GCERF updated Strategy Chapter for Investment in Kosovo
2023 – 2026

This document is guided by:
- GCERF's original "Strategy to Engage Communities and Address the Drivers of Violent Extremism (2017- 2020) and Updated Strategy for 2021 – 2025;
- Government of Kosovo's draft strategy for P/CVE and CT;
- GCERF's Investment Strategy for Kosovo (2017);
- GCERF's Investment Strategy for the Western Balkans (2019) and updated Investment Strategy for the Western Balkans (2021);
- GCERF's programming experience in Kosovo from 2017 – 2022 and in the wider region since 2020;
- Updated needs assessment for Kosovo conducted by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Kosovo;
- Consultations with Kosovo's Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- Consultations with GCERF partners Advocacy Training and Resource Centre, Community Building Mitrovica and Community Development Fund and their respective partners Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and Integra
- Additional desk research on the current situation in Kosovo;
- Findings by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), their work in the Western Balkans and their manuals on Secondary and Tertiary interventions;
- EU's Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans.

Content

Acronyms

AFP	Accelerated Funding Panel
CoP	Communities of Practice
CSM	Country Support Mechanism
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
GCERF	Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
IGC	Intergroup Contact
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PR	Principal Recipient
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RFTFs	Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters
RNA	Regional Needs Assessment
R&R	Rehabilitation and Reintegration
SR	Sub-recipient
TPM	Third Party Monitoring
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Kosovo has been a frontrunner in the rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of returnees from foreign conflicts, repatriating large numbers of Kosovar citizens and providing comprehensive support including psycho-social and economic reintegration initiatives. However, there are growing concerns of a rise in domestic violent extremist incidents as well as the impact of other forms of extremism. The context of violent extremism is changing and calls for a balanced approach to prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE) and rehabilitation & reintegration as well as to all different forms of extremism. The focus must shift to ensure sustainable R&R of returnees from conflicts abroad as well as general prevention work in ethnic-Serb majority communities. The second part is a new focus for GCERF requiring careful risk mitigation and ongoing contextual assessment.

An updated needs assessment and literature reviews confirm that the drivers of radicalisation to violent extremism remain broadly like those identified in the 2018 Strategy for Investment in Kosovo and that there are several continued needs for returnees from conflict zones. GCERF funded support to returnees and their families and communities has been impactful but require further investment to ensure long-term sustainability. Local P/CVE and R&R actors including government institutions, frontline workers, CSOs, and other local community actors need to be empowered to continue the valuable support to vulnerable groups and communities. However, they currently lack the thematic knowledge, operational capacity, and coordination mechanism with the national government to successfully implement the strategic objectives set out by the Government of Kosovo.

The proposed focus of the next round of funding is therefore the capacity building of relevant P/CVE and R&R actors at the local level and reinforcing local mechanisms and institutions to mitigate polarisation of children and youth. Building on GCERF's previous investments in Kosovo, this will strengthen local ownership, and improve coordination between the national and local level to enable a joint response to a changing violent extremist context beyond the lifespan of GCERF's investment.

WHAT: A balanced approach to R&R and P/CVE of all forms of extremism through capacity building, reinforcing mechanisms and mitigating polarisation	
WHO: - National/local institutions and frontline workers - Local and community based CSOs/ grassroots groups - Children and youth, including returnees but also other minority groups including Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish, and Bosniak youth. - Returnees and their family members or legal guardians	**WHERE:** - Mitrovica (South, North, Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Skenderaj, Zvecan, Vushtrri) - Gjilan - Pristina - Peja - Han I Elezit - Podujevo - Gjakova

> **HOW:** CSOs and local institutions are provided the tools and support to work towards a sustainable and coordinated approach to tackling P/CVE and R&R.

Guiding principles

The following principles will guide GCERF's investment in Kosovo:

- Piloting sustainable approaches, focusing on strengthening structures and capacities of committed frontline workers and members of civil society;
- Supporting Government-led strategies and action plans;
- Gender responsive, intersectional programming[1];
- Conflict sensitive approaches that follow the Do No Harm[2] principles to identify potential negative consequences, take steps to prevent them whenever possible, and propose corrective actions when necessary;
- Ensure that programming contributes to and is aligned with good practices and recommendations of the GCTF.[3]

Current Context

Returnees from foreign conflict in Syria, Iraq & Ukraine

Kosovo has one of the highest numbers of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) per capita[4]. Between 2012 and 2016 an estimated 358 Kosovo citizens (256 men, 52 women, 50 children) travelled to Syria and Iraq. In addition, at least 81 children were born to Kosovar nationals in the conflict zones. As of May 2022, 253 citizens returned to Kosovo and an approximate 86 citizens (40 men, 7 women, 39 children) are still expected to return home. In 2014 and in 2022, several people in the Western Balkans region travelled to fight in the war between Ukraine and Russia.

Returnees from conflict zones require support with their rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) process. Previous GCERF funded support has shown that their needs are difficult to anticipate and they can require a wide range of assistance including medical, psycho-social, educational, economic/financial, administrative, and legal assistance. Frontline service providers are often not sufficiently trained nor have sufficient human and financial resources to address all these areas of support in a timely manner. In addition, the communities where returnees move back to may require support in improving their understanding of the rights of

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[1] Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. *The Gender and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Policy Toolkit.* GCTF, 2022.

[2] http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/do-no-harm-local-capacities-for-peace-project/

[3] Including: Memorandum on Good Practices in Strengthening National-Local Cooperation in Preventing Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (2020); Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders (2016) and its addendum (2020); The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon (2016) and its addendum (2020); Good Practices on Addressing the Challenge of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (2018).

[4] From 2019 UNODC report highlighting Kosovo having the highest number of FTFs per capita of any other country in Europe.
https://www.unodc.org/pdf/terrorism/Foreign_Terrorist_Fighters_Handbook/EN_Foreign_Terrorist_Fighters_Ebook.pdf

returnees and the R&R process to increase their acceptance towards returnees and alleviate their concerns. Returnees receiving tailored support may result in grievances, especially in areas where many people have socio-economic difficulties. Stigma against returnees can jeopardise R&R programming causing delays or even negatively affect the violent extremist (VE) context by unintentionally contributing to the drivers to radicalisation to VE.[5]

At the same time, Kosovo has separately seen an increase in arrests related to domestic extremist violence in the past two years. As of October 2022, 75 people are under investigation by the Special Prosecutor's Office for terrorist related activities. It is important to note that statistics related to terrorist activities exclude women and children returnees, inter-ethnic violence, cyberattacks or violent incidents in the Northern area of the country.[6]

Polarisation

The unaddressed legacies of the 1990s wars continue to foster religious, ethnic, and political divisions.[7] The context of violent extremism in Kosovo needs to be understood in the framework of its post-conflict setting and the current polarised dynamic between different ethnic, religious, and political groups. Various forms of extremism can be identified in Kosovo: religious extremism relating to both Islamic extremism and Orthodox extremism which are dominant in Albanian and Serbian majority communities respectively; and ethnonationalist and political extremism which build on narratives and grievances stemming from the Yugoslav wars that divides ethnic communities. This polarisation is particularly apparent in political discourse, media coverage, educational material in schools, online hate speech, hooliganism, and other violent incidents.

