The influence of extremism ideology on young people behavior in Baghdad

Baghdad Women Association
in corporation with
I Mentor
the Essence of
Coaching and Development
The influence of extremism ideology on young people behavior in Baghdad (Field study)
Project Name: - Potential of young people as Peace Builders.

Executive Authority: - Baghdad Women Association.

Supporting Authority: - Kvinna till Kvinna.

Place of implementation: - Baghdad/ Iraq.


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Baghdad Women Association

BWA is a local and non-governmental independent organization that was founded in Baghdad in 2004 and registered at the NGO Department under No.(1017090).

Our Vision:
Combat all forms of violence against women and girls and ensuring legal protection, equality, respect and all human rights for women and girls.

Our Mission:
Work to reduce violence against women and girls by providing all necessary support services to survivors of such violence, advocating for the implementation of appropriate laws, policies and government programs as well as working to increase women’s political participation through leadership development, knowledge and capacity building.

Our Strategy:

1- Protecting Women:
- Provide free medical, legal and social support services to survivors of violence through the listening centers.
- Enhancing the hotline service to enable reaching to big number of survivors of violence.
- Developing the referral system in all Baghdad through capacity building and coordination mechanisms between the main service providers.
- Raise the level of awareness and building capacities to resist to violence and violence depending on the sex and insure preventing violence from all members of the society and stakeholders.
- Creation of studies and researches on cases concerning the fear of women protection.
- Advocacy to enhance the legal framework and ensure women protection and survivors of violence.
2- **Women Participation:**
- Empowering women to participate in the economic activities through the management training courses and skill training (computers, language and vocational training).
- Enhancing the economical participation through advocacy and coordinating with Ministries and companies.
- Empowering women to participate in decision making at the local community level and the political level through training courses and knowledge.
- Enhancing the political participation for women through advocacy.

3- **Women and Peace:**
- Raise the awareness level for Ministries, local council, community police and NGOs on UNSCR1325, INAP1325.
- Maintain dialogue and advocacy efforts towards the Iraqi government and International organizations to enhance the implementation of UNSCR1325 in Iraq.
- Insure exchange of experience in working on INAP1325 with other organizations and stakeholders at the regional level.
- Capacity building for women to participate in dialogue to enhance and ease social cohesion.
- Enhancing integration and participation of women in peace processes and local national reconciliation.
- Conduct researches on the state of women and her requirements after conflict, the psychological impact of conflict on families.
I Mentor the Essence of Coaching and Development

Vision: -
To upgrade personal and institutional performance beyond potentials.

Mission: -
Essence for Coaching and Development is a pioneer developmental private independent registered company (Registration Number 02-1357 in 2016) with a positive sustainable impact on the community, aims to upgrade performance of individuals, groups and institutions including governmental institutions, local and international non-governmental organizations, private sector companies and offices, through coaching, training, providing mentorship and consultations, organizational assessment and development, monitoring and evaluation, implementing developmental technical and awareness projects and programs, using updated evolving approaches and methodologies by well qualified experts, adopting the values of entrepreneurship, professionalism and sustainable impact.

Values: -
1. Entrepreneurship: - We encourage and highly appreciate innovation, creativity, renovation, development, precedence and lead within fair competition.
2. Professionalism: - We are committed to honesty, integrity, sincerity and transparency values through mutual trust, implementing projects and activities in high quality within clear effective plans.
3. Sustainable Impact: - We aim for effective coaching and development to create a positive sustainable impact for beneficiaries and community in general.

Services and Activities: -
1. Training and enabling individuals and human resources of Governmental and Non-Governmental Institutions and groups, according to their technical and practical needs.
2. Performing Organizational Assessment and Development planning for institutions, and supporting them in designing structures, administrative systems and policies, strategic plans and developmental programs, in addition to helping them in implementation, reporting and monitoring and evaluation.
The organizational development includes seven main components, governance, strategic planning, financial management, leadership and internal organizational culture, human resources management, information management, external relations and use of media.

3. Conducting researches and studies related to human and organizational development, including needs assessment, data collection and analysis, editing books, manuals and training materials.

4. Establishing training centers, holding workshops and training courses, and coordination of study and research tours, organizing events, conferences, seminars and fairs.

5. Providing coaching, mentorship and administrative consultations for individuals, organizations and institutions.
**Introduction:**

The current internal and external changes in the system of values, behaviors and manners of people worldwide are the reason why our community is undergoing a series of social, economic and psychological transformations. Iraq is on top of the countries that were exposed and still is exposing to the jeopardy of extreme thinking and its aftermath of terrorist operations. Since our community is of a majority of young men and women, thus, they are the ones to be mostly affected by this situation. Consequently, the world they live in will be filled with non-stop tensions, disputes and conflicts that might lead them to seeking isolation or worstly going into a swirling state of violence.

As life evolves and relationships get more complicated, man would more likely seek expatriation for different reasons and in different ways. Therefore, many studies in philosophy, psychology and sociology have been carried out in different periods of time and at different economic, social, political and religious circumstances in a bid to analyze these reasons. Moreover, this study is dedicated to shed some light on the ideological extreme thinking and discuss its main reasons, forms and its impact on the youth of Baghdad nowadays.

The ideological extremism is one of the critical phenomena that jeopardize individuals and communities as a whole. The fact that some young men and women being extreme to their own opinions, thoughts and beliefs about certain social, political and religious issues is a very common thing in every society and at all times but now it is going way beyond that especially in modern societies when extremism outcome with violence, terrorism, insecurity, society disorders, jeopardy, and vandalism. Youth are the most likely to embrace this thinking for being in a stage of age that makes them very active, vigorous and having a strong willingness for change and renovation; and very emotional and criticizing at the same time for the frequent life contradictions they are going through in a modern community that is already undergoing different and contradictive political and economic changes and challenges. Those changes and challenges made human beings suffer from continuous setbacks and the feeling of not belonging, neglection, carelessness, deprivation and being culturally and politically marginalized are not but bricks paving the way to extremism.
Extremism is defined as the stagnancy, fanaticism, excessiveness and the extremity of self-esteem, thinking, norms and beliefs that lead to rejecting all opposing thoughts, beliefs and freedoms of speech and religion. It is notices that extremists don’t believe in discussion as they have a strong desire to eliminate others and impose their own extreme thoughts on them even with force or threat if it takes to. They also have a one-sided-point of view as facts have one and only explanation for them just as life has one track too. They also think they are the only ones who can understand facts and other affairs, and it gets more critical when they try to impose their opinions on everyone.

According to this study, the procedutral concept of the ideological extreme thinking is outlined as the behavioral and thinking excessiveness in holding to certain thoughts that could be religious, political, economic, artistic or literary where he/she believe they know the absolute and unnegotiable truth so to separate themeselves from the cultural and social structure of the society which they are already part of yet having the feeling of being strangers within oneself and among people.

It is worth mentioning that extremism could be found anywhere and at all times. Furthermore, it is as old as the human history is; in fact, it started along with the history of humanity just when communities started to expand into increasingly larger units, fostered by the appearance of different religions, beliefs, ideologies and even interests. But still, each case has its extremists and moderates.

