



**GCERF**

Preventing Violent Extremism

# **A DIFFERENT STORY CAN BE WRITTEN**

**CASE FOR INVESTMENT**

**EXPLODE**



CASE FOR INVESTMENT

# A DIFFERENT STORY CAN BE WRITTEN

In 2019 the world spent USD 3.6 trillion on security responses to violence. Yet the most pernicious form of violence, violent extremism, is still on the rise. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality, making even more young people susceptible to extremist narratives. The threat is accelerating while traditional responses are failing.

*A different story can be written.*



“The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 is an important moment to reaffirm our global commitment to resist and confront extremism in all its forms, and to recalibrate our responses to ensure societies are resilient against the divisive, hate-filled ideologies that impact us all. Security measures to combat violent extremism will not on their own produce the conditions that are vital to rewind the spread of extremist ideas that we have witnessed in the last 20 years. It will take generations to rebuild societies that have been affected and impacted by the cycle of insecurity, civil war, conflicts and polarisation that have been and are being fanned by extremist actors around the world. And it will take collective pro-action, resources, and ingenuity to ensure that the next generation is able to maintain a world where extremism has no place in society or politics”

**TONY BLAIR**  
FORMER UK  
PRIME MINISTER

Over the past three years GCERF has shown how investing in people makes a real difference.

We have already provided better alternatives for one million people at risk of radicalisation, building resilient and resourceful communities around them.

Over the next three years with a new investment of at least **USD 120 million**, we will continue to invest in people:

- Providing **better alternatives** for 2 million more people directly at risk of radicalisation to violent extremism, significantly depleting violent extremist groups of new recruits around the world
- Turning the vicious cycle of violent extremism in communities where despair breeds the resentment upon which violent extremists prey, into a **virtuous cycle** where communities are resilient against violent extremism and other exogenous threats, and can prosper
- Replacing the negative consequences of violent extremism, including irregular migration, the export of extremist narratives, and the drain on public resources, with **positive outcomes**, including trust between communities and authorities, stronger state institutions, and greater investment including from the private sector
- **Reinforcing a new approach**, that integrates security and development resources, mobilises the private sector, builds strategic partnerships, converts political cooperation into practical engagement, and is led by communities at risk
- Elevating global ambition towards conceiving a **future generation without extremism**



# AN ENDURING CHALLENGE

Violent extremism is a direct threat to international security, economic growth, and development.

It intensifies existing conflicts, undermines democracy, and drives irregular migration. The violent extremist threat is transnational, even when it manifests locally, for example through the online spread of violent ideological propaganda. Equally, domestic interests are defined beyond national boundaries. Trade, aid, investment, tourism, international security, and development all put significant numbers of citizens, resources, and reputation at risk.

Over the past three years, the direct economic impact of violent extremism has been at least USD 100 billion globally, and in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria is the annual equivalent of 2 per cent of GDP, about the same as is currently spent on healthcare or education. UNDP estimates that 16 countries across sub-Saharan Africa lost a further USD 100 billion in economic activity over the past decade due to insecurity and non-state violence. The development of

Cabo Delgado's vast gas resources has been stalled indefinitely because of the activities of ISIS affiliates in northern Mozambique.

According to the UN, "...violent extremism threatens to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades" in countries across the world. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has identified violent extremism, along with climate change, as the greatest threat to development progress in her country. The achievement of SDG 16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, is particularly threatened by violent extremism. Poorer communities, and within them, women and children, bear the brunt of the burden of violent extremism.

Over the past 20 years, the world has confronted the threat of violent extremism with determination and

purpose, but mainly through military means. There has been progress. Organised terrorist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda have been pushed back in the Middle East and North Africa. The number of deaths attributed to terrorism globally has reduced. Progress towards the SDGs, including on education, employment and good governance, has addressed some of the inequities that drive people, especially youth, towards radicalisation to violent extremism.

But the threat endures. The return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families from Syria and Iraq is a legacy issue; terrorist groups are emerging in new geographies; far-right extremism is on the rise. Violent extremism still takes an unacceptable toll on lives, undermines prosperity and progress; and is an affront to universal values. The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the threat and undermining resilience to it.

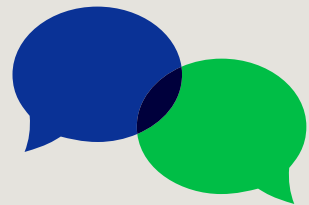


## ALLEVIATING THE IMPACT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON WOMEN

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"I am filled with hope because I can meet my family needs and my earnings have increased from FCFA 200 (USD 0.31) four months ago to between 1500 (USD 2.34) and 3,000 FCFA (USD 4.68), depending on whether there are special events,"

...reported Djidia, a woman, entrepreneur and mother of three in Mali who was part of a GCERF-funded programme in the region of Kendé, an area that is often visited by violent extremist groups. Before the programme, Djidia was vulnerable to recruitment. She could barely cover the basic needs of her household. Although poverty does not necessarily lead to radicalisation, economic vulnerability and relative deprivation create fertile ground for violent extremist recruitment. GCERF programmes aim to break this cycle by offering material support to individuals to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Djidia received training on financial planning with a grant for a business start-up that enabled her to start cattle fattening, a practice that has dramatically increased her income. She also benefitted from awareness-raising about the threats and consequences of violent extremism. Around 6,000 women and youth have received similar support from GCERF programmes in Mali.