Polarisation does not necessarily lead to violent extremism but contributes to an enabling environment for radicalisation to VE and violent incidents.[8] Youth is particularly vulnerable to polarisation. We can make a distinction between vertical and horizontal polarisation of youth in Kosovo.[9] Vertical polarisation relates to the key drivers identified in the section below which particularly affect youth. A lack of self-worth, job opportunities, and positive identity often lead to grievances. Horizontal polarisation here refers to the segregation of youth by ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic background often reinforced by schools, media and online platforms, and political discourse.

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[5] Based on GCERF previous programmes. Also see: Erinda Bllaca Ndroqi. *Dealing with returned women in the Western Balkans: challenges and opportunities from a practitioner's perspective*. Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2022.

[6] Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN). *Needs assessment on Kosovo's capacities and needs to fight various forms of extremism.* October 2022.

[7] Lack of justice for war victims and competing war narratives contributed to creating divisions amongst the ethnic groups in the region.

[8] See for example: Majda Halilović and Nejra Veljan. Exploring ethno-nationalist extremism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Atlantic Initiative, 2021.

[9] Jolien Verlove et al. *Theorieën en aanpakken van polarisatie*. Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2020; Boy Broeders. *Complementary approaches in youth work to counter polarization*. Utrecht University, 2021.

In addition, different violent extremist groups have the potential to reinforce each other's narratives and can encourage attacks and counterattacks, often called cumulative or reciprocal extremism.[10] Government policies and its (donor funded) interventions can also influence the "us versus them" narratives if groups perceive double standards and feel more targeted than other groups.

Key drivers
The updated needs assessment (Annex 1) in October 2022 and other research point to similar findings as identified in GCERF's original needs assessment for Kosovo (2016). Kosovo's post-conflict situation highlights political drivers including lack of trust in institutions, limited dialogue between central and local government, alleged corruption, unequal public service provision; economic factors including high rates of poverty and unemployment, difficult labour market conditions that disproportionately affect youth and women; political unrest and mis/disinformation; social factors including sense of isolation and marginalisation in rural areas and of minority groups and social identity struggles.

As elsewhere, youth in Kosovo are identified as most vulnerable to radicalisation to violent extremism. Structural polarisation in education, high unemployment rate and difficult labour market conditions, crises of identity, and high access to technology further enable an environment for radicalisation to violent extremism.

Regional and international VE influence and impact
The context of violent extremism in Kosovo cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the region. While the Islamist groups in Kosovo maintain a strong connection with their counterparts in Albania and North Macedonia, the ethno-nationalist and far-right groups have a strong connection with groups in Serbia and Montenegro.

Ethno-nationalist and far-right extremist groups based in Serbia view Kosovo as 'the historical heart of Serbia', perceiving ethnic Albanians as adversaries in an enclave belonging to Serbia. In line with this narrative, Serbia-based groups also conduct activities within Kosovo and have significant influence on the ethno-nationalist narrative and tensions in the North of Kosovo that borders with Serbia. Some groups also target ethnic Serbs that cooperate with Kosovo institutions. There is also occasional Russian involvement, as Russia is supportive of Serbia's claims to Kosovo.[11] Far-right extremism is also present among ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Albania. However, the narrative of uniting the "Albanian lands" does not see as much support.[12] Political tensions impact this dynamic. Most recently, tensions between Kosovo and Serbia rose concerning licence plates, IDs and the arrest of a Serb police officer resulting in violent protests and roadblocks. The political narratives used highlighted the ethnic aspect of the dispute.[13]

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[10] See for example: Annelies Pauwels. *Cumulatief Extremisme*. Vlaams Vredesinstituut, 2022; McNeill-Willson

[11] Guy Faulconbridge. *Kremlin backs Serbia, denies Russia is stoking tensions in Kosovo*. Reuters, December 2022.

[12] BIRN. *Needs assessment on Kosovo's capacities and needs to fight various forms of extremism*. October 2022.

[13] CrisisWatch. Kosovo. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch

At an international level, far-right extremists perceive Kosovo as an example to the "Great Replacement theory" that Muslims aim to displace white Christians[14]. According to this theory, Muslim Albanians occupied Kosovo, pushing out Orthodox Serbs. [15] British far-right leaders and activists such as Nick Griffin and Jim Dowson have been linked to far-right groups in Serbia, openly supporting Serbia's claim to Kosovo. Jim Dowson even trained far-right organisations in Serbia in social media skills.[16] Similarly, US far-right extremist Robert Rundo has collaborated and donated to far-right Serbian groups present in Kosovo. Similar cases of support to far-right extremist groups in Serbia have been seen in other far-right groups across Europe.[17] Governments and stakeholders have so far not addressed these international aspects in strategies or programming.

The recent war in Ukraine has also impacted inter-ethnic tensions and increased the fear of aggression from Serbia. At a UN Security Council meeting in April 2022, Kosovo expressed the need for protection as "Serbia is in the midst of an unprecedented military build-up with donations of warplanes from the Russian Federation and Belarus."[18] The European Union has expressed concern about Russia's influence and attempts to destabilise the Western Balkans.[19]

GCERF Positioning
2017 – 2020: Round 1 & 2
Kosovo became a GCERF partner country in 2016. A dedicated Country Support Mechanism was developed including members of the Government of Kosovo, civil society, and the donor community. Guided by GCERF's initial Investment Strategy in Kosovo (2016) two rounds of funding between 2017 and 2020 covered five grants for a total of just over USD 2.6 million to support local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).[20]
- **Advocacy Training and Resource Centre (ATRC)** consortium promoted community acceptance of returning foreign terrorist fighters (RFTFs) through awareness raising campaigns and training of journalist students and trained youth on P/CVE and the dangers of online radicalisation.

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[14] The "Great Replacement" or "Replacement theory" is a far-right white supremacist conspiracy theory originated by Renaud Camus. The original theory claims that ethnic white populations are demographically and culturally being replaced by non-white, in particular Muslim, populations. See: Renaud Camus. The Great Replacement. 2011.

[15] Nermina Kuloglija. *The 'awakening': American Right-Wing Extremist Finds Allies in the Balkans.* Balkan Insight, 2022.

