

GCERF STRATEGY 2026–2029

Reshaping the Agenda to Sustain
Prevention in an Uncertain World



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Foundations for the 2026–2029 Strategy	8
2.1 Lessons from a Decade of Practice	9
Community ownership	9
National responsibility	9
Flexible funding	9
2.2 Evolving Global Context	10
2.3 Shifting Funding Landscape	11
3. Purpose	12
3.1 Vision and Mission	13
Vision	13
Mission	13
3.2 Goals	14
Address grievances between groups	15
Decrease the social legitimacy of violent extremist groups among community members	15
Promote positive alternatives to violent extremism	15
Rebuild trust between communities and the state	15
4. Strategic Plan	16
4.1 Geographical Priorities	16
Pathway to Entry	17
Pathway to Exit	17
4.2 Thematic Priorities	18
4.3 Investment Model	18
Flexible engagement with new partner countries	19
Modular investment cycles	19
Informed sustainability	19

Table of Contents

4.4 Guiding Principles	20
Sustainability	20
Results-Based Management	20
Accountability and Transparency	20
Conflict-Sensitive Programming	20
Comprehensive Risk Management	20
Localisation	20
Whole-of-Society Approach	20
5. Enabling Capacities	22
5.1 Resource mobilisation and diversification	23
Value for money	23
GCERF fills a unique gap	23
P/CVE delivers across donor priorities	23
GCERF generates value for the private sector	23
Community engagement is good governance	23
5.2 Partnerships and global influence	24
Partnerships for financing	24
Partnerships for impact	24
Partnerships for influence	24
5.3 Artificial Intelligence and digital innovation	25
5.4 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	25
5.5 Staff development and organisational culture	26
Our values	26
5.6 Operational accountability and risk management	27
6. Conclusions	28
6.1 About this strategy	29
Effective Partnerships for the Prevention of Violent Extremism	29

Executive Summary

GCERF's Strategy 2026–2029 sets out how we will sustain and strengthen prevention in an increasingly uncertain world. As **the only global fund dedicated to preventing violent extremism**, GCERF enters its second decade with a clear mission, a proven model, and renewed determination to reshape the global agenda – demonstrating through evidence and results that prevention works.



Our purpose is to fund and sustain communities to combat the drivers of violent extremism

and terrorism, supporting community priorities and individuals directly affected. Our vision is that the next generation can inherit a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society.

The consensus on counterterrorism is weakening. State-led security responses are resurgent, resources for prevention are shrinking, and multilateralism is under strain. Yet the local grievances, exclusion, and poor governance that fuel violent extremism are deepening. In this context, prevention is more essential than ever – and GCERF's experience shows that **resilient, engaged communities can resist radicalisation, rebuild trust, and strengthen peace and security.**



Since 2014, GCERF has:



raised and invested over USD **200 million across 25 partner countries**



supported 4 million+ people at risk of radicalisation and recruitment



delivered impact at just **USD 30 per beneficiary**

Built on a lean structure, inclusive governance, and a strong evidence base, GCERF has evolved from start-up to maturity: an agile, credible, and high-performing organisation that delivers **measurable impact at low cost.**

Four goals translate this purpose into action:



addressing issues
between groups
that extremists
exploit



rebuilding trust
between
communities
and the state



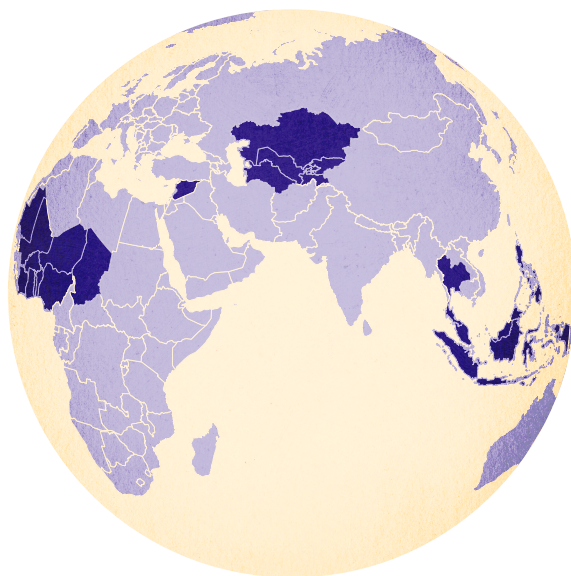
promoting
positive
alternatives to
violent extremism



decreasing the
legitimacy of
extremist groups,
on and offline

The new strategy combines geographical and thematic priorities.

