focused on registered, localized and relatively small civil society organizations (CSOs), especially those that are active in the PERSI targeted areas; these "localized CSOs" generally favor collaborative and participatory methods, working closely with local government

- Localized CSOs are sometimes sub-contracted by or may apply for grants administered by larger/national CSOs to work on projects in their area of operations; they perceive those larger CSOs as chasing donor agendas and therefore not being willing to take on societal issues that need to be resolved through political/advocacy action

- Networking among these CSOs on a regional or district basis is highly variable

- Localized CSOs advice: "Work from the bottom up. We know the people and the contexts"; and "Take time to identify the good organizations to work with."

Key Conclusions

- There is vibrancy in Pakistani society at the grassroots level and across communities, which can be built upon for common purposes of stability, gender equality and female empowerment

- CSOs have workable strategies that produce results while avoiding pitfalls that can stymie initiatives devised by outsiders; when local level government and CSOs interact in ways that are beneficial for each entity and for target communities, there is a better chance of positive and sustainable results

- Variations and capacity deficits among CSOs need to be recognized and addressed

- The funding bodies most respected by civil society are those that: engage for the long haul; establish trust relationships with knowledgeable and committed individuals within government and civil society at local level; and positively exploit effective bottom-up solutions.

Recommendations

- Develop a PERSI Gender Strategy and underpin all programming with in-depth gender analysis and strategy on a sector-specific basis; strengthen research on gender and development

- Create spaces and secure places for positive interaction, play and learning within communities, including work places that are women-friendly

- Widely disseminate a strong counter-narrative to violent extremism; use modern information technologies extensively across sectors to support peaceful social mobilization

- Engage with males, including religious and traditional leaders, and embed opportunities for critical thinking about gender roles, relations and norms within all programming

- Address the need for safe, secure, affordable and female-friendly transport

- Focus on female and male youth to channel their energy, hope and drive in positive ways

- Expand training and employment opportunities in education and health sectors, and make home-based income generation strategies for women more accessible and lucrative

- Utilize a clear framework for working with local levels of administration and government.

- Build on existing local "forces for good"; work with localized CSOs and citizens' groups as well as with district level government in a bottom-up approach

- Develop a clear and consistent protocol for community engagement and empowerment based on successful local models that are applying international best practices in participatory development

INTRODUCTION

International studies show that: (1) those societies that are the most unstable tend to be those with a very diverse population[6] and (2) those that are the least productive have the greatest degree of inequalities stacked against females.[7] Pakistan, with its huge and diverse population of over 170 million and ranking of 115 out of 145 countries on the 2011 Gender Inequality Index, certainly fits these generalizations by demonstrating high levels of instability and low productivity. Moreover, social indicators (including gender equality indicators) have not improved in Pakistan commensurate with economic growth. The World Bank described the situation, highlighting the relevance of gender disparities in economic analyses and programming, as follows:

> South Asia stands out among all the regions of the world as a region with a high degree of gender inequality—in opportunities, resources, and rewards enjoyed by men and women. Within South Asia, gender disparities in Pakistan are also pronounced: they cut across all classes, sectors, and regions of the country. *Although the issues of gender inequality in Pakistan are well-documented, less is known about what drives these gender differences and what policy levers are at hand to effect change.…Achieving [stabilization] objectives requires in-depth understanding of both economic and non-economic issues…It is vital to include the influence of socio-cultural norms on families' reactions to policies and programs, or we risk creating initiatives that are unsuccessful, even if they provide all the right economic incentives* (emphases added).[8]

USAID policy increasingly recognizes the importance of gender equality and female empowerment and addresses it as a cross-cutting issue/sector in all of its programming. Accordingly, USAID/Pakistan requested Management Systems International, under the Monitoring and Evaluation Project (MSI/MEP), to carry out a gender analysis in relation to the localities being targeted by a new initiative: the Pakistan Expanded Regional Stabilization Initiative (PERSI). An interagency initiative spearheaded by USAID/Pakistan's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), PERSI aims to integrate security, political and assistance efforts in selected geographical regions of Pakistan. The objectives of the 3-5 year initiative are to promote security and stability, counter violent extremism and help build the foundation for longer-term economic, political and social development.

According to the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment policy, a gender analysis "refers to the systematic gathering and analysis of information on gender differences and social relations to identify and understand the different roles, divisions of labor, resources, constraints, needs, opportunities/capacities, and interests of men and women (and girls and boys) in a given context."[9] This study was contracted to gather data and conduct such an analysis in relation to three areas and 15 targeted locations of the country, as shown in the table below.

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[6] Easterly, William and Levine, Ross (1997). Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions. Source: The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 112, No. 4 (Nov. 1997), pp. 1203-1250. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2951270

[7] Department for International Development (2010). Key Messages from Evidence on Gender Equality. London: DFID. Retrieved from: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/gender-evidence-papers.pdf

[8] World Bank. (2004) Improving Gender Outcomes: The Promise for Pakistan. Islamabad: World Bank. Retrieved from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSAREGTOPPOVRED/1337567-1139839558962/20818167/Pakistan-GenderAssessmentReport_final3-03-05.pdf

[9] USAID Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment. Key terms. Retrieved from: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/gender/gender_analysis_terms.html

TABLE 1: TARGET LOCATIONS BY AREA

Karachi	Northern Sindh	Southern Punjab
Lyari Town	Ghotki District	Bahawalpur District
Korangi Town	Jacobabad District	Dera Ghazi Khan District
Orangi Town	Larkana District	Lodhran District
Sultanabad Neighborhood, Kemari Town	Shikarpur District	Multan District
	Sukkur District	Muzzafargarh District
		Rajanpur District

The purpose of the study was: "To produce a thorough meso- and micro-level gender analysis of PERSI targeted locations and a set of recommended principles and lessons learned that can be used to integrate gender into PERSI programming."[10] The key questions for investigation and analysis were defined as:

1. What are the gender relations, roles and norms for women and girls and men and boys in Karachi, Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab?

2. What other elements of an enabling environment for gender equitable access and participation are or are not present in the above-mentioned locations? [11]

3. What civil society organizations and any notable international organizations are undertaking programming addressing gender and violent extremism and insurgency (or gender and peace and conflict)? What are the interventions and the characteristics of these interventions?

4. What are the recommendations for enhancing gender equitable access and participation in PERSI programming?

A qualitative research methodology was used to investigate the above questions in PERSI targeted locations. Individuals (1,035 including 467 women and 568 men) from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences were interviewed through focus group discussions (FGDs), key participant interviews, and informal group discussions.[12] In each Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab location (5 and 6 sites respectively) one focus group was held with each of the following groups: younger men and women (16-31 years old) and older men and women (32+ years old). In the four Karachi research sites two focus groups were held with each of those four groups of participants. Direct observation of the 15 PERSI targeted locations was also used. Secondary source information, including published and gray material, was collected and reviewed to inform the analysis; a comprehensive list of sources is contained in the bibliography at Annex 10.

The research was carried out during July 2012 by a core team consisting of two full-time consultants, Dr. Valerie Haugen (Team Leader) and Dr. Aamer Abdullah (Senior Peace and Conflict Specialist). Two part-time consultants, Ms. Khalida Ahson (Provincial Gender Specialist, Punjab) and Ms. Sahar Gul Bhatti

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[10] See Annex 1: Statement of Work.

[11] The research team used the framework developed by Brinkerhoff to analyze the enabling environment for gender equitable access and participation in the PERSI targeted areas. The framework includes commonly agreed-upon features of the enabling environment, including the economic, political, administrative, and socio-cultural situation. A list of the main features under those headings is included at Annex 5. The results of that analysis are incorporated in this report in a cross-cutting manner. Brinkerhoff, Derick (2004). The Enabling Environment for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Government Actions to Support NGOs. Washington, DC: Research Triangle Institute. Available at: http://www.rti.org/pubs/brinkerhoff_pub.pdf

[12] Interview and focus group guides are available in Annexes 3 and 4 respectively. In order to protect people's anonymity and security, a list of informants is not included in this report. For more information about the exact consultations, contact MSI/IMEC.

(Provincial Gender Specialist, Northern Sindh), were also part of the core team. Focus group discussions were carried out by Voice Tel Tech (VTT), MSI/IMEC's partner.[13]

This report first examines Gender Relations, Roles and Norms in Chapter 2, then Chapter 3 moves on to analyze gender aspects affecting three key sectors identified by USAID – education, health and livelihoods. In Chapter 4, the specific issues of sexual and gender based violence are discussed, followed by analysis of the relationship between gender, peace and conflict in the targeted areas in Chapter 5, and consideration of the role of civil society in Chapter 6. Finally, overall conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively.

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[13] High level expert gender and development advice was provided to the team by Dr. Yasmin Zaidi.

GENDER RELATIONS, ROLES AND NORMS[14]

This general analysis of gender relations, roles and norms in the targeted areas is based on USAID's six gender domains, which provide a useful conceptual framework. The domains are discussed in the following order: Access; Knowledge, Beliefs and Perception; Practices and Participation; Legal Rights and Status; Power and Decision Making; Time and Space. A final section sums up conclusions for all six domains.

Findings

Access[15]

Access to Services and Benefits

Only one social welfare program, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP),[16] was mentioned by FGD participants (at least 20 times by both males and females). There is some anecdotal evidence from civil society organizations (CSOs) of systemic discrimination against women from minority groups in gaining access to national programs such as BISP. None of the FGD participants made any mention of micro-insurance or being able to access microfinance schemes when speaking about services and benefits.

Water and sanitation services are problematic across all PERSI locations; typically, such problems affect women and girls more, due to their responsibility for most household chores. Nearly all Karachi FGDs noted the impact of rain on overflows of sewerage and mud that prevent children from going to school, force shops to close, and suspend transport services. Many CSO personnel brought up the negative effects of load-shedding on businesses and hospitals. The lack of access to secure, available and affordable transportation for all people, especially females, was mentioned in all FGDs and most key participant interviews, including those carried out in the four Karachi locales.

Nearly all FGD participants expressed a strong desire to access services and benefits from external programs. There were numerous mentions of the importance of CSOs in increasing access to services and benefits through direct provision and stimulation of grassroots involvement, including by establishing community organizations such as village development committees, Citizen Community Boards (CCBs), etc. The CCBs were introduced by the Government as a way to bridge the gap between the grassroots level (local organizations and ordinary citizens) and government structures. Private providers of health and education services were also mentioned, some of which provide assistance to facilitate access by the poor. Public sector services in PERSI targeted areas are more affordable than private sector services, but people feel strongly that public services are neither efficient nor effective. There are models of public-private partnerships and quasi-government organizations delivering the same services efficiently. Examples include the Government of Punjab partnership with Akhuwat to provide interest-free microfinance to the poor.

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[14] A full description of the research approach and methodology is found in Annex 2.

[15] This domain refers to a person's ability to use the resources necessary to be a fully active and productive participant (socially, economically, and politically) in society. This domain includes access to resources, income, services, employment, information, and benefits. Access to employment and income is addressed in-depth later in the report in the section on Gender and Livelihoods. Access to education, health, and income generation services and benefits are discussed in-depth in separate sections later in the report.

[16] BISP targets poor households with cash transfers directed to females.

Access to Information

Important information channels for all informants in targeted areas include Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) such as mobile telephones, radio, and television. Many people use Short Message System (SMS) texting and young people (male and female) also use the Internet and various social networking sites such as Facebook. While the use of mobile telephones seems particularly widespread, according to a 2010 survey of more than 4,000 individuals, Pakistani women are 59 per cent

> "The world is coming to rural Pakistan through television, internet cafes, and mobile phones. No corner and no individual is left untouched!"
>
> -Dr. Arif Hassan, Karachi University professor

less likely to own a mobile phone than men. Rural citizens experience the negative effects of the digital divide within Pakistan more than citizens in urban areas.[17] According to one FGD group in Karachi, "Grooms send their wives-to-be a cell phone prior to the wedding... This way, they get to know each other." In Lyari Town, it was reported that, "As soon as a girl gets a job in a factory, she gets a mobile phone."

Informants generally believe that males have more access to information and this enables them to have greater income generating opportunities and decision-making power. In some areas, such as parts of Jacobabad District, women's access to outside information is extremely restricted due to social and household norms. There were some comments in male and female FGDs that access to some cell phone and Internet-based social media are resulting in harm to females, in particular, but also to males. Several stories were told of women who were severely punished (beaten or murdered) for violating the honor code because they received a text message or a call on their cell phone from a male. In some instances, the calls were a mistake and in others the communication came from males who had bought a set of descriptions and cell phone numbers from cell phone card vendors who illicitly collect numbers of young women and sell the numbers along with information about the young women at a rate of 10 numbers for USD1.

Access to Formal and Informal Communications Networks and Social Networking

There is evidence of unequal access to formal and informal communication networks and social networking settings between females and males. A common assertion in FGDs was that males know more about the ways of the world due to their greater exposure beyond the household or the neighborhood. Younger women in a Karachi FGD summed it up as follows: "Men have more outdoor activities and a strong social circle, unlike women who remain at home most of the time and only get information about any opportunities through print media or friends."

For many women, access to communication and social networking channels outside of their immediate neighbors and family occurs mainly at weddings, funerals or religious rituals. Women also report gathering at the homes of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and Lady Health Visitors (LHVs),[18] female teachers and politicians, prominent older women, and at clothes-washing and water-collection sites. Women relatives and knowledgeable, educated women in the community are important networking resources for females. Younger

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[17] For an excellent overview of recent research on ICT access and use as well as the implications of not knowing Urdu or English as a contributor to the gender and urban/rural digital divides, see AudienceScapes (2010). In Pakistan Social and Institutional Inhibitors Lead to ICT Gender Divide. Accessed at http://www.audiencescapes.org/country-profiles-pakistan-communication-habits-demographic-groups-gender-media-divide-women-men-habits-access-use. Also see: (1) AudienceScapes (2010). Pakistan Media Access Overview. Accessed at http://www.audiencescapes.org/country-profiles-pakistan-country-overview-country-overview-television-radio-internet-mobile-media-communication and (2) Karin Astrid Siegmann Sustainable Development (ND). The Gender Digital Divide in Rural Pakistan: How Wide is iIt and How to Bridge It? Accessed at http://www.sdpi.org/research_Programme/human_development/GDDStudyGroup_Results.pdf .

