

### GCERF in Bangladesh

Since 2016, GCERF has **lived up to its initial commitment**, investing three times in a country. GCERF's last round of investment began in July 2022 and goes until December 2023.

This round of investment is focusing on turning the already existing activities into more **sustainable** ones, specifically the youth clubs and digital literacy.

This is contributing to **increased community agency and positive sense of purpose**.

### Portfolio overview as of June 2022

#### Active grants

#### Rupantar

2016-23 | *Principal Recipient with 5 sub-recipients*

- ❖ Established and ran peace clubs. Provided leadership, digital, and critical thinking skills to youth (including those in university and madrasas) and raised awareness on PVE.

#### Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)

2016-23 | *Direct grantee*

- ❖ Established and trained youth platforms; held community engagement events and fostered social cohesion, and established and ran women's courtyard platforms.



Photo: At a women's courtyard platform



Photo: Peace Club members are in dialogue with local state, non-state actors



#### Current investment

- Rajshahi; Chapai-Nawabganj
- Khulna; Satkhira
- Chattogram; Cox's bazar
- Greater Dhaka; Dhaka

Investment started: 2016  
 Investment to date: USD 9.3 million  
 Current investment: USD 1 million  
 Active grants: 2

### Investment Focus



Building resilience against violent extremism by supporting youth platforms to ensure financial and existential sustainability; strengthening the advocacy and fundraising capacity of grantees and youth groups.



Chattogram – Cox's Bazar, Greater Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna



Secondary school and madrasa students; University-level students; out-of-school and unemployed youth; virtual youth; Religious and Community Leaders; and Governance Actors.

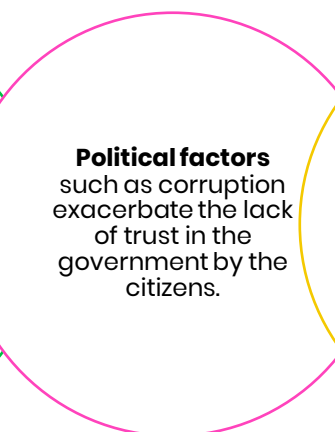
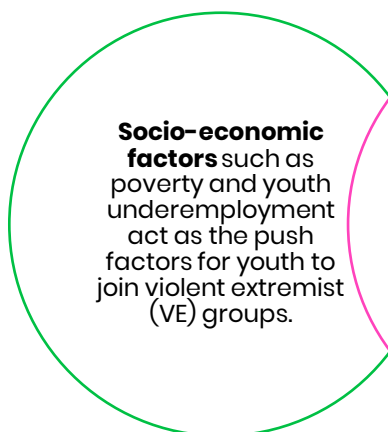


2016-2023



GCERF in Bangladesh works in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs and other local government authorities, and the United Nations country team.

### Violent Extremism in Bangladesh: Drivers



### 40th

On the Global Terrorism Index 2022, with 2 attacks and 6 deaths in 2021

### Current Programming: Systems Approach

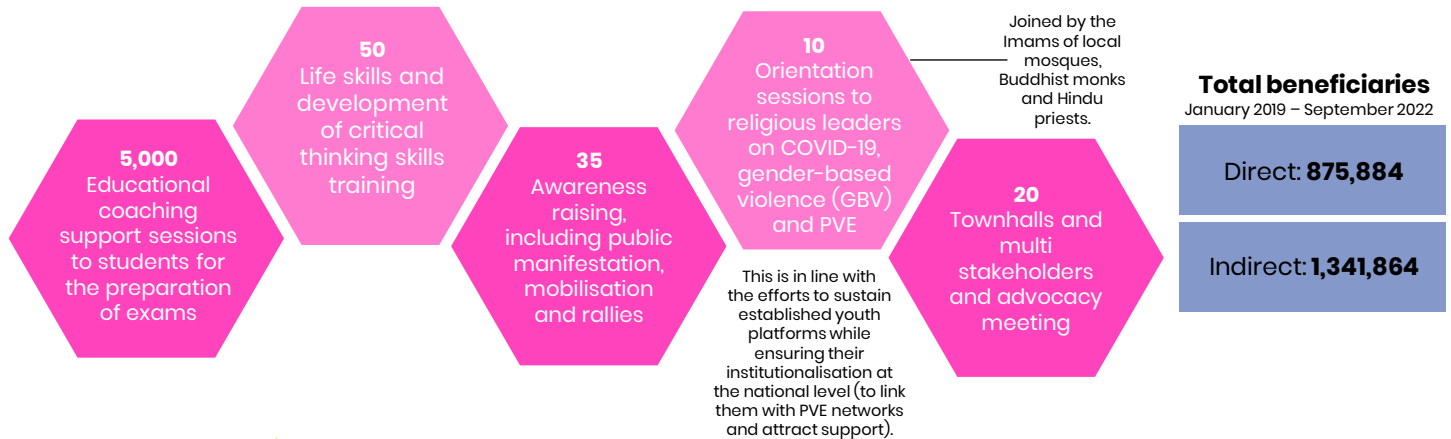
**National:** Advocating for the mainstreaming of preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) into national policies. Institutionalising and ensuring the sustainability of youth PVE/peace platforms.