GCERF will maintain engagement in regions such as **the Sahel and Southeast Asia while responding to emerging risks in Central Asia, Syria, and the West African littoral states.** Rehabilitation and reintegration will become a formal thematic priority, alongside growing work on the links between violent extremism, migration, environment, and technology.



GCERF will continue to demonstrate that **prevention is not only possible – it is cost-effective, sustainable, and essential to peace and security.**

Guided by our values, driven by evidence, and grounded in the realities of the communities we serve, we will ensure that the next generation inherits a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society.

A revised investment model

will introduce flexible entry mechanisms, modular investment cycles, and clear pathways to sustainability and national ownership.

Delivery will depend on six enabling capacities:

- diversified resource mobilisation
- strategic partnerships
- digital innovation
- results-based learning
- staff development and organisational culture
- strong operational accountability and risk management



1. Introduction

THE global consensus on counterterrorism is fracturing, with a renewed emphasis on state-led security responses, shrinking resources for prevention, and a weakening of the multilateral system that once provided a platform for dialogue and coordination. As the only international organisation dedicated to preventing violent extremism, GCERF has the responsibility to help reshape this agenda – acknowledging new realities while demonstrating, through evidence, the enduring impact, added value, and necessity of prevention.

This strategy marks GCERF's second decade of operations. Since our establishment in 2014, we have achieved significant results: more than **USD 200 million** raised and invested in local communities across **25 partner countries**, providing better alternatives for over four million people at risk of radicalisation and recruitment – at an average cost of just **USD 30** per beneficiary. These achievements rest on a strong evidence base, robust governance, and a growing global profile.

Over the past decade, GCERF has moved through the three classic stages of organisational development. The start-up stage focused on mobilising funds, building governance and operating models, and establishing our identity. The growth stage was marked by rapid expansion, growing demand, and evolving internal systems. During this period, we concentrated on scaling operations, strengthening our culture, retaining talent, and refining our models.

With this strategy, GCERF enters a stage of maturity – where the challenge is to sustain performance, stand out in a crowded field, and avoid stagnation. This is the moment to identify gaps, reimagine aspects of our business model, and strengthen a culture of adaptability. It is also a time to harness the opportunities and confront the risks presented by emerging technologies. These imperatives are sharpened by a broader shift in the purpose and financing of development and the implications this has for multilateralism.

Over the next four years, we will meet these challenges and help reshape the agenda. Our achievements and learning (**Section 2**) give us a unique base of data and evidence to influence and inform the global discourse and reassert the importance of preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism (P/CVE). In an evolving and less predictable world, GCERF will take the lead in defining long-term geographic and thematic priorities that protect democracy and development from the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. Our purpose

(**Section 3**) remains clear and coherent, responding directly to the growing risk of violent extremism and terrorism, including in the digital space.

This strategy sets out our goals for the next four years (**Section 4**). To guard against complacency, GCERF must proactively pursue new opportunities, review and refine our governance and operating models, and ensure that innovation remains a defining feature of our work.

We will also reshape the agenda internally – by fostering a values-driven culture (**Section 5**) that attracts and retains the best talent worldwide, and by showing how strong values provide a moral compass for impactful performance.

We live in an increasingly extreme and polarised world. GCERF is uniquely positioned to help reshape the global agenda, to sustain prevention and guard against more violent extremist and terrorist outcomes.

Training youth on conflict prevention, social cohesion and inclusion in Ghana. (© RISE, Ghana)



2. Foundations for the 2026–2029 Strategy

THE foundations of this strategy lie in a decade of experience and a rapidly changing world. This section distils the lessons we have learned, examines the evolving global and funding environments, and highlights the trends that will shape how GCERF and our partners can have the greatest impact in the years ahead.

Positive parenting training for inspectors of children's affairs in Kyrgyzstan. (© SOS Children's Village, Kyrgyzstan)



2.1 LESSONS FROM A DECADE OF PRACTICE

Over the last strategic cycle, our portfolio has doubled in size – in both the number of countries we serve and the grants we support. It has also expanded to cover the full spectrum of P/CVE contexts: from active conflict and post-conflict recovery to prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. This growth has raised GCERF's global profile, deepened our experience, and demonstrated the value of scaling up. Our new strategy will build on these lessons while placing greater emphasis on sharing what works with the wider community.