[18] The National Program for Family Planning and Primary Healthcare was launched in 1994 by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government to deliver maternal and child health and nutrition services in rural and urban slum areas and covers more than 65 per cent of the target population The Program has trained over 100,000 women as Lady Health Workers and Lady Health Visitors (supervisors of the LHWs).

women are the most restricted of all groups in face-to-face networking and communication opportunities, although those attending school or working outside the home are less constrained.

Youth and women's networks and groups are present in all PERSI targeted districts but are not yet well interconnected. There is little evidence of formalized men's networks, other than those established through mosques. The research team saw evidence of the negative social capital—violent and criminal gangs—serving as links among young males within some of these networks, particularly in Lyari and Korangi.

Knowledge, Beliefs, Perceptions[19]

Knowledge

FGD participants identified a range of relevant types of knowledge, which have been grouped under several themes below.

Knowledge of Ways to Improve One's Life. Many informants across the board mentioned the role of CSOs, ICTs and media, political party meetings and LHWs in increasing their knowledge about a range of things: computerized national identity card (CNIC), rights, health care and education. Many FGD groups noted that educated females have the knowledge to take better care of children. Most males feel that they have quite a lot of knowledge about potential economic opportunities, and all FGD groups noted that men tend to know more than women about a range of issues, including politics, individual politicians and income-generating strategies.

Professional/Work Knowledge. Professional working people, such as female education and health care professionals, have some opportunities to build their knowledge through their employment. Otherwise, very few participants were aware of opportunities to improve their work-related knowledge; every FGD group said that such opportunities would be welcomed and supported by the community.

Knowledge of Islam. Most key informants noted that the lack of knowledge of Islam and the inability to comprehend the Qur'an are significant issues in a country where religion, culture and government are so closely linked. An example of this limited knowledge was observed in the widely varying views among informants about the inheritance rights of females under Islamic law.

Beliefs and Perceptions

Beliefs about Male and Female Capabilities. Overall, female FGD participants believe that women are very capable. They think that women's capacity is limited by males and socio-cultural practices. Younger females in particular voiced extreme frustration and anger over those restrictions. These young women do not see themselves as inferior to males, but they do perceive that familial, community and institutional structures are stacked against them. Females who stand up to restrictions and injustice are admired. "I want to be like Mukhtaran Mai!" was commonly heard from younger women.[20]

According to informants, females with a tertiary education are perceived as being more intelligent and better able to handle themselves than uneducated or less-educated females and, therefore, deserving of more respect—even in some cases having the right to voice an opinion to her husband, father or brother. For males on the other hand, education does not appear to be linked to power in the family or local community;

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[19] This domain refers to the types of knowledge that men and women have, the beliefs that shape gender identities and behavior, and the different perceptions that guide people's understanding of their lives, depending upon their gender identity.

[20] Mukhtaran (Bibi) Mai is a human rights activist from the Jatoi Tehsil in rural Muzaffargarh District. On the order of a tribal council in 2002, she was gang-raped as punishment for a perceived breach of honor by her brother. She pursued the case in court, thus gaining much national and international attention and putting herself and her family in serious danger. She remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights.

they are seen as being capable of making family decisions regardless of their education level or financial assets.[21] Males believe they should have the final say in all matters since they are the breadwinners, and female informants confirmed that this is the norm. Many participants felt that income generation programming should address the needs of both females and males in order to prevent increased conflict within the family.

Beliefs about the Government and Elites. A majority of male and female FGD participants believe that politicians, police and the elite work against the interests of the people. Indeed, many in Karachi feel that the government has abandoned their communities and services have deteriorated. Every Karachi FGD mentioned that their area was peaceful until political parties and gangs started working to turn people against each other. FGDs also consistently mentioned corruption, including nepotism, as a core problem affecting the country and their communities. Voter fraud was mentioned in nearly all FGDs.

Corruption is a major and worsening problem in Pakistan, as shown by Transparency International rankings; in 2012 the country was ranked 33rd worst in the world in terms of perception of corruption, slipping five places from 2011.[22] As mentioned previously, both male and female informants described how they have to pay bribes for various benefits and services—whether for a job, placement in an academic program, security and protection, or welfare services. Thus, corruption acts to prevent the poor and disenfranchised from getting ahead and asserting their rights.

Most people believe that without external help by the government, there are no possible solutions that the average individual can introduce to substantially improve their lives or their communities. The view of one participant in an FGD comprised of older Pathan and Punjabi men in Orangi Town was very specific, "five to six men and women cannot do anything to fight for our rights. At a minimum, 10,000 individuals are required to protest against the idle government to give us our rights." Section E below, Power and Decision-making, expands on this theme.

Practices and Participation[23]

Behaviors and Actions

FGD participants commented on various trends in behaviors and actions over the past decade. The most commonly mentioned changes in FGDs were those related to:

- Marriage practices
- Family structure
- Violence and insecurity
- Mobility, both male and female
- Educating children, especially girls
- Health care and family planning
- Females as professionals and wage laborers

Almost all FGD groups said that there has been an overall shift towards later marriages for both females and males. There were mixed views about the reason for the reported trend; improved education levels, awareness of problems associated with child marriages, and the bad economic situation were all mentioned. According to many FGDs and most CSO personnel, educated young women tend to command a higher bride price and are becoming more sought after.[24] However, there are pockets, particularly in rural Southern Punjab and

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[21] However, participants noted that poor men have less status and authority at the village level than men with greater financial assets.

[22] Results for 2012 retrieved from: http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results

[23] This domain refers to people's behaviors and actions in life – what they actually do – and how this varies by gender roles and responsibilities. The questions include not only current patterns of action, but also the ways in which men and women may engage differently in development activities.

[24] Women in Punjab "who complete middle and high school live in households that enjoy up to 30 percent higher consumption per capita, relative to women with less than middle school education. One possible reason is that more educated women are able to marry men who have almost twice as much education as the husbands of women with less education. Another explanation is that higher schooling may enable Pakistani women to increase their own earnings by as much as 150 percent." IEG (Independent Evaluation Group). (2011) Do Conditional Cash

Northern Sindh areas and parts of Sultanabad, where early marriage practices continue to dominate. Parents try to marry their daughters off to a suitor quickly after schooling before they are considered to be too old to be desirable, or because the family wants to grab a suitor who does not want any payment.

All FGD groups felt that elopements are increasing, along with court marriages, which are an inexpensive option of legalizing the union of those whose families do not approve of their choice of spouse. There are some instances of parents wanting daughters to elope in order to avoid paying a dowry, but more often it is a decision of the couple themselves. Many FGD participants shared stories of elopements and the negative repercussions, which include kidnapping, isolation and/or murder of the couple. They report that parents tighten up control of their daughters after hearing of elopements.

Patterns that seem to have remained fairly static, according to informants, are: marrying within one's caste and ethnic group, low divorce rates, mismatched couples (large discrepancies in age, experience and/or education level), and marriages aimed at keeping assets in the family—for example by ensuring that first cousins marry, that widows marry the husband's brother, or waiting until a male within the same family and clan comes along.

Engagement in Development Activities

Participants in most FGD groups mentioned at least one or two organizations, usually in the health and education sectors, working in their respective areas. However, the common view is that there are few opportunities to engage in development activities. There is a strong level of interest, and a majority said that if activities were offered, both females and males could and would attend activities, especially if certain socio-cultural sensitivities were observed and security concerns were mitigated—particularly in Karachi for all participants, and for females in the other targeted areas.

Women's engagement in development activities largely occurs when an external organization makes a clear and concerted effort to draw them in. For example, female FGD participants in Korangi Town (Karachi) mentioned a center that teaches young women about menstruation, and there were several comments in Karachi of the women's wings of political parties that call women together for occasional meetings. Younger women are seen to be the most isolated from development activities. Karachi-based CSOs all noted that young working women are the group most exploited by employers and least involved in advocating for their labor and other rights. Participants pointed out that there are limited opportunities for males to engage in development activities. One activity that was mentioned—providing young males from Sultanabad with computer hardware, software and training—never materialized, even though the community had put forward seven young men.

Most FGD participants had never participated in a discussion group or similar activity. The following statement is representative of their reaction to the discussions: "This is the first time we have had such an opportunity and the experience opened our eyes, got us thinking, helped us to understand other groups' perspectives and issues, helped us understand the importance of including women and others in decision-making, relieved our stress."

Districts have a development budget consisting of the money left over after operating costs such as salaries and debts have been paid. At least 25 percent of the development budget must be spent through Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). The CCBs help to design, implement, manage and monitor local level projects. In every district, *tehsil*, town and union, a group of non-elected citizens can establish and register as a CCB.

CSOs have been instrumental in helping CCBs get established and start applying for development monies through the government. Most key informants remarked upon the negative effects of the current lack of local government structures, especially with respect to undertaking development initiatives.

Table 1 below shows the gender breakdown in membership and leadership among CCBs in selected districts in the study target areas. Males dominate both membership and leadership of most CCBs. For example, CCBs in Muzzafargarh and Sukkur have significantly higher levels of male participation (90.46 per cent Muzzafargarh and 86.24 per cent Sukkur) and leadership (91.29 per cent Muzzafargarh and 92.98 percent Sukkur). In two districts, Dera Ghazi Khan and Shikarpur, however, female participation is higher as compared to other districts. In Dera Ghazi Khan 49.55 per cent of members are female and in Shikarpur 37.03. However, it should be noted that the data for these districts are only for those CCBs created by Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE) as opposed to those that DTCE facilitated. In those CCBs directly created by DTCE female membership was specifically targeted. Even in the CCBs created by DTCE, however, males are overwhelmingly represented in leadership positions.

TABLE 2: PARTICIPATION IN CITIZEN COMMUNITY BOARDS BY GENDER FOR SELECTED DISTRICTS

District	Total CCBs	Total Members	Male Members	Female Members	Total Chair Person	Male Chair Person	Female Chair Person
Muzzafargarh	1,181	24,078	21,780	2,298	1,137	1,038	99
Percent			90.46	9.54		91.29	8.71
Sukkur	667	14,298	12,331	1,967	655	609	46
Percent			86.24	13.76		92.98	7.02
Multan	790	14,588	12,968	1,620	750	691	59
Percent			88.8	11.1		92.10	7.80
Dera Ghazi Khan*	359	1,986	1,002	984	345	291	54
Percent			50.45	49.55		84.35	15.65
Ghotki*	102	430	404	26	102	102	0
Percent			93.95	6.05		100.00	0.00
Jacobabad*	212	971	817	154	212	193	19
Percent			84.14	15.86		91.04	8.96
Larkana*	43	87	87	0	43	43	0
Percent			100	0		100	0
Rajanpur*	269	792	714	78	261	247	14
Percent			90.15	9.85		94.64	5.36
Shikarpur*	99	1,280	806	474	90	71	19
Percent			62.97	37.03		78.89	21.11

Source: Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE) – starred (*) districts are those in which DTCE has intervened. The data for these only reflects those CCBs formed by DTCE.

Nevertheless, civil society organizations appear to be the main conduits for males and females at the grassroots level to participate in development activities.[25] CSO personnel (and their literature) noted a wide array of community organizing at the grassroots level. In Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, the establishment of community organizations is common, although there was not a lot of mention of this happening in Karachi. CSO activity in the target areas is explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

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[25] A list of CSOs mentioned in the FGDs is provided by district in the District Profiles Annex.

Legal Rights and Status

Customary and Formal Legal Codes and the Judicial System

Pakistan's pluralistic legal system is based on English common law and Islamic law, as well as a complex set of traditional practices which tend to give less recognition to women's rights—at times, even less than Islamic law would prescribe. CSO key informants and district personnel provided numerous stories about the enforcement of legal rights under both customary and formal legal codes, as did many FGD participants. Customary legal codes are commonly utilized in all the target locations. Many participants, especially in Sultanabad, mentioned the still-influential role of the tribal councils known as *jirga*.[26]

Although formal legal codes exist and laws about voting, physical assault, theft and so forth are generally known, FGDs cited many instances of individuals (mainly males) disregarding them in favor of the customary code or vigilante action. There are many examples of individuals taking revenge for alleged offenses without the involvement of a *jirga*, and justifying their actions under the umbrella of a violation of the honor code.[27] It is largely males who carry out customary forms of "justice", but females have also been involved. Most FGD participants have dim views about the just enforcement of the formal legal code. In feudal areas, they told numerous stories about manipulation of the judicial system by powerful persons or families who collude with those meant to uphold the law. FGD groups in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh noted that the police "torture us without any crime having been proven" and related numerous accounts of male peasants being accused of and imprisoned for crimes committed by feudal landlords or the landlord's supervisor.

Corruption presents a major obstacle to the rule of law; the police were ranked by Transparency International Pakistan as the most corrupt Pakistani government entity in 2011. Many FGD participants made comments similar to these by the younger men from Korangi Town, Karachi: "Prevention of violence is only possible if the police perform their duties honestly. By empowering the Pakistan Rangers[28] force, we can save our society from violence because the Rangers do not take bribes." Older women from the same area expressed the view that, "If you pay the police, they will support you. But no one supports the poor."

Legal Documentation

Various types of legal documentation were mentioned consistently in FGDs, but knowledge about documentation requirements and practices is variable. Property titles are generally not held in a woman's name, although a few female FGD participants (particularly in rural areas) noted that they, or women in their area, did own some land. Most FGD participants noted that marriages, divorces, deaths and births are registered with the authorities; however, some participants, particularly those in rural villages in both Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, were unaware of the marriage registration requirement and process. Informants report that divorces tend to be registered only if they happen through the courts, which is uncommon.

