



**GCERF**

Global Community Engagement  
and Resilience Fund

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020





Photo by Jacob Lund  
from shutterstock.com



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# WELCOME

If the year has taught us anything, it is the necessity of standing by one another.

It has shown the mettle of our team, the tenacity of the grant recipients we support to end violent extremism and the courage of the now millions globally we wake up each day to serve.

I say this knowing that for many, the term “2020” has become synonymous with the blur we would rather forget. Not so at GCERF.

We were founded on the premise that a world without violent extremism is possible. Since 2014, we have been tireless in our efforts to draw on the best instincts of humankind, undeterred by the worst. This means we support one another in the face of crisis, provide much-needed funding, listen to those who know best what is needed and lend support.

When COVID-19 hit, we were as ready as any organisation could have been. We had well-established relationships with leaders in some of the hardest-to-reach communities of the world. We made an immediate decision to allow grant recipients to divert 5 per cent of their existing grants to activities that alleviated the impact of the looming public health crisis. Grassroots organisations we fund with experience in campaigning, door-to-door distributions and water, sanitation and hygiene, adapted quickly and used their trusted positions in their communities to stop the spread of COVID-19.

In laying the groundwork for communities free of violent extremism, we had also paved the way for healthy communities receptive to evidence-based,

medical advice. We recognised early the link between restrictions of movement and the ability of extremist groups to recruit – and resisted it.

GCERF continued to make gains. We expanded into new countries. We grew our base of supporters, online and off. We recruited talented staff from disciplines ranging from security risk analysis to financial auditing and compliance. We raised funds and continued to disperse money to the most impoverished and vulnerable communities.

No one can say that 2021 will be the year when the world is pandemic free. It certainly will not be free of violence. I can, however, say with confidence that in 2020, GCERF played its part in preserving the life and the dignity of many. With your support, we will continue on our road to building sustainable peace.

Welcome to our 2020 Annual Report,



**Dr Khalid Koser**

Executive Director, Global Community  
Engagement and Resilience Fund







# INTRODUCTION

GCERF is unique in its approach to ending violent extremism. We firmly believe that prevention is the key to a safer future.

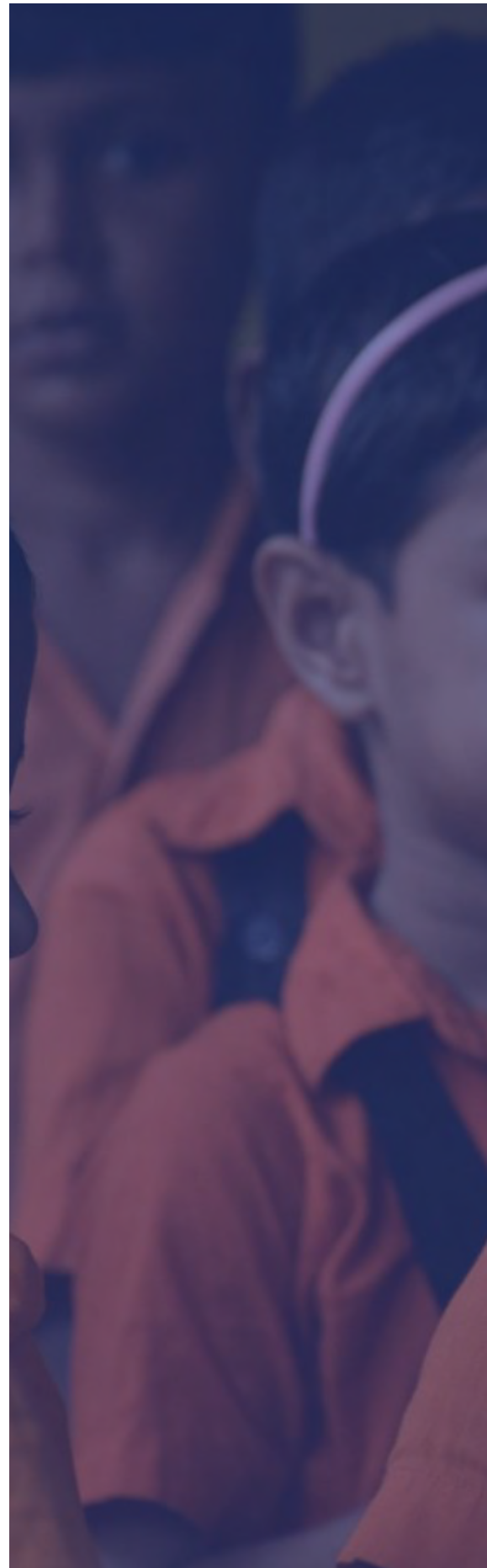
That is why GCERF invests early in people at risk of radicalisation. By providing grants to local NGOs, we create learning opportunities and offer vocational training and other activities that promote a sense of self and belonging, to steer people vulnerable to the stories spun by terrorists onto a positive trajectory.

Put simply, we use development means to achieve security ends.

If we do our work well, these same people are not only diverted away from the false promises of violent extremists. They become the strongest advocates for bringing lasting peace and change to their communities.

In the pages that follow, you will read about the tangible difference that GCERF is making in trouble spots around the world. Peace starts with people and these individuals have used the trust we have placed in them to rally their peers, stir their leaders, and build whole armies of hope.

This is where change begins.





**BANGLADESH**

Photo supplied by Rupantar

# GCERF'S EDGE

As with traditional development actors, results are at the core of our success. The difference at GCERF is in how we measure success.

We cannot know how many lives we have saved or attacks we have prevented. That is the truth of preventative work. What we do know is that improving the socio-economic conditions of people in communities riven by violent extremism is one of the best places to start. An integral part of this work is in-

creased opportunities for civic and political engagement and dialogue between communities.

GCERF measures its impact through four leverage points. They are to:

- **Promote community agency**
- **Enhance social cohesion**
- **Foster a sense of purpose**
- **Create equal access to opportunities**

## **COMMUNITY AGENCY**

### To date, we have:

- Developed **25,095** change agents and youth ambassadors and trained **49,440** youth to take initiatives to prevent violent extremism in their school or communities.
- Engaged **25,189 religious/community leaders** in capacity-building workshops and programme launches aimed at ending violent extremism at a local level.
- Trained **690 journalists** and prospective media practitioners on responsible reporting of violent extremism and its prevention.
- Engaged **210 security actors**, such as police and military personnel, and more than **23,832 young people** in collaborative actions aimed at promoting a sense of mutual responsibility towards one another. In Kenya alone, GCERF has supported **252 joint youth-security actor initiatives**.

## **SOCIAL COHESION**

- Conducted **1,590 interfaith, inter-community or inter-generational dialogues** with more than **262,470** participants.
- Established **217 interfaith, intercommunity, and intergenerational frameworks to set up** consultative mechanisms between groups.
- Introduced nation-building events in **30 madrasas** in Bangladesh alone, promoting respect for diversity, linguistic and otherwise, among students. These madrasas conducted **526 sessions on countering violent extremism**.
- Produced **1,233 radio or TV programmes** to raise awareness and facilitate discussion on radicalism and preventing violent extremism (PVE).





## SENSE OF PURPOSE

- Formed **776 youth groups** to increase engagement of young people in discussions, debates and activities related to PVE, using accessi-

ble entry points such as cultural and sporting events.



## EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

- **Improved livelihood and employability of 19,475 people** through GCERF's programming, including **material support to 1,718 youth and 4,863 women** who were given tools and seed grants to upgrade jobs skills and start businesses.
- Delivered **vocational training and apprenticeships to 200 talibés** in Mali, meaning partici-

pants were trained on identifying radicalisation and how to prevent violent extremism. Of this group, **30 talibés went on to launch initiatives to prevent and combat violent extremism**. Talibés are students of the Qur'an.



**BANGLADESH**

Photo supplied by Rupantar

# MONITORING & EVALUATION

At GCERF, the vital work of monitoring and evaluation is led by our Performance and Impact Unit. This function is critical for the organisation's evolution – not only as we continue refining programmes to ensure their success at PVE, but for our own development as the vanguard of an emerging field.

In 2020, the Performance and Impact Unit improved monitoring and evaluations processes to allow for a faster analysis of results achieved through GCERF-funded programming around the world. The team designed a new results framework template and reporting process that enabled more timely tracking and reporting and aided clear expectation setting between GCERF and its partners on the data to be gathered, analysed, and reported.