**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**  
UN SECRETARY GENERAL

**"The pandemic is a wake-up call for whole-of-society efforts within and between countries to recover better together. This resonates with recommendations that I made...for a strategic investment in prevention and resilience against terrorism, by building strong institutions and effective governance and integrating efforts to address violent extremism...with the pursuit of sustainable development, the sustaining peace agenda and human rights."**

# A NEW RESPONSE



The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 provides an opportunity to learn from both the successes and failures of preventing violent extremism over the past 20 years, and write a different story, with a different ending 20 years from now.

It has become clear that punitive and repressive counterterrorism and military responses are expensive and ineffective, often resulting in unintended negative consequences like civilian casualties that may become a cause for further radicalisation. The development sector remains agnostic to the challenge, concerned at the risk of legitimising violent extremism by focusing on root causes, and about the securitisation of development aid. The private sector has yet to mobilise its resources towards the challenge. The emerging multilateral response is neither comprehensive, coordinated, nor coherent.

GCERF is the only international organisation dedicated to preventing violent extremism.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

More than **49,000 youth and 15,000 community and religious leaders trained on leadership, and advocacy**, empowering them to voice their communities' concerns

More than **100 advocacy mentorships supported**, some of which have resulted in policy reform

**Awareness-raising and training for 4,000 prisoners, 300 prison officers and 30 paralegals** on the prevention of violent extremism

**1,596 interfaith, inter-community, and inter-generational dialogues that have brought together more than 40,000 people** from different faiths and groups

More than **400 conflict resolution platforms created and revitalised**, allowing more than 15,000 people to solve their disputes through non-violent means

**Capacity building for more than 7,000 governmental and other stakeholders**, including for law enforcement

**Cultural and sports events have engaged more than 240,000 youth**, promoting their sense of worth and belonging by reconnecting them with other youth

**Establishment of 700 peace clubs**, fostering peace and tolerance and teaching youth to spot early signs of radicalisation

**Training for more than 18,000 youth** on interpersonal skills, life-skills and digital literacy

**Vocational and entrepreneurship training, and support for income-generating activities** that have improved the employment status of **more than 19,000 people**

Our multi-stakeholder Governing Board combines perspectives from donors, partner countries, civil society, and the private sector. We replicate this whole-of-society approach in the countries we support. We partner globally and locally with the UN and other

credible organisations preventing extremism and violence, and strengthening civil society and government institutions, to ensure that we are an integral part of an ecosystem with a sum impact greater than its constituent parts.

Global apprehension is not matched by practical commitments to action.

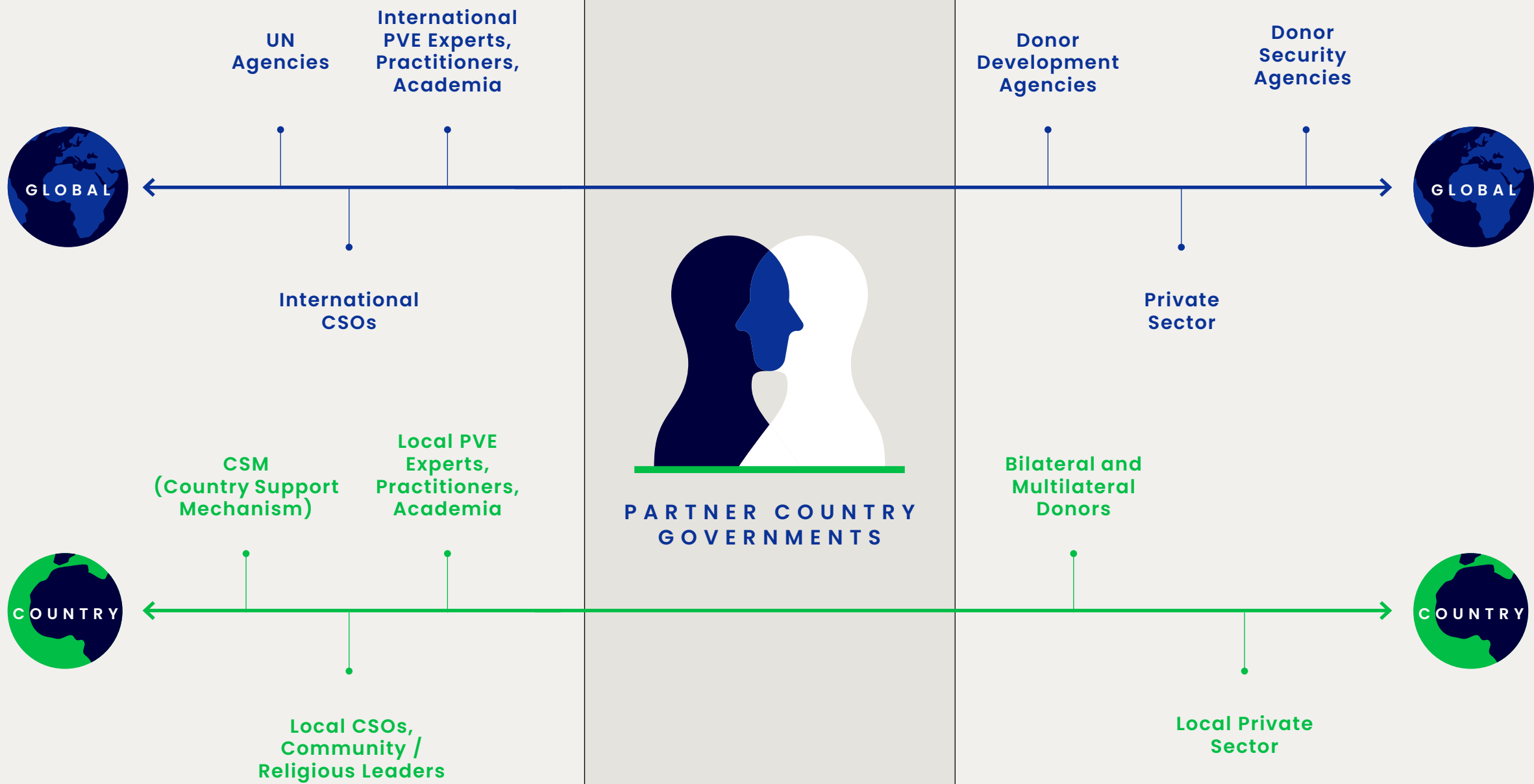
GCERF represents a new response. We mobilise resources from security and development budgets and from the public and private sector. We directly channel dedicated funding to local organisations to design and implement projects that respond to their own realities.