[16] Jelena Cosic et al. *British Nationalist Trains Serb Far-Right for 'Online War'.* Balkan Insight, 2018.

[17] See for example: Loïc Tregoures. *Kosovo, the global far right, and the threat to liberalism.* European Council on Foreign Relations, 2019; Igor Ispanovic. *French Connection: 'humanitarian' far right claims Kosovo as Cautionary Tale.* Balkan Insight, 2022; Besa Ismaili. *Kosovo's fate in the Western Balkans will determine the future stability of Europe.* Euronews, 2019; Jacob Boersema. *De racistische 'omvolkingstheorie': van Buffalo to Baudet.* OneWorld, 2022; Vera Tika. Kosovo Issue Has Expanded Serbian Far-Right's Global Reach. Balkan Insight, October 2022.

[18] United Nations. *Briefing Security Council on Serbia, Kosovo.* Press United Nations, 20 April 2022.

[19] European Parliament. *Russia's Influence in the Western Balkans.* European Parliament, 6 July 2022.

[20] GCERF subscribes to GCTF's "Whole of Society" approach, which recognises both the global and local nature of violent extremism, in line with the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) and the UN Secretary General's (UNSG) Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

- **Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)** consortium promoted inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding among youth, organised civic education classes, taught digital literacy skills, and supported local authorities on developing a strategy on preventing violent extremism in Mitrovica South.
- **Community Development Fund (CDF)** consortium aimed to decrease hostility and hate speech against minority groups, engaged vulnerable youth in livelihood skills training and digital literacy, and organised community events to strengthen social cohesion.
- **Forum for Civic Initiative (FIQ)** focused on increasing employment opportunities and access to community resources in Kacanik municipality through professional development trainings and empowerment of youth-led civil society organisations.

The grants from Round 1 & 2 have been evaluated through third party monitoring and grant closing evaluations.

2020 – 2024: Round 3

In 2020 GCERF developed a Regional Strategy for Investment in the Western Balkans to include Albania and North Macedonia. GCERF established a Regional Accelerated Funding Panel (RAFP) to support investment in the wider Western Balkans region. In 2021 the regional strategy was updated to also include investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Regional Strategy focused on facilitating rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) of RFTFs and their families through capacity building to relevant institutions, direct assistance to returnees and their families, and reduce stigmatisation to enable resocialisation. Programming in Kosovo includes:

- **ATRC** consortium focuses on building the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors in R&R and PVE; supporting the implementation and monitoring of the national strategy for PCVE and CT; coordinating P/CVE and R&R relevant stakeholders; improving media coverage on P/CVE and R&R.
- **CBM** focused on building capacity of local governmental actors and frontliners in Mitrovica on R&R and P/CVE; promoting social cohesion among children and youth; providing livelihood and educational support to returnees from conflict zones.
- **CDF** consortium focuses on providing trauma-informed educational and recreational support for children including returnees; building the capacity of frontline workers and parents; providing livelihood support for returnees and vulnerable people.

The CBM programme concluded in August 2022, the ATRC and CDF programmes are set to finish in May 2023 and December 2023 respectively.

Lessons learned

Some key lessons learned from GCERF programming between 2017 and 2022 as well as the implementation of the National PCVE and CT Strategy of the Government of Kosovo, which GCERF programming supported, which will inform the next round of funding are:

- The importance of *desecuritisation* of the R&R process and PVE work **while ensuring risk mitigation.** R&R and PVE work is sensitive and was initially performed solely by government institutions. Over time, GCERF funded CSOs have built trust and productive

relationships with government institutions to become partners in the R&R and PVE sector. CSOs have proven to be crucial actors in providing support to returnees as well as implementing PVE projects due to their access to communities. However, risk assessment and mitigation are necessary to ensure the safety of returnees, vulnerable groups as well as the actors involved in P/CVE and R&R work.

- **R&R work needs to be complemented with PVE work**. R&R initiatives may be less effective or even counter-productive if they are not done in tandem with PVE activities. PVE efforts ensure that continued drivers that led people to join foreign conflicts in the first place are being addressed to avoid re-radicalisation or radicalisation to VE of others. In addition, PVE efforts are necessary to ensure an enabling environment for the reintegration of returnees into their communities.
- There is an urgent need to **focus on all forms of violent extremism**. VE threats change over time and P/CVE actors should be prepared to tackle all forms of extremism. While the focus in the past few years has been on religious extremism, the recent increase in evidence of far-right extremism and ethno-nationalism in Kosovo and the region show the importance of broadening P/CVE actors' capacities to respond to all forms of extremism and for GCERF funded CSOs to focus on people not only vulnerable to religious extremism, but also other forms of extremism.

GCERF has also collected challenges, lessons learned and good practices from its grantees throughout its programmes.

Updated Needs Assessment

An updated needs assessment was conducted by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Kosovo during August and September 2022. The in-depth assessment builds on research and monitoring activities BIRN have been performing as part of a GCERF funded programme in Kosovo since May 2021 covering 135 interviews with representatives from central and local level institutions, CSOs, and academia. As well as three country wide workshops with 51 municipal institutions and 5 community gatherings with a total of 81 participants. BIRN also conducted an additional 31 interviews, a focus group, and a standardised survey for all Kosovo municipalities. Key findings are summarised below.

Unbalanced focus on R&R

Responding to the FTF phenomenon, resources of the Government of Kosovo as well as GCERF support to Kosovo have focused mainly on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from foreign conflict zones. A shift in focus is necessary to ensure **a balanced approach that tackles both R&R and P/CVE**. The needs assessment highlighted that this approach is important to:

- Ensure sustainable reintegration of RFTFs and their families. Neglecting to address continued drivers that may have led to their departure has the potential to cause re-radicalisation;

- Prevent a new wave of FTFs leaving for foreign conflict zones, particularly as the war in Ukraine has again attracted people in the region to join;
- Ensure a balanced approach to all forms of extremism, avoiding reciprocal extremism and an unbalanced focus on Islamic extremism. This will foster resilient communities that can prevent or respond to the different forms of extremism present in Kosovo;
- Mitigate the increase in domestic violent extremism incidents.

These last two points highlight the related need for a more balanced approach to all forms of extremism. While the focus has been on religious extremism, a growing concern has been expressed about **other forms of extremism** far-right and ethnonationalist extremism in Kosovo and the Western Balkans region. [21] However, research and training on other forms of extremism is very limited and requires more resources.

Lack of local empowerment

Due to the sensitive nature of CT and P/CVE, initiatives have been performed mainly by national authorities and a few trusted CSO partners based in the capital. The government of Kosovo shows great willingness to *de-securitise* P/CVE and R&R. However, local CSOs and government institutions do not have sufficient thematic knowledge, operational capacity, or risk assessment and mitigation means to carry out these new responsibilities.