GCERF improved the process of designing grants. All GCERF grants now pass through a detailed process in which GCERF and grant recipients co-design a theory of change that feeds into a results framework. These documents underpin a detailed workplan and budget. That is, GCERF applies the gold standard for quality assurance in programming in line with results-based management.

In the reporting period, GCERF's specialist staff:

- Provided guidance to grant recipients on best practices for data collection.
- Travelled to Nigeria to present results of a joint baseline study to local stakeholders.
- Delivered technical support to grant recipients in Nigeria, Bangladesh, Kosovo, Philippines and Mali through online bilateral meetings and workshops, including on the collection of baseline, midline and end-line data.

The year also yielded positive results from third-party monitoring, a complementary tool that functions alongside the regular team's work of monitoring, reporting, and grant management during the grant cycle. For grants in Kenya, third-party monitoring of programmes under both the core and accelerated streams of funding showed early signs of success in bridging law enforcement, youth and other stakeholders and mobilising religious groups to prevent and counter violent extremism. Of particular note was the impact of GCERF support on County Action Plans to prevent and counter violent extremism in Kenya.

GCERF also initiated an ex-post independent evaluation of the acclaimed Community Action Response Teams established by GCERF grant recipient, ActionAid Nigeria. Ex-post evaluations assess how sustainable outcomes of programming are. The results of the evaluation, due in the first half of 2021, are much anticipated as ActionAid continues to attract national press for its model for building youth participation in policy making into law across other parts of Nigeria.

In 2020, GCERF and the Global Counterterrorism Forum's working group for countering violent extremism agreed to partner on joint research on preventing and countering violent extremism at a local level.





**NIGERIA**

Photo by Muhammadtaha Ibrahim Ma'aji from unsplash.com

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

GCERF's Independent Review Panel is an impartial group of 10 experts appointed by the GCERF Governing Board to provide a rigorous technical assessment of requests for funding received by GCERF.

At the same time, the panel provides expert advice on specific country assessments and GCERF's investment strategies. In 2020, the terms of reference of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) were updated to benefit further from the knowledge of its world-class experts.

GCERF engages IRP members during the grant management process and to contribute to the organisation's capacity building efforts for grantees. The panel is an essential component of GCERF's funding mechanisms to ensure quality programming, PVE specificity, and alignment to national priorities.

Members are institutionally independent of the GCERF Secretariat and Governing Board. Each serves in a personal capacity with no link to their employer, government, or other entity. In 2020, the panel reviewed grant proposals from Albania, Kosovo, Mali, the Philippines, Somalia, and Sri Lanka. The panel also assisted in the development of the investment strategy in Kenya and Sri Lanka, as well as the regional strategy in the Western Balkans.

GCERF maintained close communications with the panel, involving them in its work, including at multiple webinars called Global Communities of Practice. Topics covered in 2020 ranged from good practice in community policing and involving the private sector in PVE. The virtual series attracted more than 400 participants from around the world, including practitioners, donors, and members of government from GCERF's partner countries.

The discussions provided a new platform for GCERF's grant recipients to talk directly to experts in the field of countering and preventing violent extremism and, as importantly, share experiences with each other. The webinars allowed GCERF to further its mission of creating enduring change in the local communities where it funds work. This included an exchange of lessons learned from various global contexts and planted seeds for further research and programming by GCERF and partners.



# MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL IN 2020



**Mr Christian Leke Achaleke**

2018 Luxembourg Peace Prize  
Laureate for Outstanding Youth  
Peaceworker



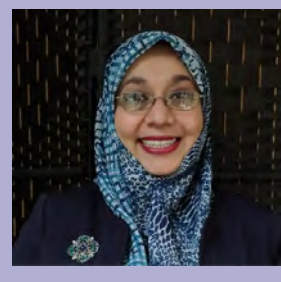
**Ms Hamsatu Allamin**

Founder, Allamin Foundation for Peace  
and Development; member of the  
global Women's Alliance for Security  
Leadership (WASL) and Federation of  
Muslim Women in Nigeria



**Sir Malcolm Evans**

Professor of Public International  
Law, University of Bristol Law School;  
Chair, United Nations Subcommit-  
tee for the Prevention of Torture



**Ms Humera Khan**

Executive Director, Muflehun;  
Adjunct Professor, The George  
Washington University Elliott  
School of International Affairs



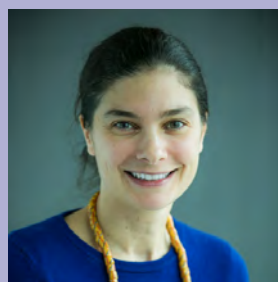
**Ms Phyllis Muema**

Executive Director, Kenya  
Community Support Centre  
(KECOSCE)



**Ms Mossarat Qadeem**

Executive Director, PAIMAN  
Alumni Trust



**Ms Maud Roue**

Programme Manager, Kofi Annan  
Foundation



**Mr Keneshbek Sainazarov  
(IRP Chair)**

Central Asia Program Director,  
Search for Common Ground



**Dr Lisa Schirch**

Senior Advisor on Policy, Alliance  
for Peacebuilding



**Mr Thomas Wuchte**

Executive Director, International  
Institute for Justice and the Rule of  
Law (IJL)

GCERF thanks Ms Phyllis Muema and Ms Hamsatu Allamin for their service as members of the Independent Review Panel and noted their resignation at the close of 2020. At that time, the Governing Board approved the appointment of the following experts as new members:



**Dr Andrew Glazzard**

Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow,  
United States Institute for Peace



**Dr Medinat Malefakis**

Conflict, Terrorism and Humanitarian  
Displacement Expert



**Dr David Malet**

Associate Professor of Justice, Law and  
Criminology, American University

# GOVERNANCE

As GCERF's decision-making body, the GCERF Governing Board has various responsibilities. The Board:

- **Guides GCERF's strategic direction**
- **Promotes GCERF's mission and engagement with partners**
- **Mobilises resources**
- **Manages country investment strategies, budgets, and internal control systems**
- **Monitors performance, ensures compliance with ethics and conflict of interest policy, and oversees the Secretariat**

In 2020, GCERF held two virtual board meetings to adapt within the restrictions of COVID-19, on 9 June 2020 and on 1-2 December 2020. The Board took 28 decisions on critical issues, such as allocation of funding, strategy implementation plans, internal control measures, and country and regional strategies for the Western Balkans, the Sahel, Somalia, and Sri Lanka.

On 1 December 2020, Mr Stefano Manservigi was appointed as the new Chair of the Governing Board at the conclusion of outgoing Chair Ms Carol Bellamy's term, and will assume duties in January 2021. Mr Manservigi, a former Director-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) in the European Commission, brings extensive experience to the post with a long career in international diplomacy, security policy, and development.

In 2020, the Board approved Albania, Niger, and North Macedonia as new partner countries. All Board decisions are publicly available on the GCERF website. A full list of our board membership can be found in Annex 1.

Another important development was the creation of a Finance and Audit Committee responsible for overseeing and advising on financial matters, audit, risk management and internal control. By the end of 2020, the Finance and Audit Committee consisted of three members and held several meetings.

The Governance and Ethics Committee, consisting of six members, held several meetings in 2020. In 2020, the Governance and Ethics Committee did not receive any reports of cases of conflict of interest.

At the country level, individuals covered by principles related to ethics and conflict of interest are members of the Country Support Mechanisms, who are involved in the grant making process. Recipients of GCERF funding are also bound by GCERF's Code of Conduct. During 2020, no cases of conflict of interest in partner countries were reported to the GCERF Secretariat, relayed to members of the Country Support Mechanisms, nor to funding recipients.



# OUTREACH

In 2020, GCERF continued to expand its external audience, drawing more PVE practitioners, young people, prospective donors, academics, and reporters to its mission of preventing violent extremism.

GCERF unveiled a new website, including refreshed branding, easier navigation, and a corporate video to capture new audiences. Such enhancements worked alongside concerted web campaigns and events series, enabling GCERF to continue advocating the critical role of communities in preventing violent extremism. GCERF recorded these gains in spite of challenges to traditional reporting and programming throughout the global pandemic.

GCERF distributed quarterly newsletters featuring short videos and pushed interactivity through virtual events and a heightened presence on social media. GCERF attracted international press mentions and was featured in esteemed journals, magazines, and industry publications such as DevEx, Just Security, the Royal United Services Institute blog, and others.

GCERF organised several external events, primarily in virtual format due to COVID-19, and held speaking roles at numerous high-level conferences. It increased engagement with the private sector and hosted a virtual Community of Practice event with GCERF grantees globally to discuss the local context, goals, and challenges involved with engaging the private sector.

