




GCERF aims to address the drivers of violent extremism in six districts in Sri Lanka through leveraging activities that **strengthen youth’s resilience against violent extremism**. The programme targets youth (15-29 years), through activities of youth dialogue meetings, youth PVE orientation, youth-local government dialogue meetings, interfaith camp meetings, improvement of livelihood skills and community PVE sensitisation.


Investment Focus

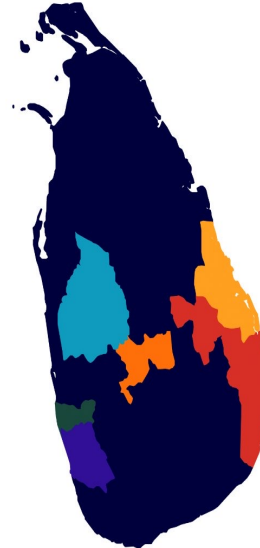
 Focuses on building social cohesion in communities with limited economic opportunities and tension and promoting sense of purpose through strengthening the critical thinking of youth, improving livelihood skills and spreading positive PVE narratives.

Ampara, Batticaloa, Colombo, Kalutara, Kandy, Kurunegala

 Youth (aged 15-29), women, men, girls, and boys

 2021 - 2025

 GCERF in Sri Lanka works with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGO Secretariat, National Intelligence, and the United Nations Country Team.



Current investment

-  Kurunegala
-  Kalutara
-  Colombo
-  Kandy
-  Batticaloa
-  Ampara

Investment started: 2021
Investment to date: USD 1.8 million
Current investment: USD 1.8 million
Active grants: 1

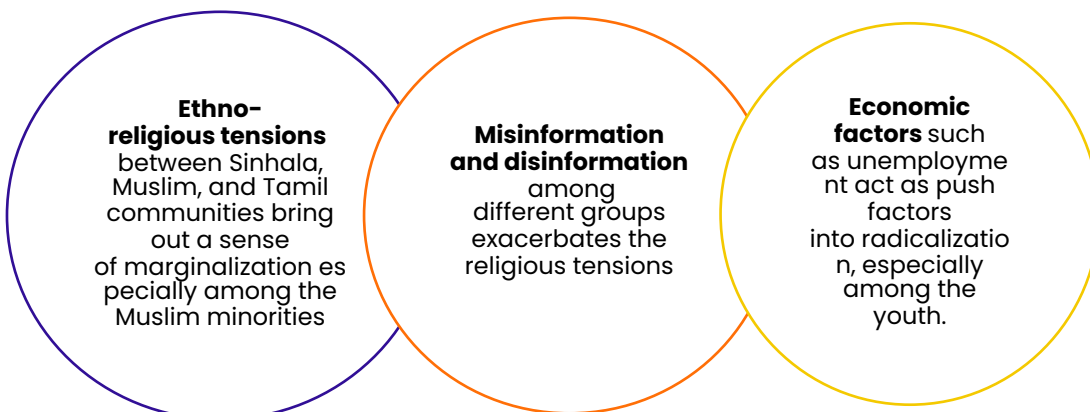
Portfolio overview as of February 2024

Helvetas Sri Lanka

2021-25 | Host organization with 13 sub-recipients

❖ The sub-grants are distributed into various areas, such as at increasing youth engagement with state actors & decision-makers; enhancing critical thinking and improving interaction with students from different backgrounds, promoting youth awareness on PVE and resilience against hate speech and disinformation; and improving livelihoods opportunities for youth.

Violent Extremism in Sri Lanka: Drivers



33rd
On the Global
Terrorism Index
2024

Current Programming: Systems Approach

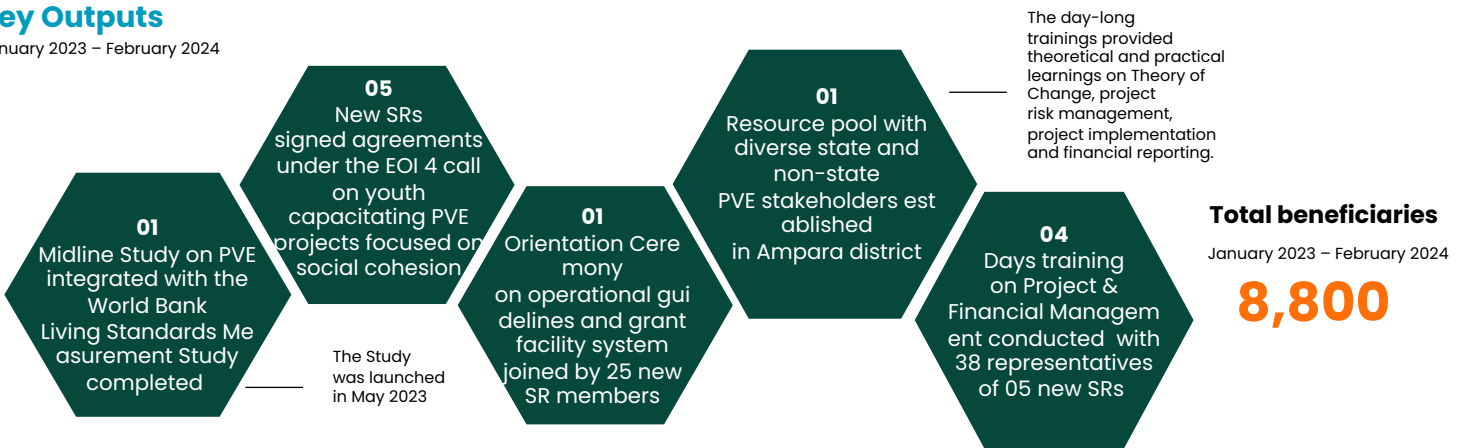
National: Promoting inter-faith/ethnic understanding and strengthening social cohesion to reduce hate speech and clashes among different faith/ethnic communities which drive violent extremism. Promoting youth-led inclusivity and critical thinking initiatives intended to increase youth’s tolerance and sense of purpose will help achieve this end.

