

BACKGROUND

GCERF's work in North Macedonia has achieved significant progress in supporting the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees while strengthening community resilience against violent extremism. Through collaboration with local organisations, GCERF has facilitated essential individual and family counselling, fostering trust and open communication.

North Macedonia became a GCERF partner country* in 2020. To date, GCERF has invested USD 1.8 million in the country, with two active grants.

GCERF adopts a comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) approach, which includes tailored case management to support trauma recovery. This encompasses psychological, psychiatric, medical, educational, economic, and social assessments. The GCERF grantees, the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation (MCIC) and the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) play an active role in advancing R&R efforts in North Macedonia.

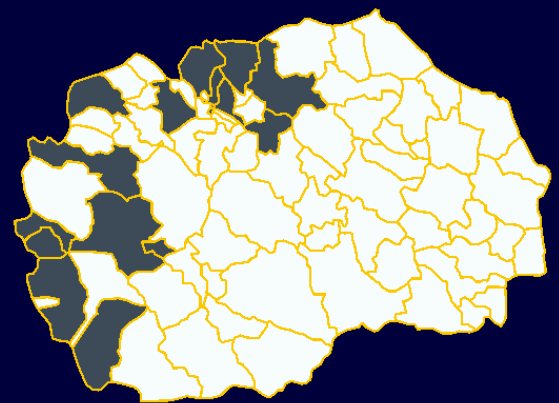
While GCERF's R&R programmes for returnees are indispensable, an exclusive focus on rehabilitation risks overlooking the growing threats posed by ethno-nationalism. This ideology acts as catalysts for radicalisation, particularly affecting vulnerable individuals, such as returnees, who face significant challenges in their reintegration journey.

GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN NORTH MACEDONIA

GCERF's investment aims to propose a balanced approach to R&R and Prevention/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) of all forms of extremism through capacity building, reinforcing existing mechanisms, and mitigating polarisation.

There are three main drivers of violent extremism in North Macedonia :

1. Ethno-nationalism: an ideology that emphasises the nation and its identity as being solely defined by a specific ethnicity or cultural group
2. Religiously motivated extremism: the use of violence or threat of violence inspired by a religious ideology to achieve political, ideological, or religious goals
3. Violent political extremism: encompasses political ideologies that promote ideas of suprematism



WHERE

- Skopje
- Polog
- South-western region
- North-eastern region






WHO

- At-risk groups and individuals, including children, youth, and returnees
- Returnees and their family members or legal guardians

CURRENT GRANTS



 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
<p>Principal Recipient: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: Pleiades, Nexus – Civil Concept</p>		<p>Initiate holistic approaches for sustainable reintegration of vulnerable families (including those with RFTF's) in North Macedonia.</p> <p>Facilitate direct work with RFTF's will be conducted in coordination with, and alongside, the Local Multi-Disciplinary Teams and the appropriate government ministries.</p>	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Skopje area, Tetovo, Kumanovo		USD 950,000	July 2021 – September 2025

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
<p>Principal Recipient: Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: Center for Common Ground, Center for Tolerance and Lifelong Learning</p>		<p>Build resilient local communities against violent extremism and radicalisation through capacity building and support to communities and vulnerable groups and individuals in the process of P-CVE and R&R.</p> <p>Boost the existing state P-CVE and R&R system at central and local level and make them responsive through active engagement with RFTF and their family members while applying the institutional approach.</p>	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kicevo, Struga, Ohrid, Kumanovo, Debar, Plasnica, Lipkovo, Cucer Sandevo, Cair, Gazi Baba, Butel, Saraj, Arachinovo, Centar		USD 850,000	July 2021 – December 2025

STORY OF CHANGE

A NEW LENS ON LIFE: A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE

POSITIVE PARENTING: BREAKING STEREOTYPES THROUGH WORKSHOPS

A New Lens on Life: A Journey of Resilience and Hope

In a small office in North Macedonia, a young woman's life was taking a hopeful turn. Just 18 years old, she was already a mother to a five-year-old daughter, navigating the challenges of a fragile marriage. After spending seven years in a conflict zone in Syria, she returned to her home in Skopje carrying heavy traumas and a sense of uncertainty.

That day, she was meeting with Pleiades, a local organisation that had been supporting her reintegration into the community. Pleiades had organised a photography course for her, funded by GCERF, to help her discover new skills and possibilities. Now, she was being handed the tools to practice—a camera and a tripod.

As she opened the packages, her excitement was hard to miss. Her face lit up, reminding everyone in the room of a child opening a birthday gift. She wasted no time and began taking photos right there in the office. Confidently adjusting the settings on the camera, she explained how to use the aperture, compose shots, and capture the perfect image, skills she had mastered during the course.

When she first returned to Skopje, she faced a completely new reality. The community she had left as a child was no longer the same, and neither was she. But with the dedicated support of Pleiades, she began to rebuild her life. Along the way, she discovered her talent for languages, becoming fluent in Turkish, Macedonian, and Albanian, and recently starting English classes.

The photography course gave her more than a skill—it gave her hope. She dreams of using photography to earn an income, gain independence and take a step to brighter future for herself and her daughter.

With her mentors, she's now planning to continue her education by enrolling in high school, determined to create opportunities she never thought possible.



Workshops with parents, MYLA

Positive Parenting: Breaking Stereotypes Through Workshops

In North Macedonia, a series of workshops, conducted by MYLA, brought parents together to learn about conflict prevention, and fostering peaceful coexistence.

These workshops exemplify positive parenting by equipping families with the tools to create more respectful, and harmonious environments for their children.

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2021 to March 2025

3,600

individuals including students, parents, psychosocial workers and community members engaged through learning sessions, cultural events and community activities to promote dialogue and strengthen community ties

740

individuals including civil society representatives, media professionals and frontline workers participated in trainings which equipped them with tools to support sustainable reintegration efforts

35

returnees and their family members received psychosocial and counselling support to recover from the trauma and heal

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:
www.gcerf.org
contact.wb@gcerf.org

f @gcerf

X @thegcerf

in GCERF

GCERF Outreach

@thegcerf