GCERF strengthened its relationships and prioritised close coordination with key partners, including the United Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Hedayah, the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), and the Kofi Annan Foundation (KAF). GCERF signed Memorandums of Understanding with IIJ and KAF.

# FINANCE

The finance unit plans and organises the Fund's financial resources, managing annual and project audits, while complying with international accounting standards. The team also provides technical support to the Fund's grant-making and grant-management activities and conducts financial training for GCERF grant recipients in-country. An annual audit was conducted by an external company, BDO SA Ltd, in Switzerland on GCERF's financial statements in 2020.

During the year, a number of GCERF grant recipients in Africa, Asia, and Europe underwent financial

examinations by BDO LLP in the UK. The Secretariat continued strengthening its internal control and risk management systems, in accordance with the COSO model of internal control. A full revision of current procedures and processes started during the last quarter of 2020.

In 2020, the Finance and Audit Committee was established with an initial composition of three members by the Governing Board to oversee and advise on matters related to finance, audit, risk management or internal control.

# HUMAN RESOURCES

GCERF finished the year stronger, more efficient, and more resilient than it started.

The organisation continued to attract highly qualified professionals from around the world. GCERF adapted seamlessly to remote work, due in part to its commitment to internal capacity-building and flexible work arrangements predating the global pandemic.

In 2020, GCERF successfully onboarded five new employees and four short-term interns. At year end, the GCERF Secretariat had 27 staff members, including permanent and temporary employees, one outsourced staff and interns. The team was 74 per cent women and comprised 16 different nationalities.

The Secretariat moved to remote work on 18 March 2020, in line with official advice from the Swiss government. As GCERF had already migrated to Microsoft Office 365 in 2019, all staff were well-equipped to correspond and collaborate on shared projects virtu-

ally. This was particularly noteworthy at a time when comparable organisations were reporting productivity losses in the initial months of adaptation.

Throughout the year, GCERF worked to ensure strict cybersecurity rules in line with best standards. It concurrently focused on supporting staff through the uncertainty of the pandemic and associated restrictions on movement. For example, GCERF secured an additional temporary mental health support and organised social events online and offline, when possible, to boost morale and maintain staff wellbeing.



# RESOURCE MOBILISATION

GCERF is supported by 18 governments, the EU, and the private sector. At year end, total financial contributions received since GCERF's inception in 2014 reached USD 97.4 million, including in-kind contributions. In 2020 alone, GCERF secured a total of USD 18.7 million to reinvest in existing partner countries and add new countries to its portfolio. GCERF continues to benefit from the strong support of its current donors, which have renewed their commitments to its mission. In 2020, GCERF welcomed Germany and Italy as new donors and looks forward to building strong

relationships with them.

In parallel, GCERF continued its engagement with potential new partners, including the private sector and foundations, which remains a long-term goal. Notably, GCERF signed an MOU with IHS Nigeria to offer skills training to an estimated 4,000 participants of peace camps in Nigeria. This partnership will be implemented when COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and movement allows.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO GCERF

In thousands of US Dollars (as of 31 December, 2020)	Cash	In-Kind Contributions
Australia	5,293	-
Canada	3,445	-
Denmark	2,094	-
European Union	11,279	-
France	2,420	-
Germany	5,990	-
Italy	575	-
Japan	7,525	-
Kofi Annan Foundation	96	-
Liechtenstein	257	-
Morocco	30	32
Netherlands	11,535	-
New Zealand	1,243	42
Norway	4,622	-
Private Sector & Other	52	36
Qatar	10,000	-
Spain	12	-
Sweden	167	-
Switzerland	10,447	1,969
United Kingdom	2,577	-
United States of America	13,427	2,326
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,087</b>	<b>4,405</b>

# ALBANIA

## CONTEXT

Albania became a GCERF partner country in April 2020, as part of GCERF's expansion to other Western Balkan countries. Kosovo was the first. GCERF contracted an external expert to conduct a Regional Needs Assessment and subsequently developed a three-year investment strategy for the Western Balkans focusing on the rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of returning foreign terrorist fighters (RFTFs). This builds on a theory of change developed for community-based R&R.

COVID-19 exacerbated economic hardship and restricted travel. More than 450 people, in Syria, were expected to be repatriated starting 2020. However, due to the pandemic and shifting global priorities, returns were delayed. Of this number, the government of Albania had expected to receive 25 women and children but instead, only five people returned.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- GCERF funded Terre des Hommes to assist the government's reception centre for RFTFs, the first point of contact for returnees. The grant recipient supported the first family of returnees and aided an unaccompanied child to be reunited with family.







**ALBANIA**

Photo by Chris Boehm from unsplash.com

## LESSONS LEARNED

- The sensitivity of repatriating RFTFs illustrates the importance of multi-stakeholder coordination and flexible programming.
- The challenge of communicating with governmental institutions highlight the need for both GCERF and partners to proactively engage with relevant governmental bodies.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS



# BANGLADESH

## CONTEXT

COVID-19 reached Bangladesh in March. By year end, the pandemic had contributed to 7,559 deaths. Social and economic challenges grew in the reporting period with a lower level of remittances, decreased rates of international trade across industries, and cancellations from foreign buyers of ready-made garments.

Violent extremist (VE) groups continued to exploit increasing political, economic, and social grievances aggravated by pandemic, using Bangladeshi cyberspace to reach an even wider audience. Since the outbreak, the number of internet users rose by more than 50 per cent across Bangladesh, according to a November report published in Foreign Policy. Misinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 multiplied during the year, according to The Diplomat, which cited increasing radicalisation through doomsday scenarios and encouraging attacks.

In Rajshahi and Khulna districts, arrests of supporters and members of banned VE groups were reported by online media and Rupantar, a grant recipient operating in the area. In Cox's Bazar, where the YPSA-led consortium and Pulse Bangladesh operate, the price of essential goods rose 50 per cent at the same time daily wages dropped 15 percent, according to grant recipients.

Resentment among host communities towards the Rohingya community hosted in the camps grew as the socio-economic situation worsened, according aid groups cited in news reports.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- GCERF supported more than 500 youth platforms. These platforms, such as youth peace clubs, brought together young women and men, girls and boys from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences and talk about the negative impact of violent extremism in their communities.
- GCERF developed change agents who led various community level activities to prevent violent extremism. Training on leadership, communication, facilitation skills, and PVE is provided to young people to promote critical thinking skills and a sense of purpose.
- Change agents voluntarily supported the implementation of COVID-19 activities included food distribution to 800 households in Cox's Bazar, hygiene materials and door-to-door awareness raising in Khulna, Rajshahi, and other areas that reached more than 18,000 households.
- Youth peace club members were invited by the Khulna City Corporation to participate in a September planning meeting, a great step in empowering youth in decision-making.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Grant recipients came up with new approaches on how to continue performing PVE initiatives without jeopardising the health and safety of staff and beneficiaries. Although virtual meetings did not work well in rural areas due to poor connectivity, they proved effective in coordinating consortium members. Online financial monitoring of sub-recipients was also tested and found efficient.
- Cultural norms continued to pose barriers for

efficient women's participation in programme activities. The YPSA-led consortium reported the engagement of majhi, or traditional leaders, in activities implemented in Rohingya camps were crucial to promoting women's involvement in PVE. This is because the permission of majhis is important to ensure women's engagement in the programme.

- Rupantar overcame the challenge of engaging youth from diverse religious backgrounds due to stigma by creating positive examples in targeted communities and better promoting peace clubs.



**BANGLADESH**

Photo supplied by Rupantar

### ABDUL, SCHOOL TEACHER, CHAPAI-NAWABGANJ

"[THIS IS] THE VERY FIRST TIME WE ARE EXPERIENCING OUR YOUTHS FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS AND MULTIPLE BACKGROUNDS COLLABORATING AS A TEAM AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER FOR A COMMON GOAL: DEVELOPING TRUST AND RESPECT."

