

BACKGROUND

Somalia has faced the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism (VE) for many years. Despite notable progress over the past five years, VE and terrorism continue to pose significant threats to human and national security in the country. According to the 2025 Global Terrorism Index, Somalia ranks seventh among countries most affected by terrorism globally.

Somalia became a GCERF partner country in 2021*. To date, GCERF has invested a total of USD 5 million in the country. Currently, there is an active investment of USD 1 million supporting a consortium of Somali civil society organisations (CSOs), and a new investment process worth an additional USD 1 million is underway. Furthermore, GCERF is forming a partnership with a non-profit research organisation that will serve as a Learning Partner. This collaboration will enhance our ability to monitor and evaluate results, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, and facilitate learning across different portfolios.

GCERF is collaborating with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) of Hirshabelle and South West to support the implementation of Somalia's National Strategy on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). Our current focus is on reducing factors that contribute to VE by enhancing community resilience, especially in areas recently liberated.

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).

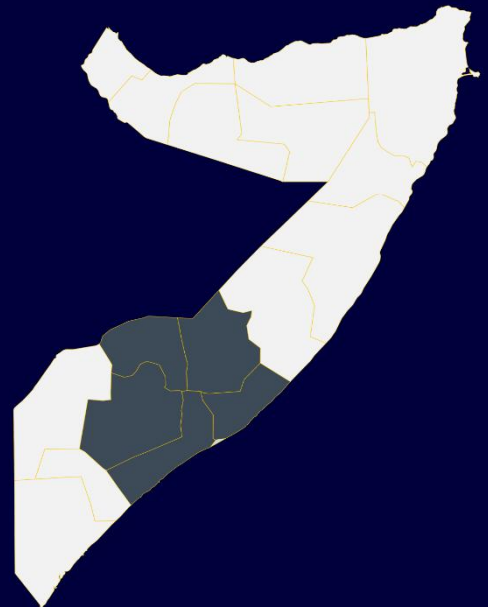
In Somalia, the CSM is chaired by the Tubsan National Centre for PCVE.

GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR SOMALIA

Based on extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, GCERF developed a new Investment Strategy for Somalia. The drivers behind VE are complex, but three of the most widely identified in Somalia are:

1. Perceptions of marginalisation
2. Limited economic opportunities
3. Governance and security challenges

GCERF implementing partners focus on building community resilience to violent extremism through context-specific P/CVE activities; and enhancing local capacities for resilience and providing vulnerable individuals with social, economic, and reconciliation opportunities.



WHERE






- South West
- Hirshabelle

WHO

- CSOs and Community-based organisations (CBOs)
- Youth and their support networks
- Women, men, boys, and girls in newly liberated areas
- Clan/ traditional and religious leaders
- Private sector and business networks

CURRENT GRANTS

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Elman Peace Centre (EPC) Sub-recipient: Youth Empowerment Education Lifeline Organisation (YELO)		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enhance the capacity of women and youth leaders to take a proactive role in community reconciliation structures and P/CVE activities.2. Strengthen trust and collaboration among communities by implementing sustainable, locally driven Community-Based Reconciliation(CBR) initiatives3. Support women and youth in contributing to economic diversification and accessing livelihoods by establishing a business network	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Jowhar, Adan Yabal and Matabaan (Hirshabelle)		USD 1,000,000	January 2024 – March 2026

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis (SIDRA) Sub-recipients: 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
South West and Hirshabelle		USD 250,000	January 2026 – December 2027
Note: This project is being implemented in Kenya and Somalia			

STORY OF CHANGE

FROM TRAUMA TO TRIUMPH: A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND RENEWED HOPE

When violent extremism forced 24-year-old Muna and her family to flee their home in El-Hareeri district following its recapture by Al-Shabaab in 2024, her world was shattered. Witnessing the brutality of the militants left her traumatised and uncertain about the future. Relocated to Jowhar, Muna struggled with fear and despair until she found a lifeline through Elman Peace's Women and Youth as Agents of Change project. The programme, implemented by Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in newly liberated territories, aimed to rebuild lives by addressing trauma, fostering economic resilience, and reducing vulnerability to violent extremism. Muna attended community trauma healing dialogues, where she connected with other displaced women and began processing her pain.

Determined to rebuild her life, Muna enrolled in the project's vocational training in tailoring (TVET). With no prior experience, she dedicated herself to mastering the craft, discovering not only a skill but a newfound passion. Soon, she began sewing from her family's home in Jowhar, creating designs for young girls, women, and even bridal wear. Though still a student, her small business grew, and her dream of opening a larger shop became a driving force. But Muna's transformation went beyond economic empowerment.

Having experienced the psychological toll of violent extremism, she founded an all-girls mental health support network, offering mentorship to young women struggling with displacement and loss. "I wanted others to know that their pain doesn't define them," she said. "Healing is possible, and so is a better future." Muna's story exemplifies how targeted interventions can break cycles of despair and reduce the appeal of extremist narratives. Through addressing trauma, providing livelihood opportunities, and fostering peer support, the project empowered her to reclaim her agency and, in turn, inspire others. Today, she stands as a testament to resilience, proving that even in the face of devastation, new beginnings are possible.

"This program didn't just teach me a skill—it gave me back my purpose, Now, I know I can shape my own destiny."

—Muna.



TVET Trainees

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2021 to June 2025

11,250

Individuals at-risk of radicalisation received counselling or psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience against violent extremism

2,400

people joining dialogues, consultations, roundtables across religious, ethnic and generational lines to foster social cohesion and tolerance

930

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

840

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

620

participants trained on trauma-and-violence-informed care, and rehabilitation and reintegration services

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 and the publication of articles and research papers in reputable journals, to advance 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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