

BACKGROUND

Violent extremism (VE) has posed a heightened threat to Kenya since the late 1990s, when Al-Qaeda bombed the United States Embassy in Nairobi. Whilst larger attacks have occurred less regularly in recent years, there remain frequent smaller-scale incidents and attacks in Coastal and North-Eastern Kenya.

Kenya became a GCERF partner country* in 2018. To date, GCERF has invested USD 13 million in the country, with an active investment of USD 1.6 million currently supporting one local civil society organisation (CSO) that disburses small grants to community-based organisations. This investment supports civil society's active involvement in implementing the National Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (NSPCVE) and County Action Plans (CAPs).

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, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee, the Country Support Mechanism (CSM), in each partner country.

In Kenya, the CSM is chaired by the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and includes representatives from the Ministry of Interior, county governments, donors, and independent think tanks. This mechanism provides strategic direction to GCERF and the programmes we fund, ensuring accountability, results and alignment with national strategies.

To further embed local ownership, our grantees also seek to coordinate and effectively communicate with relevant government officials at the sub-national level, particularly within county governments.

GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN KENYA

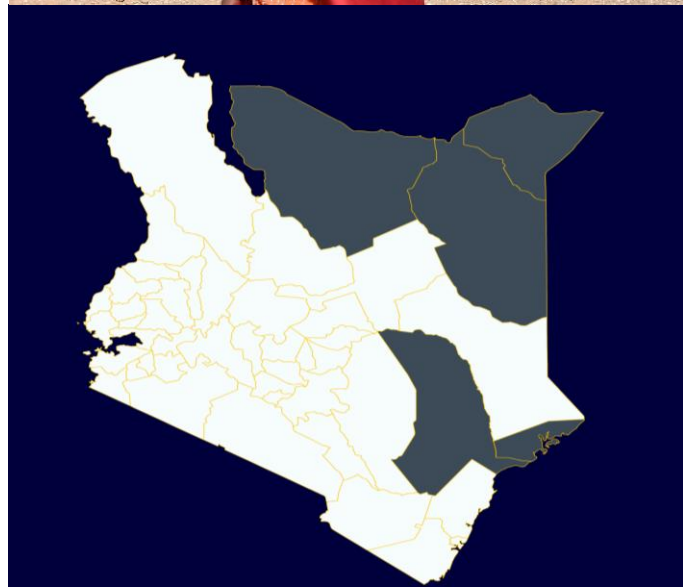
GCERF's Investment Strategy was developed with stakeholders in Kenya and agreed upon by our Governing Board in 2023. It outlines a comprehensive approach to address the drivers of violent extremism and guides civil society organisations to design their programmes. The drivers behind VE are complex, but three of the most widely identified in Kenya are:

1. Youth unemployment
2. Perceived marginalisation
3. Relationship with security actors.

Over the last three years, one of the primary objectives of GCERF's investment has been to support the implementation of the NSPCVE at the county level, particularly through strengthening the coordination and capacity of County Engagement Forums.**

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

** A multi-stakeholder group comprising representatives from key sectors such as the security sector, civil service, criminal justice institutions, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, peace committees, youth and women organisations, private sector, and active community members to facilitate the implementation of national strategy to prevent violent extremism.



WHERE

**Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit,
Tana River, and Wajir**

WHO

- Government entities
- CSOs and community-based organisations (CBOs)
- Women, men, boys, and girls in vulnerable communities
- Individuals who have disengaged from VE groups and their support networks
- Frontline workers, such as psychologists, counsellors, probation officers, etc
- Influencers

CURRENT GRANTS



IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Act, Change, Transform! (Act!)		Provide CBOs with small grants and capacity to deliver PVE programmes. Increase awareness of women, youth and the community on PVE – including human rights and gender (offline and online). Improve agency for community leaders, especially youth and women, on driving P/CVE. Increase socio-economic resilience for women and youth against violent extremism through increased sustainable income.	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Tana River and Wajir		USD 1,585,000	January 2025 – September 2027

Note: A programme funded by the European Union Delegation to Kenya

IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis (SIDRA) Sub-recipient: Climate and Health Connect (CHC)		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conduct in-situ monitoring of hard-to-reach areas and establish a complementary remote monitoring system2. Facilitate and provide support to in-person knowledge-sharing events3. Undertake rapid needs assessments (RNAs) to inform decision-making by the Somalia Country Support Mechanism (CSMs)	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Tana River, and Wajir		USD 250,000	January 2026 – December 2027

Note: This project is being implemented in Kenya and Somalia.



Local radio session disseminating the developed campaign awareness contents (Credits: RPPL)



Coordination meeting at EWER Centre (Credits: RPPL)

STORY OF CHANGE

Dialogue Forums: Community and Security Actors Work Together to Build Resilience

Before November 2024, Tullu Roba village in Isiolo County faced rising insecurity, with increased petty theft, especially at night, linked to drug abuse among unemployed youths, some involved in drug peddling. The village also experienced declining school attendance, with many youths dropping out and engaging in loitering. These issues caused community insecurity, loss of trust in the state, and a sense of powerlessness about the future of the young generation.

In response to concerns, the RPPL programme held community barazas in Tullu Roba, bringing together security officers, chiefs, the Nyumba Kumi (ten-household community policing initiatives), and residents. The meetings facilitated open dialogue on safety issues, resulting in solutions such as regular patrols by police and community members, accountability of chiefs for re-enrolling dropouts, empowering Nyumba Kumi in information sharing, and promoting vocational training for out-of-school youth.

The interventions yielded tangible results. The community members and local leaders reported a noticeable decline in incidents of petty theft. This is directly attributed to the increased visibility of security patrols and the heightened vigilance of the empowered Nyumba Kumi members. A significant shift in the relationship between residents and security forces was realized. As faith leader Abdulrahman Ali noted, "We now feel more connected to the police. Before, we feared reporting cases, but now we are part of the solution." This improved cooperation is fundamental to sustained security. While long-term data on school re-enrollment and vocational training uptake is still being gathered, the initial security improvements have fostered a more optimistic outlook within the community. The feeling of helplessness is gradually being replaced by a sense of agency and shared responsibility.

The Tullu Roba experience underscores the effectiveness of inclusive dialogue and community-led security initiatives. The initial success highlights several key lessons: meaningful progress requires an active partnership between communities, local administration, and formal security structures; solutions co-created with the community are more likely to be embraced and sustained; improved relationships between citizens and security actors are an essential outcome and enabler of further progress.



Dialogue forums between security actors and Community Members



Abdirahman Ali, a community leader in Tullu Roba village, giving his remarks in one of the programme's dialogue

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2018 till June 2025

13,985

individuals trained on PVE, conflict sensitivity, critical thinking, conflict resolution skills to strengthen community resilience and susceptibility to extremist agenda and recruitment

8,500

people at-risk of radicalisation engaged through dialogues, consultations, roundtables across religious, ethnic and generational lines to foster solidarity

1,450

participants trained in trauma and violence-informed care and rehabilitation and reintegration services

800

people reached through livelihoods or economic support to strengthen economic resilience against violent extremism

130

civic and safe spaces established to foster dialogue, mental health, and well-being

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 strengthen trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures remain 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.