The absence of freedom and democracy and the widespread of corruption, despotism and poverty in most Arab countries made it very easy for such extreme thoughts to be transplanted, grown and spread. Extreme groups and organizations take advantage of grievances and negativities of local communities like ignorance, unemployment, corruption, absence of the rule of law and injustice acts practiced against people as motives to change youth thoughts and recruit them according to their own evil interests.

Extremism is a very complicated phenomenon whose complication is very hard to be touched. It is simply a number of brain activities such as beliefs, direction, emotions, actions and strategies adopted by a person or a group of people in a way that keep them distant from the quo status among others. These activities come up to the surface during conflicts as a result of rage. Referring to people, groups or
activities as extreme and giving situations a certain description is a personal matter from one hand and political from the other hand. Besides, the extreme act that some might see as fair and moral like (fight for freedom) might be seen by others as immoral, terrorist and against the society, however, it all depends on the values, political views and morals of each party and their relation to the doer of the action.

❖ **Main causes of extremism and its influence on youth:**

Sociologists have different explanations for the many phenomenal aspects of extremism each according to his\/her own intellectual orientation, for instance, functionalists like Emile Durkheim, Robert K. Merton and Talcott Parsons regarded social defects like extremism as a structural malfunction occurring inside the social system and the symptoms are: Individuals loosing integration with social groups, deficiency in outlining the proper rules by which an individual should behave and breakdown in the ethical and idealistic system of society that produce anti-values causing this oblique and unfamiliar behavior. This case is due to institutions inability of meeting individuals and groups' needs and ambitions which forms the extreme thinking inside them.

Whereas Marxists regard such phenomena to the poor economic conditions of large spheres in society resulted from the capitalistic system and its aftermaths of poverty, unemployment, economic and political deprivation, injustice, inequality, oppression, marginalize, monopolism and exploitation; all these factors contribute in the growth of many phenomena and extremism is the most dangerous of all.

Siklman supported this explanation when he related social phenomena like extremism and violence to the political instability of countries that arises from wrong practices like injustice and inequality among individuals and groups. Thus, extremism is a reaction to groups' disagreement in terms of interests, and the increasing feeling of injustice, inequality, deprivation and oppression in all its different aspects: political, social and economic.

Ideological extremism is a worldwide phenomenon and people are very concerned about it. However, the problem of extremism doesn't only lie within its twisted thinking norms or back-warded primitive views; because in practice, these extreme ideologies take new diversion, namely, from groups and
individuals and some countries into real terrorism; and this terrorism doesn’t strike its political or intellectual enemies directly; sadly, its random strikes lead to the killing and injuring of hundreds and thousands of innocent people. There are four common theories when looking for the relationship between the cognitive style and the ideological content: The Dominant theory, extremism theory, Contextual theory and Multiple-attribute value theory. Thought we cannot come cross them all at this time but it is worth mentioning that all these theories dedicated to solve the problem of world theoretical generalization and the historic political contexts. We can say that the main problem of extremism, especially in protracted conflicts, is not about the violent activities practiced by these extreme groups only, it is about how excessive, firm, unforgiving and non-changeable these extreme norms are. There are six sources of extremism and deprivation (extreme poverty) is on top of all then come lack of healthcare services, education, job opportunities and healthy food. Whenever all these sources are combined together then violence is the result. And if we added to that denying human basic needs like: the need for security, respect, recognizing different groups, obstructing the political participation and the gap between what people think they deserve and what they can have. All or some of these factors can lead to extremism specially when people are deprived from their legal rights of expressing their needs. Generally, ideological and intellectual extremism could be addressed through schools and theories in sociology that dealt with this phenomenon from three interpretative approaches:

1- Self-approach: includes the theory that is taken from the psychological school.

2- The second approach: includes theories taken from (geographic, economic, social, behavioral, socio-cultural and socio-religious schools) that dealt with this phenomenon through external factors and others that depend on individual’s self-composition in explaining the thinking diversion.

3- The third approach: an integral one that includes the two previous approaches.
Extremism co-factors:

1- Political Islam being in the state of conflict with the developing secularism in society.

2- The widespread of financial and administrative corruption and the demised ability to push society towards sustainable growth and development.

3- Unemployment and the incompatible job opportunities and accepting less than the lowest standard of living, as well as the helplessness of youth in building the future with the lack of visions and proper planning of how to recruit proficiencies.

4- Extreme dialogues that became an excuse to demand separation and division in order to get benefits under the term of independency.

5- No protection programs to be offered by national policies for a proper raising within families, weak rehabilitation, aid and social care programs, lack of awareness in terms of dealing with children, orphans and homeless children.

6- The widespread of extreme thoughts among teachers and lecturers in the education and learning sector in addition to restructuring the infrastructure, financial crisis, constitution, election and deterioration of the general culture of society.

Forms of extremism:

There is no single form or pathway of extremism not even a definite speed by which it flows, besides, the educational level doesn’t seem to be a reliable element to predict societies’ incompatibility against extremism. But what is known for sure is that some social, economic and psychological factors can definitely lead to extremism. Specialists divide these factors into two fundamental categories:

- Motivating factors: factors that push people towards extremism such as: marginalize, inequality, discrimination, oppression, limited access to related quality and education, deprivation from the smallest civil rights and freedoms and other historical, social, economic and environmental problems.

- Stimulating factors: dragging youth minds to the extreme thinking, for example, highly-organized violent and radical groups having seductive
speech and active programs that provide services, finance and job opportunities for youth all for membership in their organizations. They also have the capability to seduce new members by promising them comfortability, adventure and wars, on top of that, they seem to be able to secure them self-comfort, a place to fit in and a supportive social network.

Some political factors like the absence of the rule of law, corruption and crime can also form a suitable ground for the growth of extreme groups

**Nationalized Policies and Strategies of Youth**

UNDP supports policies and programs that aim to have well acquainted, empowered and engaging youth so they can contribute to the sustainable human development. And to enable their societies to integrate youth, innovate and find solutions for the challenges of development and society transformations.

**Youth as a positive power for transformational change**

Recent statistics showed that the global youth population is the largest in number ever. More than 60% of UNDP-beneficiary-countries’ population are of youth aged between 15 and 24 years.

However, the more opportunities available for them to work, communicate and influence, the more challenges they have to face, starting from climate change and unemployment to different forms on inequality and elimination specially for the vulnerable and marginalized spheres of society.

**Introduction of Strategy**

- Three results:
  1. Youth-enhancing economic empowerment.
  2. Youth-enhancing civil participation, to increase their participation in decision making processes, political processes and institutions.
  3. Enhancing youth engagement in tolerance building.
- **Youth Economically Empowered**

Creating job opportunities and offering decent means of living are a MUST when empowering youth economically and socially. They also contribute in the sustainable human development. Success means creating more job opportunities for youth but without forgetting to improve their qualities which could be accomplished by improving their productivity, facilitating youth transference to more productive sectors and increasing the possibility of having social protection.

- **Youth engaged in general life, political processes and institutions**

When young men and women understand their rights then they will be able to engage themselves in civil societies, public service and political processes. They should know the means through which they can practice their civil and political rights and to contribute in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

These means of engagement include systematic political processes such as youth consultancy councils, youth parliaments or consistory councils and United Nations’ operations locally, nationally and internationally consecutively.