The government aims to establish **local multidisciplinary mechanisms** at the municipal level to serve as the main mechanism for case management of RFTFs, their families and other individuals at risk of radicalisation to violent extremism. Chaired by a local social worker, the mechanism will be tailored to the case management needs of the community. Participants can include psychologists, local police, etc. The national government will provide access to the mechanism's chair on a need-to-know basis. A first multidisciplinary mechanism, modelled after the Prevent Programme in the United Kingdom, was piloted in Han I Elezit[22] and perceived successful in being tasked with case management in P/CVE and R&R. The government of Kosovo now aims to replicate the mechanism in other municipalities starting in five (5) initial municipalities (**Mitrovica South, Gjilan, Pristina, Peja, and Podujeva**) which are identified as both willing to develop such mechanism and to need one to manage R&R and at-risk cases. Support is needed to operationalise the multidisciplinary mechanisms including drafting the Municipal Action Plans and developing risk assessments and mitigation measures; provide thematic and technical trainings to ensure their understanding of VE and capacity to tackle cases; mentor its members and monitor and evaluate their progress.

Local **community-based organisations** are perceived to **lack thematic knowledge and operational capacities** to support R&R and P/CVE and be sustainable partners in the

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[21] See also: Mirza Buljubašić. *Violent Right-Wing Extremism in the Western Balkans: An overview of country-specific challenges for P/CVE*. Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2022.
[22] Supported by the UK Embassy and the European Union in cooperation with Norther Ireland Cooperation Overseas (NI-CO).

localisation of P/CVE. Support is needed to improve thematic understanding, build their operational capacity, and improve networks between small CBOs and larger CSOs.

Low capacity of frontline workers and first responders

Kosovo's draft strategy on P/CVE identifies parents, teachers, psychologists, doctors, social workers, municipal officials, religious leaders, and community members as first responders in PVE. While some training programmes have taken place, many people in these target groups do not have basic knowledge on P/CVE nor the capacity to support returnees and groups vulnerable to radicalisation to VE. GCERF funded programmes have so far trained a total of 170 practitioners on trauma-informed R&R. Most of these practitioners work at central level institutions. There is need for practitioners at the local institutions to be trained. In addition, there is a significant lack of human resources. Currently, on average there is only one social worker available for 10,500. In Pristina, one social worker covers support for 26,000 people. In all schools around Kosovo, a total of less than 140 psychologists are employed.

First responders who have not received (sufficient) training need to be provided a basic understanding of PVE and R&R, the tools to identify early warning signs, and become familiar with the referral mechanisms in place, such as the multidisciplinary teams.

Continued structural drivers to VE

Initiatives are needed to continue addressing the structural drivers of radicalisation to VE, with children and youth. Initiatives are needed to address:
- The lack of opportunities and unemployment/ of youth, in rural areas;
- Segregated education and competing narratives of war in schools that foster polarisation between different ethnic, cultural, and religious groups;
- A lack of critical thinking and digital illiteracy make youth more vulnerable to online messaging including hate speech and recruitment platforms to violent extremism.

Continued needs of RFTFs and their families

While support to RFTFs and their families have accomplished significant results in both trauma-informed rehabilitation, working towards social and economic reintegration into communities, several needs continue to exist. The following support is still needed:
- Educational support for children returnees who are not yet caught up with their peers;
- Psycho-social support for children who have not (fully) overcome their trauma from conflict zones and/or struggle with their social development;
- Economic reintegration support to returnees and their families/legal guardians.

In addition, it is important to note that an approximate 86 citizens are still planned to be repatriated and will require support in their rehabilitation and reintegration.

Correctional and Probation Service

There is a significant need to build the capacities of correctional and probation service staff. However, as this set of needs will be addressed by other, non-GCERF funded projects, this

strategy will not go into detail on this component. The needs assessment in annex 1 and overview of other programmes in Annex 2 provide further details. GCERF will continue to bring together P/CVE and R&R stakeholders in Kosovo to coordinate their different programmes through the coordination meetings organised by ATRC where project process, good practices and lessons learned are shared; and through Communities of Practice organised by GCERF (see also the section on *Capacity building, learning and sustainability*).

Proposed Approach

Thematic focus

GCERF's revised Strategy for Investment in Kosovo will address all forms of extremism and have a complementary approach to R&R and P/CVE.

Programmatic focus

Support to multidisciplinary teams at the municipal level

A multidisciplinary approach to P/CVE and R&R addresses the complexity of the radicalisation as well as disengagement. Multidisciplinary teams are useful to identify early warning signs of radicalisation to VE, allowing for inputs from different sectors as well as case management of returnees that enables fast referral and response to unanticipated and changing needs. Multidisciplinary teams have been used to tackle PVE and R&R in various countries across Europe.[23] In line with the Government of Kosovo's strategic aim to decentralise PVE and R&R support, GCERF funding will support organisations to operationalise, and **capacity build multidisciplinary teams**, working closely with local institutions.

GCERF funded programmes will aim to support:
- The operationalisation of the multidisciplinary teams supporting the distribution and understanding of its existing standard operating procedure (SOPs) to different municipalities; develop additional guidelines, workplan and scope, risk management framework as required to allow their functioning.
- Thematic trainings on P/CVE and R&R, polarisation, the role of the local level;
- Practical trainings to ensure understanding of key documents and the members' roles, case management and the potential harm of bad case management[24];
- Monitor the operational progress, accountability, and sustainability of multidisciplinary teams and other local P/CVE and R&R actors;

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[23] From GCERF programming experience in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also see for example: RAN H&SC ISSUE PAPER: *Multi-agency working and preventing violent extremism*. Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2018. Annelies Pauwels and Maarten De Waele. *De lokale aanpak van radicalisering*. Vlaams vredesinstituut, 2022; Cassie Elizabeth Daugherty. *Deradicalization and Disengagement: Exit Programs in Norway and Sweden and Addressing Neo-Nazi Extremism*. Journal for deradicalization, 2019; RadarAdvies. *Radicalisering en de rol van de lokale overheid*. RadarGroep, 2015.

[24] Donor information sharing between UK, EU, GCERF and any other stakeholders working with multidisciplinary teams will ensure that all municipalities receive the same standard of trainings. Training materials, guidelines, expert pools, etc. will be shared.

- Provide technical support or trainings to national institutions where relevant;
- Monitor the progress made of the Action Plan of the Kosovo Strategy.
- Coordination meetings between all P/CVE and R&R actors at the local level including the multidisciplinary teams, CSOs, municipalities, and IGOs such as the OSCE and IOM.