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS





## **RECOGNISING RADICALISATION: “A GIFT FROM ALLAH”**

*Even during the pandemic, Arizul Islam,\* 18, and his friends Khairul,\* Sohel\* and Razu\* regularly attended the local mosque in Khulna City Corporation, Bangladesh, to pray.*

*The devout young man felt inspired there and was growing closer to his friends.*

*Arizul, a college student, was becoming more and more convinced of his friends' perspective that the government was favouring “non-believers” over Muslims. By the time Arizul learned that they belonged to the home-grown violent extremist group banned by the government, Allah'r Dal, he was convinced that jihad was the only way to end the perceived degradation of Muslims.*

*“We believed that this pandemic had been a gift from Allah for the destruction of kaffirs [non-believers]. This pandemic will not touch any mumin [believer],” he said. Arizul stayed in touch with his friends via a protected text platform and began withdrawing from his other friends.*

*“I was growing an ‘us versus them’ mentality. My inner beliefs were changing gradually in favour of their logic and the company of my other friends and family did not give me much comfort,” he said.*

*It was these changes that caught the attention of his classmate, Sirajul\*. Sirajul belonged to a GCERF-funded peace club organised by the NGO, Rupantar. From his experiences learning about propaganda and the emergence of violent inci-*

*dents through the club, he knew that his childhood friend's irregular behaviour could be a sign of radicalisation. The peace clubs host cultural, sporting, and inter-faith activities aimed at bringing diverse groups together and improving social cohesion.*

*“Realising Arizul's unusual avoidance, isolation and unfamiliar belief system, I introduced him to some other friends at peace club,” Sirajul said.*

*They talked to Arizul several times and also spoke to his parents and the elected representative of the area. They discussed the need for tolerance and pluralism in society as well as the susceptibility of youth to recruitment by violent extremist groups.*

*Slowly, Arizul regained a sense of scepticism and began critically analysing his situation. He stopped communicating with the trio involved with Allah'r Dal and by July, the elite arm of the police, the Rapid Action Battalion, had arrested Sohel, Khairul, and Razu on suspicion of supporting militancy.*

*Now, Arizul is grateful to the members of the peace club for intervening.*

*“Initially, I wasn't interested in hearing them but after several conversations, I came to realise that I was walking on the wrong path,” Arizul said. He is now interested in conducting social activities for other peace club members.*

*\*Not their real names*

# KENYA

## CONTEXT

Kenya continued to be a frequent target for terrorist attacks led by Al-Shabaab. Attacks mainly targeted non-local service providers, such as teachers, and security personnel in Garissa county, the shared US-Kenyan Manda Bay Airfield in Lamu, and construction workers in Wajir-East. Al-Shabaab also continued to force local communities to pay a tax to the militant group.

The pandemic and its restrictions influenced social

and security dynamics within the country and accentuated some of the drivers of violent extremism including unemployment, a sense of hopelessness, and community grievances against state institutions. Government restrictions led to implementation delays for some activities, especially those involving students as schools remained closed until the end of 2020.

All nine GCERF grantees repurposed funding to respond to public health, financial, and educational issues that communities faced due to the pandemic.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- GCERF funded three Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Garissa, Isiolo, and Nyeri, and helped lead implementation of County Action Plans for countering and preventing violent extremism.
- Grantees implemented activities to respond to the pandemic and its implications in the security sector. These included distribution of food and hygiene items, personal protective equipment (PPE) and water dispensers in vulnerable communities, religious institutions, police stations and correctional centres.
- Grantees implemented activities to enhance trust and collaboration among youth and security actors, particularly in Garissa, Nairobi, and Wajir Counties. These activities included engagement of youth in Community Peace Watch Groups. Representatives from community peace watch groups, including security actors, reported that youth became key in conflict prevention, particularly in remote areas that elders cannot easily access.
- Vulnerable community members in VE hotspots, including in and out-of-school youth and women affected by VE, received professional skills training on financial literacy and business entrepreneurship to access employment opportunities.
- GCERF grant recipient, Legal Resources and Foundation Trust, developed the first Penal Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in Correctional Centres to ensure integration of PVE in national policies and practices regarding prison service. The strategy gained traction with the Parliament of Kenya and will be used as basis for any new legislation related to PVE in prisons.
- Grantees reported that more young women took up group leadership roles, an improvement on past years when female voices were hardly heard in group sessions.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Initiatives that support joint actions from community and security actors help to improve the relationship between the community and security actors. Dialogue between youth and the broader community breaks the ice, defuses hostility, and helps to address stereotypes.
- Grassroots CSOs can be leaders in driving change at the local level within a short time-

frame. Legal Resources and Foundation Trust advocated to develop a PVE strategy in prison facilities and influenced policy change within a one-year period.

- Local CSOs can be more effective when their scope of work is well-defined, their outcomes and outputs are clear, and they are supported in building partnerships with national and international actors.

**EZEKIEL KAMAU**

**WAITHAKA – 27, YOUTH FROM  
KAMUKUNJI SUB COUNTY**

“YOUTHS NOW INTERACT FREELY WITH THE POLICE OFFICERS THROUGH ORGANISED DIALOGUE SESSIONS WHERE GAPS BETWEEN POLICE AND YOUTH ARE ADDRESSED.”

## THE WAY FORWARD

The next phase of GCERF's programme in Kenya will focus on enhancing sustainability through the support of community structures Community Engagement Forums in 21 counties. Each forum is

established by the Government of Kenya to support County Action Plans for preventing and countering violent extremism.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS



Healthy Africa, Empowered People!





## **BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE & POLICE**

*When reporting a crime, few would expect to be put behind bars themselves. But this was how many young people in Kenya's Kamukunji sub-county felt when the relationship between police and the youth were at their lowest point in July 2020, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. "Young people were saying they were always suspects," Gibson Mwaita, the Consortium Manager of the GCERF-funded Jiongoze project said. "They talked about harassment by the police, being arrested and being rounded up and put behind bars when reporting crime, instead of being listened to." Stories like these were the catalyst for change. A baseline study in 2019 showed that police harassment of young people, between 18 and 35, was one of the drivers for violent extremism in the community. "Part of what was driving them to join these violent extremist and organised groups was in retaliation to what was perceived as harassment," Mwaita, 31, said. "Young people were being rounded up just for being in groups in the playground."*

*As the appeals from young people to intervene grew, the consortium of five local NGOs worked to broker a truce between young people and the police. SOWED Kenya talked to key actors, including in the National Government Administration and a Member of Parliament, and took the lead in convening what is known as a "Kikao" open-air dialogue. This gave people representing all sides the chance to air grievances and start finding solutions. "The young people got to speak out about some of the things that were being done in the community that they felt were really fuelling the conflict between police and young people. For them to feel safe, in terms of even coming to the police station, they wanted to feel like they had a go-to person," Mwaita said. The police listened and took action. They took recommendations generated at the open-air dialogue and by the following month, the police station had created the position of Station Youth Liaison Officer. The two selected officers, chosen against strict criteria, were male and female, below the age of*

*35, known for their empathetic dispositions and being friendly to youth. Defence Kale, one of the young constables to fill the newly created post at the Shauri Moyo station, said the rapport between young people and police was now "excellent". "The youth are becoming friendlier to police officers and they are willing to give information on what is happening in the community," Kale, 31, said. This, in turn, has improved her ability to police, with young people trusting her with information on planned crimes that police are now able to thwart as a result.*

*The success of the programme has snowballed. Nearby Buruburu police station assigned their own Station Youth Liaison Officers and a roll-out of the newly created programme is now underway nationally, starting with 11 pilot counties, including the capital city of Nairobi. The Executive Director of SOWED Kenya, Karanja Muraya said, "We already had a series of meetings with the National Police Service – including the Directorate of Counter-Violent Extremism and Organised Crime, Directorate of Reforms and Directorate of Community Policing – and the REINVENT Programme to discuss the terms of reference and standards of procedure for the SYLOs [station youth liaison officers] and the training materials." Furthermore, the initiative has already yielded results on the broader mission of preventing violent extremism. "We have seen reduced cases of violent extremism in the communities in Shauri Moyo and Kamikunji and Buruburu based on the reforms," Mwaita said, based on anecdotal feedback received so far. A similar sentiment has been echoed in national counterterrorism data, according to Muraya. "Looking at the data from the National Counter Terrorism Center, it indicated that Kamikunji has recorded a significant decline in the number of people who are crossing over to Somalia for training," Muraya said. Back in Shauri Moyo, police are now invited to join youth initiatives in the community such as sporting events and tree plantings. "Youths now interact freely with the police officers through organised dialogue sessions where gaps between police and youth are addressed, creating a crime free environment." said Ezekiel Kamau Waithaka, 27, living in Shauri Moyo.*

# KOSOVO

## CONTEXT

As with Albania, the Kosovo programme at GCERF is run under the Western Balkans Regional Strategy. The Western Balkans countries most affected by radicalisation, including Kosovo, are characterised by poor governance, corruption, a lack of political accountability, inter-ethnic tensions, and frozen conflict, where violence has ceased but underlying causes of the conflict remain. A lack of employment opportunities, poverty, and low levels of education contribute to the region's vulnerability to violent extremism.