**Youth as key factor in society’s capability of tolerance**

Youth can play a positive role in their local societies during conflicts and catastrophes. The prior work to secure their means of living builds their ability of tolerance and fosters the social cohesion, it also prevents conflicts that jeopardize youth.

❖ **Four-ways approach:**

The strategy includes human rights-based-approach that goes in line with the UNDP strategy of gender equality. It reinforces other guiding principles including taking lead of national affairs, participation and rejecting discrimination.

The strategy follows a four-ways-approach:

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Four – ways- approach

- **Support**: through developing youth capabilities and youth organizations including youth groups in government, parliament and other representative bodies.
- **Involvement**: through engaging youth in communication, call for and generalizing youth cases on all development planning fields.
- **Influence** through the intellectual leadership and discussions about the international policies and social networks that take marginalized youth voices into consideration and work on improved and updated data in order to track the development process from 2015 and afterwards.
- **Sustainability** through supporting the national policies and more effective strategies to protect young men and women from exploitation and neglect and support their active participation in all fields of society.
Ten guiding principles:

- To work through youth in initiatives, with youth as cooperators and for youth as targeted groups, all through integrating them in programing UNDP and assist regional programs in creating mechanisms that enable, engage and include youth specially the vulnerable and marginalized ones.

- To protect human rights of youth through promoting a programing pathway based on human rights and to build youth capabilities so they can demand their economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights and to practice them freely.

- To express the core meaning of gender equality and to empower young women in particular because sustainable human development could not be totally achieved unless young women and girls have equal opportunities for participation just as young men and boys.

- To exert efforts to achieve sustainable human development through creating proper means of living for poor youths and to have them directed in all work frames by expanding their scope of choices and improving their abilities and opportunities in ways that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable so to be of good benefit to present without jeopardizing the future.

- To follow the guidelines of the national leadership and ownership along with other countries’ regional programs including youth leadership in order to make decisions regarding the best way through which they can achieve their aspirations. To also follow the guidelines of the UNDP when making policies and developing the leadership and institutional skills that can come out with sustainable results for youth.

- To ensure that youth enjoy the freedom of participation and expression when seeking equal development opportunities for both genders. To recognize youth as a positive changing factor for their own development. To enhance youth civil communities’ engagement and participation in politics and general institutions.
✓ To encourage 'innovation- for transformational change' through the investment in new and creative approaches and to detect the possibility of reintegrating experiments and increasing them.

✓ To promote cooperation among South-South and triangular countries to intensify exchanging knowledge, experiences, best practices and other resources that provide solutions for youth development specially in southern countries that are being led by young employers.

✓ To encourage youth to volunteer in the development process so to have them engaged in overcoming the challenges accompanied with it and to gain expertise, build confidence and solidarity of society and to create opportunities for participation.

✓ To exchange inherited knowledge through supporting transferring data and bilateral experiences among youngest and oldest generations and to develop dialogue among traditional and local society's leaders, old men and youth during and after conflicts.
Enhancing youth empowerment through human rights-based approach

Project description:

First: analyzing the problem

During the past few years, Iraq has been suffering from economic depression and political and security instability, violence has greatly escalated in many parts of the country in 2014 where many provinces were attacked and occupied by ISIS. The latter took control of most of the northern and western parts of Iraq. ISIS was also known for its brutal ways of killing and horrifying people to have them subject to their commands and that led to the fleeing of thousands of families to other neighboring provinces as well as escalating sectarian tensions among mixed communities.

The social environment in Iraq became less safe for current and future generations for being full with tensions, violence, injustices and human rights breaches. Gun-carrying-culture has become a substitute for forgiveness and accepting others which
created a negative environment that prevents from having a peaceful life and a brighter future.

As a response, it was necessary to invent the culture of peace to have free environment to solve disputes, and that was the field through which youth can play a great role when they promote for "the culture of change" by changing their attitudes and behaviors towards people and the negative customs and twisted logic of religion and belief.

The inner conflicts (civil war) that lead to the killing and fleeing of thousands of civilians and forced individuals or even full communities to seek resort in other foreign countries proves that these conflicts will have a negative effect on the society and population structure in terms of future coexistence which jeopardize the country as a whole. It will also reflect its negativities on a wider range of the region and the world because such conflicts will create a producing and nursing environment for such terrorist groups and organizations that are very dangerous for the humanity.

Reasons of conflicts varied in terms of political, economic, social and religious clashes. Youth had the greatest part of them whether as affected or effecting parties whereas they could have played a positive role specially when youth are known throughout the history for taking lead in many social changes through revolutions and they mostly had the sense of creativity, initiative and time to develop more peaceful ways for living.

Youth today form more than half of world population which is the largest number in the history of the world ever. According to a statistic made in 2015, 1,2 billion young people (ages 15-24) are registered worldwide, which is (one to six people), so it should not be looked at the world as a responsibility but a chance for change.

Youth (ages 15-29) are mostly victims of deadly armed conflicts, physical abuse, sexual assault, illiteracy, lack of basic social services and economic opportunities and the absence of the rule of law and human rights.

Through the experience of BWA with youth and with the implementation of many projects and activities, youth are now more open for change and more willing to try new strategies and looking for new ideas and they are being guided for a brighter future.
Engaging youth in the peace-building-process is of a special importance and could be promising with peace, security and integrity in the societies that were torn by wars. Youth can also play a big role in dealing with conflicts peacefully and with appreciation to all different cultures.

Enhancing youth participation in peace-building process requires:
- Adopting a human rights-based-approach.
- Outlining a social approach that recognizes youth as a fundamental component in the economic development of their country and enhances their opportunities for economic empowerment.
- Political and social approach that interlinks youth with society socially and politically and provides them opportunities, training and support for their participation in activities and life in general.
- A socio-cultural approach that analyses youth roles and supports constructive dialogue and youth re-inclusion.

And that’s how youth, as members of a dynamic group in the society, play a great and definite role in making positive change during conflicts and in founding peaceful and democratic societies.

**Second: - Targeted groups**

1- (20) young men and women were directly targeted during the project’s conduction period whereas 200 young men and women were indirectly targeted by getting information from the trained ones by more than 50%.

2- (100) school students, (50 boys\ 50 girls) (ages 12-18 years) were trained, and the number of the indirectly beneficiaries is expected to reach (800) persons.

3- (500) young men and women, (250 men\ 250 women) (ages 18-35 years), of the directly-targeted-group were targeted, and the indirectly-targeted-group were all the ones who received a hard copy of the study.
Third: - Associates

- Ministry of Youth and Sports-led- Al-Tamayouz forum. Whereas this project aims at targeting youth, then it is important to cooperate with such forums, organizations and bodies so youth can communicate with their coaches to execute the activities subject of this study.
- Ministry of Education/ Department Human Rights. To facilitate the project staff’s mission in executing activities at schools.
- Volunteering group of both genders.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports\ National Center for Volunteering Work
- Red Crescent Society.
- Our Youth for Development and Leadership organization.
- National Reconciliation Committee
- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs\ Al-Mutasim Center for Vocational Training
- School boards at both Karkh and Russafa, (Al-Manhal high school for girls, Al-Mutamayyezeen high school for boys, and Al-Mutamayezat high school for girls, Al-Mutamayyezeen secondary school for boys).