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[26] *Jirga* are tribal councils of elders (almost always male) with quasi-judicial authority based on Islamic tradition, although religious leaders are seldom members; they are most common among the Pashtun. The High Court of Sindh province issued a ban on trials by jirga in 2004.

[27] Punishment is meted out for many reasons including: a 'legitimate' honor code violation (whether real, perceived, or imagined) and an 'instrumental' violation where an individual or group manufactures a violation. The manufactured violation can be either an act that is designed to trigger a reaction in others to defend the code of honor or an intentional misrepresentation of a violation (that may or may not have occurred). The data provide many examples of honor code conflict sequences: a mother who does not like her daughter-in-law and accuses her of a violation of the honor code, causing the male family members to react; a Karachi political party that carries out a violation of the honor code, making sure that people believe the act was committed by a different ethnic group in order to stir up inter-ethnic conflict; a husband who wants his wife's property so accuses her of an honor code violation then resolves the matter by himself or with male in-laws, or through a *jirga*.

[28] The Pakistan Rangers are a part of the Paramilitary forces of Pakistan, and consist of members of the Pakistan Army under the direct control of the Ministry of the Interior of the Pakistan Government. The Rangers are an internal security force with the prime objective to provide and maintain security in war zones and areas of conflict as well as maintaining law and order that includes providing assistance to the police.

A majority of participants noted that most adults have CNICs. Some participants said that younger women are not allowed to get CNICs even though they are of age, since the girls' future husbands will "see to their registration".

Right to Inheritance, Employment, Atonement of Wrongs and Legal Representation

Almost all male and female FGD participants knew that females have the right to inheritance under the law; for Muslims in Pakistan, this aspect of the law is governed by Islamic principles. However, the inability of females to enforce their rights was cited repeatedly in female FGDs, and a group of older men concurred: "Women do not inherit although they should according to legal and religious laws." Many informants identified the control exercised by feudal landlords and other powerful individuals as a key barrier to inheritance by women, exacerbated by the inability of the police to guarantee these rights. Most females and males knew that women are entitled to a half share; however, some males thought that the share of a female is only one-quarter under Islamic law.

Unemployment and underemployment were reported as problems by many informants. Young, educated females, particularly in rural areas, are frustrated by their limited opportunities for a productive role in life. Uneducated females are eager for opportunities to learn and earn, but they continue to be channeled into low-paying work, including agriculture[29] and traditional crafts. Young, educated males express despair that they lack the bribe money, connections and clout to get a government or private sector job, while uneducated young males work as day laborers and earn little. Older men report being demoralized by their inability to serve as breadwinners. Those working on feudal estates have few rights typically associated with employment. Males are in charge of the atonement of wrongs at all levels of society. Atonement is frequently manipulated by the elite or other power-brokers. Many FGD participants noted that tribal feuds, particularly in Northern Sindh, are resulting in many revenge and retribution killings by males who take justice into their own hands. However, there is no atonement of wrongs for many types of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and structures are lacking to provide support for its victims.

Participants repeatedly mentioned that judicial and legal services are severely constrained for all groups and for virtually any issue that might affect a male or a female. Participants from northern Sindh and southern Punjab mentioned numerous times that elites use the courts to cover their own crimes (usually murder or rape) by colluding with law enforcement and justice system personnel to accuse and convict a local poor person. Participants in focus group discussions mentioned instances where individuals have considered using or have attempted to use the formal system to pursue or defend their rights. The instances provided were typically related to women who wanted to claim inheritance rights. Participants (in particular, female participants) noted that cases of SGBV are under-reported and are rarely prosecuted successfully, aside from those few cases in which a notable authority figure takes up the woman's cause. The frequently-mentioned barriers to pursuing legal rights and justice include the lack of: financial means, knowledge of the system, connections to influential people, supportive family and community (in many cases, women who wanted to pursue their inheritance rights were dissuaded from doing so by their families and/or the broader community), services and good governance in existing services. CSOs mentioned that access to free legal advice is provided in various ways in certain locations, particularly for females, but what is available is too limited.

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[29] Agriculture is not necessarily low paying, but the poor, particularly women, are often in the lowest paying levels of the value chain.

Power and Decision-Making[30]

Make Decisions Freely

Young women are sometimes used within their families for income-generating or productive purposes due to economic necessity, but they are not empowered and do not have personal agency (the right to exercise their free will). Informants suggested that families are holding out for these women to be taken off their hands through marriage, when responsibility for them passes to another family. Educated younger women may appear to be more empowered; however, even they are usually forced to focus on domestic tasks such as child-rearing rather than economically productive roles.

> **"We have to follow the orders of the *wadera*. Whether his orders are good or bad, if we are going to live in the same community, we have to follow the illegal justice of the *wadera*."**
>
> **-Younger males, Northern Sindh FGD**

The role of young men in the family is generally for income-generating purposes and carrying on the family lineage. They have greater scope than women to make decisions freely, including in their choice of marriage partner. However, they too are at the mercy of cultural norms. FGDs recounted numerous examples of young couples eloping then being hunted down by their families, and either killed or separated and punished.

Older males appear to have the ability to make decisions freely and indeed, within their families, they largely have such liberty; however, when dealing with societal structures and institutions linked to wealth and power, their capacities are also limited by their societal status.

Exercise Power over One's Body

Males generally are able to exercise power over their own bodies and movements. Males in the FGDs said they can go wherever they want and gather when they want. However, men working for feudal landlords believe that they and their families are under the power of the landlord and have little control. Most females and children have little control over their own bodies. Males largely direct where and for what purposes a female or child can go, with whom, and for how long. However, many females identified the subtle (and occasionally more overt ways) that they resist such domination: sweet-talking, lying, acting covertly, getting a more powerful family member to intercede on their behalf, going on hunger strikes, or running away.

Exercise Power within the Household

All FGD groups said that males are the ones who exercise power in the household; this was often linked to status as the breadwinner. The majority of females and young males living at home said they are required to ask permission from an elder male for even the most basic aspects of household life, such as the purchase of a new item of clothing. Nevertheless, male control is not monolithic. There is a range of negotiated decision-making behaviors at the family level between husbands and wives and mothers and sons.

Family planning matters are most often decided by the husband and wife together, although there are numerous examples of wives deciding these matters, as well as many cases where the husband has the final word, and/or elders in the family (particularly the husband's father or mother). Some participants noted that it is easier for couples that do not live in an extended family setting to keep control of such decision-making. The following FGD report is illustrative of the level of variation observed: "Three participants said that only the husband plans the family. Four participants said that it is a mutual decision between the husband and

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[30] These domains pertain to the ability of people to decide, influence, control, and enforce personal and governmental power. It refers to one's capacity to make decisions freely, and to exercise power over one's body within an individual's household, community, municipality, and state. This domain also details the capacity of adults to make economic decisions, including the use of resources, income, and their choice of employment. Additionally, this domain describes the decision to vote, run for office, enter into legal contracts, etc.

wife. Two participants said that the mother-in-law or sister-in-law forces the daughter-in-law to have a child when they say it's time." (Younger women FGD, Sultanabad, Karachi)

The power of the in-laws in decisions of a couple or a wife was mentioned consistently in FGDs. Mothers wield ongoing power over their adult children, particularly with respect to their daughters-in-law and certain types of choices. There are stories of some standing up for daughters-in-law, and others persecuting them. Oftentimes, if a husband dies or is away, a woman's life in the in-laws' home is made unpleasant.

Exercise Power within the Community

Older males exercise most power at community level, according to informants. In Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh FGDs, there were frequent mentions of the local *wadera* (feudal landlord) making community level decisions. There are many examples of pressures exerted by *waderas* to enforce conformity with local norms, especially females and males who act against customary codes. On the other hand, FGD participants often referred to CSOs that have been successful at exercising power within communities for social change.

Younger females appear to exercise virtually no power within their communities. However, FGD participants gave examples of females who, through their family, level of education, age and/or work are able to exercise power in their communities. Females also exercise indirect power through gossip and whisper campaigns about the "bad" behavior of other women.

Young men, even if unmarried, are allowed access to male decision-making in some communities and may even contribute to discussions. This practice does not appear to be linked to any particular ethnic group. Young, unemployed males were mentioned many times by both male and female FGD participants as exercising negative power in the community, especially through sexual harassment of females. Young men also pressure their peers into restricting their sisters' mobility, work and educational opportunities.

Exercise Power within the Municipality

Of the four age groups, older males—particularly those with status and wealth—exercise the most power at the municipal level. However, many FGD groups noted that any individual could exercise power within the municipality if he/she had the money for bribes for the police or other government entities. As well, FGD participants gave examples of females who have sufficient status to be able to exercise power in the municipality. Several female politicians at the local level, such as the Union Council, have been able to bring about noticeable change in their communities. A group of older female FGD participants in Jacobabad District, Sindh, recounted that, "…the women of the village can freely participate in politics. During the last election, a woman contested for the Union Council seat and she won the election. She successfully carried out her responsibilities during her tenure."

It was noted repeatedly in FGDs and CSO interviews that females also gain access to power by using their involvement in CSOs as stepping stones into public life. The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) movement is a prime example of a powerful force at municipal level and beyond. Sixty percent of the PFF membership is female, as is much of the leadership, and female members even train males. In addition, all political parties have women's wings where females seek to advocate for their constituency.

Younger males and females are increasingly involved in youth groups, whether it is a political party youth wing, the *Aman Ittehad* youth movement, a CSO activity or a youth network. These bodies engage in some activism at the municipal (and provincial and state) level.

Exercise Power within the State

Data from key participant interviews show that individuals who are part of elite structures are most able to exercise power within the state. The male feudal landlords, *pirs* (Muslim spiritual healers) and politicians are mentioned time and again as individuals who exercise state power. A number of key participants as well as

Pakistan literature on gender and development have noted the importance of educated females from elite families in the passage of legislation on human and women's rights.

There has been a quota of 17.5% of seats reserved for women in the parliament of Pakistan since 2002; it was entrenched by the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010. Varying quotas also exist at local levels of government. According to female politicians interviewed in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, even if they are elected through direct franchise, they have to use the influence of their male kin or their husbands to withstand social pressures. Currently, female electoral victories mean little for participation of women on a wider scale, which points to a need to support women's engagement in politic life at all levels.

CSO literature provides many examples of grassroots groups successfully advocating to the highest levels. For example, the 10,000 postcards to the Prime Minister campaign to increase the education budget worked—to a certain extent (he left office before delivering on the promise.) There is virtually no evidence in FGDs of men or women exercising power in a legitimate manner at the state level. While many participants of both sexes said they do vote, it was uncommon for people to vote for the candidate of their choice, uninfluenced by any other person or entity. Some said it was a long-standing practice for political parties to "buy" votes through various tactics.

Time and Space

Availability and Allocation of Time and Locations[31]

All female FGD participants, regardless of their status, location or employment status, carry heavy domestic responsibilities. Poor females in particular have very little time that is not taken up by those responsibilities. Not only do they work in the fields or factories for 10 to 12 hours a day, in the evenings they often do stitching or embroidery for sale, as well as carrying out their household tasks. Younger females who work in factories and poor widows and divorcees have the least unstructured time of all groups. CSO informants noted that younger females commute to work, work for 12 hours, travel home, and then help with household tasks and informal productive work.

Even female professionals have little spare time since they tend to rush home from work to prepare food and take over the care of children and extended family. Women spend little time with women outside of their families. Some communities and males allow females to go to talks at the mosque and congregate occasionally at the home of a respected female. The village *mela* (agricultural fair) and *urs* (religious fair) are gatherings where males and females (with permission) are present; in Karachi it was mentioned that women go to political meetings on occasion.

If males are working, this productive role takes up most of their time. In general, men spend little time on household tasks, although a few male FGD participants mentioned that some do take care of the house and cook. There is frequent mention of men getting together regularly, playing cards, or smoking with other men. Young, unemployed men seem to have the most time on their hands. Many male and female FGD participants in all locations mentioned young men "lounging about," "hooting at" and "ogling" females.

In general, males can congregate in more places and spaces than females. Men frequent markets, hotels, street corners, the *mohalla* (town shops) in urban areas, and traditional cultural spaces such as *baithaks/otaques*. Boys and young men frequent the open areas of the village/town, while girls spend time in the rural village lanes, but only until they reach puberty. Boys and girls are often involved in labor from an early age. For example, in Karachi, young Pakhtun boys are sent to work for carpet weavers, and both boys and girls are sent out scavenging. Children were not observed in public places in Karachi locations.

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[31] For extensive quantitative data on time use by females and males, see the Government of Pakistan (2009). Time Use Survey 2007. Islamabad: Government of Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics. Available at: http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/time-use-survey-2007

Overall, there appears to be a lack of public spaces and places for all residents of targeted locations, whether younger or older, male or female. With the exception of a couple of Karachi groups, all FGDs noted that there is no place for people to gather, learn, play, and relax, and saw this as a liability. Most male and female participants said that public spaces would be frequented if they were safe. In Karachi sites, FGD participants frequently remarked that "…the parks are not safe and were often the site of drug deals; they are in bad shape physically or are used by powerful people for whatever they wanted." Lyari FGD participants said they had to travel to Clifton to visit a park.

Implications of Time Commitments and Space Availability

The implications of these constraints on free time and space are different for different groups. Generally, women are time-poor and over-burdened, with restricted time for activities of choice. The limited public spaces and places to gather for socializing and/or learning contribute to people's isolation, especially women. Unemployed males have time on their hands and could get involved in positive activities if they were offered. Every FGD mentioned that idleness of young men, in particular, has negative implications; many noted that they get involved in petty and organized crime. Groups consistently remarked that unemployment leads to drug use/abuse, which leads to domestic violence and/or other crimes. The harassing behavior of some of these males makes females feel threatened and worries their male protectors.