Political tension continued in Kosovo. Former Kosovo Liberation Army chiefs were indicted with international crimes, EU-led Kosovo-Serbia dialogues resumed, and the government fell. As mentioned earlier, GCERF's investment in the Western Balkans focused on the R&R of RFTFs and their families. GCERF signed one new grant in Kosovo with Community Development Fund.



**KOSOVO**  
Photo supplied by Community Development Fund

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Community Building Mitrovica consortium engaged youth in Mitrovica North and South. Together with local doctors and epidemiologists, they produced leaflets and videos for awareness-raising on COVID-19. They provided PPE to staff members of hospitals and police stations, as well as families in rural areas. The consortium's online outreach efforts reached 133,899 people.
- The Community Development Fund consortium and Forum for Civic Initiatives, or FIQ (Forumi për Iniciativa Qytetare), finished their programmes in September. Endline surveys showed youth participants had a clearer vision of their objectives in life, a higher sense of belonging and were more capable of interacting, cooperating, and creating friendships with members of other communities.
- The Community Development Fund consortium supported the Government's Division of Reintegration under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to support RFTFs, their families, and receiving communities.
- The Advocacy Training and Resource Centre consortium developed a policy paper providing recommendations to government on the impact of COVID-19 and R&R.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- The media is a useful tool for influencing society's openness to the R&R of RFTFs and their families. However, media reporting yields adverse effects if not done responsibly.
- The complexity of R&R highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder coordination. Stakeholders should not expect access to FTFs and their families simply by virtue of having a grant. Building trust with government authorities takes time.
- CSOs do not necessarily need direct contact with RFTFs to support R&R. The Community Development Fund's activities supporting returnee children to receive home-schooling through use of tablets is a good example.



KOSOVO

Photo by Igor Bulgarin from shutterstock.com



## WOMEN REBUILD LIVES AFTER WAR IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

*One year after returning to Kosovo from Syria and Iraq, women received professional skills training as part of rehabilitation and reintegration programming funded by GCERF.*

*The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kosovo, Ms Gerdovci, said these activities are incremental steps that pave the way towards economic reintegration and empowerment of returnees. The programme provides women with both the required skills and the resources, such as sewing machines, needed to create their own merchandise.*

*The Reintegration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is talking to private companies about providing returned women the opportunity to supply companies with these products.*

*"In this way, they will be able to generate income and not become a burden on the state but instead will be able to add value and reintegrate into their communities," she told Kallxco, in a July report by reporter, Adelina Ahmeti.*

*Returned women have also shown interest in other courses such as gastronomy, she said.*

### AT-RISK YOUTH PARTICIPANTS IN GCERF FUNDED WORKSHOPS

"I HAVE INCREASED [MY] SENSE OF EMPATHY.

"THEY HAVE TAUGHT US TO BELIEVE IN OURSELVES AND INCREASE OUR SELF-CONFIDENCE."

## THE WAY FORWARD

- GCERF grantees will increasingly support all aspects of R&R including support to RFTFs, government institutions and the creation of an enabling environment for returnees.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS







KOSOVO

Photo by Mrika Selimi from unsplash.com

# MALI

## CONTEXT

The collapse of constitutional democracy in August heightened fears about opportunistic advances by violent extremism groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimeen and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the southern regions of Mali, particularly in Kayes and Sikasso. In Central and Northern Mali, particular Mopti, Segou, and Gao, violent extremist groups repeatedly targeted civilians, foodbanks, public infrastructures such as bridges, schools, and popular transport routes. These activities are aimed at isolating populations further as interethnic conflicts continued.

A high number of violent extremist intrusions were recorded in the southern regions of Kayes and Sikasso where attacks against paramilitary posts gained momentum. While reports from GCERF grantees in these regions suggest that communities are contributing to efforts to prevent violent extremism, potential exacerbating factors in areas with existing problems such as modern slavery and mining disputes are causes for alarm.



MALI

Photo supplied by Action Mopti Consortium

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Action Mopti consortium supported an awareness raising campaign designed and led by 20 youth ambassadors (10 women and 10 men) in the urban Mopti commune. The campaign targeted 5,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), in five different hosting sites of victims of intercommunity conflict. Campaigns mobilised young people, inside and outside the camps, to engage peers on radicalisation and prevention. IDPs requested the youth-led campaigns be continued.
- The AMSS consortium organised awareness-raising days on citizenship for 165 young men and women. Mayors, village councillors, and representatives of local women's associations were present.
- The ENDA consortium collaborated with community leaders, local and school authorities to identify 800 children (400 girls and 400 boys) and ensure their enrolment in school. Local leaders with an in-depth knowledge of communities helped identify the children, who will receive school kits that economically vulnerable families often struggle to afford.
- The Think Peace consortium worked with vulnerable youth, women, and people with reduced mobility to enhance their access to economic opportunities through training and micro-funding. Some 88 participants (43 men and 45 women) attended 16 coaching sessions in agricultural entrepreneurship such as market gardening, cattle and sheep feed, meat processing, soap production and marketing. At the end of the training, each beneficiary was given a business plan to receive small grants.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- Community leadership fosters wider mobilisation and partnership with the private sector, reducing project costs and increasing sustainability. In Kayes, seven town halls were offered 2 hectares of land each to support the implementation of the project's socio-economic activities.
- Youth beneficiaries of vocational training require close and tailored mentorship. Sustainability increases when beneficiaries gain better command of management tools and equipment and the private sector plays a critical role.

### MALE BENEFICIARY OF YOUTH PROGRAMMING, 24, MOPTI

"THIS PROGRAMME DOES NOT SIMPLY INCLUDE BENEFICIARIES. IT SUPPORTS THEM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR OWN INITIATIVES – THE BEST WAY TO INCREASE A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN YOUTHS."

## THE WAY FORWARD

- GCERF will co-lead with the Malian Government, in collaboration with Switzerland, France, United States, United Kingdom, and United Nations Development Programme, a national PVE conference bringing together Malian communities and PVE stakeholders, a first in the country.
- GCERF will sign an MOU with the G5 Sahel on joint activity in the Liptako-Gourma region. In line with the GCERF Sahel strategy, programming will provide direct support to the implementation of G5 Sahel activities on the governance, resilience, and human development axes.
- GCERF will set up a Regional Funding Panel in the Sahel composed of regional authorities, national governments, donors to promote and enhance co-creation and co-ownership of PVE programming activities.
- GCERF will launch new portfolios in Burkina Faso and Niger to work with the governments in supporting and promoting locally-designed and locally-led PVE interventions through CSOs, including community based organisations.



MALI  
Photo by Ikpro from shutterstock.com



## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS



### RESTORED AGRIBUSINESS MARKS END OF A DARK TIME

*"My name is Sanou M. D. I am 55 years old. I live in Tambafigna - commune of Kéniéba region of Kayes. I am the president of the Tambafigna women's group. In our village, all the women suffered martyrdom in general, particularly me. The theft of installations (solar panels, batteries, the pump) in our market gardening zone had left us idle. This accelerated the impoverishment of women who could no longer afford the costs of health, schooling, and food for their children.*

*"One day we were invited by the municipal authorities of Kéniéba to participate in a meeting of the*

*GCERF project in our village. We were more than 20 women participating in this meeting that day. The project team explained the reasons for coming to our village. During the discussions, we quickly understood that it was about the economic capacity building of women and consolidating social cohesion in the context of violent extremism.*

*"As soon as this information was announced, we broke into dance because it was finally the end of a dark time for us women. With that, we will finally have economic and financial stability. At the same time, we can maintain our family lives, which had started to degrade.*

*"I never thought that one day our market gardening activity would resume because we felt we had knocked on every door without success."*



**MALI**  
Photo by ANDRZEJ GRZEGORCZYK  
from shutterstock.com

# NIGERIA

## CONTEXT

Deeply impacted by the pandemic, the country experienced its worst economic recession since the 1980s. According to the June Nigeria Development Update of the World Bank, the recession would potentially push an additional seven million Nigerians into poverty.

These factors, according to grant recipients, contributed to increased incidence of violence throughout the country, including in Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Plateau States. Grantees reported an increase in kidnappings, herdsmen attacks, burglaries, and armed robberies, as well as violent extremist attacks. They also said extremist groups had manipulated narratives around the government's handling of the pandemic, blaming the state for poor services and abandoning some communities in a bid to reinforce feelings of victimhood.