Project Activities: -

1- 20 Youths, (10 males\ 10 females) (ages 18-35), from Baghdad have been chosen to be trained on the basic principles: volunteering, conflict management, negotiation skills and leadership and social cohesion skills. The training activity took place in Ishtar Hall at BWA’s headquarter.
2- Holding discussion meetings to intercommunicate youth with local authorities by gathering a number of ideas for the project titled 'youth potentials as peacebuilders' in corporation with: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs\ Al-Mutasim Center for Vocational Training, Ministry of Youth and sports\ department of Relations for International cooperation- division of Organizations and National Center for volunteering work and a group of volunteering young men and women.
3- Carrying out an activity about peace building and combating discrimination (Scouting Camp and Short Enlightening Film).

A training scout camp was held as cooperative idea that put together three organizations: BWA, Iraq Red Crescent Society and Our Youth for Leadership and Development organization. The 2-days training camp took place at Al-Zawraa Park with the participation of (19 males and 17 females i.e.36 participants in total) (ages 18-35) and of different educational levels. The goal was to spread basic principles such as forgiveness and accepting others, cooperation for building human, building youth abilities through bonding and communication and, the most important, to stress on the peaceful coexistence and avoid ethnic and sectarian languages.

BWA produced a short film titled (Watana) discussing aspects like peace building, combating sectarianism in addition to fixing up the principle of peaceful coexistence and avoiding ethnic and sectarian languages.

4- Two-days-training session about peace building and combating sectarianism for (100 school students), (50 boys\ 50 girls) (ages 12-18), as part of the National Student Day activity on November 23rd.

5- Conducting a study about the influence of extremism ideologies on young people behavior in Bagdad by targeting (500 youths) (250 males and 250 females).

6- Conducting a two-grouped-debate about peace issues with the participation of (30) young men and women.

7- Holding a concluding conference to discuss the activities and study of this project on the International Day for Human Rights.

8- Organizing an exhibition for the purpose of delivering a message about peace, violence against women and their rights and project activities.

9- Participation of a youth band, since music is considered as a form of peace.

10-Participation in the 16-days campaign activity for rejecting violence against women by printing (200) cups with the campaign message written on them.
**Goals:** -

**General Goal**
To reject sectarianism and hatred and to promote for peaceful coexistence and build peace.

**Direct Goals:** -
1- Enlightening youth about the necessity and importance of taking part in general life and achieving communal peace.
2- Spreading awareness through the principles of forgiveness and accepting others, cooperation for building human/s building youth potentials through bonding and communication and, the most important, the peaceful coexistence principle and avoiding ethnic and sectarian languages.
3- Enlightening youth about the importance of volunteering and participation in making decisions that help develop the scientific, social and economic structure that of a great role in development and general interest.
4- Finding the appropriate and proposed solutions to solve the problem of ideological extremism.

**Field Study Goal:** -
Identifying the main causes of extreme ideology, sources, co-factors of its widespread and its impact on youth behavior; and shedding light on the relationship (forms and dimension) of the intellectual extreme ideology with the diversities and different values whether intellectual, religious, social or economic

**Field Study Methodology:** -
This study focused on three main phases: -
- Identifying the most important sources of information and bodies and factors that affect youth minds and behaviors and to which extent they are exposed and aware of extreme ideology.
• Measuring the impact of the exposure of this extreme thinking on youth behavior and orientation in general.
• Identifying youth attitudes and behaviors towards women and their rights and to which extent the ideologies affect youth attitudes and behaviors.

This field study specifically discusses the impact of extreme ideologies on youth behavior in Baghdad. Since the agreed work plan between BWA and Kvinna till Kvinna determines time, place and targeted people of this study, however, other general issues that affects youth like unemployment, corruption and economic, political and educational conditions are not to be discussed in this study despite the fact that they are of great importance and could be discussed in other studies.

For the purpose of achieving the above-mentioned goals and with the experience of Baghdad Women Association in conducting field studies and with the help of a well-experienced-technical assistant, the project staff and volunteers executed the following activities:

1. Building the study team through holding a training workshop about the mechanisms through which data could be gathered and analyzed and how to set indications and measure them.
2. Setting up the study work plan and timeline in participation with the field employees and volunteers.
3. Designing a questionnaire form (attached with this study) to conduct a survey about the influence of extremism ideologies on young people behavior in Baghdad. Questions subject of the questionnaire were divided into four section (Extremism: concept and causes, extremism impact on society, youth information sources and how affected they are and youth behavior in general and their opinions and behaviors towards women in particular). The questionnaire also included other general and behavioral questions.
4. (532) participants from Baghdad, (269 males and 263 females), were randomly given this questionnaire and the database employee took care of entering, processing and reviewing the information.
5. Interviewing 23 persons (lawyers, faculty members, psychologists, teachers and educators) of both genders about the influence of extremism ideologies on young people behavior.
6. Reviewing and analyzing the data with co-workers and discussing the results, conclusions and recommendations.

7. Writing and designing the field study according to a scientific approach that goes within the goals of the study and project type.

❖ **Field Study Results**

**Targeted Groups:**

This field study included (532) participants, (269 males and 263 females) (ages 18-35), from different areas of Baghdad. They all were randomly picked and they filled out the questionnaire by their own will with the help BWA coordinators and volunteers who made sure to give those participants space to answer the questionnaire freely and truly and respect their rights of participation. All collected information were dealt with high proficiency and confidentiality and they were analyzed according to scientific methods where the team abided objectivity and neutrality.

**Participants Age group:**

Testing youth opinions about the influence of extremism ideology on their behavior and specially towards women, data were deliberately collected from young-aged-people. After the analysis, a comparison has been made among them according to their sources of information and the factors affecting their thinking and behavior.

336 participants were aged 20-30 i.e. 64% and 124 participants were aged 31-35 i.e. 24% whereas participants whose ages were lower than 20 were 65 persons i.e. 12%. See table and figure below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (1) Participants Age Group
Marital status strongly affects youth behavior and orientations, therefore it was necessary to inquire about the marital status of the participant when conducting this survey.

However, the questionnaire shows that 63% of the participants (different ages) were unmarried, while 32% were married. 8 participants were widowed i.e. 2% and 16 participants were separated i.e. 3%. See table and figure below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (2) Participants’ Marital Status
**Educational level:**

This study stressed that data collection process should include all different levels of education in a bid to see to which extent education affects youth behavior and how much they are affected with the thoughts and ideologies they are getting. Whereas all participants were randomly picked out, the highest percentage goes for those holding a bachelor degree with different specialization then comes those who hold undergraduate degree (Secondary and high school diploma) while other degrees were of the least; which means that the collected information were mostly taken from educated people who are capable of answering the questionnaire with consciousness, independency and objectivity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Diploma</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School Diploma</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Learning</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Learning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (3) Participants Educational Level

Chart No. (3) Participants’ Level of Education
Work:

Even when most of the participants were educated and holding a university degree, still, one-third of them were unemployed due to lack of governmental employments and hardships of finding vacancies in the private sector.

