

BACKGROUND

Ghana's northern regions face growing vulnerabilities to violent extremism, despite the country's overall stability. Both internal and external factors contribute to this risk, with the rise of extremist groups in the Sahel – particularly in Burkina Faso – significantly heightening the threat. Burkina Faso, ranked 1st on the Global Terrorism Index in 2025, shares a border with Ghana, raising concerns over the potential spillover of violence. This is further compounded by the influx of refugees and displaced victims of violent extremism into vulnerable northern communities. Porous borders also allow the discreet movement of armed groups across countries, increasing Ghana's exposure to regional instability.

Ghana became a GCERF partner country* in 2023. To date, GCERF has invested USD 3 million in the country, with three active grants worth USD 2.7 million currently supporting three consortia comprising 11 local civil society organisations (CSOs). The investment supports the active involvement of civil society organisations in implementing the National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Ghana.

GCERF pioneers a unique model of investment designed to promote a whole-of-society approach and ensure the sustainability of our programmes. Under this model, in each partner country, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee called the Country Support Mechanism (CSM).

In Ghana, the CSM will be co-created and co-designed with the National Security Council Secretariat and will bring together relevant government agencies, civil society organisations, and donor representatives to provide strategic direction for the programmes, ensure results, and progressively inherit ownership of funding community-level efforts to prevent violent extremism.

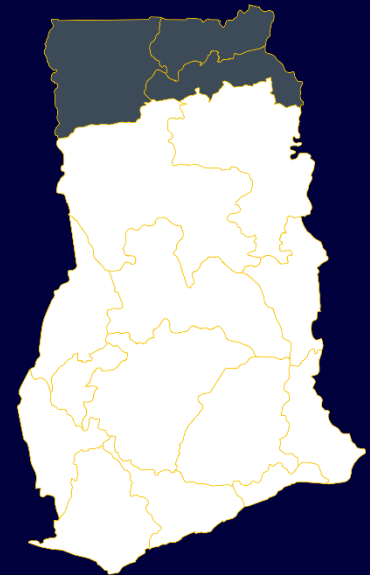
GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN GHANA

GCERF's investment strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to address the drivers of violent extremism and guides civil society organisations in designing their programmes. According to GCERF's needs assessment and consultations with relevant stakeholders, there are three main drivers of violent extremism in Ghana:

1. Increased flow of refugees from Burkina Faso burdening existing social infrastructures;
2. Growing tensions between farmers and herders around access to natural resources;
3. Absence of effective screening systems to monitor potential infiltration and recruitment by violent extremist groups.

The primary objective of GCERF's investment is to create an enabling environment for the prevention of violent extremism, within communities, CSOs, and authorities; to empower vulnerable populations economically; and to strengthen community resilience through the promotion of traditional conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms.

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.



WHERE

- North East
- Upper East
- Upper West

WHO

- Youth (men and women aged 15–24 and 25–35) from the refugee and host communities:
 - a) unemployed or underemployed;
 - b) from rural settings;
 - c) from ostracised minorities.
- Local authorities, traditional and religious leaders, Queen Mothers.
- Marginalised communities:
 - a) refugees and migrants, with a specific focus on women with limited access to social and economic opportunities;
 - b) ethnic minorities, including Fulanis.

CURRENT GRANTS



 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: CDD-Ghana Sub-recipients: ASFIT, CARO Ghana, RISE Ghana		Livelihoods and start up certification for vulnerable populations; Advocacy for inclusive service access and public engagement. Strengthen traditional conflict prevention and resolution structures	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION	 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT	
<u>Upper East:</u> Builsa North, Bawku Municipal, Bongo, Kassena-Nankana East, Bolgatanga East districts <u>Upper West:</u> Lambusie Karni, Nandom, Wa West, Lawra Municipal <u>North East:</u> Bunkpuru-Nyakpaduri; Yunyoo-Nasuan; Chereponi; East Mamprusi; West Mamprusi districts	USD 900,000	December 2024 – June 2027	

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: NORSAAC Sub-recipients: CAPECS Ghana, AFRIKIDS		Mentorship and small grants for economic empowerment Large-scale PVE awareness campaigns Peer-to-peer grassroots conflict resolution and peacebuilding training	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION	 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT	
<u>Upper East:</u> Kassena Nankana West; Tempene; Builsa South; Talensi; Bolgatanga Municipal; Nabdam districts <u>Upper West:</u> Daffiama Bussie Issa, Nadowli-Kaleo districts <u>North East:</u> Mamprugu Moagduri	USD 900,000	December 2024 – December 2027	

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: STAR-Ghana Sub-recipients: BEWDA, SILDEP, SWIDA		Digital literacy for youth to PCVE online Refugee and minorities (Fulanis, women, etc.) empowerment Linking beneficiaries of income-generating activities to market opportunities in other regions	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION	 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT	
<u>Upper East:</u> Bawku West; Garu; Binduri; Pusiga districts <u>Upper West:</u> Sissala West; Sissala East Districts	USD 900,000	December 2024 – June 2027	

STORY OF CHANGE

BUILDING RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM: EMPOWERING YOUTH WITH FACT-CHECKING SKILLS

Ghana's northern regions face rising risks of violent extremism, with online radicalisation among youth becoming a growing concern. Extremist groups exploit digital platforms to spread disinformation and recruit, making digital literacy and vigilance essential for community resilience.

In response, STAR-Ghana Foundation, funded by GCERF, launched the Digital Skills Club to empower young people with the skills to identify and counter disinformation and misinformation.. The digital skills clubs serve as a platform that empowers members to lead in monitoring, educating, and working with community authorities to ensure credible information is available to the youth in the community. In Fielmuo, during an engagement with the members of the digital skills clubs, the assemblyman expressed his pleasure at how the digital club members engage in educating their peers on how to use the internet safely. One of the executives of the club attributed his ability to identify false information online and guide his peers to the training he received under the project.

In Garu, an executive of the digital club narrated how he was able to pick up on the term 'Let's run,' which was being used to prompt young people to leave the community based on a false alarm that extremists had entered the community. He shared that, due to the training they received on fact-checking information, he approached the community leaders to verify the information and eventually found out it was false. He then shared the correct information with his peers in the community to discredit the false alarm.

Similarly, in Fielmuo, another digital club member shared that he was able to detect a scam message being shared on WhatsApp groups about university admissions. The document was forged. He traced the message and realised it was a fraudster behind it. He informed his friends that the message was fake, and they should ignore it. One of the group leaders mentioned that the group is very beneficial and requested logistical support to carry out more sensitisation activities in the community. The Digital Skills Club empowers youth to counter disinformation, promoting digital literacy and strengthening community resilience.

"This training is very useful for us, the youth, especially as we are about to go into elections in Ghana. A lot of information circulating on social media and TV is creating tension. These skills now enable us, the selected youth, to verify and inform others about the accuracy of the information we receive."

J.L., Fielmuo



Digital literacy club executive engaging members in Garu © STAR-Ghana

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from December 2023 till June 2025

2,465

individuals at risk of radicalisation by extremist groups trained in digital literacy to combat misinformation and online radicalisation

202

women received vocational training to strengthen their economic resilience to recruitment by violent extremist groups

41%

of endline survey respondents were categorised as having "high vulnerability to violent extremism", a significant decline from 55% at baseline

GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthens trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.



GCERF
Preventing Violent Extremism
and Terrorism

Find out more about becoming an investor, our work, and the collective impact we make at:
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