Community ownership

Local communities are at the heart of preventing violent extremism – a point reinforced by the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. They understand what drives recruitment in their own contexts and bring creative ideas for prevention. We have learned that engaging women and youth is essential to detecting early signs of radicalisation. Involving local voices in design, implementation, and evaluation fosters trust, legitimacy, and long-term ownership. Over the last cycle, GCERF has developed a model where grantees co-create their theory of change and indicators from the outset, making programmes both more relevant and sustainable. Our strategic challenge is to extend our reach beyond the communities we can directly engage.

National responsibility

Preventing violent extremism and terrorism requires multi-faceted national strategies, combining government action, community engagement, and policies that address root causes. While GCERF's focus remains on communities, we have learned how our programmes can also influence upstream government actions – for example, by providing platforms for civil society consultations – and downstream individual responsibility, such as training frontline workers and teachers. Our strategic challenge is to embed our community-level support within broader national and regional initiatives and exert influence on governments to assume ultimate responsibility.

Flexible funding

At times over the last four years, GCERF has diverged from the collective intent of a global fund, implementing the specific priorities of our investment partners. Agile operations and creative governance have enabled us to stay true to our mandate and mission. Yet flexible funding remains critical if GCERF is to fulfil its potential and fill the growing gap in community-based P/CVE. It allows us to act proactively, respond swiftly to crises, sustain engagement in contexts that are no longer in the headlines yet remain critically important to preventing violent extremism and terrorism, and address community priorities as well as donor expectations. Our strategic challenge as the global fund mandated to prevent violent extremism and terrorism is to preserve sufficient latitude over our investments in an increasingly constrained and conditional funding environment.

2.2 EVOLVING GLOBAL CONTEXT

The conditions for violent extremism and terrorism are more fertile today than at any time GCERF was established. Yet the system that once contained violence is under strain. Resources are dwindling, multilateralism is faltering, and governments around the world face contradictions and declining credibility in their capacity to respond effectively. Political obstacles restrict engagement in the very places most at risk – Afghanistan, Gaza, Myanmar, northeast Syria, and the Sahel, where the fallout from violent extremism and terrorism is already visible – and will continue to grow, albeit unpredictably. Within societies, fear and uncertainty are rising, and security has become one of citizens' foremost concerns. It is understandable that security-focused counterterrorism is resurgent.

This is precisely why now is the time to sustain and grow GCERF. We are lean and representative, unimpeded by the costs, bureaucracy, and politics of the wider multilateral system, and not over-reliant

on any single donor. We invest directly in communities – addressing the drivers of radicalisation while rebuilding confidence in state institutions through inclusive governance. GCERF has become the leading global actor in preventing violent extremism and terrorism, demonstrating through our impact the value of prevention as a complement to counterterrorism – and to make it more sustainable.

To realise this potential, we must continue to reinforce our added value: driving economies of scale, resisting bureaucracy, lifting political barriers to engagement, and maintaining an unwavering focus on impact.

GCERF's investments are one important reason why, despite growing polarisation and extremism globally, violent extremist and terrorist manifestations have remained limited. As the international system reshapes, it is essential for GCERF to reinforce prevention as a pillar of peace and security.



2.3 SHIFTING FUNDING LANDSCAPE

These global trends also shape the funding environment for prevention. As resources tighten and priorities shift, the challenge for GCERF is to sustain and deepen investment in community resilience within a more competitive and conditional landscape.

At one level, this means reinforcing our decade of impact and future-proofing our model. Our impact is grounded in trusted local relationships and close collaboration with national governments, within a globally recognised monitoring and evaluation framework. We continue to offer outstanding value for money. We must maintain a lean structure, rigorous safeguards, and inclusive governance.

But this will not be enough in the years ahead, as funding directly available to GCERF is likely to become more restricted, conditional, and transactional. We will need to position P/CVE – and GCERF itself – more explicitly as directly relevant to

national interests, particularly in advancing security and de-risking development and investment. We must evolve from a grant-maker to an investment catalyst, making co-funding standard practice, recognising donors now as investment partners, and including partnerships with the private sector. We will document leveraged resources, encourage domestic and diaspora funding and collaboration, and attract financing from development banks, foundations, and the private sector.