The latter part of the year was marked by nationwide protests against police brutality. The slogan, "End SARS", called for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a unit of the Nigerian Police.

In Jos, the capital of Plateau, protests turned violent on 20 October, when pro-SARS protesters clashed with demonstrators who barricaded a major road. This sparked violent interactions, leading to more widespread unrest. Cars and shops were vandalised and burnt. Nationwide, at least 50 people died in clashes between protesters and security forces.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- GCERF's second round of funding in Nigeria reached more than 34,000 beneficiaries.
- As a result of grantee programming, community dialogues, and conflict resolution mechanisms – such as Community Action Response Teams and Youth Peace Ambassador meetings – became entrenched in 35 project communities. Community leaders reported increased capacity to address local-level conflicts and a rise in the level of trust in the community to do so. Grantees reported less violence between farmers and herdsmen, a key source of conflict and driver of radicalisation in the past.
- The ActionAid Nigeria consortium formed State Conflict Management Alliances. Alliances support information gathering and tracking tools that amplify early warning and response mechanisms and, by bringing together a range of stakeholders, enable more effective conflict resolution. In Ado, Plateau State, community leaders agreed that all gatherings including festivals, such as burials and association meetings, must include a segment dedicated to PVE messages.
- Inter- and intra-faith dialogue sessions brought together various secular and religious groups to address the animosity with which these groups had previously regarded each other. The projects supported the development of groups such as Inter-Religious Forums and the Traditional Rulers Forum to work collaboratively to address VE-related challenges. Local govern-



ment authorities in some areas now use these groups to increase their own engagement with community members.

- Projects showed a positive impact on youth. After attending youth peace camps, mentoring sessions, and skill training, young people reported gains in confidence and sense of purpose, while family and community members reported a dramatic drop in levels of youth idleness and violence.
- In Kogi and Nasarawa, the ActionAid Nigeria consortium made advances in developing the legal frameworks to prevent violent extremism among youth. In Kogi, the consortium advocated to operationalise the Youth Development Commission which will foster programmes focusing on PVE and young people. Women Environment Program is also sponsoring a bill for the establishment of the Benue Youth Development Commission.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Activities that bring young people from different communities together create an avenue for better understanding and appreciation of diversity. This appreciation is core to fostering peaceful coexistence.
- Involvement of state officials at various levels is crucial to ensure political will, project acceptance, and an enabling environment for the project.

### IWUSE, NIGERIA POLICE FORCE

"I NEVER HAD ANY TRAINING ON COMMUNITY POLICING, I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW IT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED. I ONLY HAD ACCESS TO FEW MATERIALS BUT THAT DID NOT GIVE ME DEPTH TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT UNTIL WE HAD THIS TRAINING. THANKS TO THE ORGANISERS FOR SUPPORTING ME TO DELIVER BETTER IN MY DUTY STATION"



NIGERIA  
Photo by Jordi C from shutterstock.com



## YOUTH TRUSTED TO RESOLVE DISPUTES USING NEW SKILLS

*In July, in Kasgong, Pankshin, tensions were raised among local communities after a cow belonging to Fulani herders was killed. Such incidents typically result in violent retaliations and conflict. To ensure a peaceful resolution of the situation, the village head decided to call Ayuba Daser\*, a Youth Peace Ambassador familiar with the Fulani community.*

*Following investigations and negotiations, the issue was resolved without any reprisals or violent acts. The perpetrators were found and handed over to the authorities.*

*According to Ayuba, "While in camp, we were taught how to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner. Since then, I have been using this skill to settle disputes in my community. I also have a good relationship with the Fulanis in my community, so when this issue came up, the village head sent for me and thankfully, we were able to resolve it peacefully."*

*\*Not his real name*



**NIGERIA**

Photo by Abubakar Balogun from unsplash.com

## THE WAY FORWARD

- The second round of grants are expected to be finished by the end of 2021.
- GCERF commences the review of its country strategy. It will kickstart consultations with key P/CVE stakeholders about a possible shift of focus from central Nigeria closer to the north east with potential support for rehabilitation and integration of people disengaging from Boko Haram and other terrorist and crime groups.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS

**act:onaid**





# PHILIPPINES

## CONTEXT

Contrary to expectations that the pandemic would reduce violence and conflict, high levels of instability and violence in Mindanao were reported throughout 2020, due to local VE groups' sporadic attacks, police and military operations, and feudal disputes. While the number of terrorist-related deaths decreased compared to previous years, the Philippines remained in the top 10 of the Global Terrorism Index in 2020.

All grantees reported that members of VE groups used COVID-19 as an opportunity to intensify recruitment, propaganda activities, and to mount attacks. Four major groups continue to operate in Mindanao on behalf of Dawlah Islamiyah, or IS, namely: the Abu Sayyaf Group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, remnants of the Maute Group, and remnants of the Ansar Khalifa Philippines.

Following the August twin suicide bombings in Jolo, Sulu, security actors considered family suicide terrorism as a primary attack method in the area, with women as key perpetrators. Across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), levels of intra- and inter-group violence due to clan feuds and land conflicts also remained high, displacing hundreds of families.

Meanwhile, a highly criticised Anti-Terror Law passed in July. The law went before the Supreme Court for containing provisions that run contrary to human rights, which advocates said could fuel terrorism. The government also intensified operations against communist terrorist groups, leading to arrests, surrenders, and protests from human rights groups.

By year end, mobility in the country was less restricted allowing economic activities to resume. With the rate of unemployment at its highest in 15 years, grantees expressed concern for underserved communities where VE activities can thrive. Remote education remained challenging with children and parents struggling with distance learning. In the BARMM, the progress of the transition government was delayed by the pandemic leading to calls to extend the transition period beyond 2022. More than ever, local governments up to the barangay level have been put to task to effectively deliver services and maintain peace in their own localities.



**PHILIPPINES**

Photo by Kobby Dagan from shutterstock.com



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Grantees reached 14,859 direct beneficiaries (45 per cent female and 55 per cent male) and more than 350,000 indirect beneficiaries, primarily through radio and social media.
- The Synergeia Foundation consortium worked to reduce vulnerability to recruitment by ensuring that children receive basic education and that education programmes are implemented by local governments. With the support of local mayors in the towns of Piagapo, Kapatagan, Buldon and Jolo, learning modules were produced and delivered as households adapted to distance learning.
- The Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society engaged in stakeholder coordination, profiling, and mapping to promote access to services and opportunities across 70 barangays in the BARMM. The consortium organised fora to allow community members to engage with BARMM authorities and increased community agency in areas where it was previously absent. The consortium worked with regional bodies to ensure the security approach was coupled with interventions that provide sustainable socio-economic opportunities, including for former rebels.
- The Institute for Autonomy and Governance consortium developed modules focusing on teaching moderate Islam with a focus on tolerance. The support and presence of the provincial Mufti and the chairman of Sulu Ulama Council for Peace and Development, along with the use of the Islamic Library as a training venue sent a clear message about the credibility of the module and the issue of violent extremism as a serious concern among religious leaders. As a result, 100 highly vulnerable young people attended a week-long peace camps where the modules were used.
- The Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services consortium delivered PVE and COVID-19 messages to communities through radio and video programmes, produced by citizen journalists, recruited and trained as part of this project. Known as patrolers, they used community connections to identify relevant, positive stories. Their efforts contribute to reducing the impact of misinformation.
- The Initiative for International Dialogue formed two local advisory groups composed of CSOs in Cotabato and Maguindanao. These local advisory groups representing the Moro, indigenous people, and Christian communities advocated for transitional justice and peace.