With our support, they are promoting social cohesion, lifting barriers to equal opportunities, building community agency, and fostering a sense of purpose, to advance communities that are resilient to violent extremism and that can achieve sustainable development. We foster local leadership, peer collaboration between local organisations, and partnership with national governments.

GCERF is transmitting back to the international community what works and what doesn't, from an expanding global evidence base.



THE GCERF PARTNERSHIP



**INDEPENDENT  
EVALUATION OF GCERF  
BY THE UK FOREIGN  
AND COMMONWEALTH  
OFFICE, 2018**


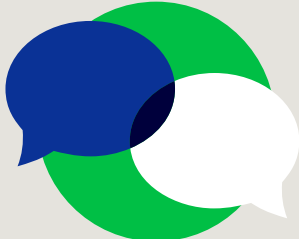



“GCERF has established robust governance, processes, and procedures which are in keeping with those of other well-established trust funds. As a legally independent international entity, it operates at the ‘gold standard’ of international organisation governance – a fact that gives it significant freedoms and access.”

CONVERTING POLITICAL  
COOPERATION INTO  
PRACTICAL ENGAGEMENT

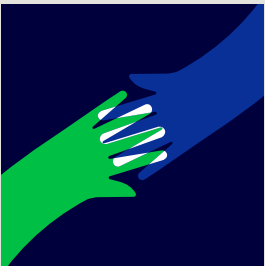
Globally, GCERF and the community-led interventions we support, contribute to the implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and ensure that the policy frameworks developed by the Global Counterterrorism Forum are implemented at the local level.

GCERF investment strategies and programmes are aligned with national strategies and action plans to prevent violent extremism, and help implement them at the local level, tailoring them to local circumstances, facilitating coordination, and galvanising buy-in from communities.



		HOW WE WORK		
<div>THE RIGHT THING</div> <div>We work to prevent extremism and violence by investing in people. We do this by addressing root causes, and seeking to <b>create better alternatives for youth</b>, in particular, <b>against the enticement of violent extremists</b>.</div>	<div>IN THE RIGHT PLACES</div> <div>GCERF channels global funds to <b>individuals and communities at direct risk</b> of radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremist agendas, in support of national efforts.</div>	<div></div> <div>1.IDENTIFY COMMUNITIES</div> <div>Working with local partners to identify the communities most vulnerable to violent extremism.</div>	<div></div> <div>3.BUILD CAPACITY</div> <div>Unlocking local potential by building organisational capacity to ensure crucial skills and knowledge evolve in the early stages of development.</div>	<div></div> <div>4.CONNECT WITH PARTNERS</div> <div>Connecting local partners to national governments, foundations, and businesses to further scale initiatives.</div>
<div>AT THE RIGHT TIME</div> <div>GCERF focuses on prevention, working in countries and regions where there are warning signs that radicalisation and recruitment are increasing, and, where <b>intervening now, can change future trajectories forever</b>.</div>	<div>IN THE RIGHT WAY</div> <div><b>GCERF funded-projects are community-led</b>, and build the capacities of individuals and communities, ensuring that the projects' impact is sustainable, lasts beyond GCERF's support and is owned by the community.</div>	<div></div> <div>2.FIND AND FUND ORGANISATIONS</div> <div>Finding community-based organisations at the grassroots level that are capable of delivering local initiatives, and then <b>utilising global resources to fund those with potential to grow and scale</b>.</div>	<div></div> <div>5.MONITOR PROGRESS</div> <div>Striving for long-term sustainability with regular follow-ups and check-ins. GCERF uses this knowledge to <b>enrich a global understanding of how to strengthen community resilience</b>.</div>	





ENGAGING  
LEADERS AND  
GROUPS FROM  
DIFFERENT  
FAITHS AND  
BACKGROUNDS

At the height of the Rohingya crisis, resentment against Buddhist minorities escalated in Cox’s Bazar.

In response, a GCERF grantee started to host interfaith dialogues for faith leaders and courtyard meetings for women, bringing together people from different faiths, and turning around the conversation from resentment to oaths to stand together against violence and promote harmony.