Capacity building of local CSOs
GCERF funded programming in 15 other countries has shown the importance and effectiveness of CSO initiatives in P/CVE and R&R. In Kosovo, GCERF partners ATRC, CBM, CDF and FIQ have significantly contributed to P/CVE and R&R work. However, such initiatives are often led by large, capital based CSOs and IGOs. Local CBOs do not take part in larger strategic conversations on P/CVE and R&R and often lack the thematic and operational capacity to be implementing partners of the government's P/CVE and R&R strategy. However, local CBOs have the most access and are trusted actors in the community who could have the largest sustainable impact. The next GCERF funded programme will aim to **empower local CBOs** and build their capacity to work on P/CVE and R&R in a coordinated manner with government institutions.

GCERF funded programmes will aim to:
- Develop a capacity assessment and building tool to evaluate, benchmark and track the progress of CSOs during the duration of the programme;
- Provide trainings to improve thematic knowledge on P/CVE and R&R;
- Provide trainings to improve operational capacity including on financial management, monitoring and evaluation, risk management, grant writing;
- Set up a mentoring/on-the-job training scheme for more experienced CSOs to support small CBOs in their region of work;
- Ensure coordination with local government institutions and the larger strategic goals of the government of Kosovo.
- Support small CSOs in implementing P/CVE and R&R activities.

Training of trainers for frontline responders and other relevant actors
Frontline workers and other relevant PVE and R&R actors such as media actors, parents and community leaders have a crucial role to play in early identification and ensuring the functioning of the referral mechanism. GCERF will aim to provide them with adequate information and knowledge to identify and respond to signs of radicalisation to VE.

GCERF will aim to support:
- A certified Training of Trainers for psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers;
- Subsequent trainings for larger audiences of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers as well as teachers.
- A certified Training of Trainers of media actors;[25]
- Trainings for parents and legal guardians;

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[25] The training of media actors will be coordinated with the Netherlands funded programme "MATRA" and with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.

Reinforce schools as safe spaces and link to the early warning mechanism
Schools have the potential to foster resilience among children and youth and form a crucial link to the multidisciplinary team for early warning. It is key to also engage individuals who engage with children and youth outside of the school setting such as parents, legal guardians, and other community members such as youth group leaders. Providing them with the necessary information and training to identify and refer according to the systems in place is key to a successful referral mechanism. [26]

GCERF funded programmes will aim to:
- Provide trainings to school staff including teachers and school psychologists;
- Engage and support parents and legal guardians;
- Reinforce schools as a safe space for PVE activities through multifunctional rooms;

However, schools are often segregated in terms of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Hence, working in schools is not sufficient to tackle polarisation.

Mitigate polarisation among youth
GCERF proposes to use a combined Intergroup contact and positive youth development approach to tackle horizontal and vertical polarisation among youth in Kosovo[27]. If vertical frustrations due to drivers such as lack of opportunities are not addressed, they can be expressed horizontally[28], resulting in discrimination or violence towards other ethnic, cultural, or religious groups. On the one hand, **Positive youth development (PYD)** focuses on further developing the strengths of youth and by nurturing their personal and social assets.[29] Engaging youth as equal partners, PYD aims to build their personal resilience. On the other hand, **Intergroup contact (IGC)** aims to improve social cohesion among different groups of youth. ICG is relevant for the context of Kosovo, since segregation of educational and social spaces, youth of different ethnic, cultural and religious background have limited interaction with each other. This approach engages youth from different backgrounds in positive interactions to improve social cohesion. This is most effectively done by working towards a common goal. It is important to also work with the youth's family or legal guardians to mitigate a contradicting "in/out group" narrative at home.[30] A combined approach will aim to build up youth's personal resilience as well as social cohesion.

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[26] Based on stakeholder feedback. See also: Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. *Toolkit on racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism (REMVE)*. GCTF, 2022.

[27] A combined approach of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Intergroup contact (IGC) has proven a useful approach of P/CVE youth work in GCERF funded programmes in the Western Balkans, in Kosovo and Albania. Youth work was limited under GCERF's regional strategy in the Western Balkans, and is planned to be scaled up under this strategy.

[28] Boy Broeders. *Complementary approaches in youth work to counter polarization*. University of Utrecht, 2021.

[29] Daniel TL Shek. *Positive youth development: current perspectives*. Adolescent health, medicine, and therapeutics, 2019; Youth.gov. Positive Youth Development.

[30] Thomas F. Pettigrew. *Intergroup contact theory*. Annual review of psychology, 1998; Jolien Verlove et al. *Theorieën en aanpakken van polarisatie*. Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2020

In practice, this means engaging youth from different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds in Kosovo in activities building their personal resilience, fostering their community engagement, and ultimately improving social cohesion. Consultations with youth as well as previous experience with similar activities will inform the building of activities. In addition to the current approach of youth leaders/ peace agents, which has been proven successful[31], the upcoming GCERF funded programme will aim to:

- Reinforce sustainable spaces (such as schools, youth centres, youth councils) for youth work connecting to the local communities and institutions;
- Determine the local needs of youth in rural and urban areas through youth consultations;
- Use a youth-led process to provide appropriate activities building personal resilience and encouraging community engagement which at the same time brings together youth from different backgrounds;

Mitigate the high youth unemployment rate.

Logic of Strategy and Programme Indicators

All grants funded under this strategy will be aligned with the Country-Level Theory of Change (ToC), which allows GCERF to evaluate the cumulative effect of its programming. All proposed grantee programming should be able to be reflected in the ToC and should use a selection of the country-level indicators included below.

Problem statements: central and local institutions lack resources and capacity to fully decentralise the rehabilitation and reintegration processes in a sustainable matter, to continuously address the systematic drivers of radicalisation to violent extremism in an increasingly polarised post-conflict society.

Response:

- **IF** GCERF works closely with National/local institutions, frontline workers, Local and community based CSOs and build their capacities;
- **IF** GCERF works towards a goal of sustainability and enables the in-country stakeholders;
- **IF** GCERF supports the strengthening of education institutions to make safe spaces for children and youth;
- **IF** GCERF supports the mitigation of polarisation among youth and foster intergroup contacts among different groups and communities;

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[31] Based on third party monitoring evaluations as well as baseline/endline results.