Conclusions on Gender Relations, Roles and Norms

Gender relations, roles, and norms are not homogeneous in the targeted areas, as shown by the diversity of views and experiences captured by this study, and numerous examples of men and women successfully challenging the traditional stereotypes and societal rules.

> "*I* am the evidence of the change! Ten years ago, no girl in my area would have dreamed of attending a university, much less even a secondary or middle school! Here I am, attending a co-educational university in Sukkur Town! What other proof do you need of change?"
>
> -Response of one young woman from a very conservative tehsil in Sukkur District.

Pakistan is grappling with the construction of what can be termed "gendered modernity", whereby the country becomes increasingly urban with greater numbers of educated women, many of whom are no longer willing to tolerate discriminatory social practices and laws—even as conservative religious groups aggressively promote seemingly irreconcilable stances on women's rights.[32]

Moreover, feudalism and other institutionalized power structures are not monolithic; the decision-making hierarchy is increasingly being challenged. There are numerous examples of powerful families and individuals working for the common good, and these elite power-brokers are potential allies in stabilization. There are also cases of local level administrators and CSOs mitigating the oppressive risks associated with this social class.

This means that there are entry points for positive change even in the most conservative communities. Changes in mindsets and behaviors are possible. The localized heterogeneity at the community, family and individual levels can be used effectively to promote increased gender equity and stabilization, if gender and power dynamics are well understood and addressed. Our research reveals that power structures and conditioned patterns of behavior go through cycles that are affected by external factors such as the economy and war. The increasing penetration of cheap, alternate information sources including mobile telephony and the Internet is raising awareness and introducing new ideas, notably among the poor and uneducated, both

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[32] United States Institute for Peace (2012). Moving Forward with the Legal Empowerment of Women in Pakistan, Special Report 305. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace. Available at: http://www.usip.org/publications/moving-forward-the-legal-empowerment-women-in-pakistan

male and female. Although huge gender disparities continue in education, our informants expressed enthusiastic support for education in general and particularly for females; this view cut across all FGDs, regardless of the participants' sex, age, location, ethnicity, sect or socio-economic class.

Many said this is a huge change in attitudes from a decade ago, and described a significant shift in awareness about and positive responses to health matters, especially child and maternal health and family planning. The trend of women working increasingly outside the home alongside males is also noteworthy. While this has typically been fairly widespread in poor rural areas, economic woes and educational advances seem to be driving a trend in urban areas towards reduced gender biases in work.

The demand for education, health services and income generation opportunities is very high. Where education and health services are available, affordable and gender-sensitive, people use them. People's common interest in these basic services is an asset that can be built upon in stabilization programming. Notwithstanding the above-described openings and opportunities, serious barriers will affect the potential of any PERSI investment to "close the gender gap" and empower females as well as males to enhance stabilization. They include (as discussed in more detail in other parts of the report):

- The pervasiveness of male decision-making power over female agency

- Legal, familial and communal norms and mechanisms that prevent ordinary people, especially women, from exercising personal agency and claiming justice when rights are violated

- The forces of communal conformity and control exercised by feudal landlords and other powerful individuals

- Scarcity of positive counter-narratives to raise consciousness about power dynamics, and to counter the misrepresentation of Islam and gender-equality that is used to manipulate people's views

- Lack of safe, affordable and female-friendly transportation services whether for work, education, business or health care purposes

- Lack of suitable work opportunities, especially for those without education

- Lack of awareness that SGBV is closely linked to and a key factor in instability, negative peace and arrested development.

GENDER ANALYSIS BY SECTOR

Gender and Education

Findings

Demand for Basic Education

None of the 756 participants in the FGDs spoke out against educating girls and women; on the contrary, there was a clear pattern of feeling that educating females is a good thing. Females (older and younger) from all the FGDs want their daughters (and sons) to be educated to the highest level possible in the respective locale. Males (older and younger) across the FGDs had more varied views on girls' education. Significant differences of opinion about how girls' education should be provided and accessed, ranged from "girls should be allowed to attend school for as long as they want and become whatever they want" at one extreme, to "girls should only attend a madrasah until grade five," and "girls should only study within the home" at the other end of the spectrum.

Views on whether boys and girls could attend school together were also mixed. Some participants were open to the idea, provided there were separate spaces for boys and girls, particularly in middle school and beyond. According to one FGD participant from a remote village in Southern Punjab, "I come from a very conservative area and family. But, here I am in a co-educational university in Multan, studying for my master's degree! I am only one of a handful of educated young women in my area. But, others would like to learn and would not necessarily be prevented. There are just no opportunities."

There are numerous examples of individuals or the larger community solving local education problems, which evidences the generally high priority placed on education. In one rural Northern Sindh community where government teachers never showed up, three young female high school graduates began teaching classes in the empty primary school.

Access

Where infrastructure exists and there are teachers and a monitoring system in place, FGD participants say government school buildings are generally being used for their intended purpose. On the other hand, they also reported cases where school infrastructure was unused, used for different purposes (grain storage by the feudal landlord, for example), or in an unsafe condition but still being used, particularly in Karachi. A consistent theme among informants in all locations was the need for schools within the immediate vicinity, in order to boost girls' enrollment and participation. If girls have to leave the community for schooling, then safe and secure transportation should be available.

Some FGD participants mentioned that an education stipend is paid to girls and poor students to enter and stay in school. There was no mention of the source or whether this money was instrumental in keeping a girl in school, although a recent impact evaluation of a stipend program in Punjab showed positive results on school continuation by girls, as well as other benefits.[33]

Quality and Cost Factors

Securing a quality education for children was a problem mentioned repeatedly in FGDs. A common view, particularly in Karachi, was that there are a number of private schools in the area that charge high monthly fees (about PKR 500), and then there might be a government public school—but many children are sent to a

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[33] Independent Evaluation Group. (2011) Do Conditional Cash Transfers Lead to Medium-Term Impacts? Evidence from a Female School Stipend Program in Pakistan. Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from:
http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/1CE1D20CDD5BBB0985257838004E2C10/$file/Pakistan%20CCT%20Impact%20Eval%20full%20web.pdf

madrasah because even government schooling is not affordable. Thus, private schools are catering to the demand for quality schooling from better-off families, while religious groups appear to be filling the gap in government services by offering free education. An increase in the number of girls' madrasahs was mentioned by many key informants, particularly in Northern Sindh.

The hidden costs of schooling (beyond tuition fees) include uniforms, books, and transport. For girls, the costs can be higher because of their vulnerability to harassment on the way to school and cultural norms about female mobility. In some cases, a male from the family must accompany her to and from school, which entails additional costs.

Nearly all key informants said that the national school curriculum is a barrier to promoting peace, tolerance, and gender equality, and needs to be revised. They are hopeful that government devolution will offer an opportunity for provinces to tackle the curriculum issue.

Demand for Higher Education

University and technical courses are in high demand overall. There is an increasing demand, especially by young men, to learn vocational/technical skills that could lead to better-paying jobs and open up opportunities for entrepreneurship. According to key informants, there seems to be a trend toward young men opting away from university education in favor of technical training, and an upward surge in young women entering universities (although not necessarily entering non-traditional fields for women). Bahauddin University expects that 70 percent of the 2013 student body will be female; of Karachi University's 30,000-plus students, 73 percent were female in 2011, up from only 60 percent in 2006. Technical education, English language, and computer literacy courses are available even in small towns.

Return on Investment

Many FGD participants expressed awareness that educated women have greater chances for gainful employment. However, some FGDs with males indicated that investment in education of girls is not seen as particularly valuable because (1) there is still considerable opposition to women working outside the home and (2) the family of origin will ultimately not benefit, since the girl leaves the home upon marriage. There is evidence that a family with limited resources will choose private school for a son and public school for a daughter, since they feel that the greater return on investment will come from a male child. Young, educated men are concerned that their investment in education has not led to greater income-earning opportunities. They want to get office jobs or work overseas, and many would rather remain unemployed than work in blue or brown collar jobs. Young, educated women want to work in any capacity, but their opportunities are blocked due to social norms and other restrictions (transportation, lack of access to jobs, etc.)

Conclusions on Gender and Education

The composition of the FGDs included an intentional mix of individuals with varied levels of education, including those with graduate degrees (doctoral and master's degrees) and those who had never attended school and/or were illiterate. Regardless of the level of education or socio-economic background, there is widespread awareness of the importance of education, as well as generalized support of and desire for education opportunities, including for females. There are many community networks (ranging from one individual reaching out to her/his local neighbors to large, well-organized community initiatives) with individuals who are committed to solving local problems locally. There is also untapped human capital in the form of educated young men and women--even in the most rural villages in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh -- who are unemployed and interested in getting involved. There is evidence that employment of females in education-related jobs is more generally accepted than many other types of work outside the home. These various social phenomena all represent important windows of opportunity for the equitable development and stabilization of the targeted areas.

Despite the growth in private sector providers of education, the distance of schools from students' homes, lack of secure transport, and costs of schooling continue to be significant barriers, for females and poor

families in particular. The use of conditional cash transfers to families seems to have had some positive effects on education indicators for girls. However, this strategy needs to be carefully analyzed and implemented to ensure sustainable benefits and avoid negative repercussions for mothers who receive such transfers to support their daughters. It is important to note that international research demonstrates that the quality of the education is as important as the monetary support, particularly in attracting and keeping females in school.[34]

There is a demonstrated need to focus on strengthening females' access to and participation in secondary education, particularly through schools closer to homes or accessible by safe and affordable (free/subsidized) transport and supporting both male and female high school graduates to gain access to suitable employment. Given males' roles as decision-makers on family matters, including education, it is important to identify ways of engaging with men to ensure the equitable participation of both females and males.

Gender and Health

Findings

Demand

Many FGD participants across targeted locations felt that there has been a big shift in the past decade in people's awareness about the importance of paying attention to health issues. Participants in all FGD groups talked openly about many health topics, including family planning, and many noted the importance of vaccinations. The government and donor focus on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to improve child health and to reduce maternal mortality was mentioned by several key informants as essential to the progress that has been made in changing attitudes and practices.

Access

Participants observed that there is some public health infrastructure in most communities, including a network of Basic Health Units (BHUs), which is utilized when there are health care workers and medicine available. However, care is often inaccessible because staff is not present or lacks the relevant skills. Transportation for routine and emergency care is a significant barrier for males and females alike. There are examples of community-based interventions where a CSO provides incentives to the owner/driver of a van or pick-up for set-fee health transport services; however, these initiatives are often short-lived.

Innovative uses of ICTs to enhance access are also apparent. Karachi boasts a medical call center staffed 24 hours a day by 1,200 on-call medical professionals, and a number of FGD groups mentioned having reliable access to Rescue 1122 and Chepa ambulances. Bahawalpur District FGD participants noted that due to limited communication lines and high demand, it was seldom possible to reach the emergency services on the telephone.

In Karachi, it was reported that LHVs, LHWs and nurses are opening their own clinics. Many key informants and some FGDs spoke about other available models of health care provision, including models that are pro-poor and provide good care. Public-private partnerships exist, for example, in Lodhran District through the National Rural Support Program. The Pakistan Primary Health Initiative and the Punjab Rural Support Program were also mentioned as exemplary programs in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh. In Karachi, there are several excellent no/low-cost health care institutions, notably the well-regarded Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation and the Jinnah and Indus Hospitals.

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[34] World Bank. (2011) Girls' Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment and Economic Growth. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099080014368/DID_Girls_edu.pdf

Costs

Many rural FGD participants observed that health care services and related transportation are often very expensive. Although the public hospitals offer free treatment, quality of care is generally not high and they are very crowded; often they are farther away than private facilities, so transport costs are a barrier. Private clinic fees are beyond the means of most families and often staffed only by a compounder. Even unskilled traditional birth attendants (TBAs) charge upwards of PKR 2,000-4,000 per delivery and Caesarian sections cost around PKR 30,000. The lack of savings and health insurance often leads families into medical debt, pushing them into chronic poverty. BISP is piloting a social health insurance scheme as well as a female entrepreneur in Islamabad who aims to provide such insurance, particularly for women.

Health Workers

All FGD groups commented on the lack of knowledge and skills of health care providers, especially TBAs who often do not know when it is appropriate to refer a woman to the hospital. In spite of that view, the services of LHWs and LHVs are appreciated by both male and female FGD participants. In the villages where they reside, LHVs and LHWs often become a rallying force for women around health and other matters, including domestic violence. Nevertheless, coverage by the cadre of LHWs is limited and visits by LHVs are infrequent. Many participants noted the need for female doctors and female personnel in the BHUs, as well as male health workers. Some Pathan participants[35] mentioned difficulties for a female patient to be seen by a male health worker, although this problem does not appear to be widespread in the Karachi sites visited. Traditional herbal medicine is accessed through *hakims* (healers), *dais* (TBAs), or elder family members, although these remedies are falling into disuse as health care increasingly follows a medical model.

Pakistan has some excellent medical training institutions, and females are increasingly entering health care fields. Ninety-five percent of Aga Khan University Medical School graduates are women and Bauddin University's (in Multan, Southern Punjab) top performers in the medical school are females. Many participants in all FGDs favored the training of young, educated unemployed men and women as health care providers, and said that would be supported by their communities. The majority of nursing staff are from Christian backgrounds; the Government of Sindh is trying to open up the health provider field to non-Christians through affirmative action strategies.