Over the past four years, GCERF has hosted more than 1,600 interfaith, intercommunity, and intergenerational dialogues that bridge religious, ethnic, and generational divisions within societies. GCERF programmes have also engaged more than 25,000 religious and

traditional leaders. In Nigeria, GCERF grantees reported that 94 per cent of religious and traditional leaders understood the risks of radicalisation to violent extremism following these activities. In Mali, following a GCERF-funded programme, 2,099 religious or traditional leaders launched PVE initiatives on their own.

GCERF believes that working with religious and traditional leaders, and bridging religious divides, is essential. Religious and traditional actors are often the most credible and trustworthy voices for the community. Engage them, you engage a community.



CHANGING  
POLICY FROM  
THE BOTTOM-UP

“Today, we made history,” said the Youth Commission Bill’s sponsor, Hon. Ahmed Mohammed as the law was signed by the Governor of Kogi State, the first of its kind in Nigeria. The Bill was the result of a long advocacy process led by a coalition of young people and youth organisations.

The process started when a GCERF partner provided youth with advocacy tools, training them how to identify key stakeholders and gatekeepers. Once trained, the youth organised themselves and identified a strategy to push for their goals: a multi-stakeholder Youth Development Commission – whose mandate would be to increase socio-economic opportunities for youth, reduce anti-social behaviour, and empower young men and women.

The youth organised themselves and engaged actors whose public support or direct relationship with law-making were important for the passage of the Bill, coupled with public manifestations in the communities, and a social media campaign. The Bill passed 10 months after its conception.

The long-term effect of the Bill cannot be underestimated. Its mandate directly addresses several drivers of violent extremism in the region, on a much larger scale and longer-term than GCERF’s initial intervention. More importantly, the Bill helps to repair the trust between youth and the authorities, demonstrating the benefits of non-violent political action. Its success inspired similar initiatives in other states such as Nasarawa State, where a version of the law has passed the first reading, and in Benue State, where the initiative has just started.

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Today,  
we made  
history.”

YOUTH COMMISSION  
BILL’S SPONSOR



**18 government donors plus the EU, have contributed** over USD 100 million to GCERF from security, development, and humanitarian budgets

**13 partner countries have requested GCERF's support**

**187 local NGOs have received resources from GCERF** to build open, inclusive, and resilient communities in 179 localities around the world

**GCERF and its partners have directly engaged 2 million people – mostly young men and women;** and are supporting a further 11 million people, who now live in safer communities

**50 percent of GCERF grant recipients are women and girls**

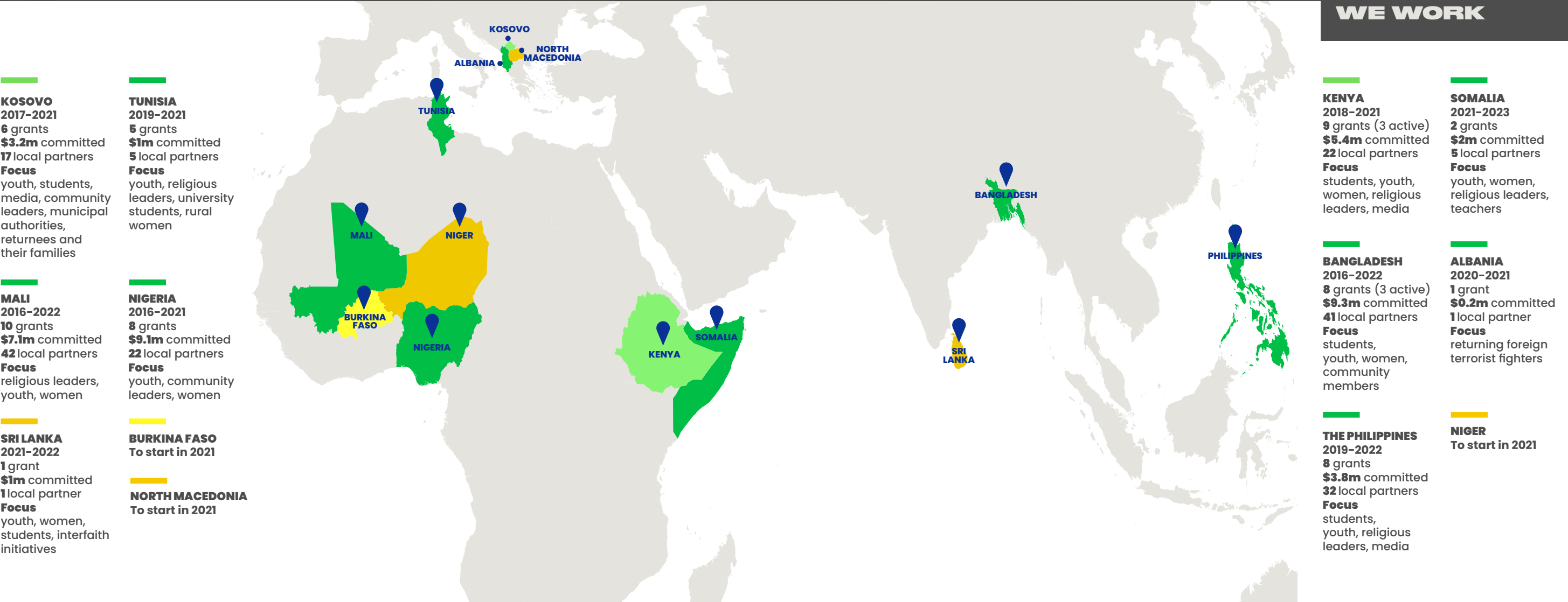
GCERF has formed **2 regional inter-governmental panels** in the Sahel and in Western Balkans strengthening regional cooperation and responses addressing VE threat