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- **IF** GCERF supports the linkage and inclusivity among governance actors, CSOs and community-based mechanism;

AND the following assumptions hold true:

- Accountability and sustainability are key for effective RRR and PVE
- Decentralisation of RRR responses is critical in addressing radicalisation to violent extremism and polarisation
- Greater integration and operationalisation of local multidisciplinary mechanisms leads to efficient and sustainable responses on RRR and PVE
- Education institutions are critical to foster resilience among children and youth
- Increasing diversity and inter-community exchanges leads to less polarised environment

THEN,

Government institutions, community -based mechanism and CSOs have the tools and capacity to continue address RRR and various forms of extremism with reduced international support. Local ownership, coordination between the national and local level will be strengthened, widespread polarisation will be mitigated, joint responses will continue to be implemented to a changing violent extremism context beyond the lifespan of GCERF's investment.

This overarching ToC will lead to the following:

Programmatic Outcome:

- Central and local PVE and R&R structures (institutions, coordination mechanisms etc.) are more accountable, and financially sustainable
- Municipality level response mechanism (Multidisciplinary teams) are functional and cable of identifying, referring or providing services; and facilitate coordination with the local level actors
- Returnees and their families/caregivers receive professional support to rehabilitation and reintegrate into the community
- A better relation is fostered among youth from different communities and youth became more resilient to violent extremism through improved critical thinking and increased livelihood opportunities

Indicators

Outcome Indicators/Metrics

1. % of programme indicators on sustainability that achieved their target
2. # of institutions/entities adopting accountability/financial sustainability plan
3. % of members of local multi-disciplinary teams able to work effectively in RRR and PVE
4. % of returnees, their families, caregivers who report psycho-social wellbeing
5. % of youth who demonstrate socialisation and acceptance towards peers from different communities

Output Indicators/Metrics

1. # of accountability, financial sustainability plan developed and implemented
2. # of multidisciplinary teams operationalised
3. # and of % of local CSOs that manage to implement PVE and R&R programmes on their own
4. # of central, local institution officials, and frontline workers trained on RRR, P/CVE and other forms of extremism
5. # of returnees supported
6. # of youth engaged in the programme

In developing their programmes and results frameworks, grantees will be required to select

indicators from the list above that link to the activities, outputs, and outcomes of their proposed programmes. After the grant-making process is done and the first round of baseline data collection of the programmes is realised, the GCERF Secretariat plans to complement those indicators with targets (for quantitative and qualitative indicators), so GCERF can monitor and evaluate the achievement of its goals in the Kosovo portfolio.

Geographic focus

In line with the Government of Kosovo's draft strategy for P/CVE and CT the priority municipalities have been identified for programming. The first five municipalities were identified as showing willingness to develop local capacities on P/CVE and R&R as well as equally requiring case management efforts in their P/CVE context. GCERF proposes to start with these five municipalities and subsequently expand to other municipalities in the North (Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Skenderaj, Zvecan, Vushtrri) and other areas as identified as vulnerable to radicalisation to VE or having large numbers of returnees (including Gjakova).

Subsequent expansions are subject to change and will depend on the progress made in the priority areas and needs identified at a later stage.

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Mitrovica (South** and North*)	Gjakova	Gracanica
Gjilan**	Vusshtri	Steprce
Pristina	Skenderaj	Ranillug
Peja	Leposaviq*	
Podujevo	Zubin Potok*	
Han I Elezit	Zvecan*	

GCERF will aim for fully capacitated municipalities that are able to support other municipalities in their area of Kosovo in the expansion phase and once the GCERF programme ends.

*The approach in Serb-majority municipalities will require extensive risk assessment and mitigation and ensure the safety of partners and participants and avoid worsening political tension. Possible approaches will be discussed with local CSOs and the government of Kosovo. Now, it is not deemed safe for local organisations in Serb-majority communities to work on general prevention activities linked to the central government. Currently there are no municipal authorities in Serb-majority communities, so GCERF's plan to wait until after the April 2023 elections to begin engaging with municipal authorities. In the meantime, GCERF will continue to monitor the political situation and the security situation in Serb-majority communities, with the expectation of a slower pace in these municipalities to ensure Do No Harm. The approach will start with meeting and consulting local partners, but not funding programme activities until the new cadre of mayors are installed.

The approach will build on lessons learned from other municipalities but will consider the different local contexts and challenges. If partners are struggling to make progress in Serb-majority municipalities, then grants will shift focus to other municipalities where activities are progressing more smoothly. GCERF's flexible approach to grant management will enable grantees to adapt their workplan based on the context. More detailed mitigation measures will be outlined in the forthcoming programme proposals.

** Geographic selection of support to multidisciplinary teams will depend on other donor funded projects. Ongoing communication with EU and UK will inform final decision.

Demographic focus

Target beneficiaries

GCERF aims to build the capacity and connect all relevant P/CVE and R&R actors. Initiatives will focus on working with:

- Relevant national/local institutions and frontline workers as identified in Kosovo's Strategy on P/CVE and R&R;
- Local and community based CSOs across the country that currently or plan to work in P/CVE and R&R;
- Children and youth, including returnees but also other minority groups including Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish and Bosniak youth;
- Returnees and their family members or legal guardians.

Gender and intersectionality

Gender roles and dynamics are integral to the recruitment strategies and the internal functioning of violent extremist groups. R&R interventions to date have been largely gender blind. A gender sensitive, as well as an age appropriate, approach is necessary to ensure

responding to the gendered experiences and providing support to the actual needs of returnees.[32] Equally, P/CVE initiatives should take into consideration gendered drivers as well as early warning signs. For example, research also shows a direct link between individuals' opposing views on gender equality and a higher support for violence.[33]

In GCERF's previous programming in the Western Balkans partners have identified that experiences of travelling to foreign conflict as well as expectations and needs in rehabilitation and reintegration are gendered. In Kosovo, GCERF funded projects has supported mainly female adult returnees. For example, small grants for self-employment were provided to 35 returnees (25 women, 10 men) while vocational training was provided to 19 returnee women. A similar amount of returnee boys and girls received trauma healing support with a total of 38 beneficiaries (19 girls, 18 boys). It is also important to recognise the gender norms that were present in the conflict zone which create expectations of their adaptation to the gender norms of the community in Kosovo. For example, being patient with girls and women when it comes to assimilating to societal norms which discourage wearing a hijab and other religious clothing.

Research has pointed out the role of masculinity in different forms of extremism. Kosovo is a patriarchal society, and it is therefore important to ensure a gendered lens in project design and implementation particularly looking into the role of misogyny, toxic masculinity, traditional gender, and family roles. There is a growing consensus that domestic violence contributes to the spread of violent extremism.[34]

GCERF will aim for a better streamlined intersectionality approach, paying greater consideration to how people from other minority groups such as the Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish and Bosniak population and people in rural areas are affected by drivers to VE or returns from conflict zones. An intersectional perspective will inform programme design to ensure community-led and context specific initiatives are developed with ample consultations of target groups.