**Community:** Promoting community-wide efforts at preventing VE through multiple community-level stakeholders' (youth, women, religious leaders, etc.) engagement and dialogue to build PVE capacity and raise awareness.

**Individual:** Building the individual's quest for social cohesion and tolerance, including youth's critical thinking and sense of purpose and increasing digital literacy.


### Key Outputs\*

\* October 2021 – September 2022




### Key achievements\*


\* October 2021 – September 2022




As a result of Rupantar's advocacy, Khulna University School of Law has agreed to include the subject "Violent Extremism Law including Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (Amendment 2013)" as a regular course in their curriculum.



Rupantar created a collaboration with Agordari Union Parishad, Satkhira. The Union plans to allocate a budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 to support the youth PVE initiatives.



YPSA CEVEC Consortium organised a Community Radio Program on PVE issues with Youth and Adolescents in Chattogram, reaching more than 8,900 people.



To ensure sustainability, YPSA is working with educational institutions from Round 2. The activities started with a briefing about the new dimension of the project, including the school management committee in PVE activities.

During Q3 2022, PEACE Consortium conducted 32 quarterly coordination meetings:

“ The aim and initiatives of peace club are impressive; I will provide my best assistance if any club apply for being registered from youth development department. ”

- EMDADUL HOQUE BABEL, INSTRUCTOR, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, KHULNA

### Story of Change

Youth radicalisation in Bangladesh has been growing and a new trend of groups looking to recruit young men for 'Hijrat' (migrate) to Afghanistan has been identified.

Safiq (18) a student from a renowned college in Khulna left home for 'hijrat' (migration) months ago. After having terrible experiences on the journey, he was finally able to return home. He said he had been influenced by a college student who made him believe there is no alternative to Jihad to save Muslims from ongoing oppression and discrimination and to restore their lost glory.

He moved to a remote area of Bandarban where he was forced to cut off contact with his family. "Six days later I risked my life and fled to a police box in Ruma Upazila in Bandarban and told them everything in detail and they helped me to return home to my family."

Safiq, then, came to the attention of the Ward no. 13 Peace Club. The Peace Club president said, "We talked to his family after hearing about the incident and promised them support, but they are still scared. We also talked with Safiq." Recently Safiq joined a coordination meeting and shared his experience with the Peace Clubs.

Safiq said, "I talked with the Peace Club friends and now feel like a free man, it seems darkness is fading away and I'm becoming enlightened; because human life is not limited."



Discussion with a youth forum in process of registration in Chakarria



Initial meeting with education institution head in Cox's Bazar



Rupantar conducts training on Digital Media Literacy and Social Media Entrepreneurship to build the capacity of the youth, and expose them to acquire soft skills in computing to increase their critical thinking competency to reduce online radicalisation. Using the digital skills they acquired through the trainings, the youth spread alternative narratives against extremism online:

*"We are still grappling with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, with lots of social contacts taking place online. We feel this training on Digital Media Literacy and Social Media Entrepreneurship could make a significant positive impact in the lives of young people."*

- Md. Kabir Hossain, Ward Councillor, Khulna City Corporation, Rupantar, March 2022



### GCERF's Added Value in Bangladesh



GCERF focuses on **building institutional capacity** e.g., CSOs, and government agencies.



GCERF invests in building a PVE-focused **community of practice** with CSOs, government agencies, and experts



Communities are at the **forefront of project design and implementation**, and the programme works with existing community structures for sustainability



All project design and implementation are done in coordination with **nationally-aligned**, locally-led programmes



GCERF connects CSOs, communities, and other stakeholders with government and security actors, leading to **better coordination and relationships**



GCERF's consortium model and capacity-building approach enables us to work in **remote areas**