We must also demonstrate a clear pathway to national ownership – ensuring that our investments are time-bound, matched by growing national commitments, and supported by credible sustainability pledges.

Building on these foundations, the next section reaffirms GCERF's purpose – why we exist, what drives our work, and how our mission and vision will guide the next four years.



3. Purpose

IN the context of tightening resources, the sensible course is to return to first principles – to remind ourselves why GCERF was created and what makes our contribution distinct – and to moderate expansion. If other organisations do the same, we can envision an ecosystem built on collaboration rather than competition, combining complementary expertise and grounded partnerships.

Unlike many others in this field, GCERF has remained true to its founding mandate: to fund local initiatives that build community resilience against violent extremism. While our reach has expanded – across new geographies and emerging themes, in particular rehabilitation and reintegration – our core function and purpose have remained constant.

As investment partners consolidate and other organisations scale back, GCERF is now recognised as the leading global investor for community-based P/CVE and rehabilitation and reintegration. The evolving global landscape makes this purpose more critical than ever. A decade of learning positions us well to meet this responsibility with renewed ambition, and to shape global policy.

Our vision and mission translate this enduring purpose into a clear and actionable framework for the next four years.

Art campaigns for healing and solidarity in Tunisia.
(© Friguia pour les strategies, Tunisia)



3.1 VISION AND MISSION

Vision

The next generation can inherit and maintain a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society.

This vision reflects GCERF's commitment to long-term change. It emphasises the shared responsibility of communities, governments, and societies to work together to prevent violent extremism, ensuring that future generations inherit resilient, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

Mission

To fund and sustain communities to combat the drivers of violent extremism and terrorism, supporting community priorities and individuals directly affected.

Our mission focuses on empowering local actors to lead solutions tailored to their contexts. By providing sustainable funding and support, GCERF ensures interventions address the root causes of violent extremism and prevent recidivism, while remaining responsive to community needs and priorities – strengthening the capacity of society to prevent radicalisation.

3.2 GOALS

Having reaffirmed our vision and mission, GCERF's understanding of how our funding builds community resilience against violent extremism and terrorism draws on a decade of experience translating principles into practice. This section connects our purpose to our strategy, illustrating how the work we fund generates measurable impact and strengthens long-term resilience.

While the underlying theory remains the same – that engaged and resilient communities can withstand the risks of

radicalisation and recruitment – we have refined the presentation of the four goals our interventions aim to achieve. These goals make explicit their relevance to both preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and to rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R), an emerging thematic priority explored further in **Section 4.2**. In several cases, they also reference the digital domain, an increasingly critical arena for P/CVE and R&R where GCERF is expanding our engagement.

Training on peace education for educators in Tunisia. (© Ifrikiya Centre for Common Ground, Tunisia)





Address grievances between groups

GCERF supports communities to bridge divides and resolve local conflicts, fostering inclusion and participation across groups, and making extremist narratives of protection or revenge less persuasive, including online, where false information fuels polarisation. In R&R contexts, this also means helping mend the social fabric between returnees and their communities, reducing stigma, marginalisation, and the risk of recidivism.



Promote positive alternatives to violent extremism

GCERF invests in social, economic, and ideological opportunities that provide credible and dignified alternatives to joining violent extremist groups. These include livelihood support, civic engagement, and messaging that promotes inclusion – both offline and online. For returnees, such opportunities accelerate reintegration and reduce incentives to engage in violence.



Decrease the social legitimacy of violent extremist groups among community members

GCERF helps communities reject violence as a means to achieve political or social ends, countering extremist influence and narratives – particularly in the digital sphere, where communities increasingly form online and are dispersed. Former members and returnees can be powerful advocates for peace, using their experiences to de-legitimise extremist ideologies and reinforce non-violent norms.



Rebuild trust between communities and the state

GCERF helps establish a more virtuous cycle of service delivery, accountability, and dialogue – removing the grievances that violent extremist groups use to recruit and radicalise. In R&R settings, this includes supporting frontline state institutions and community mechanisms to receive, assist, and reintegrate returnees safely and effectively.

GCERF is committed to ensuring that interventions consistently achieve these goals by adapting approaches to diverse contexts, monitoring effectiveness rigorously, and translating learning into practice across all partner communities. All interventions are guided by a set of core principles – the guardrails for our work – detailed in [Section 4.4](#).