In practice, this means that the GCERF funded project will need to actively aim to remove barriers of participation and prioritise voices of the most vulnerable and marginalised to ensure activities address the actual needs of the target groups, including all ages and genders.

Conflict sensitivity

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[32]See for example; Katherine E. Brown and F.N. Mohammed. *Gender-Sensitive Approaches to FTF Child Returnee Management.* ICCT, 2021; RAN EXIT. *Gender-specific approaches in exit work.* Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2019.
[33] Majda Halilović and Nejra Veljan. *Exploring ethno-nationalist extremism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Atlantic Initiative, 2021.
[34] See for example Laura Kropiunigg and Rafael Kropiunigg. *Do Violent Homes Make Violent Extremists?* Women Without Borders, 2022.

A Do No Harm approach is central to GCERF funded programming, and means mitigating harm for participants, project staff members and the wider community. GCERF will take the following steps[35]:

- A rigorous context analysis and risk assessment will be the first step of preparation of programming. Interviews and focus groups will be held where relevant to gain a thorough understanding of the local situation. This will be important related to political sensitivities in the North of Kosovo. This information will allow for risk mitigation planning.
- GCERF's approach to tackling all forms of VE aims to avoid further marginalisation of religious, political, or ethnic groups.
- Adaptive programming and flexibility are key to GCERF's approach. A transparent feedback loop between local partners and communities will ensure that both successes and good practices as well as failures and challenges are shared to learn and improve future work.

Country Alignment and Coordination

During the last five years of investment in Kosovo and the Western Balkans region, GCERF has strengthened collaboration with key stakeholders. Alignment and coordination with the Government of Kosovo's Strategy for P/CVE and CT as well as programmes implemented by other donors or CSOs are ensured through:

- The **Regional Accelerated Funding Panel** (RAFP) was established by GCERF in July 2020. The mechanism consists of a member from each partner country (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia) and one representative from each contributing donor to GCERF-funded programmes in the Western Balkans;
- A **Regional Advisor** based in Pristina (Kosovo) strengthens coordination and consultations with in-country donors and other stakeholders such as the IOM;
- **GCERF partners involvement in drafting the new Kosovo strategy for P/CVE and CT** will ensure that they are recognised partners and that their work is aligned with the strategy;
- GCERF partner **activities specifically aimed at coordination of P/CVE stakeholders**. Since 2021, partner ATRC has brought together all actors implementing P/CVE activities on a regular basis to reflect on progress, challenges, and lessons learned as well as present their planned activities to avoid overlap.

An overview of current programmes implemented can be found in Annex I.

This strategy proposes to reinvigorate the **Country Support Mechanism** that was established in 2016 when Kosovo became a partner country. There is a need now more than ever to ensure strong multi-stakeholder engagement and oversight as GCERF looks to ensure a sustainable transition in Kosovo. GCERF will work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to reinvigorate the

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[35] As recommended by UNDP. Anita Ernstorfer. *Conflict Sensitivity Approaches to Preventing Violent Extremism: good intentions are not enough*. UNDP, 2019.

mechanism, which will support the approval process of this strategy. The mechanism will develop a term of reference and a structure. The constitution of the mechanism and structure will be defined in quarter 4 of 2022 and finalised in the first quarter of 2023.

The Regional Accelerated Funding Panel (RAFP) was highly useful when each country in the region had a national coordinator for CT/CVE and the strategy was focused on R&R of FTFs and their families. However, the national coordinator position has become defunct in a few countries and countries such as Kosovo are now focusing on new thematic topics like FRE, which need to be fleshed out in a country strategy. Currently, GCERF is not planning to maintain the Regional Accelerated Funding Panel as its members are no longer available and there is no longer a purpose to sustain the RAFP.

Funding and investment scenarios

Currently, GCERF funded programmes with ATRC and CDF will continue until May 2023 and December 2023 respectively. ATRC's programme focusing on capacity building at a national level, with media actors and community-based initiatives to foster an enabling environment for R&R, will finish in May 2023. A cost-extension of USD 400,000 signed in June 2022 with CDF is focused on the following:

- Training of frontline workers (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers);
- Capacity building of schools as hubs for early warning and fostering resilience;
- Continued support to returnees and their families until December 2023.

A new project starting in quarter 1 of 2023 as part of Round 3 will tackle the following:

- Capacity building of CSOs;
- Capacity building of multidisciplinary teams and relevant local/national institutions;
- Mitigate polarisation of youth;
- Research and development of materials on far-right extremism and ethno-nationalism in Kosovo.

The estimated budget to implement the strategy is USD 2.5 mln invested over the next 36 months through several consortium led grants.

Capacity building, learning and sustainability

Tailored capacity building for local CSOs

As outlined above, capacity building of local CSOs will be a key aspect of upcoming GCERF funded programmes. A capacity assessment and building tool will be developed to evaluate the current capacities of the CSOs and provide them with tailored trainings and on the job support.

Thematic and technical trainings

GCERF will continue to facilitate capacity building for its grantees and sub-grantees by linking global, regional, and national experts to local practitioners and actors in interactive workshops. Trainings cover both thematic and technical topics. Depending on grantee need, this can include communications, security and risk analysis and mitigation, programme management, finance and compliance, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as on thematic trainings such as trauma-informed approaches to R&R programming.

Regional knowledge sharing
In addition to trainings, GCERF also organises regional **Communities of Practice** (CoPs) where GCERF partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia exchange challenges, lessons learned and good practices. CoPs sometimes take the form of trainings as mentioned above or are more reflective workshops to learn from and build on each other's work in the region. Some previous CoPs include a regional baseline symposium consolidating baseline findings of partners across the region and lessons learned workshops on PVE and R&R programming in the Western Balkans.

To encourage more structured coordination and communication on challenges and good practices a **Regional Action Platform** (RAP) and thematic sub-groups were created to facilitate regular sharing of lessons learned with clear deliverables. The RAP aims to connect all Western Balkan partners working on PVE and R&R, where the sub-groups will allow partners across Consortia with similar focus (e.g., trauma informed R&R, youth activism, gender, etc.) to work together to review, revise and develop consolidated approaches.

In addition, the larger Global Action Platform (GAP) organises quarterly virtual Global Communities of Practice. GCERF invites all grantees and other stakeholders to attend its Global CoPs which allow grantees from around the world to share insights, raise challenges and suggest solutions to common problems related to VE. The GAP has also launched working groups to connect its grantees and sub-grantees across the world on the topics of livelihood support, community-based integration, and social cohesion.

GCERF's Independent Review Panel, a group of P/CVE practitioners and experts from around the world, supports the Secretariat with proposal review, learning events, and capacity strengthening of partners. The IRP Chair also serves as a member of GCERF's Governing Board. They support the grant making review process to ensure quality, impact, value for money, alignment with national strategies and provide direct support to CSM members and grantees through structured inputs and capacity building.