**GCERF has formed 8 national-level multi-stakeholder platforms** that serve as one of the prime loci of discussions regarding prevention of violent extremism in GCERF partner countries

In Somalia and the Philippines, GCERF programmes have enhanced **collaboration between national and sub-national authorities** by including representatives of autonomous regions on the national platform

# GCERF IN FIGURES

## WHERE WE WORK





# PROVIDING BETTER ALTERNATIVES

With a new investment of USD 120m GCERF will continue to invest in people, providing better alternatives for 2 million people directly at risk of radicalisation and recruitment, and building a safety net among 10 million other people in their communities, tracking their trajectories.

Expand its presence to 10 more countries including in the Middle East, West and Central Asia, and South East Asia, while ensuring a lasting impact in countries where GCERF is currently present

Support the rehabilitation and integration of 1,000 returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families

Train and equip 25,000 community and religious leaders and peace ambassadors to lead the fight against violent extremism in their communities

Promote government commitment to preventing violent extremism, by working with sub-national level authorities and linking them with local organisations

Establish 1,250 youth peace clubs to promote youth engagement and advocacy

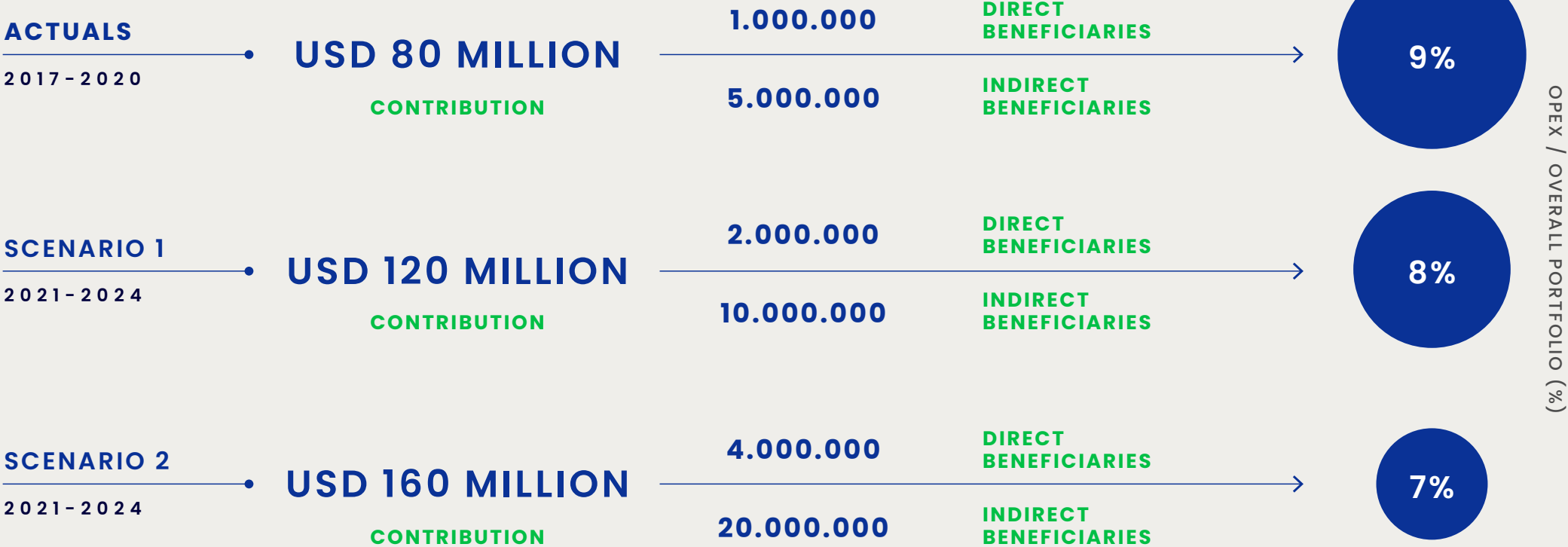
Establish a network of local knowledge partners that provide GCERF and the international community with the lessons and evidence-based assessment of what works and what doesn't

Support governments to implement 20 national action plans on violent extremism, elevating the role of civil society in national policy

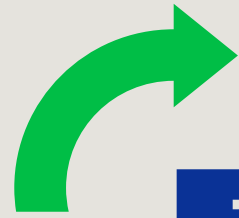
Enable a global movement of community action against violent extremism

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

This represents a 100 percent return on a 50 percent increase in investment. Doubling the investment in GCERF to USD 160 million over three years will generate a fourfold return on investment. Operating expenses as a ratio of the portfolio under management will continue to be driven down the more is invested.







# ESTABLISHING A VIRTUOUS CYCLE

Violent extremism generates a vicious cycle in communities where it becomes embedded. Extremist narratives identify existing cleavages within society and deliberately deepen them, generating a self-fulfilling cycle of resentment and blame. Additionally, violent extremism can shape-shift into

other forms of violence and criminality, including kidnapping and human trafficking. GCERF's interventions have turned this vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle, building trust between different ethnic, tribal and religious groups that has inspired cooperation and collective action.