Together these goals and principles form the foundation of our Strategic Plan, guiding GCERF's geographical and thematic priorities and ensuring that resources are deployed for maximum impact and sustained community resilience.

4. Strategic Plan

OUR previous strategic plan focused on community-specific interventions in individual countries, with clearly defined entry and exit criteria. In this strategy, we aim to combine geographical and thematic priorities, consolidating interventions and lessons on shared drivers of radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism and terrorism across diverse contexts. Violent extremism and terrorism transcend boundaries – and so must our strategic response.

This new strategic plan establishes criteria for a more deliberate and principled geographical footprint, identifies current and emerging thematic priorities, proposes refinements to our investment model to implement these priorities, and is guided by a set of core principles that safeguard the quality, relevance, and impact of our interventions.

4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL PRIORITIES

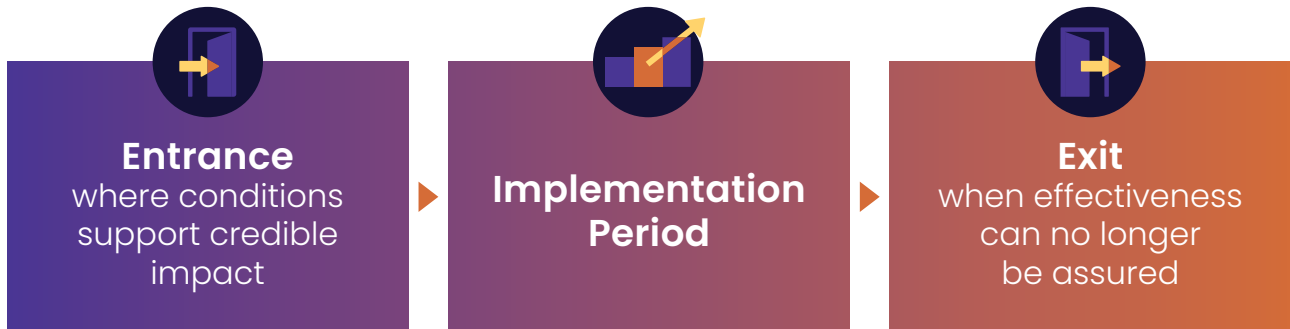
GCERF will maintain a strategic yet adaptive geographical focus. We will continue to engage in regions where significant investments have already been made – **such as the Sahel and Southeast Asia** – while also responding to emerging priorities in areas where the risks of violent extremism and terrorism are escalating and rehabilitation and reintegration are priorities, **including Central Asia, Syria, and the West African littoral states**. This balance between continuity and adaptability reflects both our accumulated experience and our responsibility to address evolving global threats.

As noted in **Section 2.1**, GCERF's geographical footprint has increasingly been shaped by the priorities of our

investment partners through tied funding, rather than by community, national, or regional risks. This has created a supply–demand dilemma: our diverse base of investment partners enables programming across multiple regions, but often not as the result of a deliberate strategic decision. This dynamic risks undermining the principle of sustainability, exposing GCERF to the political pressures that have weakened the multilateral system, and diminishing the strategic role of the Governing Board.

To address this, GCERF will set out clear pathways for entering and exiting partner countries and will endeavour to adhere to these criteria.

Credible and Sustainable Investment



Pathway to Entry

Upon Board approval, we will enter countries where all three of the following are true:

- Relevant authorities are willing to collaborate, providing the basis for an enabling environment.
- There is a realistic funding pipeline for a credible and sustainable investment.
- There is a strategic logic, for example, expanding GCERF's presence across a particular region or thematic to address a growing threat to global security created by violent extremism and terrorism.

As detailed in **Section 4.3**, GCERF's proposed investment model is designed to lower political barriers to entry by introducing a pilot entry year without full membership, creating space to establish the conditions for a full investment.

Pathway to Exit

Upon Board approval, we will cease funding in countries when any of the following are true:

- GCERF can no longer achieve its mandate unimpeded.
- Adequate funding is unavailable over a critical period; or has been replaced by alternative sources including national governments.
- There is empirical evidence that risk of violent extremism is diminished.