Since the economic condition of individuals has a great effect on their way of thinking, knowing participants' types of work helps understanding their reactions and answers on this questionnaire specially when bearing in mind that poverty and unemployment are key motivations that lead youth to extremism and violence as response to their inner feelings of rage and anger resulted from frustration, marginalize, elimination in middle of increasing living demands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (3) Participants' Work Status

Chart No. (4) Participants' Work Status
Extremism: Concept and Causes

1- Youth acknowledgment about the concept of extremism:

To be extreme is to have a one-sided-thought and not accepting other's different point of views, optimistically, results showed that youth are somehow well-acquainted with the concept of radicalism and this could be interpreted as a good sign of their awareness of such conceptions despite all the surrounding circumstances.

This result owes to the fact that most of the participants are well educated, coming from civil communities and having a good chance to access information through media and internet technology which is a good point to start off programs, activities and initiatives that enhances youth participation in spreading awareness about the risks of extremism.

From another hand, some other participant mixed between the concept of extremism with that of poverty and ignorance which could be due to the intermixture of these concepts as causes and effects each overlapping the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your perspective of extremism</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Accumulation of wrong thoughts and guidelines</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being bias to one thought without accepting those of others</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (5) Participants' Perspective of Extremism
Most participants defined ignorance and religious intolerance as the two most significant factors in spreading extremism and that's what many studies, that were carried out in similar societies, have concluded.

Extreme groups use ignorance as a hosting environment for their back-warded thoughts because ignorance makes people ready to accept any thought presented to them as they lack culture and consciousness necessary for them to have a criticizing thinking that differentiate between constructive and destructive thoughts. Whenever ignorance is combined with religious intolerance, then this impact doubles its effect on turning the different ethnic, religious and sectarian components against each other. These extreme groups could also take advantage of society's grievances like suppressed freedoms and poverty to recruit more youth and that's what really happened in the areas that were attacked and controlled by terrorist and extreme groups.

Youth being acknowledged with these factors and their dangers is a useful starting point for the precise diagnosis and hard work to downsize their impact and then to exterminate them by using means and methods that increase social awareness and reduce fanaticism and peoples' grievances.
What is the most effective factor in spreading extremism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the most effective factor in spreading extremism</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Intolerance</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppressed Freedoms</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak National Belongingness</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (6) The most effective factor in spreading extremism

3- Key Groups That Contribute in Spreading extremism:

Terrorist and extreme groups are surely the first to be ever responsible for generating and spreading the extreme thinking by using religious and historical texts or else like twisted political concepts so as to utilize them according to their evil interests and propagate for them through different means like TV media channels, social media pages and applications, direct interviews and printings. Thus, our aim in this study was to shed light on other groups that have a hand in spreading extreme
concepts and to which extent they affect youth and whether deliberately or not, i.e. if it is due to lack of awareness or as a reaction to rumors and fake news.

Though it was uneasy to ask participants about the most significant parties that contribute in spreading extreme thinking in society as whole, yet 41.4% of the participants freely and frankly stated that all religious parties and media channels who consist (26.7%) negatively contribute in spreading extreme thoughts whether deliberately or not even when they claim neutrality and mediation in all their speeches and programs. This indicator urges us to ask these parties and media channels to reconsider their way in addressing society and specially youth and to follow more real, serious and neutral approaches so to change youth idea of them.

We would like to mention that by putting these options in front of the participants we did not intent a certain media, political, religious or social party as we did not also mean to make generalization but our aim was to have a pre-thought about the parties that contribute in spreading this thinking in a way or another

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the key contributor in spreading extremism</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious parties</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warship houses</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions and study curriculums</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (7) Key Contributor in Spreading extremism
Chart No. (7) Key Contributor in Spreading extremism

Personal interviews’ results showed that participants have varied in their opinions about the scope of extreme thinking among youth each according to their culture and environment, some said that the scope of spread was limited for the increased awareness among youth and the 'limited' part includes those who are uneducated. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate this percentage no matter how little it is for its dangers on society.

**Extremism influence on society**

**Extremism -due to- most dangerous problems and aftermaths on in society**

Extremism aftermaths on societies are many and diverged yet one leading to another which makes it hard to be identified in one question within the questionnaire, and for this reason, we had to put three options so participants can choose one of them in a bid to have more specified answers and avoid confusion when listing too many options.
Extremism massive aftermaths like murder, threat, displacement, rape, properties seizure and destroying and vandalizing infrastructures and institutions are very familiar and obvious and if we listed them with the options, they would have got the highest percentages and added nothing to our survey because we already have information and impressions regarding these aspects, therefore the options we have put focused on the social aftermaths specifically.

According to the participants' opinions, the greatest danger of extremism was communal division that reached to (41%) and led to many conflicts and complications jeopardizing individuals’ safety and society’ unity and ability to face challenges. 34% of the participants agreed to the fact that this danger does not come in isolation from the danger of terrorism which is an expected result of extremism and one of its practical operations. The danger of low moral standards and behaviors that are (34%) also produce negative phenomena like violence, harassment, addiction, crimes and other.

Having giving participant the freedom to list other answers, yet the majority chose one of the already listed options which proves their existence and dangers at the same time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the most dangerous problems society can be exposed to due to extremism</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Division</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Moral Standards</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (8) Extremism -due to- most dangerous problems and aftermaths on in society
What are the most dangerous problems society can be exposed to due to extremism

Chart No. (8) Extremism - due to - most dangerous problems and aftermaths on in society

Participant answers, at the personal interviews, to the question (what are the most dangerous aftermaths of the spread of extreme thinking among youth) and the answers were:

- Creating a host environment for terrorist and extreme groups
- Absence of trust, security and stability.
- The widespread of sectarian, ethnic and atheist seditions and adopting the extreme thinking
- The breakout of civil wars.
- Weakness of growth and development in all fields, economically, socially and educationally
- Addiction to drugs and alcohol.
- Social and family disintegration.
Sources of information and their scope of influence:

For the purpose of measuring the extent to which youth are exposed to or familiar with extreme ideologies, we had to look for their sources of information and see how much they trust and believe them and also to test the effect on their thinking and behaviors.

Identifying these sources will help us choose the best way through which we can reach youth minds, have a positive effect on them and spread awareness about their major and effective role in building peace and choosing the right partners to achieve these goals.

The chart below shows that youth (ages 20-30) are the ones to be mostly affected with internet and social media; this effect decreases among those whose ages are between 30 and 35 because they are directly affected by TV channels then by social media. Accordingly, the more people are educated, the stronger the effect of internet gets.

This result came within our expectations for the huge interest of youth in internet and informational technology specially during the last few years when their means became many and very easy to access to and for what they have of attracting and thrilling elements besides giving youth the ability to share thoughts, news and publications. These technologies are a double-edged-sword because at the time they are being invested to spreading positive awareness, other terrorist and extreme groups are seizing chance to spread their destructive ideologies among youth without the latter recognizing. And that’s what 39% of the participants’ answers have confirmed when they stated that the sources from which they are getting information may (to a certain extent) circulate extreme thoughts. From another hand, 64% of the participants stated that their trust in these sources is somehow 'limited' whereas 28% stated that they have no trust at all in these sources, and that explains the weak effect of extreme ideology on them even if they are being exposed to such ideologies in certain occasions.
Chart No. (9) Sources of Information according to the age and education of participants.