Barriers to Women's Health

International research has identified numerous interconnected gender-related factors that affect women's health, many of which have emerged in FGDs of this study and other Pakistan-based research. Some of the key issues are:

> "The streets are very narrow and it takes us 30 to 45 minutes by taxi to reach Jinnah Hospital. Once there, we have to wait in a long queue for our turn. Well-known private clinics are very expensive and out of our reach. There are maternity homes, but very few provide 24 hour service and their day and night rates are different."
>
> -Younger Pathan male FGD participants, Sultanabad) Neighborhood, Kemari Town, Karachi

- Poor nutrition of girls/women due to household gender discrimination

- Pregnancy and childbirth among adolescent girls

- Restrictions on women's mobility

- Girls' exposure to gender-based violence

- Low levels of education and literacy

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[35] Pathans are an ethnic group predominantly found in Khyber Pakhtunkwa Province and the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. The conflict and the 2010 earthquake have forced many Pathans to seek a living in other parts of Pakistan, predominantly in Karachi, Sultanabad Town, and overseas.

- Limited powers of decision-making

Maternal Health

Every FGD group mentioned at least one recent death of a pregnant woman. The most commonly mentioned causes are: complications due to adolescent pregnancy; unskilled TBA; transport unavailable, slow, dangerous or expensive; no male present to take the woman to the hospital; and inability to afford care. A large percentage of deliveries continue to take place at home without skilled attendants, resulting in maternal deaths as well as related illnesses. Post-partum hemorrhage is one of the leading causes of maternal deaths. Several FGD participants from different target areas noted a trend in increasing numbers of Caesarian sections, while increases in the numbers of abortions, particularly in Karachi, were mentioned by several informants.

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

There is a lack of awareness among adolescents of sexual and reproductive health as well as certain types of diseases, health needs and issues, such as sexually transmitted diseases. There was only one reference in 76 FGDs to young people accessing information on this subject, and recent research[36] shows that this is a significant area of need for both young men and women. Target communities are generally concerned about the continuing practice of early marriage, although many observed that the marriage age of females was rising.

Conclusions on Gender and Health

As with education, the desire for accessible, affordable and good quality health care is widespread. While rural areas suffer greatly due to the lack of health services, the situation in urban areas is not necessarily better. Many of the issues described in Karachi have also been observed in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh district towns. The recurrent patterns within the FGDs revolve around proximity, affordability and quality of health care, which are priority concerns regardless of sex, age or location. In contrast to the problem-solving demonstrated with education challenges, finding workable solutions for health issues seems beyond the capacity of individuals and communities, without some external assistance.

As Pakistani society continues to modernize and become exposed to the outside world, young men and women are increasingly challenging social norms and mores, and more women in general are entering the workforce. It is thus not surprising that unplanned pregnancies and abortions have reportedly increased, and that as elopements and court marriages increase, so does SGBV in the form of honor punishments and killings. These phenomena all have a clear impact on the health sector, and especially on the health of younger women.

Recent changes in attitudes toward the importance of healthcare provide PERSI with a solid platform to build on. The foundation laid by government and donor emphasis on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5[37] is apparently paying off, at least with respect to people's overall views about maternal and child health. The pressing health care needs are numerous and large, but not insurmountable. Structures and mechanisms already exist; though inadequate, they can be built upon.

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[36] World Population Fund-Pakistan (2010). A Research Study on the Status of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People in Pakistan. Islamabad: World Population Fund-Pakistan. Available at: http://www.wpfpak.org/pdfs/SRHR_Report_2010.pdf

[37] At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals. MDG 4 is 'Reduce child mortality and MDG 5 is Improve maternal health. http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/

There are many excellent initiatives within the health sector that can be replicated and expanded to achieve multiplier effects. For example, a BHU could be used in the evenings for first-aid training for young men and women, or for enhancing TBAs' skills. Medical schools could provide education for different types of health care workers, and the LHW/LHV program could be strengthened and extended to underserved areas. The expressed interest in training local females and males as health care providers for their communities provides an opportunity for interventions that could combine two important objectives: enhancing access to basic health care while providing useful employment options for young people.

Gender and Livelihoods[38]

Findings

Overall, men and women across PERSI targeted locations feel that life has gotten harder from an economic perspective in the last decade. Many people, particularly in Karachi, say that the moral fiber of society is breaking down and that is affecting income generation.

Demand

Many male and female participants are very interested in training and marketing opportunities to improve their chances to find paid work. Educated women and men want jobs that match their education level. Securing a reasonable return on investment is important for educated youth—if the job pays and safety and security for women is adequate, then work will be taken up.

Types of Work

Better-educated women often run schools and other small businesses from their homes, such as beauty parlors, while better-educated men work in administrative jobs and trades such as carpentry, plumbing and automotive repair. For males and females with college degrees, the local call center industry provides good jobs in Karachi. English language and computer skills are key to obtaining good jobs in the current marketplace. Less educated or uneducated men work as guards, drivers, shoe-makers, factory laborers and vendors.

> "There is a 40-year-old, single woman in our locality that lives in a rented house alone. She works the same type of work as men, lifting blocks on construction sites and earns PKR 800 per day."
>
> -Older females, FGD in Bilal Colony, Korangi Town, Karachi
>
> "Forty-five women work as road repairers in their tehsil."
>
> -CSO staffperson, Muzzafargarh District, Punjab

The types of work undertaken in rural areas are not closely linked to perceptions of gender-appropriateness. Less-educated people of both sexes in rural areas of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh work in agriculture and factories. However, within these broad types of work, there are jobs that are typically done by one sex or the other. Women also work as fisher people, alongside men. They commonly do or teach stitching and embroidery. There are also numerous examples in the FGD and CSO interview data of females in various locations doing work that is typically not considered appropriate for their sex.

Salaries

Factory laborers are reported to earn around PKR 1,500-2,000 per month while educated workers earn PKR 7,000-8,000. FGDs mentioned examples of men and women earning unequal pay for equal work. Orangi

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[38] For detailed quantitative data on Pakistan's labor force, see: (1) Government of Pakistan. (2011) Pakistan Labor Force Survey 2010-11. Islamabad, Pakistan: Federal Bureau of Statistics Government of Pakistan and (2) Brookings Institution (2010), Pakistan Index, Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Derived from the Government of Khyber Paktunkhwa Finance Department (June 2009).

participants said that a male school teacher earns PKR 8,000 while a female earns only PKR 3,000, and female nurses earn less than males. Female agriculturalists earn around PKR 150 day, while males earn PKR 300 or more. While agriculture-related work brings in more money than embroidery, the formal sector pays women the most. However, informants report that women are largely excluded from this more lucrative arena, and much of their work is unpaid. This finding is consistent with other recent research.

> **"I tried three times to get into the Pakistan Navy, but I could not get through. My friend told me that I would only clear the test if I had bribe money."**
>
> **-Younger males, FGD in New Haji Camp, Sultanabad neighborhood, Karachi**

Assets and Savings

Most families have few assets of significant value and little or no savings. Many rural families have a small piece of cultivatable land—typically four to five *weegha,* equal to about two hectares—that is used to produce food and some income. People from all socio-economic levels use traditional community-based saving mechanisms, which are similar to a village savings and loan schemes but not linked to livelihoods development. Individual males contribute an agreed amount each month and the recipient of the pot changes every month; the same arrangement often exists for females.

Barriers

The livelihoods barriers that FGD participants identified consistently, regardless of sex, age, ethnicity and location, are the following.

- **Lack of Education, Knowledge and Information.** Women say that they lack ideas about income-generating possibilities due to their limited exposure to the broader society. This is corroborated by the fact that embroidery was mentioned in every single focus group as an income-earning skill of females, but few other business ideas were identified. As mentioned in the section on Knowledge, Beliefs and Perceptions, FGDs generally felt that men have considerable information in relation to economic opportunities, although other barriers may prevent them from using that information. Inadequate quality and quantity of education also inhibits the livelihoods potential of many people.

- **Financial Constraints.** Most people lack financial resources for business start-up costs and equipment. FGD participants said they have limited access to credit and are vulnerable to exploitative money lenders or landowners. Men would prefer to have their own businesses, but with no money except via interest-based loans, they are unable to establish them. Women at times get loans for domestic use, but the loan amount is not adequate to establish a business. For both males and females, the lack of access to affordable and adequate business loans is a significant constraint to income generation—both the start-up of a new business or the expansion of an existing one.

- **Corruption/lack of connections.** As commented above, the best jobs are often not available without bribes, contacts and/or nepotism, even for educated and skilled individuals. In Karachi, political and ethnic groups control employment in particular locations, for example in Lyari, where males are employed in the large metropolitan government-run corporations such as Karachi Municipal Corporation.

- **Insecurity.** Lack of physical security in Karachi prevents both men and women from finding and keeping work. Shops frequently have to close and employed individuals cannot find safe transport out of and within their areas of residence. Women fear harassment and violence, and their male relatives fear for them, which significantly limits mobility.

- **Lack of Transportation.** This was mentioned in every FGD and affects women and men, old and young, in all locations. Individuals in Karachi noted the effects on people's work lives of the inter-dependent issues of insecurity, lack of transportation and poor infrastructure. Buses and rickshaws will not enter certain areas, and in times of heavy rain, buses change their routes to avoid driving into

open manholes that cannot be seen. Some factories have a "pick and drop" service, but whole communities are not served.

In addition, there are barriers related to restrictions on women's personal agency and control of resources. The norm reported by most informants was for husbands or other male family members to control income generated by females, especially in rural areas. However, some FGDs in Shikarpur and Ghotki Districts cited examples of men respecting the right of women to keep the money they earn, for example, from raising livestock. Most FGD participants noted that in rural villages and many parts of the Karachi sites, women can generally move about freely <u>within</u> the community in order to work; exceptions were parts of Rajanpur, Larkana, and Jacobabad Districts and Sultanabad in Karachi.

Prospects for Income Generation

Karachi provides a range of jobs and occupations for skilled and unskilled, educated and less educated men and women. It also offers a huge market for a variety of service oriented work, for example in the health industry and in cleaning services. Karachi is one of the few places with factories that recruit women and provide them with transport. There was wide consensus that the urban and peri-urban areas of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh provide a large consumer base for services that educated or semi-skilled/skilled women and men could provide (e.g., beauty salons, small home-based schools or tuition centers). Factory and office work is in many areas considered acceptable for women; some women are employed in date factories in Sukkur, for example.

Informants offered a variety of suggestions for enhancing livelihoods in their areas, as follows.

- A central vocational training and sales center where women could sell their handicrafts directly for a reasonable profit, as well as pick up orders, designs and additional skills.

- Men in cotton-producing areas suggested setting up a textile or yarn factory that could employ women as well as young men.

- FGD participants in Sukkur District mentioned the recently established milk plant that provides employment to scores of men, and suggested that industrial zones could be also set up.

- FGDs in Ghotki District suggested micro-credit for young men and women to set up small agri-businesses in the towns.

- CSOs suggested transportation cooperatives that operate across a district, linking the main town with smaller towns and villages.

Enabling Environment

The federal government's new Framework for Economic Growth 2011[39] has many recommendations that are directly relevant to young people, including work-study programs, youth entrepreneurship, volunteer service, and training in functional adult literacy and life skills relevant to the job market. There are few specific mentions of women in the Framework, and a single reference to promoting gender equity; it does refer to urban jobs in the service sector being created for women and youth. The Framework places a heavy emphasis on openly competitive markets; however, it should be kept in mind that access to such markets is often challenging for the poor and women.

The Government of Punjab's new Youth Policy envisages the establishment by public-private partnership of a Youth Venture Capital Fund to support entrepreneurship among young men and women. The policy also encourages all universities to provide on-campus jobs to at least five percent of their full-time students and to

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[39] Available at: http://www.pc.gov.pk/hot%20links/growth_document_english_version.pdf.

set up career placement offices. In addition, the Punjab Internship Program will be started to maximize opportunities for fresh graduates. The Government of Sindh is in the process of developing a similar youth policy.

Access to credit for women is restricted due to lack of collateral, particularly in Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab locations. Models for free micro-loans exist and some have demonstrated great success, but overall there is limited lending to women. Some structures developed for this purpose have proven ineffective, such as the First Women Bank Limited; poor loan repayment (reportedly due to husbands misusing the funds) led to suspension of the program. The female manager of a Sukkur bank revealed that not a single loan had been advanced to women entrepreneurs, although she saw various opportunities for female entrepreneurs.

No FGD mentioned the Khushhali Bank, which was established by the government to boost microfinance across the country, although it has branches in Multan, Sukkur, and Karachi.[40] The World Bank ranking of Pakistani cities lists Multan as the best in PERSI areas (overall rank 2) for ease and cost of doing business. Karachi (overall rank 5) and Sukkur (overall rank 6) follow.[41] According to a number of key informants, Multan and Sukkur have the capability to become hubs of growth for Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, provided that some infrastructure is developed.

Conclusions on Gender and Livelihoods

The challenges facing the enhancement of livelihoods in the targeted areas, and Pakistan in general, are daunting. The barriers to women's economic empowerment found by this research largely reflect those identified in international research: "The main factors that curtail women's ability to improve their working conditions include the socially ascribed gender division of labor which requires them to take primary responsibility for unpaid domestic work and care within the family; restricted mobility in the public domain; the unequal distribution of productive assets; barriers in financial markets; low levels of post-primary education and market-relevant skills; and lower levels of voice and bargain power."[42]

Various types of SGBV and security risks are significant deterrents for women to work outside the home, and lack of access to credit restricts their possibilities for operating or expanding their own businesses. Women of all ages try their hand at generating income at home, especially through embroidery, but a large amount of time and effort is required to earn just a few rupees. Men predominantly make more money than women and have greater opportunities in both formal and informal sectors.

Returns on investment in education are becoming more uncertain as the ranks of educated unemployed grow. It is apparent from the biographical data on FGD participants that most communities have educated men and women who are unemployed or under-employed, who represent an unexploited resource. Because of the resulting under-utilization of human capital, the society as a whole suffers—including through shortages of trained health care workers, educators, and other sorely needed service providers.