During the last strategic period, a grace period was introduced, allowing partner countries to remain Board members for two years after the end of an investment cycle. This fallow period provides flexibility to re-engage if conditions change. It is equally important that communities are not abandoned due to political decisions beyond their control. Accordingly, GCERF will continue to include local organisations in partner countries that have no active investments in our global community of practice (the Global Action Platform), and maintain their eligibility for individual recognition, such as the Carol Bellamy Leadership Award and other micro-grants, or research collaboration. GCERF will also systematically transfer knowledge, data, and capacity to national counterparts, to ensure sustainability and long-term return on investment, and support regional learning and transition frameworks.

Having set the parameters for where GCERF works, the next step is to define what we focus on – the thematic priorities that will drive our impact and learning over the **next four years**.

4.2 THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Over the last four years, GCERF has responded to growing global pressure to evacuate the foreign terrorist fighter camps in northeast Syria – a testament to the agility of our organisation, the value of flexible funding, and a proactive strategic approach. Through this effort, we are establishing the **Global Rehabilitation and Reintegration Mechanism (GRRM)**, integrating pre-departure training in the camps, support for rehabilitation and reintegration in communities of origin, and feedback loops that communicate success stories back to the camps – encouraging further voluntary departures. With its operational focus, the GRRM will help translate political ambitions to evacuate the camps into practical, sustained outcomes over the lifetime of this strategy.

Beyond the camps, GCERF has also supported rehabilitation and reintegration in diverse contexts – including former child soldiers in Yemen, terrorists in the Sahel, and prisoners in Kenya. Our aim now is to consolidate these experiences into a thematic priority on **rehabilitation and reintegration**, formally integrating this work

within the P/CVE field, validating a dedicated theory of change, and sharing lessons to inform good practice and policy.

Across our global portfolio, other recurring themes are emerging – notably, the effects of **climate stress as a driver of instability**, the interactions between violent extremism, **migration, and displacement**, and the **role of emerging technologies**. During the lifetime of this strategy or beyond, these may also evolve into thematic priorities, informed by our field-building experience in rehabilitation and reintegration.

These thematic priorities will reinforce country-level impact by enabling targeted sharing of experiences across contexts. They will promote the integration of P/CVE within broader global peace and security agendas, position GCERF to respond to emerging challenges, and develop specialised expertise where gaps exist.

Across all themes, GCERF will integrate the perspectives of women, men and young people to ensure interventions reflect the realities of those most affected by violent extremism.

4.3 INVESTMENT MODEL

To fully realise the potential of this strategy, GCERF will adopt a revised investment model that allows for more flexible engagement with partner countries, firmer foundations for launching new investments, and a more iterative approach informed by empirical evidence and learning. The model will strengthen GCERF's ability to align strategic intent with operational realities,

while preserving the principles of national ownership, sustainability, and accountability. We will explore, in line with our mandate, the potential to fund local authorities in addition to community-based organisations, promoting more comprehensive local implementation of national priorities and commitments.

The new investment model has **three main hallmarks:**¹

Flexible engagement with new partner countries

GCERF will introduce a more adaptable approach to engagement, based on Board pre-approval and initially without conferring Board representation, for a period of up to one year. This will lower barriers to working in politically sensitive contexts, open the option to programme in countries that are not ODA-eligible, and allow GCERF to test feasibility before committing to a full investment cycle. It will also enable time-bound interventions in response to specific requests – for example, the rehabilitation and reintegration of a defined group of returnees from the camps in northeast Syria.

Informed sustainability

In some contexts, a seventh year will serve as a transition to full national ownership and withdrawal of GCERF support. In others, the modular cycle will restart, ensuring regular checkpoints for assessing progress and identifying opportunities for exit or renewed investment.

This revised investment model will be underpinned by GCERF's guiding principles, ensuring that flexibility and innovation are always matched by national ownership, accountability, transparency, and alignment with our core values.

Modular investment cycles

A new modular design will structure engagement in phases as appropriate. In new partner countries, the first year will focus on establishing the conditions for investment – including political commitment, financial readiness, and clear geographical and thematic targets. This will be followed by two years of full investment, and up to one year for evaluation and learning, which will inform a potential second two-year phase where results justify continued engagement. For existing partner countries, this assessment will take place at the end of the current investment round.



¹ The full revised investment model will be presented in operational detail to the Board for approval.

4.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As GCERF expands its geographical reach, consolidates thematic priorities, and adopts a more agile investment model, our work must remain firmly anchored in a set of guiding principles. These principles provide the guard-rails for implementation – ensuring that as we evolve, we stay true to our mandate, uphold our values, and deliver impact responsibly and effectively.