Chart No. (10) Participants’ Trust in Sources of Information
Parties that have the greatest effect on participants' thinking and behavior: -

Internally, family will always have the greatest effect on youth's thinking and behavior with all their different ages, and that comes from the nature of community that preserves family traditions and cohesion among its members. Family effect could have a great role in protecting youth from following these extremism ideologies that they are being exposed to through the surrounding environment or the modern means of communication. Friends also play an important role in affecting their mates, and this role depends on the type of concepts, norms and behaviors those friends are transferring which could be both positive or negative.

Externally, results showed that youth volunteering campaigns, media and NGOs have the most effective influence on youth thoughts and behaviors compared with other parties and institutions. And if we sorted the participants who took the questionnaire according to their level of education, work type and places where the field study was carried out, then we can say that youth with university degrees and living in the cities are more affected with the concepts spread by these NGOs and the youth campaigns they take part in. These results might differ if we had carried
out the field study in other areas with lower educational level, less acknowledged and have less participation in the NGOs' activities.

Chart No. (12) Key Internal Party That Has The Greatest Effect On Youth Thinking and Behavior According to Their Age and Level of Education

Chart No. (13) Key External Party That Has The Greatest Effect On Youth Thinking and Behavior According to Their Age and Level of Education
As a positive result, 45% of the participant stated that the parties that affect youth internally and externally don’t circulate extreme norms, whereas 43% stated that these these parties ‘might to a certain extent’ circulate such extreme norms which makes their effect on the thoughts and behaviors of youth very limited. And if we bared in mind what participants have previously stated that they don’t trust too much their sources of information, then we can interpret their unaffectedness with these extreme ideologies, which makes optimistic about the future and how we could make use of this awareness and intellectual immunity of youth in developing a communal culture that eliminates extremism and calls for enhancing the peaceful coexistence and accepting others.

Chart No. (14) Participants opinions of whether the affecting party circulates extreme thoughts.
Eliminating extremism:

34% of the participants proposed to invest youth energy and develop their potentials and skills to successfully eliminate extremism; thus, this strategy has been discussed in many similar studies, and its importance owes to the fact that youth form more than half of the global population and have many potentials that could be utilized positively in development and peace building processes. This strategy might be the easiest since youth's thinking and behavior is still in the process of formation and growth, therefore they could be easily affected on, if the right and proper means were used. Besides, this strategy is the most sustainable and NGOs can help activate it in cooperation with other concerned governmental institutions including Ministry of Youth and Sports which announced about a number of plans and strategies to promote youth and engage them in eliminating extremism.

Social enlightenment came in the second place among the proposed strategies with a percentage of 25%. This proposal could be considered as a suitable method to defeat ignorance which, according to the results (participants opinions) of this study by 43% and the influencers i.e. Media Channels, is one of the most significant factors that help spread extremism. Based on all the above cited information, we conclude that
media enlightening campaigns, NGOs' activities and youth campaigns could make a big and positive change in youths' thinking and orientations.

Spreading awareness and investing youth energies cannot achieve extremism elimination unless there is social justice and rule of law which participants consider it by 20% as a significant strategy for its importance in reducing the number of grievances that makes youth feel frustrated and angry with the authorities and might pushes them to joining radical terrorist groups or adopting violent attitudes against society.

Unexpectedly, other strategies like reforming the religious speech and study curriculums was not among the priorities youth chose for eliminating extremism, which is logical if we relate it to their answers to 'the parties that affect their thinking and behavior' and religious parties were not, for them!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you suggest to eliminate extremism?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To invest youth energies and develop their abilities and potentials</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reform the religious speech</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social enlightenment</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reform study curriculums</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure social justice</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No, (9) Participants Suggestions to eliminate extremism
Chart No. (15) Participants' Suggestions to eliminate extremism
Having discussing the right and proper strategies to eliminate extremism with participants at the personal interviews, they suggested the following:

- To enact and implement firm laws to fight extremism and intellectual terrorism.
- To promote monitoring on extreme media.
- To supervise political offices’ work frames and abide them to the regulations of peaceful coexistence and reject sectarianism.
- To enhance digital security to supervise social media applications and stop extremists.
- To carry out civil and youth programs and activities like youth camps, training workshops and symposiums to raise awareness and encourage the volunteering work.
- To support NGOs and youth volunteering campaign.
- To engage youth in decision making process.
- To reform and improve religious and media speeches.
- To look after education and adopt developed study curriculums.

**Extremism - elimination-key responsible parties:**

In accordance with the previous results, youth chose media and TV channels as the most important parties who are responsible for eliminating extremism through spreading awareness and adopting the language that enhances citizenship values and contributes in building peace.

Youth also stressed on the importance of the governmental role in combating the extreme thinking whether through security forces or educational institutions which is a good indicator of youths’ consideration to the importance of intellectual growth in addition to the security procedures in preventing extremism and violence; however, most participants confirmed that the current efforts are not sufficient and go below the level of challenge.
Interestingly, youth are well aware about the importance of the associative (partaking) approach where 16% of them identified family as an important associate in eliminate extremism and that goes perfectly with the fact that family is the most significant party to be ever affecting youth thinking and behaviors just as the results showed above. Accordingly, social programs could be designed where family can play a major role in eliminate extremism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is extremism - elimination key responsible parties?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Forces</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship houses</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. (10) Key Responsible Parties for eliminating extremism

Chart No. (16) Key Responsible Parties for eliminating extremism
**Extremism scope of effect on young men and women's behaviors:**

Having answers on a number of behavioral questions, results showed that youth have a high willingness to accept others regardless of their ethnic, religious and denominational backgrounds. The greatest majority, 85% of the participants, confirmed that they have friends from different origins and that they don't mind being in a relationship with a person who is ethnically and denominationally different from them which is a good indicator proving that youth are not strongly affected with the extreme thinking ideologies.

But from another hand, there still participants who have neutral opinions that don't comply with these concepts, maybe due to intellectual or social factors!
Chart No. (18) I Have Friends from Different Nationalities, Ethnicities, Religions and Denominations.

Chart No. (19) Participants’ Willingness of Marrying Someone from Nationalities, Ethnicities, Religions and Denominations/ According to The Age and Education. Other
84% of the participants expressed their willingness to accept different opinions where 61% of them chose the direct dialogue as the most appropriate means to solve the problems they might be exposed to on daily basis; the remaining 22% of the participants chose to seek law for solving problems, and that is also a good indicator showing that youth believe in peaceful and civilized solutions instead of force and violence. Even when the options included all ages, but it was obvious that this positive attitude depends on their level of education as well.