PERSI should be able to capitalize on the consistently expressed desire for work to not only add to stability but also help mitigate gender inequality and empower females. As noted previously, it is increasingly common for women to work alongside men in various sectors; this may be stimulated in part by the difficult economic situation where females are being recruited for certain types of work (textile factories, health care) more than men are. While not necessarily new to rural areas, this trend is increasingly prevalent in urban areas. Just as conflicts and natural disasters provide openings for changes in traditional gender stereotypes and roles, an

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[40] Khushhali Bank was established in 2000 as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and its Microfinance Sector Development Program, with Asian Development Bank assistance. According to the Bank's web site, "About 80 per cent of Pakistan's population does not at all have access to financial services by the commercial banks." Its mandate is to retail microfinance services and to act as a catalyst in stabilizing the nascent microfinance sector as Pakistan's first micro-finance institution. Retrieved from http://www.khushhalibank.com.pk/

[41] International Finance Corporation and World Bank (2012). Doing Business: Ease of Doing Business in Pakistan. Islamabad: IFC and World Bank. Retrieved from http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/pakistan/

[42] DFID. (2010) Key Messages from Evidence on Gender Equality. London: DFID. Retrieved from http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/gender-evidence-papers.pdf

economic downturn can do likewise, as dominant males are forced by circumstances to allow women to work and conduct business outside the home. Provided that activities and approaches are informed by rigorous ongoing gender analyses, this situation can be a boon to livelihoods or workforce development activities that seek to mitigate gender inequality and empower females.

This research has identified various factors that support a livelihoods approach that includes a focus on home-based female workers: (1) there are more women doing this work than other types of work, across all urban and peri-urban areas of the country; (2) the women who do this work are poor and they and their families will benefit from fair payment and decent work; and (3) several studies of home-workers have shown the need for action, which has generated interest among both local and international organizations.

Livelihoods programming has tremendous potential for multiplier effects, such as providing CNICs, opening bank accounts, stimulating local economies, positively shifting power dynamics at household and community levels, implementing new women-friendly laws in practical ways, providing positive role models for children, and enhancing literacy and numeracy by integrating these into skills training. Livelihoods initiatives targeting women can also have unintended adverse effects, which include exacerbating SGBV. Interviews with key informants across PERSI-targeted areas revealed that there are increasing numbers of women in government jobs, tertiary educational institutions, and medical and educational services. This has reportedly led to increased harassment of working women on the street and harassment and sexual violence at work. Clearly, there is room for workplace-based programs and structures to counter harassment and sexual violence (See Chapter 4 below for further discussion.).

Organizations such as Akhuwat have an excellent model that could be built upon, in which finance and income generation are a family affair and the intention is to empower both the wife and husband. An investigation into the actual success of this approach is worth undertaking to potentially establish some principles for empowering women financially without endangering them physically and psychologically. Other international research has shown success in projects that empower women financially while also building their self-confidence/self-esteem and specifically their knowledge about and positive skills to dismantle domestic violence in particular and SGBV more broadly. Khushhali Bank, given its branch locations in Multan, Sukkur and Karachi, also has good potential for providing much-needed financial services to both women and men, including young people.

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Findings

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has implications for PERSI broadly and for the respective sectors of interest specifically; consequently, it is being addressed as a separate aspect of gender relations, roles and norms. This study has adopted a broad definition of SGBV that encompasses all forms of violence that are related to: (1) social expectations and social positions based on gender and (2) not conforming to a socially accepted gender role. Men and women can both be perpetrators, just as both can be victims of such violence, although male-on-female violence is most prevalent in Pakistan.

Attitudes for Change

Five viewpoints relevant to countering SGBV were reiterated in FGDs:

> "You ask me how I keep going. I keep going because I must. What else is there to do except to continue to take steps forward, despite the pain? I don't want my daughter to live the way I am forced to live. I keep going for her. I will make sure change happens for her. No woman should have to live as we do."
>
> -Female key informant, Multan Town, Southern Punjab

- "I want something better for my daughter/myself." (All female FGDs)

- "Change the mindset of the men, then things can improve for us!" (All female FGDs)

- "We're concerned about safety." (All male FGDs and many female FGDs)

- "We want perpetrators of SGBV to be punished." (A majority of male FGDs)

- "Media can play a bigger and better role." (All participants in youth group discussions and key participant interviews)

Females across FGDs, regardless of their location, were well aware of the limitations on their personal agency. Young women, in particular, are eager to break from the control. They do not want to throw all traditions away, but want more say in running their lives. Even in conservative Sultanabad, women said, "Things are changing. Females are more empowered now. It is not like before."

Men as Allies

There is a strong and recurring view among female FGD participants and most key informants that men have to be actively engaged in order for Pakistan to develop equitably. There are many examples of females successfully engaging with male guardians and negotiating more freedom, including in Sultanabad. One young woman in Lodhran District, who has a bachelor degree in science, said excitedly, "Now, my parents have changed their minds regarding female education and my father has become open-minded. If fathers can be changed, then society will change!"

There is some evidence that the importance of working with males to counter gender-based inequities and violence is becoming more generally recognized in Pakistan. Youth and development initiatives, such as those by Rozan, focus on engaging young males in social justice and human rights. Mass movements like the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum with its majority female members are important levers, as are individual national role models like SGBV survivors, such as Ms. Mukhtaran Mai and Ms. Sughra Solangi (the head of Marvi Rural Development Organization).[43]

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[43] Rozan can be found at: www.rozan.org. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum is found at: www.pff.org.pk Marvi Rural Development Organization is found at: www.mrdopk.org.

Endemic Problem

Our research underlines the scope and scale of some types of SGBV,[44] as well as the forces at work to keep SGBV structures in place. SGBV is thought to be particularly prevalent in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, including domestic violence and honor killings. Males have an overwhelming level of control over virtually every aspect of a woman's

> "Men are not only the predominant perpetrators of violence against women, but their decision-making roles and powers in the economic, political and social spheres necessitate their commitment to eradicating violence against women. ….working with men to end violence should be viewed as part of an overall goal of achieving gender equality, meaning that working with men is complementary to empowering women and achieving gender equality as a whole."
>
> -Elimination of Violence against Women in Partnership with Men, UNESCAP, 2003.

life, from what she wears and who she sees, to whether she lives or dies, inherits, is sold, is beaten, or works outside the home. In this type of environment, combating the systemic violence against women is especially challenging given that many people – men and women – believe men have an inherent right to commit such violence. These comments by Dr. Yasmin Abdullah (not her real name) are illustrative of the sentiments expressed by most females and some males in the FGDs:

> I am an educated, well-off woman. But, I do not know what empowerment feels like. …I can drive, but I cannot just grab my car keys and go. I can come to a meeting with you, but I cannot just run out of the house when it suits me. I have to wait until my husband is out of the house and my mother-in-law is asleep so that I can slip away. I am a university professor in gender studies and every day I suffer the taunts and catcalls of young men lounging around with nothing to do. I can teach students, but I know that about 70 percent of the females in my university have been subjected to sexual violence…by their professors and their male class mates—and there is nothing I can do and nowhere they can go!

Our research shows that family and community structures exercise an overwhelming level of control to keep males and females in conformity with traditional gender norms, and that substantial personal integrity and will are needed for a male to stand up to such pressures. Female in-laws often become complicit in this dynamic at household level as well. Many male FGD participants expressed feelings of helplessness to protect their families and themselves from harm, in light of these pressures.

Workplace Violence

Violence against women in the workplace remains a significant and under-recognized problem. Anecdotal evidence of sexual abuse and coercion in the workplace was repeatedly provided by both females and males. Nearly all 38 female FGDs as well as CSO personnel described sexual harassment and abuse of women on their way to work (mainly by younger, unemployed males) and in the workplace. Fear of this type of violence and abuse results in men severely restricting mobility of female relatives.

Child Sexual Abuse

Our research found some evidence of sexual abuse of students by teachers and older male students. One individual schooled in the *madrasah* system believed that over one-third of the male students in his *madrasah* have been victimized. This view was reinforced by other key informants (who also mentioned abuse of female *madrasah* students) and in FGD groups. Several participants also told of sexual abuses by religious leaders.

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[44] World Bank. (2004) Violence Against Women and Impediments in Access to Justice. Islamabad: World Bank. According to the article, Madadgaar statistics show 35,080 reported cases of violence against women between 2000 and 2004. "Madadgaar believes that this is just the tip of the iceberg as the real magnitude of abuse against women is never fully reported or exposed. The quantum of actual cases of violence against women and children is, according to even conservative estimates, ten times higher than reported."

Effect on Males

SGBV also damages the male population, although this phenomenon is seldom discussed. Constantly witnessing a range of covert and overt physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence against females, and in some cases being victimized themselves, keeps men locked in a cycle of conditioning that is difficult to break.[45] There is an extensive body of research on the personal and intergenerational effects of SGBV as well as the productivity and health costs to individuals and society. The increasing militarization and "weaponization" in Karachi is driving whole communities indoors, erecting even higher barriers for women as fear for personal safety escalates and men feel increasingly vulnerable in their role as protectors and providers.

Access to Justice

Under-reporting of all types of SGBV is common, for reasons including shame on the part of the victim and her/his family, lack of structures to prosecute perpetrators, use of customary justice mechanisms, and a tendency to ostracize the victim. One Karachi younger female FGD group remarked that 90 percent of SGBV incidents are not reported. "The government and its institutions forsake victims of SGBV; there is no mechanism that has come forward to stop the violence or support the victims." All FGD groups observed that there is "no justice" for SGBV victims; moreover, few systems are in place to assist victims with non-justice related needs.

Some initiatives are underway to try to address these gaps in the targeted areas. The Punjab Gender Action Reform Program is providing entry points for improving government responsiveness. Punjab also utilizes and is trying to improve its district level grid of shelter homes.

Conclusions on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

International research has established the link between SGBV and arrested development on a societal level. Our research shows the extent to which SGBV disrupts many individual lives, including those of victims, perpetrators, family members, and those who witness the violence on a daily basis. In Pakistan, SGBV is both the seminal expression and a cause of gender inequality and female (and male) oppression. The forces of SGBV inhibit girls and women from developing in virtually every aspect of life: from the exercise of personal agency in even minute aspects of existence, to raising one's voice to claim legally enshrined rights. The impact of domestic violence, in particular, reaches beyond the mental and physical damage to the individual woman and affects her children's development and Pakistan's economic development.

The prevalence of SGBV has restricted the ability of women to develop in "normal" times of negative peace; in an era of heightened insecurity, the impact on society becomes more insidious. In a context that has seen (1) a rapid increase in the availability of weapons, (2) an escalation of militarization, (3) deliberately exacerbated inter-group tensions, and (4) the normalization of many forms of violence, especially against women and children, it is reasonable to expect that instability will continue to increase.

Despite the challenges, international research shows that programming for SGBV, as a stand-alone initiative or integrated into sectoral initiatives, can make a difference. As a fundamental element in this equation, it is crucial that efforts to promote stabilization take SGBV into account across all activities, and that they incorporate specific efforts to reduce SGBV by mitigating both its causes and effects. The following quote provides a relevant caution:

> Denial and minimization remain among the most common impediments to the effective implementation of sanctions and protections. The realities of gender-based violence continue to be denied; that it is a phenomenon that traverses the continuum of private to

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[45] Ibid, World Bank. (2004) Madadgaar data showed a total of 12,622 cases of violence against men between 2000 and 2004, over 60% of which were suicides and suicide attempts.

public space, manifests across the life-course of those it targets, is perpetrated institutionally as well as individually and, to a greater or lesser extent, is normal and not exceptional. Not only is such violence a fact of daily life for its targets; it is normalized to the extent that there is a degree of acceptability of, complicity with…such violence.[46]

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[46] Greig, A., Basnyat, A. & Lang, J. (2008) Men and the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence: A Conceptual Framework for Policy Change, Partners for Prevention. http://www.partners4prevention.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy_change.pdf

GENDER, PEACE AND CONFLICT

Findings

Disruptors

Disruptors of the peace most frequently named across FGD groups are:

- Government (all PERSI targeted sites and especially Karachi sites)

- Political parties (mostly Karachi locations)

- Unemployed young males (all PERSI targeted sites)

- Drug-abusing males (all PERSI targeted sites)

- Other ethnic groups (all locations in Karachi)

- Feuding tribal groups (parts of Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab)

- Feudal landlords (parts of Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab)

- The police (all PERSI targeted sites)

Government and parties in the coalition government are widely accused by citizens of complicity and dereliction of duty. Several key informants noted that political tussles for control of Karachi have become criminalized and are linked to land supply, extortion and harassment of businesses. The perceived involvement of political parties in violence has led to the erosion of trust among constituents.

Young males with little to do and no family of their own were mentioned repeatedly as being disruptive elements. Aside from unemployed and drug-abusing young males, communities in the rural parts of Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab appear to be united against a common enemy—the feudal landlord—who supersedes any intra-community differences. Many Northern Sindh and some Southern Punjab FGDs mentioned the increasing ferocity of tribal feuds. In Karachi, the hub of ethno-political violence, women and men in FGDs expressed negative perceptions about other ethnic groups. For example, Mohajir women in Orangi blame Pashtun migrants for most of the killings, and Pashtun women in Korangi blame the Mohajirs. However, these perceptions are usually accompanied by the sentiment that the ethnic/sectarian issues are instigated by political parties and criminal gangs.

Despite claims to the contrary by some key informants in Southern Punjab, there is considerable evidence in literature[47] of pockets of intolerance in Southern Punjab. Most key informants believe that tolerance of diversity has historically been and is still higher in Northern Sindh due to its Sufi roots and traditions. However, they note that anti-Hindu wall chalking has begun and some Hindu families in Jacobadad District are reportedly planning to migrate to India out of fear. Some key informants in Northern Sindh attributed this increasing intolerance to the upsurge in the number of *madrasahs* under Jamiat e Ulama e Islamiah.

