

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.

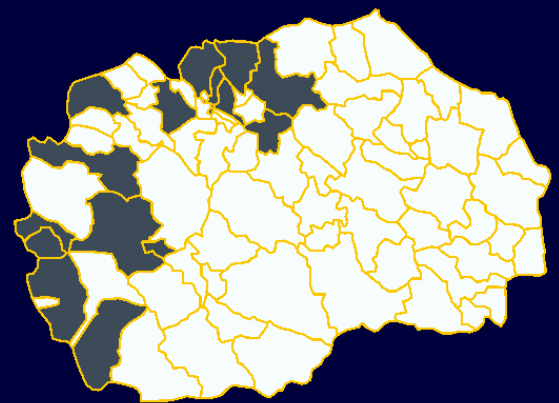
While GCERF's R&R programmes for returnees are indispensable, an exclusive focus on rehabilitation risks overlooking the growing threats posed by ethno-nationalism. This ideology acts as catalysts for radicalisation, particularly affecting vulnerable individuals, such as returnees, who face significant 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 emphasizes the nation and its identity as being solely defined by a specific ethnicity or 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	
Principal Recipient: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) Sub-recipients: Centre for Common Ground (CCG), Open Gate – La Strada (La Strada)		Strengthen national and local capacities for the sustainable prevention of violent extremism (PVE). The effective rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of returnees and their families. Promote inclusive coordination and collaboration among public institutions, civil society, and community stakeholders to enhance resilience in at-risk communities.	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Skopje, Polog, The Northeast and the Southwest regions		USD 400,000	October 2025 – September 2027

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Macedonian Civic Education Center (MCEC) Sub-recipients: Centre for Balkan Cooperation (LOJA), Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID)		Increase youth resilience and public awareness by launching tailored social media campaigns that promote civic values and interethnic cohesion. Early identification and engagement of at-risk groups—including youth involved in sports fan clubs, marginalized ethnic communities, and religious associations. The programme strengthens local prevention infrastructure by enhancing the capacity of youth centers, CSOs, and school staff to act as frontline responders, and ensures that prevention efforts are participatory, inclusive, and sustainable.	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Skopje (and its region, particularly Centar, Aerodrom and Butel), Tetovo (and the Polog region), Kumanovo (and the north-eastern region), Struga (and the Southwestern region)		USD 400,000	October 2025 – September 2027

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) Sub-recipients: Center for Common Ground, Center for Tolerance and Lifelong Learning		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. 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.	
 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

RELIGIOUS LEADERS SIGN DECLARATION AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM– MACEDONIAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Religious Leaders Sign Declaration Against Violent Extremism

On 13 May 2025, leading representatives of North Macedonia's religious communities signed a joint declaration condemning violent extremism in all its forms. The Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Violent Extremism was signed by senior figures from the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Religious Community, the Catholic Church, the Jewish Community, and the United Methodist Church, alongside representatives from the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Groups (CRRCG) and the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC).

The declaration affirms that faith is a call to peace and dialogue, not hatred or condemnation. It commits signatories to strengthening community resilience—particularly among youth and vulnerable groups—and to working collaboratively with institutions, civil society, educational bodies, and the media to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE). It also firmly opposes the misuse of religion for political, ideological, or violent purposes that undermine trust, peace, and social cohesion.

Speaking at the signing, CRRCG Director Olivera Trajkovska emphasised the growing societal challenges and the vital role of religious leaders in addressing them. The declaration concludes with a shared commitment to dignity, dialogue, and interreligious cooperation in building a society resilient to hatred and division.

Workshops for parents on proper education of children organized by Center for Tolerance and Life Learning– April – June 2025, Skopje and Kumanovo, North Macedonia



In Quarter 2, workshops with parents from five primary schools in Kumanovo and Skopje engaged 58 participants (48 women and 10 men) in discussions on conflict resolution, gender, and peaceful coexistence. Through interactive sessions, parents gained practical knowledge and tools to challenge stereotypes and support open, tolerant environments at home. Several parents reported feeling more confident in addressing conflicts and actively guiding their children, demonstrating how informed and empowered caregivers can foster positive change in both family and community life.

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2021 to July 2025

3,851

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

790

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

38

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