![Chart No. (20) How to Solve the Problems / According to the Age and Education](chart)
Results of the answers to (I strongly impose my political and religious opinions) might be opposing to the above mentioned ones concerning accepting different opinions, because the overall perspective might mean that a person SHOULD hold tightly to his opinions or this result might show that there is an ambiguity in understanding the real meaning of radicalism (since it means the attempt to impose opinions on others with force) and this requires more efforts to introduce youth more to the concept of extremism so to wave ambiguity.
Chart No. (22) I Strongly Impose my Religious and Political Views / According to the Age and Education

As a positive result, youth avoid circulating news and information that come randomly from the sources they follow which is a good behavior (reaction) and a sign of their sense of responsibility and their integrity of not to contribute in spreading rumors and fake news and information which eventually reduces the spread of negative and extreme thoughts.
Chart No. (23) I Circulate the News and Information Regardless of Their Contents.

Having asking participant about the key negative behaviors and phenomena of youth during the last few years, the answers were:

- Rebelling and revolutionary behavior.
- Carelessness.
- Violence
- Lack of awareness.
- Religious intolerance or atheism.
- Misuse of social media.
- The widespread of drugs and alcohol.
- Intellectual intolerance.

- Participants' hobbies and interests

Statistics showed that most of the participants are opened up to gregarious and positive hobbies and interests that encourages mixing with others, and this behavior is totally different from that of extremism which calls for isolation, self-absorption and rejecting many of life joys like sports, art and making friends. Even though several participants, of all different ages and denominational backgrounds, attend religious speeches, but this religious activity did not keep
them from practicing their hobbies and interest, and that shows that they preserve moderation without running after extreme thoughts.

**Attending Religious speeches**

![Chart No. (24) Attending Religious speeches](image)

**Chart No. (25) Practicing Hobbies**

![Chart No. (25) Practicing Hobbies](image)
As for the communal participation, 84% of the participants confirmed their averaged to post-averaged participation in NGOs-led-activities and youth volunteering campaigns, which is a very good percentage that shows the peaceful and civilized orientations of youth and proves their carelessness about extreme thinking that rejects all kinds of civil work. This answer gives hope about the possibility of promoting Iraq civil society by the hands, efforts and powers of youth and changing all the negative social phenomena.

Let’s take from another hand youth holding back from engaging in the political work of parties when 73% of the participant said that they don’t take part in any party activity. Therefore, this abstention needs a serious discussion and more profound study to find out its reasons why and how to possibly change this attitude which could be formed as a result to what youth have suffered during the last years of political practices and their outcomes.

![Chart No. (26) Youth Participation in NGOs-Led-Activities and Youth Campaigns.](chart.png)
Youth view of women and their attitude towards them and their role in the society

Participants’ answers and reactions were generally woman-supporting, as they are quite aware of the importance of women role in eliminating extreme thinking and the necessity to empower them so they can play a greater role in building peace socially by enhancing her involvement in decision making process and civil work.
They also realize that women might contribute in spreading this thinking if they were not quite acknowledged of its concepts, roots, orientations and dangerous aftermaths, and from this point arises the importance of engaging women in social enlightenment programs just as men and even more for what a woman has of an important place in the heart of the family which makes her a key factor in putting an end to extremism.

Chart No. (29) Women Role in Creating and Eliminating extremism

Chart No. (30) Women with potential to Eliminating extremism
Through the behavioral questions, we can identify how youth view women and the way they think about them and their rights of equality in all fields and domains. Moreover, it was obvious how open-minded youth are and how much they accept the idea of women taking part in work and study fields, having the freedom of transportation and traveling even though they understand what women might face of social restrictions resulted from the stereotypical view and lack of awareness with the concept of social gender and woman rights of society.

Whereas the majority of the participants support these rights of women, there were some other participants who take a preservative attitude that disagrees with the ideas that have been presented above which pushes us to work harder to change such attitudes among youth.

Nature of the participants, places of carrying out the questionnaire and the personal interviews have definitely affected the results if we take into consideration that half of the participants were females; even the male ones, most of them have a university degree or high school diploma and live in averaged cities in terms of living standards and civility, and this explains why many answers take side with women empowerment and accepting their freedom. These results might differ if the questionnaire was carried out in tribal or religiously conservative areas.

Chart No. (31) Woman Working in Places that Require High Involvement with Men.
Socially and personally speaking, there was a noticeable percentage of youth welcoming and supporting the freedom of women, whereas some others preserved their strict and conservative attitude about women freedom of travel and clothes. This attitude could be due to the double standard of the society (a man can and a woman cannot) and what youth used to see of a stereotypical image of women.

Same is for the economic and financial rights where some participants disagreed about women having the right of ownership or expenditure without referring to their husbands or families.
Chart No. (32) Participants’ Opinions about the freedom of Women
Remarkably, participants clearly support women freedom of participation in politics in terms of nomination, voting and occupying leadership positions in the government, which is an important progress and worth-whiling change to start from in the future when seeking youth help to support women active engagement in decision making.

Participants also highly supported women being part of NGOs-led- activities and youth volunteering campaigns in there efforts to putting an end to the negative phenomina of society.
Chart No. (34) Participants’ Opinions about the Political and Civil Participation of Women
Conclusion:

Having reading and analyzing results of the questionnaire and personal interviews that were carried out throughout this study, we conclude the following:

1. Youth have a good knowledge of the concept of extremism as well as its motives and aftermats on society, and the more people are educated, the more this awareness rises among them.

2. Youth believe that ignorance and religious intolerance are key factors to extremism.

3. Youth think that social disintegration, terrorism, violence and immorality are the most dangerous outcomes of extremism.

4. Youth highly depend on the internet, social media and satellite channels for information though they don’t trust these sources that much.

5. Internally, family and friends have the greatest influence on youth behaviors and thinking. Whereas media, NGOs and youth volunteering campaigns affect youth behaviors and thoughts externally.

6. Investing youth energies and developing their potentials is one of the most important strategies that could be followed to eliminate extremism.

7. Youth understand the importance of enlightenment, communal participation, partaking work and the exertion of the governmental and non-governmental efforts to limit the spread of extreme thinking and avoid its aftermats.

8. The rule of low and achieving social justice are key factors that reduces youth grievances which might lead them to adopt the extreme thinking.

Participants answers about youth behavior towards women in society were diverted, while some see that youth have a positive and respecting behavior towards women, others see it as uncivilized and full of violence disparagement, harassment and has a lack of faith in women participation topped with an old typical perspective of women role in society.
9. Youth stress on the importance of the positive role of media on youth behavior and orientations if it was directed correctly.

10. Youth believe that the current efforts that being paid to eliminate the extreme thinking are insufficient and lack effectivity.

11. Youth have big presence in NGOs-led-activities and youth volunteering campaigns for the purpose of changing the negative phenomena of society.

12. Youth abstention from the political work.

13. Youth have the absolute willingness to accept others and discuss different thoughts and ideas peacefully which proves that they are not affected with the extremism ideologies even if they are exposed to them through media and communication technology.

14. Generally, youth’s thoughts and attitudes about social gender and women rights were respecting, but there is a real need for more development in this area.

**Challenges and obstacles:**

1. Extremism (its causes and aftermaths) is one of the most sensitive subjects that could be discussed with others because it might raise concerns among participants when questions are being addressed to them whether through the questionnaire or at the interviews making them avoid answering sometimes.

2. Despite its importance, the lack of Arabic references and studies on extremism, especially in Iraq, makes it harder for researchers to investigate in this topic.