Sustainability

We prioritise investments that build grantee, local and national capacity to sustain results over time. This means promoting government and community ownership, efficient use of resources, and long-term resilience once GCERF support concludes.

Results-Based Management

Our decisions are guided by evidence and measurable results. We focus on learning, accountability, and effectiveness – ensuring that every investment delivers tangible returns and contributes to our collective mission.

Accountability and Transparency

We are accountable to the communities we serve and to the partners and donors who support us. We ensure transparency in our processes and decision-making, and we continually review and adapt our approach to maintain integrity and trust.

Conflict-Sensitive Programming

All our interventions are designed and implemented with careful attention to context. We work to avoid exacerbating tensions and to contribute instead to peace, dialogue, and social cohesion.

Comprehensive Risk Management

We take a proactive and systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks across all our operations. Strong risk management enables GCERF to anticipate challenges, protect our investments, and remain effective in complex and changing environments.

Localisation

We work through and with local communities to ensure that our programmes are relevant, context-sensitive, and sustainable. We recognise that inclusive participation – involving women, men and youth – enhances legitimacy, effectiveness, and sustainability. By empowering local partners to design and lead solutions, we strengthen ownership and ensure that progress endures beyond our direct support.

Whole-of-Society Approach

We promote a collaborative method for tackling complex problems by engaging diverse actors – women and men, youth and elders, civil society, the private sector and government, to strengthen cohesion, trust, and shared responsibility for preventing violent extremism and terrorism.

Building on these principles, the next section outlines the organisational capacities and systems that will enable GCERF to deliver on this strategy effectively and sustainably.

Youth, community members, and Kenya Defence Forces officers come together for a friendly match in Kenya.
(© Action Life Kenya, Kenya)



5. Enabling Capacities

DELIVERING this strategy depends on a set of enabling capacities that connect ambition with implementation. Financing remains the most critical enabler – and the one over which GCERF has the least direct control – but our success will equally depend on how effectively we mobilise partnerships, harness digital innovation, learn from evidence, invest in our people, and uphold the highest standards of accountability and integrity. Together, these capacities ensure that GCERF can continue to deliver tangible impact in complex environments, adapt to change, and remain a trusted partner in the global effort to prevent violent extremism.

Regional Community of Practice in the Sahel convened to share good practices and lessons learned. (© Agence Technique pour l'Action Humanitaire et Sociale (ATAHS), Chad)



5.1 RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND DIVERSIFICATION

In an increasingly competitive and conditional funding environment, GCERF will make a systematic and evidence-based case for investment, built on five key arguments and reinforced through a regular political replenishment cycle:



Value for money

GCERF delivers value for money by investing directly in local organisations that

achieve measurable impact at low cost. Our lean Secretariat, pooled funding model, and co-funding arrangements ensure that every donor contribution leverages additional resources and reaches those most at risk of violent extremism.



GCERF generates value for the private sector

By building social cohesion and trust in fragile settings – including those affected by extractive industries – GCERF helps foster the local stability on which sustainable investment depends.



GCERF fills a unique gap

As funding for community-level P/CVE

contracts, few organisations remain active at this scale. GCERF has the experience, reach, and credibility to fill this gap effectively.



Community engagement is good governance

GCERF's model aligns with the priorities of development banks and institutional investors, demonstrating that locally-owned prevention contributes to inclusive growth and social stability.



P/CVE delivers across donor priorities

It strengthens and legitimises counterterrorism, enhances national and global security, de-risks investment, supports national and regional development plans, and reinforces efforts in migration management, climate action, and the prevention of organised crime.

Sustained and diversified investment will provide the foundation for every other enabling capacity set out in this section.

5.2 PARTNERSHIPS AND GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Much of GCERF's influence during the last strategy period has been built through partnerships. Our Board provides a unique global forum bringing together investment partners, partner countries, civil society, the private sector, and experts, for example, through the Independent Review Panel. Our national country support mechanisms (CSMs) convene and build consensus among diverse national stakeholders, while our Global Action Platform (GAP) enables communities and relevant stakeholders in different contexts to exchange lessons and experiences.

While maintaining this spirit of collaboration, the next strategy period calls for partnerships that are directly mobilised toward achieving GCERF's strategic goals and are credible and complementary. Over the next four years, partnerships will serve three main purposes: to position GCERF within existing and emerging funding streams, to extend and deepen our policy impact, and to promote prevention as a core pillar of counterterrorism.