**PHILIPPINES**

Photo supplied by Gagandilan Mindanao Women

## EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION TO LEAD A FUTURE WITHOUT EXTREMISM

*Mira\* is a young woman living in Madalum, a municipality deeply affected by violence, especially during the 2017 military operations against ISIS-affiliated groups.*

*Like many of her peers, Mira's dreams for a better future became clouded by the poverty of her circumstances growing up. Around her, she saw malnutrition, abandoned houses, and unfinished roads.*

*Participating in a GCERF-funded programme aimed at engaging socially excluded youth gave her new optimism. Not only did she connect with other*

*young people facing similar issues, she became determined to help her peers build their communities.*

*"This project inspires us youth to participate in building peace and the development of our communities. It helps us understand the value of a peaceful environment, its impact and benefits, thus the need to reduce the presence of violent extremism," she said.*

*Mira is aware of the challenges ahead, but she is confident that with the right knowledge and skills she can play a part in bringing peace to her community. "Violent extremism, if not addressed today, will only grow," she said. "This project serves as a platform for me to find my value and identity as a Moro youth and my sense of purpose to my family and community."*

*\*Not her real name*

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Working with communities to co-design strategies is an effective approach to address specific drivers of radicalisation and recruitment in different communities.
- In areas where extremist groups are active and community needs are great, forming partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders is key to addressing needs effectively, thereby increasing resilience against VE group recruitment or encroachment.
- Local conflicts are mostly family and land-based, with less interfaith conflict than had previously been expected, according to grantees. Peace advocacy, under social cohesion, will focus on community dialogue to address these issues. Some communities in Maguindanao and North Cotabato with the presence of tri-people (Christian, Indigenous and Muslim) will receive special attention to eliminate interfaith tensions.

## THE WAY FORWARD

- The Secretariat launched a request for proposals for a local knowledge partner. The partner will support all eight grantees to increase their monitoring and evaluation capabilities and allow for greater cross-project comparison. The partner will also undertake programme-relevant research, the theme of which will be selected in conjunction with the Country Support Mechanism.

### MOTHER AND PARTICIPANT FROM JOLO DISTRICT 2

*"I THOUGHT THAT THE REASON WHY MY SON DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL WAS BECAUSE I WAS NOT INVOLVED IN HIS STUDIES. COVID-19 GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH HIM."*



## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS



PHILIPPINES

Photo by Molydar SOUAMA from unsplash.com



# SOMALIA

## CONTEXT

Somalia ranked 5th on the Global Terrorism Index and 2nd out of 178 countries on the Fragile States Index in 2020. Al Shabaab, an Al Qaeda-linked violent extremist group, controls significant swathes of the south of the country. Al Shabaab's control of rural areas and roads means that the Somali government is largely limited to control over urban centres, encircled by Al Shabaab. Islamic State in Somalia is also active in Puntland and the south. The principal drivers of violent extremism include poor governance and limited trust and presence of government authority – leaving vacuums in power, justice, and the provision of services for violent extremists to fill.

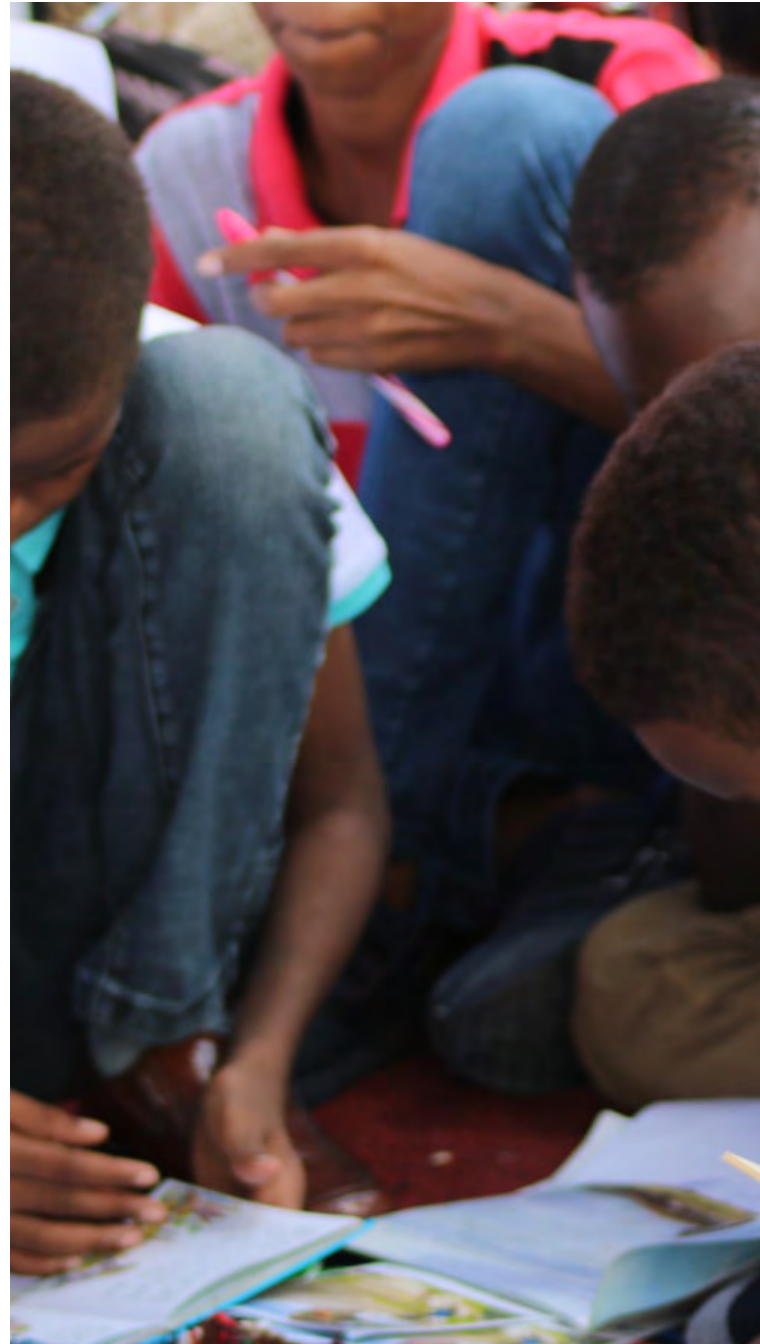
Contest over presidential and parliamentary elections also marked the political landscape. Humanitarian crises including droughts, floods, locusts, and COVID-19 threatened the already fragile livelihoods and food security context.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- GCERF selected two local organisations for funding in 2021 – one direct grantee and one consortium. GCERF worked with these grantees in 2020 to support them in articulating their community needs in fully fledged project documents.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Grassroots organisations enjoy greater legitimacy and trust in local communities. Their proximity to the lived reality of communities necessitates an agile and adaptive programming approach that can incorporate emerging needs.



## THE WAY FORWARD

- GCERF will launch programmes in 2021 and recruit a national Advisor.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS







**SOMALIA**

Photo by Ismail Salad Hajji dirir from unsplash.com

# TUNISIA

## CONTEXT

Several violent incidents demonstrated that the threat of extremism remains present in Tunisia, including terrorist attacks perpetrated in Kasserine, Sousse, and Tunis. The presence of VE groups near the Algerian and Libyan borders remained a significant threat. Police and military operations continued to disrupt terrorist cells in Ben Guerdane, El Kef, Gafsa, Jendouba, Kasserine, Mount Chaambi, and Sidi Bouzid. Grantees reported that young people are becoming particularly vulnerable to VE narratives in the governorates of Gafsa, Kasserine, and Tataouine, where primary sources of incomes, such as the production of oil or phosphates, have closed.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which reached Tunisia in March, directly weakened the country's fragile economy, increasing uncertainty and unemployment at a time when both were already factors of social unrest. Despite the government's support plan, which included TND 150 million (USD 55 million) for the most vulnerable, public demonstrations occurred across the country. Security forces responded with tear gas to disperse crowds. VE groups thrived on the economic and political instability of the reporting period and local communities' hostility towards security forces as they implemented pandemic restrictions and worked to quell demonstrations.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