We will accelerate this virtuous cycle in communities where we currently invest, and kick-start it in new communities.



## BROKERING PEACE BETWEEN HERDERS AND FARMERS

"The peace pact has made it possible for us to live like brothers in this community" says a community member living in Kogi State in the Northern Middle Belt in Nigeria - an area that has experienced a surge of violence between herders and farmers, in part as a result of limited availability of land for grazing and farming impacted by climate change. Violent extremist groups have mobilised this environmental conflict to boost recruitment.

A GCERF local partner brought together traditional and religious leaders, women, and youth group leaders and formed four Community Action Response Teams (CARTs) in four communities in Kogi State between 2016 and 2019. They were trained on conflict analysis and resolution, hazard mapping, gender equality, and advocacy, and their mandate was to prevent and resolve conflict arising in their communities and to make the link between the community and local authorities. An external evaluation found that these CARTs not only helped to mediate peace pacts between herders and farmers but also became a key component in

sustaining them by resolving subsequent disputes: "One of them stabbed one of our brothers in the farm and that could have led to a serious fight, it is the CART that mobilised and settled the issue," according to another community member.

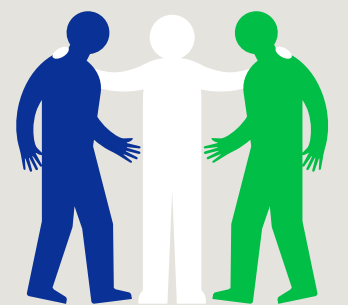
Of 70 per cent of the community members who know about the CARTs, 93 per cent consider them legitimate, 98 per cent effective, and 70 per cent highly effective in conflict resolution. GCERF is currently expanding the CART model to other communities, including in neighboring Nasarawa State.

Communities outside the programme are now forming CARTs independently.

## RESILIENCE AGAINST NEW THREATS

COVID-19 has exacerbated many of the drivers of violent extremism and disproportionately affected the youth. Violent extremist groups have taken advantage of the pandemic to ramp up their propaganda, especially online. Aware of the risks, GCERF repurposed a proportion of its grants, alleviating some of the immediate effects of the pandemic, and reinforcing confidence and trust within communities we

support. The networks GCERF helped establish to push back against violent extremism, were also mobilised to safeguard communities against the pandemic. In the Philippines, a GCERF partner used its new media platform to spread public health messaging to more than 20,000 people. Youth change agents, nurtured by GCERF in Bangladesh and Nigeria, mobilised to sensitise their communities.



By building resilience against violent extremism, GCERF is also building resilience against other exogenous threats, including COVID-19.



# PROMOTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES

**"I believe this is the right time to reset and articulate a coherent vision for change that not only continues to discourage radicalisation, but also comes together to strengthen the institutions of government to ensure society is productive, modern, and evolving with the times. In part this means empowering communities and civil society to lead the way at the local level and ensure services and opportunities reach the most vulnerable."**

**TONY BLAIR**

**FORMER UK  
PRIME MINISTER**

Violent extremism has an impact far beyond the communities GCERF supports. It intensifies conflict, widens inequalities, and is a driver for irregular migration. Extremist narratives circulate widely on social media.

In contrast, GCERF leverages positive outcomes. Training, skills, loans, and employment not only provide better alternatives to recruitment, but also to irregular migration. Critical thinking and digital literacy don't just enable grantees to filter extremist narratives, but also to push back

against them. Building trust between communities and local authorities and elevating the perspective of civil society on national agendas, helps build more legitimate state institutions. GCERF will continue to demonstrate this positive ripple effect from communities GCERF supports.



## REBUILDING THE TRUST BETWEEN YOUTH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

"The youth are becoming friendlier to police officers and they are willing to give information on what is happening in the community," says Defence, 31, a constable, from Kamukunji sub-country in Kenya.

**Repairing the relationship between the youth and law enforcement is a priority for the GCERF portfolio in Kenya, which has supported 252 initiatives to build trust and confidence between them, including dialogues and sports activities, and trained more than 250 security actors on conflict resolution, human rights, and humanitarian law.**

In July 2020, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth were feeling harassed by the police, creating an atmosphere of mistrust that in some cases, pushed youth to join criminal and violent extremist organisations as a form of retaliation.

A GCERF local partner hosted 'Kikao' - open-air dialogues in which youth, government officials, and police were represented and could talk openly. Following the recommendations of the Kikao, the local police force appointed two Station Youth Liaison Officers, one man and one woman, both under 35, and known for being friendly to the youth.

They helped rebuild trust between the police and

youth, which has contributed to a decrease in violent extremism, with fewer youths crossing the border to Somalia for training. The success of the programme has also snowballed. Nearby Buruburu police station has also assigned Station Youth Liaison Officers and a roll-out of newly created programme is now underway nationally, starting with 11 pilot counties, including in the capital city of Nairobi.