Levels of Violence

All Karachi FGDs noted that levels of violence had risen dramatically in the past decade, and told stories of their ongoing struggle to live in the midst of actual and threatened violence. One Orangi group felt that the main victims are women, young men and children, and said that women get caught in the cross-fire of gun battles. Some female FGD participants in Karachi believe that incidences of rape have increased in the last

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[47] Yusuf, M. (2011). A Society on the Precipice? Examining the Prospects of Youth Radicalization in Pakistan. In M. Kugelman & R. M. Hathaway (Eds.), Reaping the Dividend: Overcoming Pakistan' s Demographic Challenges. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

few years. One key informant noted that in the past few months, the bodies of at least 10 tortured and sexually-violated children have been found in Karachi. Many older women FGD participants in Southern Punjab ascribed the violence to poverty and unemployment. While there is evidence of rising radicalization in parts of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh, FGD participants there did not describe any overt violence related to violent extremism and insurgency.

Understanding of Positive Peace

All FGDs were aware of women's security and protection needs, however, SGBV was only raised as a peace and conflict issue when participants noted that unemployment is causing some men to hang around, taunting females or turning to drugs, and then get violent toward their female relatives. The majority of FGD participants said their area was "peaceful", regardless of the levels of SGBV; they did not realize that the prevalence of SGBV indicated a lack of a positive peace.

Women's Role in Conflict

Nearly all FGD participants expressed the view that as individuals, there was very little they could do towards mitigating conflict. For the most part, they felt that their lives are controlled by forces larger than they can tackle. Younger and older women have largely remained on the sidelines of conflict and peace issues in PERSI targeted areas. Their level of awareness and resistance was found to be low. The USAID document, Women in Conflict, explains that: "Although women's roles vary in every conflict, they generally fall into the following categories:

- Agents of change

- Active participants/combatants

- Supporting participants or shields (forced or voluntary camp followers, cooks, wives, slaves, etc.)

- Victims and spoils of war

- Newly responsible care providers."

There is little evidence of women's direct involvement in violence in PERSI targeted areas. Except the first (agents of positive change) and fourth (victims and spoils of war) categories, the categories above do not fit easily for these areas, given the lack of sustained violent conflict/post-conflict scenarios. Few women could identify any role for themselves in building peace and harmony, and many expressed feelings of helplessness in the face of conflict. There is clear evidence that females are increasingly victims and spoils of war, particularly in Karachi, where women's bodies are used to humiliate the enemy.

Radicalization of Males

Men and their displays of masculinity tend to play a central role in violent conflict around the world. There is evidence that aggressive and dominant behaviors, common features of masculinity displays, have been driving radicalization in some PERSI targeted locations. In Karachi, both younger and older men have been involved in ethno-political violence. In addition to being perpetrators, many men have suffered from the violence and conflict in Karachi, including loss of livelihoods, increases in the cost of living, and increases in fear and intimidation. There is anecdotal evidence that medical and other debt can cause desperation among men, to the point that they become attracted to the solidarity and comfort of belonging to a militant organization.

Analysis of FGD data shows that younger men are more conservative in their views than younger women, and educated male youth are more conservative than their educated female counterparts. However, recent research suggests that the overall conservative nature of Pakistani society, including its youth, should not be conflated with extremism. From an analysis of four surveys, Yusuf concluded that overall youth sentiment is

decidedly anti-extremist; most youth see extremism as a real danger to the country's future and believe they have a role to play in countering its menace.[48]

Networks and Policies

Women-led networks in Northern Sindh have contributed to peace-building, and there are examples of females playing a part in conflict resolution. For example, Zohra Bibi leads a network of 22 CSOs contributing to providing security in part of Northern Sindh. In one Karachi FGD, female participants noted that they try to resolve women's issues among themselves because male involvement can have very bad results for the women. Several female FGD participants noted that "if females stopped their persecutory behavior toward other females, this would have a positive effect on women's empowerment."

There is some evidence that educated young women and men are joining youth networks in both Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh. Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, Islamia University in Bahawalpur, and the Institute for Business Administration in Sukkur all have student and alumni groups. Youth groups in even the most conservative districts like Jacobabad are connectors, especially for young women, and spaces for awareness-raising within social networks. Other networks that support positive youth role models include the British Council-supported networks with more than 200,000 members across the country, and its young leaders program.

The Government of Punjab recently established a youth policy, which includes promotion of inter-faith and intra-faith harmony, and an accompanying strategy for its implementation. Priorities are social and economic empowerment of youth. A multi-stakeholder Punjab Youth Commission has been proposed to oversee implementation of the policy, monitor performance, and provide overall guidance. The Government of Sindh is working with a CSO to formulate a similar youth policy.

Role of the Police

In spite of the police being viewed as disruptors of peace, several Karachi FGDs described how the police and Rangers can make a positive difference. A very knowledgeable key informant[49] provided solid insights into the workings of the law enforcement sector and detailed ways that Sindh Province is seeking to improve law enforcement, including establishment of district level human rights cells, trainings on domestic violence and prevention of honor killing, and a handbook on laws related to the protection of women. He noted the importance of indigenous solutions such as the Sindh Police Honor Killings Project, under which police traveled to distant jurisdictions and dialogued with local leadership to promote change. The Citizen-Police Liaison Committees in Karachi are well-respected for the work they did in the past, though current views are more mixed.

However, many other informants described the police and Rangers as inadequate and/or colluding with criminals and/or the powerful elites. The common feeling in most FGDs is similar to that expressed by young male FGD participants in Bilal Colony, Korangi Town, Karachi: "There is not any department or organization that is working to stop the violent activities in our area. The response by the community and justice system to the different forms of violence is not admirable. Convicts often buy their freedom. Once, a police officer's cell phone was stolen. In that case, the police took strict action against the thieves, and put them in lock-up. Violence prevention is only possible if police perform their duties honestly."

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[48] Ibid, Yusuf, M. (2011).

[49] This senior individual (name withheld) in the Sindh Police mentioned several notable projects including SPARC (a police capacity-building project), the Prevention of Violence Against Women Project and the UNDP Gender Justice Program (both funded by DFID) and the U.S. Embassy Police Assistance Program. He suggests focusing on community policing as a much-neglected area, de-weaponization and capacity-building (sensitizing the top ranks, but focusing on police station house officers).

Conclusions on Gender, Peace and Conflict

While all focus groups identified types and sources of violence in their communities, only those in Karachi indicated any sense of a general and pervasive lack of peacefulness. In fact, PERSI targeted sites fall along a stabilization continuum that goes from an uneasy negative peace[50] in much of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh to war-zone-like/violence-affected neighborhoods in Karachi. There is, therefore, no single theoretical conflict and peace framework that fits the range of scenarios. Indications of a pre-conflict situation[51] include: (1) the lack of recognition that women's rights are human rights and (2) increases in gender-based violence, among others. There is evidence of these two elements in the PERSI targeted sites, but these areas do not fit any definition of sustained violent conflict or post-conflict scenarios on which to base analysis.

It is clear that these communities are characterized by deeply entrenched cultures of violence, especially, but not exclusively, violence directed at women. However, no clear linkage is evident in the data between these conditions and women's role in stabilization. More research into how females (and males) see women's peace-building and peace-keeping roles is needed to identify ways of engaging them and overcoming their sense of helplessness.

There is statistical evidence of a connection between populations with a high proportion of youth and risk of armed conflict; however, the evidence is far from proving causality.[52] The negative push and pull factors generally cited in the literature as responsible for (male) youth radicalization are all present in Pakistan, especially in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh. Negative push factors, such as relative deprivation and inadequate education systems, increase the likelihood of radicalization. Both educated and uneducated young men may be at risk of becoming radicalized due to the lack of employment opportunities, which prevents many from moving ahead with their lives. On the other hand, pull factors such as the extensive militant presence and militants' recruitment tactics are the channels whereby young men are actually brought into the extremist fold to pursue violent agendas.

International research is identifying links between insecurity and gender imbalances. The ratio of males to females in the overall population of Pakistan was estimated at 106 (males per 100 females) in 2011; it ranks among the top 15 countries in the world in this indicator. Hudson and den Boer describe a scenario that certainly fits Pakistan when they predict that in societies with rising sex ratios (which has been linked to sex discrimination and gender-based violence[53]).

> "…crime rates will increase; the proportion of violent crime will increase; rates of drug use, drug smuggling, weapons smuggling, trafficking, and prostitution will increase. The society might develop domestic and international chattel markets that kidnap and traffic women within the country and across borders."[54]

Discussions with educated youth in Multan, Sukkur and Jacobabad Districts indicated that the lack of aware, educated and content male youth in PERSI targeted locations is one of the most important barriers to countering radicalization, violent extremism and potential conflict. That conclusion is supported by the overall findings of this study. Winthrop and Graff note that "Both global econometric research on education

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[50] According to John Galtung (1964), negative peace is "the absence of (direct, overt) violence, absence of war" and positive peace is "the integration of human society".

[51] Canadian International Development Agency. (2001) Gender Equality Peace-Building Operational Framework. Canada: CIDA. Retrieved from http://www.mineaction.org/downloads/1/C-Gender-EN.pdf

[52] Hilker, L. M., and Fraser, E. (2009) Youth Exclusion, Violence, Conflict and Fragile States: Report Prepared for DFID's Equity and Rights Team. Social Development. Available at http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/CON66.pdf

[53] A high ratio of males to females suggests that sex discrimination, including some form(s) of GBV, is being perpetrated against females in that society; forms of discrimination can range from malnutrition of girl children to honor killings of adolescents.

[54] Hudson, Valerie M. and den Boer, Andrea M. (2005) Missing Women and Bare Branches: Gender Balance and Conflict. ECSP REPORT Issue 11. http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Hudson%2526denBoer.pdf

and conflict and Pakistani scholarship call attention to the role of limited access to and quality of schooling in fueling large-scale violence."[55]

Investment to boost the education levels and productive employment of young women and young men is essential for stabilization, but for different reasons—educated women able to earn a decent living are integrally linked to a nation's development and young men who are able to find gainful and appropriate (in their eyes) employment are able to be productive, to establish families of their own, meet obligations to the wider society and, presumably, will be less likely to join or support destabilizing forces and activities.

There was little evidence in our research of radio and other media being exploited by government or donors—whether to provide a counter-narrative to violent extremism, intolerance and disempowering structures; to better inform women and men; or to provide learning content for children who cannot access schooling. Awareness of alternate religious narratives, of "positive peace", and of women's potential roles as peace-builders is lacking; negative perceptions about other ethnicities are widespread. According to journalist and strategic communications expert, Amir Jahangir, "While providing critical journalism is important, it is just as important to provide a platform from which we can set good examples. We must nurture hope by reporting, for instance, on the tireless work of the health authorities and on the student groups who fight against extremism in all its forms at school."

Many positive peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives emerged through this research. Youth and women-led networks, mass movements such as *Aman Ittehad,* and youth debates sponsored by CSOs, as well as ICTs (including mobile telephony, Internet, radio and television) have great potential as entry points for contributing to a positive peace. The informants' generalized support for education and optimistic and positive opinion about their neighborhoods or communities are positive signs; these attitudes can be used as rallying platforms for civic actions for peace.

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[55] Winthrop, R., and Graff, C. (2010) Beyond Madrassahs: Assessing the Links Between Education and Militancy in Pakistan. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Center for Universal Education. Available at: http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2010/06/pakistan-education-winthrop

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS[56]

Findings

Pakistan has a vibrant civil society, consisting of a wide variety of organizations with diverse sizes, levels of formality, and purposes. Broadly speaking, CSOs range from:

- Informal, loosely-affiliated groups of people (academics, philanthropists, etc.) with an interest in a particular issue

- Unregistered and registered community-based organizations (including Citizen Community Boards)

- Registered, localized, and relatively small CSOs that work in one or several districts

- Registered, regional and/or national large CSOs that work on a wide scale

- Mass movements

This study focused on the category of registered, localized and relatively small CSOs, especially those that are active in the PERSI targeted areas.[57] For convenience, they are simply referred to in this report as "localized CSOs."

Organizational Characteristics

Localized CSOs tend to have one or two offices based in one or two districts. They typically have large boards of directors (10-20 members) and small numbers of staff (five to ten), and tend to rely heavily on volunteers. They work in a wide range of thematic areas, such as disaster risk management, child rights and protection, safe migration and human trafficking, primary health care, sustainable livelihoods and governance. Most of these CSOs have gender as a cross-cutting theme, and peace-building and social harmony are often mentioned among their goals.

All of the interviewed CSO personnel noted that they are able to implement innovative and effective initiatives; documents found in their offices and site visits by the team supported that claim. One prominent example is the Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization (PRWSWO) based in Bahawalpur District; it took on human trafficking in Rahimyar Khan District, known to be a dominant source of boys and girls trafficked to the Middle East as camel jockeys, as well as in Bahawalpur District. The organization worked in conjunction with the French NGO, Groupe Développement, and the European Commission; it also partnered with the International Organization for Migration to create counter-human trafficking district task forces.

Ways of Working

Relationships with Government

Several modes of working with government are evident within the overall civil society landscape in Pakistan. They can be broadly described as follows.

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[56] This section is not meant to provide an in-depth discussion of the civil society landscape in Pakistan or the targeted areas. The team was asked to concentrate on the meso- and micro-levels, therefore it focused on localized CSOs.

[57] Profiles of the CSOs interviewed are included in the District Profiles Annex.

- ***Avoiders.*** CSOs (including international NGOs) that bypass government altogether, only interacting to the extent necessary. The team did not come across many examples of this type in the targeted areas.

- ***Chasers.*** Generally larger national CSOs that have the structures, resources, and track records to compete for bigger pots of money from donors. They tend to work in parallel to government structures and systems; the degree of interaction is a function of project design. The chasers can also be localized CSOs that try to meet the requirements of larger CSOs and international NGOs as sub-contractors.

- ***Bottom-Up Collaborators.*** Usually localized CSOs. They come up with analyses of issues affecting the area and fashion responses, then approach the district administration/government to see if they can generate interest in collaboration and/or funding.