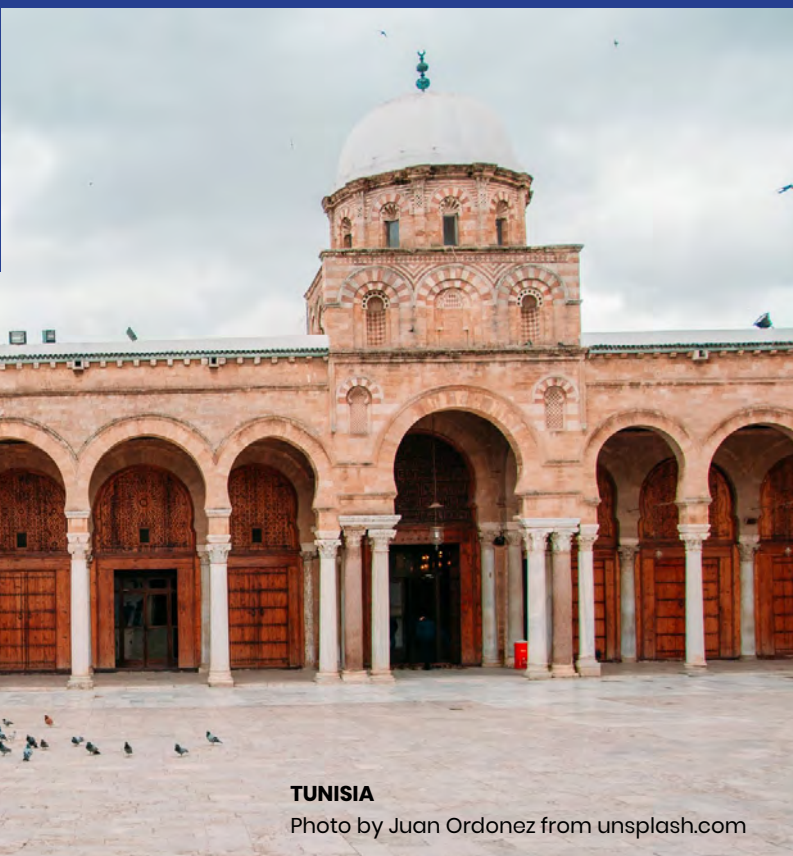
- Applied Social Science Forum led training sessions for 82 educational psychologists and children's social workers (76 women and six men) on digital resilience to VE covering how to respond to hate speech and raise complaints about VE content online.
- Forum El Jahedh directly contributed to community agency by hosting four capacity-building workshops on PVE, communication, and conflict management for 40 religious leaders (17 women and 23 men) from El Kef and Sahline governorates. The participants reported feelings of empowerment by playing an essential role in preventing the escalation of tension in their communities.
- Mobdiun reached 401 teenagers (192 women and 209 men) in the West Kram area of Tunis with 223 social awareness training sessions. Workshops enabled beneficiaries to develop





critical thinking and communication skills on various topics, including gender-based violence, racial discrimination, and community engagement, thereby reinforcing social cohesion within this vulnerable neighbourhood.

- Tunisia Plus supported 46 direct beneficiaries (19 women and 27 men) from Grand Tunis and Medenine to access economic opportunities, by conducting market studies and preparing business plans. By year end, 15 businesses had already started.
- We Love Sousse set up three Local Youth Councils in Mahdia, Monastir, and Sousse. They offer 45 young people (17 women and 28 men) a space for dialogue and political inclusion where they can share concrete proposals for PVE measures. By supporting the establishment of these councils, WLS fosters educational approaches to build resilience while also contributing to young people's sense of purpose.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- Sustainability must be at the heart of programme design. Income-generating activities promotes long-term engagement while ensuring buy-in of local communities.
- Vocational training needs to include business management to ensure viability.
- Engaging with local authorities and stakeholders is required for successful programming. As good practice, they should be included in the programme at the set-up stage, to ensure a common understanding of the activities to be implemented. A strong partnership will, in turn, help build trust and cooperation between communities and local actors, thereby increasing social cohesion and community engagement with potential for effective community-based integration.
- It remains crucial to involve the Country Support Mechanism, through its chair, the National Counter-Terrorism Commission, at every step of the grant-making and management process.

### MADIHA B., ELECTED YOUTH MEMBER OF LOCAL YOUTH COUNCIL

"VIOLENT EXTREMISM IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CAN TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS: IN THE STREETS, WITHIN FAMILIES, OR EVEN AT SCHOOL. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE LOCAL YOUTH COUNCIL WILL TACKLE VIOLENT RADICALISATION THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECTS CREATED BY AND FOR THE LOCAL YOUTH."

## WITH COACHING, A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN WEST KRAM

*Like many of his friends, Mourad, 25, was feeling insecure about his future. The social and professional stigma associated with living in West Kram, a vulnerable neighbourhood of Tunis, made him prone to radicalisation by violent extremist groups as they actively recruited in the area. In 2017, he tried to emigrate illegally. He took on a series of temporary jobs, with no long-term career opportunities, sustained only by his passion for boxing, his primary source of happiness.*

*But in August 2020, Mourad discovered Mobdiun and its GCERF-funded project, 'One-stop shop at*

*the West Kram". He attended social awareness training and personal coaching sessions. Mourad developed a better knowledge of himself and a clearer understanding of his community's social and cultural challenges.*

*"For the first time in my life, I can put words on how I feel, and to better express myself", he said. "I have also learnt to control my anger-management issues".*

*Thanks to Mobdiun's programme, Mourad has acquired a sense of responsibility and organisational skills. Besides volunteering as a coordinator for social awareness training, he is now working as a boxing coach and aims to pursue a career in this field.*

## THE WAY FORWARD

- The GCERF Country Strategy for Investment in Tunisia is under revision for the second round of funding through extensive consultations with government, donors, international organisations and CSOs representatives and will be finalised in the first half of 2021.

## PRINCIPAL GRANT RECIPIENTS







TUNISIA

Photo by Haythem Gataa from unsplash.com

# ANNEX 1

## BOARD MEMBERS

(AS OF DEC 31, 2020)

### AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, AND NEW ZEALAND

**Board Member:** H.E. Ms Cecile Hillyer, Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism and Head, International Security and Disarmament Division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Peter Scott, Acting Assistant Secretary, Counter-Terrorism Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia

### BANGLADESH

**Board Member:** H.E. Mr Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador and Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

**Alternate Board Member:** H.E. Mr Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations Office in Geneva

### CANADA AND UNITED KINGDOM

**Board Member:** H.E. Ms Miriam Shearman, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Ram Kamineni, Director, Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Crime Capacity Building Programs, Global Affairs Canada

### CIVIL SOCIETY

**Board Member:** Mr Fulco Van Deventer, Vice-Director, Human Security Collective

**Alternate Board Member:** Ms Selena Victor, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Mercy Corps Europe

### EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE AND DENMARK

**Board Member:** Mr Olivier Luyckx, Head of Unit, Stability, Security, Development and Nuclear Safety, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), European Commission

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Adrien Frier, Head of the Suppression of Terrorism and Organized Crime Department, Strategic, Security and Disarmament Directorate, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France

### FOUNDATIONS

**Board Member:** Mr Matthew Lawrence, Executive Director, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

### KENYA

**Board Member:** H.E. Dr Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva

### KOSOVO AND NORTH MACEDONIA

**Board Member:** Mr Lulzim Fushtica, Political Advisor, Ministry of Internal Affairs

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Borce Petrevski, National CVE/CT Coordinator of North Macedonia

### MALI AND NIGERIA

**Board Member:** Ambassador Tunde Mukaila Mustapha, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations Office in Geneva

**Alternate Board Member:** H.E. Mr Mamadou Henri Konate, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mali to the United Nations Office in Geneva

### POLICY, THINK AND DO TANKS

**Board Member:** vacant

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Eelco Kessels, Executive Director, Global Center on Cooperative Security

### PRIVATE SECTOR

**Board Member:** Ms Jessica Long, Managing Director, Strategy and Sustainability, North America Lead, Accenture

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Tony Carroll, Founding Director, Acorus Capital; Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

### QATAR

**Board Member:** H.E. Dr Mutlaq Majed Al-Qahtani, Ambassador and Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation

### SWITZERLAND

**Board Member:** H.E. Mr Thomas Gass, Ambassador, Vice-Director and Head of the South Cooperation Department of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)



**Alternate Board Member:** Dr Daniel Frank, Deputy Coordinator for International Counter-Terrorism, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

## **TUNISIA AND THE PHILIPPINES**

**Board Member:** Mr Mounir Ksiksi, President of the National Counter Terrorism Commission of Tunisia

**Alternate Board Member:** Mr Alexander Macario, Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Peace and Security, Department of the Interior and Local Government of the Republic of the Philippines

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE NETHERLANDS AND NORWAY**

**Board Member:** H.E. Mr Nathan Sales, Ambassador and Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State

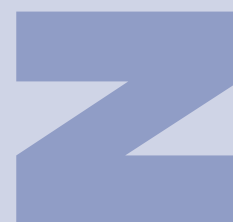
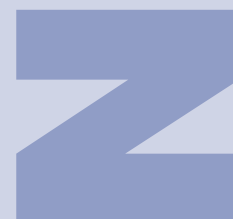
**Alternate Board Member:** Ms Naomi Yorks, Deputy Head of Section, Counterterrorism & National Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

## **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

**Chair:** Ms Carol Bellamy

**Executive Director:** Dr Khalid Koser

**Trustee:** vacant





# GCERF

Global Community Engagement  
and Resilience Fund

Geneva, Switzerland

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