Monitoring and evaluation
GCERF recognises that effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is challenging given the complexity of programming towards P/CVE. GCERF PRs in Kosovo have developed strong M&E systems throughout the previous rounds of funding and aim to pass this on to their SRs. GCERF provides guidelines, virtual support throughout the grant development and management, as

well as in-country visits by the Regional Advisor and GCERF Secretariat. The core elements of that GCERF supports its PRs with are developing a

1. Theory of Change in line with GCERF's Strategy for Investment;
2. Results Framework (RF) including Outcome and Output design and indicator target estimation;
3. Data collection and analysis plans to produce RF indicator values
4. Research design for the Outcome indicators to support claims of project/grant achievements;
5. Data Quality Assurance (DQA) to ensure project/grant indicator values are reliable and valid.

The GCERF Performance & Impact Unit works closely with the GCERF Portfolio Management and Finance Units to ensure that these five elements are developed with prospective grant recipients and are contained within their concept paper submission and subsequent grant proposals.

Timeline

The timeline for implementation is January 2023 through February 2026

Transition Strategy

GCERF determines that its support to a country is no longer required either when the GCERF model (locally-driven, community focused PVE practices linked directly to national level policies) is integrated into domestic PVE responses, or when local actors are otherwise demonstrably capable of building community resilience and implementing effective PVE programmes independently of GCERF. Transition from a country may also be triggered by low performance and/or lack of support or engagement from state or non-state partners.

GCERF has designed this strategy with a clear focus on sustainability and capacity building to enable transition out of Kosovo. By building capacities at national and local level and preparing these actors for passing on that knowledge further, GCERF's new round of investment in Kosovo should encourage the development of sustainable PVE capacities and enable actors to respond to future challenges. The strategy also aims to strengthen collaboration between national and municipal authorities to ensure that PVE priorities are funded. GCERF plans to work with other donors in Kosovo to ensure that where government resources are limited, donors fill the gap. GCERF first grants under this investment strategy will focus on sustainability at the outcome level, with specific measurements/indicators.

The following criteria have been identified to assess GCERF's ongoing support for in-country programming:

i. **Ineligibility**: A country becomes ineligible for GCERF funding, either because there is no longer a need, no longer demand, it is no longer feasible, or the country becomes ODA ineligible;

ii. **Value add and complementarity**: GCERF's approach adds value and complements existing efforts (including national and donor-supported PVE programming);

iii. **Grantee performance**: Quarterly Grant Performance Assessments enable the GCERF Secretariat to assess improvements in grantee capacity and determine when no further support is required;

iv. **Government support**: GCERF's model has been effectively adopted by state-level actors and the CSM has become a sustainable coordination mechanism for community-led P/CVE programming;

v. **Donor support**: GCERF donors want to continue investing in the country (this is considered along with all other indicators above to ensure relevance);

vi. **Outcomes/Impact:** Programming continues to contribute to achieve GCERF's stated country-level objectives;

vii. **Policy development**: Clear national PVE policy (or a plan to adopt one) and increasing openness to CSO participation in PVE.

In the case of Kosovo, GCERF believes that the indicators above have not been fully met and there is still a strong justification for GCERF's continued engagement in the country. To ensure a sustainable transition out of Kosovo, GCERF's next round of funding will focus on preparing P/CVE and R&R stakeholders to continue and embed relevant activities.

	Criteria	Assessment of Kosovo's progress against indicators
i.	Eligibility	Kosovo remains eligible for GCERF funding.
ii.	Value-add and complementarity	This strategy has been designed in close coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, ensuring additional GCERF support is complementary to support in particular funded initiatives by the IOM, USAID, EU, NL, and UK.
iii.	Grantee Performance	Grantee performance assessments to date have demonstrated that current Pristina based CSO partners have medium to high capacity. However, local organisations outside of the capital need additional support both operationally and thematically.
iv.	Government support	Coordination with the MIA has been consistently effective and productive. While programming in Kosovo is currently supported by the Regional Accelerated Funding Panel, GCERF is considering reinvigorating the CSM for Kosovo to ensure a sustainable transition in Kosovo.
v.	Donor support	Donor support exists for GCERF to remain in Kosovo.

vi.	Outcomes/Impact	GCERF funded programmes have focused largely on R&R of returnees from foreign conflicts. While objectives have been largely achieved, support is needed to further localise support for returnees. In addition, a focus on R&R, both by GCERF and institutions, has neglected P/CVE efforts to deal with its more urgent crisis. Additional support is needed to improve P/CVE capacities on all forms of extremism.
vii.	Multi-stakeholder coordination approach to PVE	Kosovo's MIA has been a key partner in ensuring multi-stakeholder coordination. Coordination can still be improved, GCERF will continue efforts to share information closely with similar projects funded by IOM, UK, EU, and NL.
viii.	Policy development	Policy development in PVE has taken place at national level, however, more sustained investment is needed to ensure sustainable progress on PVE programming is being made at local community level. The current draft strategy of the Government of Kosovo envisions larger responsibilities at the municipal level and GCERF funded projects will support building their capacity to implement these new tasks.

ANNEX I: Updated Needs Assessment

See attached.

ANNEX II: Overview of other P/CVE and R&R related projects in Kosovo

Donor/implementing partner	Programme title/description	End date
Council of Europe, funded by the European Union	Regional project to mitigate radicalisation in prisons	No data available
Regional Office of the United Kingdom	Knowledge sharing of PREVENT approach in the UK to inform referral mechanisms at the municipal level in Kosovo.	December 2022
Advocacy Training and Resource Centre (ATRC), funded by GCERF	Resilient Community Programme	May 2023
IOM, funded by the European Union	Regional programme to support the reintegration, resocialisation, and rehabilitation of returning foreign	September 2023

	terrorist fighters (RFTF) and their families from conflict zones.	
Community Development Fund, funded by GCERF	Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program in Kosovo	December 2023
KCSS/ICCT, funded by the United Kingdom and Kingdom of the Netherlands	Increase capacities of Kosovo Probation Service on counterterrorism and countering violent extremism	October 2024
OSCE	Regional mission's Focus on VERLT (Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism) to strengthen civil society, women, youth, and religious leaders; promote interdisciplinary cooperation; promote community policing.	2024
Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre Against Torture (KRTC)	Rehabilitation and reintegration of communities returned from armed conflicts.	No data available.
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), European Commission	RAN in the Western Balkans: research, policy support, and knowledge sharing	N/A
The Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans	Regional coordination platform for Western Balkan partners	N/A

Annex III. Risks and Mitigation Measures