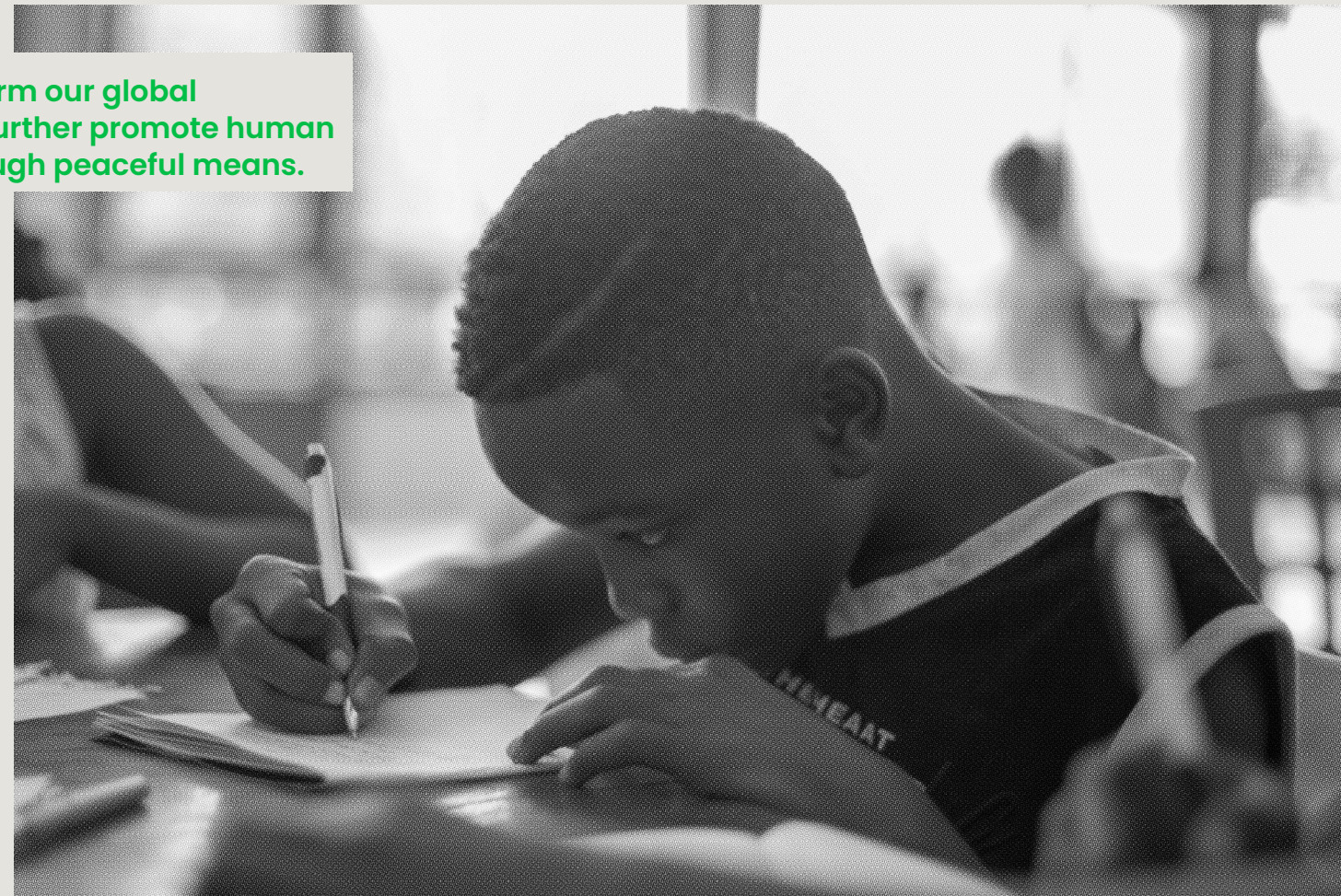


# WRITING A DIFFERENT STORY

20 years after 9/11, we have the opportunity to reaffirm our global commitment to confront violent extremism and to further promote human dignity, state integrity, and international order through peaceful means.

This is also the right time to reset our approaches. The global community now acknowledges that the threat has not receded; and that traditional approaches are failing. We now have sufficient evidence to assess the successes and failures of the past. There is a renewed, cautious confidence in globalisation; and after the COVID-19 pandemic a renewed commitment to a more predictable future.

GCERF is at the forefront of a new, more credible brand of multilateralism, linking global political dialogue with local social realities; working across development, security and humanitarian siloes to focus on the priorities of people at risk themselves; resetting the traditional donor-beneficiary relationship into a genuine partnership; mobilising private sector resources and resourcefulness; and empowering communities to take control of their own destinies.



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**TONY BLAIR**

FORMER UK PRIME MINISTER

“GCERF, since its inception in 2014, has played an important role in coordinating multilateral efforts so that global funds reach communities that are acutely affected by the insecurity of extremism. That GCERF has become an important part of the international community’s toolkit against terrorism is recognition that a range of policies is needed to undermine the resonance of extremist narratives, and that there is a collective responsibility to pool together to achieve the maximum positive impact.”