Community: Facilitating community cohesion by engaging community stakeholders (youth, women, girls, and boys) in PVE-focused dialogues, engagements, and camps with the buy-in and involvement of religious and local authorities.

Individual: Promoting the individual’s quest for social cohesion and sense of purpose through exposing them to people of diverse backgrounds and training them in PVE, tolerance, and inclusivity.

Key Outputs

January 2023 – February 2024



Key achievements

January 2023 – February 2024

 <p>Helvetas signed grant agreement with 05 new SRs ALSDC, CCPL, GAFSO, LDJF, and LIFT, scaling up and initiating on their previous PVE activities with core component of capacitating youth for PVE advocacy and positive PVE narrative skills.</p>	 <p>In Q4 2023, the completed midline survey assessed factors influencing youth resilience to VE using the BRAVE questionnaire tool. Findings reveal a strong cultural identity and rejection of violence, but distrust in state actors and reluctance to speak out against violence publicly.</p>	 <p>Helvetas SR - Group Action for Social Order (GAFSO) established a diverse resource pool to engage and advocate with the local governmental authorities on the PVE project in Ampara, fostering collaboration and innovation. Positive feedback from the district’s Police chief led to plans for replicating the initiative district-wide, with an inaugural advisory committee meeting in the works.</p>	 <p>The National Youth Consortium convened with the HELVETAS Youth Summit in Colombo, uniting 44 youth representatives from diverse districts, facilitating preparation for provincial engagement in Q1 2024 to advance youth-led initiatives and foster inclusive dialogue on PVE and social cohesion.</p>
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Ashani was a longstanding member-turned-facilitator of the youth forum of Uhana led by the Peace Community Action (PCA):

“ (Previous to the workshop) Mostly I avoided talking with other ethnic people even though I had chance to. However, I had an opportunity to join this programme and gained much knowledge on self-transformation and the impact of violent extremism, which turned my life upside down. My parents are surprised by the positive changes. I hope to transfer the knowledge I gained to my friends, youth and community in my village through whatever avenues available.”

- Ashani

Story of Change – Voices of Unity: Youth Inspiring Change in Sri Lanka

In November 2023, the National Youth Consortium meeting convened in Colombo, alongside the HELVETAS National Youth Summit, fostering a platform for dialogue and collaboration among young leaders from diverse districts across the country. Among the attendees was Amila from Kalutara, a 25-year-old advocate driven by the vision of unity and positive transformation. Reflecting on the experience, Amila expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with peers hailing from regions as distant as the east, south, and central areas of the nation.

"I am so glad to have received this opportunity to meet with my fellow youth from our sister districts," shared Amila. **"For some of us, it's the first time we meet someone from the east or south or central areas of the country. We are united in this cause together to bring unity to this beautiful country, we as youth have so much potential to change our course and the course of this country."** Holding aloft a self-made paper puppet, Amila envisioned puppeteering as a potent tool for advocacy, a creative avenue to engage stakeholders and amplify voices for change.

Similarly, Gagana, a 21-year-old participant from Kandy district, shared his fervent desire to catalyze societal change and overhaul prevailing mindsets. However, his perspective underwent a profound shift during the consortium meeting, as he recognized the imperative of collective action and the celebration of diversity. **"I badly wanted to change this country and our way of thinking and doing. I wanted the systems to change but now I realize we need to come together, celebrating our diversity, because us youth alone cannot be part of this change for a cohesive and peaceful society."**



"Look at the people who have come to this house... We spent days and months working with the youth teaching them coexistence and harmony, and you can see the results. I don't feel alone, my house is full of children and adults of all races and religions. When I came home yesterday, these people had completed all that had to be done for the funeral house! We have done our work well".

- Suresh, a Peacebuilding Skill Training Facilitator of the EMPOWER Project, found solace in the local youths coming together regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity to support him during his wife's funeral.



GCERF's Added Value



GCERF focuses on **building institutional capacity** e.g., CSOs, and government agencies.



GCERF invests in building a PVE-focused **community of practice** with CSOs, government agencies, and experts



Communities are at the **forefront of project design and implementation**, and the programme works with existing community structures for sustainability



All project design and implementation are done in coordination with **nationally-aligned, locally-led programmes**



GCERF connects CSOs, communities, and other stakeholders with government and security actors, leading to **better coordination** and relationships



GCERF's consortium model and capacity-building approach enables us to work in **remote areas**

Find out more about becoming an investor, our work, and the collective impact we make at: www.gcerf.org
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