- ***Top-Down Collaborators.*** Localized and other CSOs that are approached by the government/administration for various types of help, such as training government personnel, quality assurance and independent monitoring and evaluation, community mobilizers, and service delivery.

The CSO personnel interviewed all felt that the collaboration models were the best, as did several key informants who regularly carry out research on civil society development.

Relationships Among CSOs

Networking and coordination among localized CSOs is variable in the targeted areas. Those in some districts such as Bahawalpur demonstrate very close relationships, whereas in other districts such as Sukkur, many appear to be unfamiliar with each other. No instances were found in Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh of localized CSOs forming a consortium or working strategically together. District government personnel do not seem to have taken on the responsibility for ensuring a strategic use of these local assets.

Large national or regional CSOs maintain databases of locally-embedded CSOs and even community-based organizations (CBOs), and frequently have offices in many districts and agencies. International NGOs and development companies use those larger CSOs as sub-contractors or grantees to implement projects. In turn, these larger CSOs liaise and contract with localized CSOs, in order to draw on their local networks; their understanding of local socio-cultural, economic, and religious landscapes; their knowledge of communities' strengths and weaknesses; and their locally-tested practical development experience.

Localized CSOs in all 15 PERSI sites emphasized their need for organizational capacity development. Personnel described the challenges with scaling-up promising initiatives due to lack of sufficient capacity and funding. Although larger CSO partners are supposed to build their capacity, participants said that in reality, this does not happen. Localized CSOs' perceive that the larger CSOs with whom they work use up a great deal of money on flashy publications, administrative overhead and other hidden costs, so that the project funding that does trickle down is minimal. This makes it difficult for localized CSOs to squeeze out their own operating costs and provide support to very grassroots CBOs that also participate.

Ways of Working in the Field

Most localized CSO personnel see their organizations as more political than larger national CSOs; for their organizations, "community mobilization" is a term with political connotations. Their concerns revolve around the equitable distribution of economic benefits through land reform, water and resource distribution and reduction of defense spending. They tend to be more confrontational in their conversations about development; a common reaction to questions about social development was, "What do the federal government and Islamabad people know about the problems in Southern Punjab/Northern Sindh/Karachi?" Localized CSOs feel that larger CSOs are donor agenda followers and are therefore less willing to challenge the status quo. Along with their donors, those organizations steer away from political debate and advocacy,

and thus seldom engage in truly transformative community development and mobilization; their emphasis is merely on forming community groups and establishing contacts with the government line departments for service delivery.

Ways of working at the local level vary, however, most localized CSOs described a progressive and participatory engagement approach through which they try to stimulate the development of community-based organizations and Citizen Community Boards, building their capacity to the point that they can register and apply for development funds. CSOs commonly use community visioning exercises, followed by participatory planning of an initial small-scale social project, transparent implementation, and finally evaluation of results and fulfillment of community commitments. If funding permits, a successful project may be followed up with a larger initiative.

CSOs make concerted efforts to observe cultural proprieties, but they stress that their aim is to help all citizens in the community to benefit from activities. Older men with a leadership position or other type of status are generally approached first regarding the introduction of development activities. In the feudal belt,[58] CSOs stressed the need to approach the feudal landlord and get "permission" to work in a given community.

Knowledge Base

All CSOs, large and small, demonstrated a good understanding of a range of issues and local populations in their areas of focus. CSOs tend to undertake some form of gender analysis prior to designing and implementing interventions, and the close connection of localized CSOs to the grassroots lets them monitor effects and adjust as needed. PRWSWO was cognizant of various gender issues and challenges in Bahawalpur and Rahimyar Khan Districts, including forced marriages, trafficking of women within the country and beyond, early marriages, and harassment at work places.

PRWSWO undertook a baseline study of education in its two target districts and then presented the findings to local district administrations, along with a plan for solving some of the issues identified. The research undertaken by localized CSOs is rarely, if ever, effectively disseminated beyond the organization itself and perhaps the district administration office. The interface between localized and larger CSOs and between localized CSOs and academic institutions in relation to research is limited. There are some exceptions, such as the Aga Khan University Department of Behavioral and Health Sciences, which works with localized CSOs to introduce action research methods, then capture the learning and feed it into their coursework.

CSO Advice for USAID/PERSI

The consistent advice for PERSI from many CSO (and government) personnel is well captured in the following set of illustrative quotes from group discussions and key participant interviews.

On the Strategic Level

> "Use the approach of the Norwegians. When they plan, they have extensive meetings with our five organizations. They don't tell us what can be done, we tell them. They ask us what is good for our areas and what the best ways will be for achieving the aims."

> "Be serious. U.S. people are not very much serious. They are just giving money. They are not results-oriented. For example, you are giving money to the (name omitted) organization. But they are very good at putting things onto glossy paper with nice photographs and stories. But, what change do you see on the ground?"

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[58] Those parts of Southern Punjab and Northern Sindh that are controlled by a handful of wealthy families who own huge tracts of land and perpetuate a feudal system that relies heavily on bonded labor.

"Do not reinforce existing, destructive power structures but work with them so that you can change them from the inside out. There are many paid and unpaid activists, both males and females, in communities. Draw them out."

"Work from the bottom up. We know the people and the contexts. We know what can be pushed and how far and how even sensitive matters can be addressed in a way that doesn't get people killed."

"Don't work like a bank. Banks just want to have a few big accounts, because these are easier to manage. But what happens to the small account holders?"

"Help the grassroots community-based organizations to proliferate as a wedge against violent extremism and insurgency."

On Partnering

"Take time to identify the good organizations to work with."

"USAID needs to revise its conditions for obtaining funding. Don't just look at the track record of the organization; also look at their staff …see the work of an organization first-hand. Don't base everything on what you see on paper!"

"Yes, there needs to be strict application regulations and clear financial management conditions, but there shouldn't be any hidden costs. Everyone should know exactly what is going into programming costs and into administrative costs."

"You must work with local administration and when local level government is re-established, it must be involved. CSOs should not be taking the place of government to deliver services. Maybe in an emergency that is necessary, but when we partner with government, that is the best way."

"We can work with you. But it is safer if it isn't advertised."

"Build our organizational capacity so that we can be more effective."

Conclusions on Civil Society Organizations

There is vibrancy in Pakistani society at the grassroots level and across communities, which can be built upon for common purposes of positive peace, stability, gender equality and female empowerment. CSOs have workable strategies for tapping into that energy in ways that produce tangible results, while avoiding pitfalls that can stymie initiatives devised by outsiders. The interventions with the greatest evidence of success are those underpinned by: a clear vision of and approach to community engagement and development; a solid understanding of and commitment to empowerment and gender equality; and systematic implementation in coordination with local government authorities.

Localized CSOs exhibit a strong commitment to social justice and human rights, including addressing issues of gender inequality and female disempowerment. Their personnel tend to understand effective methods for working with communities and explained how a rights-based agenda informs their work. Their approach to community development is consistent with Freire's tenets of critical pedagogy and "conscientization" (*conscientizacao)*, which have been used across Central and South America and within Pakistan itself as a framework for individual and community engagement. However, these CSOs also tend to claim that they can do everything in an effort to stay afloat financially; in fact, they suffer from considerable gaps in their organizational development. Variations in the CSO landscape need to be well understood, and capacity deficits recognized and addressed in a comprehensive way.

When local level administration/government and CSOs interact in ways that benefit each entity as well as the target communities, there is a better chance of positive and sustainable results. Local government-sanctioned structures such as CCBs are under-utilized resources that could play an important role in facilitating enhanced cooperation between civil society and government. However, partnerships and collaborations need to be based on sound, clearly articulated strategies and operational plans that include mechanisms for dealing with internal conflict.

The funding bodies most respected by civil society are those that: engage for the long haul in a target area; establish trust relationships with knowledgeable individuals and committed change agents within government and civil society at local level; and positively exploit effective bottom-up solutions. A small amount of funding paired with clarity of vision and a strengths-based approach can bring about significant positive changes in a relatively short time, especially in a context where the human development indicators are so low and the demand so high.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Women are clearly disenfranchised in the PERSI targeted areas, particularly younger women. They lack opportunities for independent decision-making, non-traditional livelihoods, education, freedom of movement and active participation in their communities. Forms of SGBV are over-riding barriers to empowering females. However, women's opportunities are changing, especially with respect to livelihood and educational opportunities, most noticeably in Karachi and Southern Punjab. Women in Northern Sindh appear to remain more constrained by traditional social structures. Women, their male allies, advocates, government, CSOs, and conscientious and informed donors are increasingly widening the cracks in power and patriarchy in Pakistan.

That being said, virtually every aspect of a female's life in the targeted areas is still overseen and controlled by one or more males, therefore, closing the gender gap cannot happen without engaging proactively with men and the dominant male mindset and behaviors. Men, especially younger ones, also perceive some degree of exclusion and powerlessness, often linked to unemployment or being subject to the control of feudal landlords or political forces. There is a risk that a real or perceived increase in opportunities for women may exacerbate men's disenfranchisement, potentially undermining efforts to empower women and contribute to stabilization.

Every aspect of any intervention along the humanitarian and development assistance continuum has an unavoidable, but largely predictable effect on gender relations, roles and norms. Provided there is an in-depth understanding of those relations, roles and norms and a thorough knowledge of international lessons learned, much of the harm can be avoided or mitigated and benefits can be multiplied. "Understanding the culture and currently prescribed role of women [and men] in a society is absolutely necessary when working on gender-specific [or any] programs. This remains true during conflict and in its aftermath. Women's [and men's] role and status in society will determine best practices and the appropriate means of intervention in order to empower—rather than endanger —women."[59]

A stabilization initiative can have a far-reaching immediate and future effect on closing the gaps in gender equality and female empowerment, provided that it works through culturally viable positive forms of resistance that are already present. At the meso- and micro-levels, individuals and communities are solving their own problems, often with great success. A critical eye for identifying gaps and opportunities to create multiplier effects is essential; by monitoring different strategies for collaboration at the local level, those that demonstrate the greatest promise can be expanded and replicated.

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[59] USAID (2007) Women and Conflict: An Introductory Guide to Programming. Washington, DC: USAID. Available at: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/cmm_women_and_conflict_toolkit_december_2006.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this section are relatively broad in scope; they reflect the top priorities for USAID and PERSI, but do not touch on all of the details that may be useful in actual program planning and implementation. Therefore, a detailed description of supplementary recommendations and opportunities has been provided in Annex 6.

Within USAID

Strategic Level

- Develop a PERSI Gender Strategy, and underpin all programming with in-depth gender analysis and strategy on a sector-specific basis.[60]

- Identify and articulate a clear operational approach for applying the Automated Directives System guidelines that are specific to gender integration.

- Collaborate across sectors and programs to extend the effects of sector-specific interventions in creative and unconventional ways.

- Analyze the experience of other international donors in promotion of gender equity and female empowerment (and related themes) in Pakistan, in order to profit from positive lessons learned.[61]

- Strengthen social science research (including original research, micro-studies, action research and impact evaluation) on gender and development to generate rigorous data to inform programming. Use, support and build on existing research by civil society at local levels.

- Craft the approach in Karachi with care, recognizing that the levels of violence, uncertainty and fear are akin to those of a war zone and are affecting all facets of the lives of men, women, boys and girls, while eroding trust in government and in fellow city dwellers.

Programmatic Level

- Engage with males, including religious and traditional leaders, and embed opportunities for critical thinking about gender roles, relations and norms within all programming.

- Create spaces and secure places for positive interaction, play and learning within communities, including work places that are women-friendly and minimize risk of SGBV.

- Widely disseminate a strong counter-narrative to violent extremism, insurgency, intolerance and patriarchy, especially via radio, targeting youth as well as other audiences Use ICTs extensively across sectors to support peaceful social mobilization. The differences in access to and uses of technologies by various age and sex groups need to be thoroughly understood and possible SGBV repercussions mitigated.

- Address the need for safe, secure, affordable and female-friendly transport through a variety of configurations. Examples include public-private partnership to provide bus services for students and teachers at school start and end times, and transport for regular citizens the rest of the day; and expansion of Karachi's 'Pink Bus' initiative.

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[60] Annexes 8 and 9 contain tools that can be useful in analyzing the gender-responsiveness of existing or planned programming.

[61] Annex 7 contains a brief description of the most relevant interventions by the international community.

- Focus on female and male youth across all PERSI programming to channel their energy, hope and drive in positive ways, many of which can be low-cost but highly-effective. Specifically, support youth development networks to involve youth creatively as learners, doers, advocates and leaders (for pay and as volunteers); align with the Government of Punjab Youth Policy and the upcoming Government of Sindh Youth Policy, and explore ways of collaborating with new structures linked with those policies.

- Expand training and employment opportunities in education and health sectors, as a means of enhancing coverage of quality services while increasing options for gainful employment in locations near home, especially for young women. In parallel, work to make home-based income generation strategies for women more accessible and lucrative, including through skills training, credit and marketing support.

Working with CSOs and Government

- Identify and utilize a clear framework for working with local levels of administration and government. Specifically, work through the District Coordination Officer and sector-specific district personnel; in Southern Punjab, engage with the district-level gender specialists; and identify ways to help the government of Sindh move ahead with its Gender Reform Action Program.

- Develop a clear and consistent protocol for community engagement and empowerment based on successful local models that are applying international best practices in participatory development.

- Identify, support and capitalize on existing local "forces for good", putting them at the forefront rather than USAID. Specifically, work with localized CSOs, CCBs (potentially) and Citizens' Alliances, as well as district level government, in a bottom-up approach to improve the enabling environment and service delivery. Identify the most promising local initiatives and build on them, working with local stakeholders to build genuine capacity and manage scale-up.

- Utilize the larger, more established national CSOs to (1) support the organizational development of localized organizations and (2) carry out training, monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance and "watch-dog" tasks for government.