**CHAIR OF THE MALI**

COUNTRY SUPPORT MECHANISM

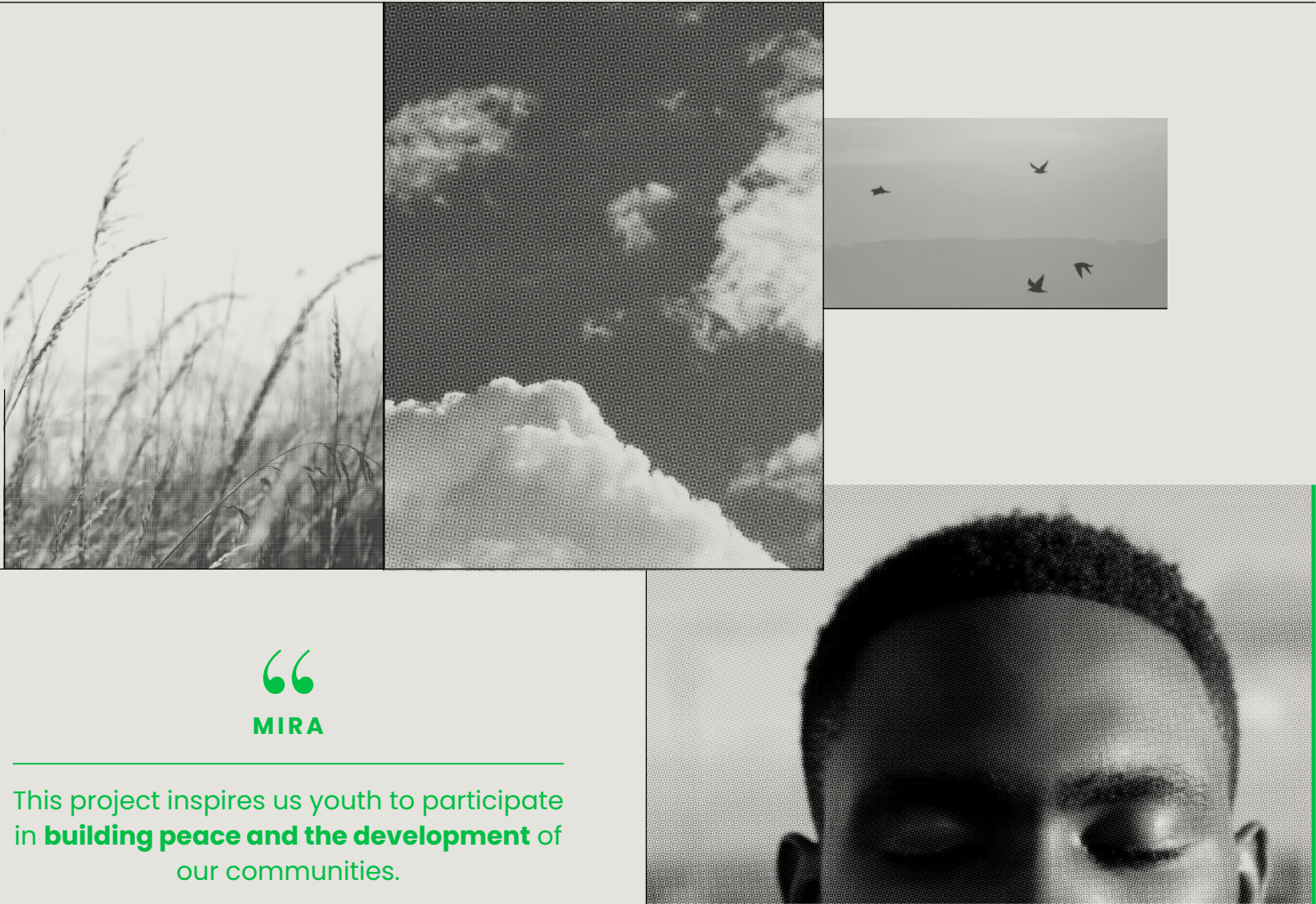
“GCERF’s approach is unique in providing space for national governments to take responsibility for preventing violent extremism in their own countries. GCERF does not dictate but convenes and facilitates dialogue between national governments, the private sector and civil society.”



There are few areas of public policy that have attracted less ambition than violent extremism. The global community talks about countering and preventing violent extremism, but never about ending extremism. In another 20 years, we need to be confident that the next generation is able to maintain a world where extremism has no place in society or politics. GCERF will empower the people and communities most affected to lead the way.

**Now is the right time to invest in people, to write a different story with a different ending. A story that starts at the beginning, with root causes, not at a violent end. A story where the conclusion is not pre-ordained from the outset that young people join violent extremist groups.**

**A STORY ABOUT  
WORKING TOGETHER  
TO SECURE A  
BETTER FUTURE.**



# EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEAD THE WORLD TO A FUTURE WITHOUT EXTREMISM

In Lanao del Sur, GCERF supported a series of initiatives promoting active citizenry and personal leadership, enhancing understanding of Bangsamoro identity and addressing historical grievances and discrimination which have been drivers of radicalisation.

Mira\* is one of the beneficiaries of this programme. The 16-year-old girl lives in Madalum, a municipality deeply affected by violence, especially during the 2017 military operations against ISIS-affiliated groups. Like many of her peers, Mira's dreams for her future became overshadowed by visions of poverty, malnutrition, abandoned houses, and unfinished roads. Participating gave her new optimism. She connected with other young people facing similar issues but also determined to help their communities.

"This project inspires us youth to participate in building peace and the development of our communities. It helps us understand the value of a peaceful environment, its impact and benefits, thus the need to reduce the presence of violent extremism," she said.

Mira is aware of the challenges ahead, but she is confident that, with the right knowledge and skills, she can play a part in bringing peace to her community.

"Violent extremism, if not addressed today, will only grow and corrupt the peaceful freedom of everyone. This project serves as a platform for me to find my value and identity as a Moro youth and my sense of purpose to my family and community," she said.

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MIRA

This project inspires us youth to participate in **building peace and the development** of our communities.

# WITH A DIFFERENT ENDING

\* not her real name