3. Extremism is very complicated and sensitive due to the overlap of its causing factors with the ones that contribute in spreading it, which requires more profound study and time as well as study tools that were not available at this study’s limited time and resources.

4. The complicated social, political and economic situation in Iraq creates a big challenge that intensifies the problem itself making it hard to be studies or analyzed.
**Recommendations:**

1. We recommend research centers, related colleges and specialists to pay extremism more attention with regard to research, study and publication as extremism is a very important yet very critical subject at the same time and also to enrich the Arabic library with objective and sedate sources.

2. The importance of engaging youth in decision making process, conflict management and peace building for what they have of huge and important potentials and energies that can make a big, noticeable and positive change in the society.

3. To spread awareness about the concepts, motives and aftermaths of extremism on society in general and among youth to a special extent so to immunize them from these ideologies and violence.

4. To support NGOs and youth campaigns specially the ones concerned with building peace and empowering youth.

5. To enhance the role of positive media in publishing the values of civility and peaceful coexistence and to work on stopping the broadcast and publish of extreme thinking that calls for discrimination and violence.

6. We demand the legislative authorities to enact laws and legislations that convict terrorism and extremism and to justly and actively implement them to reduce such dangerous phenomena.

7. To adopt the partake approach when eliminating extremism which could be accomplished through engaging families, local communities, NGOs, youth volunteering campaigns, media associations, private sector and governmental agencies for more sustainable results.

8. The importance of engaging girls and women in decision making, negotiations and efforts that aim at building peace officially and socially.

9. To reform the religious speech and draw limitations to all that can stir up the sectarian and denominational disputes and conflicts in the society and among youth.

10. To have the rule of law above all and to be implemented with profession and objectivity in order to reduce grievances that might lead youth to adopting the extreme thinking.

11. To enhance the monitoring on everything published on the internet and social media that include extreme or terrorist content.
12. To build youth leadership potentials and improve their skills as well as empower them so they can effectively contribute in defeating terrorism and extremism.

13. Political parties should necessarily adopt a national and moderated speech that could change youth current view of them and encourage them to be engaged in the political work.

14. To work on changing the Stereotypical view of women role in the society and circulate gender concepts and women rights among youth.

15. To expand the scope of study and targeted groups, rural areas have to be the subject of the next similar studies.

16. To target the families of the foreign fighters in the freed areas (provinces where the conflict took place).

17. To amend study curriculums for all different stages, re-include the topics that aim at civility, moral education, peace building and peaceful coexistence among all different ethnics, culture and implementation of human rights and human and social values all in form of short stories

18. To focus on the economic part so to eliminate one of the factors that causes extremism which is by cutting poverty, ignorance, unemployment and creating job opportunities for youth of both genders.
A questionnaire about youth potentials as peace builders:

**General information**

- Age ............
- Gender Male ☐ Female ☐
- Marital Status ............

**Education**

☐ Uneducated ☐ Primary School ☐ Secondary School ☐ Vocational Learning
☐ High School ☐ Religious Learning ☐ diploma ☐ Bachelor ☐ Msc or PhD

**Work**

Unemployed ☐ Employed ☐ Private Sector ☐ Student ☐

☐ Military

**Extremism Concept**

1. **What is your concept of extremism?**
   - Wrong superimposed thoughts and guidelines ☐ violence ☐ Being bias to one thought without accepting those of others ☐ ☐ other

2. **What are the most dangerous problems of extremism society?**
   - terrorism ☐ communal division ☐ low moral standards
   - ☐ other ☐
   - mention..................................................................................................................

3. **What is the key factor in spreading extremism?**
   - ignorance ☐ religious intolerance ☐ suppressed freedoms ☐ weak national belonging ☐ poverty ☐ other mention
   - ..................................................................................................................

4. **In your opinion, who is the key party responsible of extremism?**
   - Religious parties ☐ worship houses ☐ media ☐ family ☐ educational institutions and study curriculums
   - ☐ other mention
   - ..................................................................................................................

**Sources of information and their scope of influence**

5. **What is your source of news and information? (you can choose more than one)**

TV ☐ Radio ☐ Internet ☐ Social Media ☐ Family and friends
☐ Religious men ☐ Tribes’ leaders ☐
6- To which extent do you trust this source?
   a lot ☐ to a certain extent ☐ I have no trust ☐

7- To which extent this source circulates extreme thoughts?
   A lot ☐ To a certain extent ☐ never ☐

8- What is the internal party that mostly affect your thinking and behavior?
   Family ☐ Friends ☐ Co-workers ☐ Neighbors ☐ Teachers and lecturers ☐
   other ☐
   mention

9- What is the external party that mostly affect your thinking and behavior?
   organizations ☐ Religious men ☐ Tribes ☐ Political parties ☐ Media ☐ Youth
campaigns ☐ other ☐
   mention..............................................................................................................................
   ....

10- Does this party circulate extreme thoughts?
   A lot ☐ to a certain extent ☐ no ☐

Eliminate extremism

11- What do you suggest to eliminate extremism?
   To make use of youth energies and develop their potentials and skills ☐ to reform the
   religious speech ☐ Social enlightenment ☐
   To reform study curriculums ☐ Social justice ☐ other
   ..........................................................................................................................

12- Who is responsible for eliminate extremism?
   Educational institutions ☐ Security forces ☐ Media ☐ Family ☐ Worship
   houses ☐ other
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ....

13- Do you think the exerted efforts to eliminate extremism are sufficient and effective?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

14- If you face a problem, how do you deal with it?
   Back off ☐ Direct dialogue ☐ Law ☐ Force ☐ Tribally ☐
   other
   .............................................................................................................................
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To which extent do you agree with the following</strong></th>
<th><strong>I totally agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>I agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>average</strong></th>
<th><strong>I don’t agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>I don’t agree at all</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have friends from different religions, nationalities and sectors</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can marry someone from different religions, nationalities and sectors</td>
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<td>I am ready to accept different opinions</td>
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<td>I strongly impose my religious and political views</td>
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<td>I publish the news and information I get regardless of their content</td>
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<td>I take part in changing the negative phenomena of the society</td>
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<td>I attend religious speeches</td>
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<td>I exercise regularly</td>
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<td>I always go out with my friends</td>
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<td>I listen to songs</td>
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<td>I take part in NGOs-led-activities and youth campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>I take part in political parties' activities</td>
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<td>I think a woman plays a role in eliminating extreme thinking</td>
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<td>I think a woman plays a role in creating extreme thinking</td>
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<td>A woman has of potentials what is enough to eliminate extremism</td>
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<td>A woman is being harassed by the society</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
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<td>A woman has the right travel and transport freely</td>
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<td>A woman can work in places with a majority of mix with men</td>
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<td>I support that a woman should fulfill her studies and accomplish her ambitions</td>
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<td>A woman has the right to choose her spouse</td>
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<td>A woman appearance and clothes are a personal freedom</td>
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<td>A woman should give her salary to her husband and family</td>
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<td>A Woman has the right of ownership</td>
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<td>I encourage women for driving</td>
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<td>A Women has to know her rights</td>
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<td>I support woman participation in NGOs-led-activities</td>
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<td>Woman participation in politics, nomination and election is important</td>
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<td>A woman can occupy a leadership role in the society and government</td>
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