We already have Memorandums of Understanding with some of the most relevant partners, which we are actively implementing. Others are represented within International Geneva, where GCERF plays a distinct role in connecting the prevention agenda to both the security and development communities. Our ambition should be to become the prevention/PVE 'pillar' in global and regional military and security coalitions.



Partnerships for financing

It will engage development banks, the private sector, and philanthropic foundations.



Partnerships for impact

It will involve specialised agencies, research institutions, and think tanks, and leverage GCERF's unique empirical evidence-base, informing global policy and practice.



Partnerships for influence

It will focus on actors able to shape global agendas and create favourable conditions for prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

5.3 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL INNOVATION

Digital technology – and especially artificial intelligence (AI) – is transforming how governments, societies, and organisations operate, including how violent extremists and terrorists act. For GCERF, work in the digital space is essential to adapting to these changes and fulfilling our mandate.

Over the next four years, GCERF has two main priorities in this domain. The first is internal: we will incorporate digital technologies, particularly AI, to simplify, automate, and scale our internal systems, strengthen operational capacity, and maintain a competitive edge. It will be important to balance innovation with ethical considerations and ensure our team is equipped with the necessary skills.

The second is external: to translate digital advances into tangible improvements in programming and learning. We will invest in grants where AI is a core component, supporting GCERF partner countries to harness these technologies. We will also invest in developing critical defence skills among users to protect themselves and communities from malicious use for radicalisation. We will also capture and share lessons learned among partners and across the broader P/CVE field, ensuring that digital innovation strengthens our collective impact.

Harnessing digital innovation will also strengthen the systems that underpin our learning, accountability, and performance.

5.4 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Over the past four years, GCERF has invested significant attention and resources in strengthening its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Measuring progress in preventing violent extremism is complex, yet GCERF has built a more robust system, demonstrated tangible results, and increasingly focused on outcomes rather than outputs – an evolution noted positively in multiple external evaluations.

The next step is to deepen our focus on outcomes and impact, ensuring that GCERF applies the best possible methodologies to understand achievements, shortcomings, and lessons learned, and to use these insights to refine future investments. In practice, this means moving towards a more standardised set of metrics on outcomes and impact, improved data collection methods, streamlined reporting systems (including through digitalisation and AI),

and more advanced evaluation techniques. It also means embedding learning more deliberately into programme design and adaptation, facilitated through the new investment model.

Our aim is that, by the end of this strategic cycle, GCERF's M&E system will be simpler for grantees to use, more reliable in assessing project results and impact, and better able to generate timely, actionable insights for GCERF and the wider P/CVE community.

A stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning framework will also reinforce GCERF's culture of performance, improvement, and shared learning across the organisation.

5.5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

GCERF is, above all, a values-driven organisation. Our team has shown resilience and commitment in navigating the turbulence of the current funding environment – supporting one another as colleagues, collaborators, and companions. As we enter our second decade, we have refined our values to make them more action-oriented and to reflect the kind of workplace culture we want to nurture: one where everyone feels valued, empowered, and inspired to make a difference. In an often-unkind world, we believe that kindness is a strength – a foundation for collaboration, respect, and impact.

Our values

- 1. Make a difference*

- 2. Achieve together*

- 3. Uphold integrity*

- 4. Respect yourself and others*

- 5. Learn and improve*

- 6. Be kind*



In the coming years, we will strive to deepen our commitment to staff development and organisational learning to continue to attract, retain, and grow exceptional talent. We will promote a culture that is entrepreneurial, adaptive, and confident in taking calculated risks – encouraging innovation while maintaining accountability. This means providing space for experimentation, supporting professional growth through mentoring and learning opportunities, and recognising initiative and creativity.

We will also strengthen internal collaboration, ensuring that teams across the Secretariat work cohesively and share knowledge effectively. By aligning individual performance goals with organisational

priorities, we will build a culture of shared purpose and mutual accountability. Our commitment is to an organisation that is not only values-driven, but also dynamic, curious, and bold – one that learns continuously, takes informed risks, and leads by example in how we work together to deliver lasting impact.

By investing in our people and nurturing a culture of integrity, innovation, and shared purpose, GCERF strengthens the foundation that enables us to deliver lasting impact across all areas of our work. Ultimately, GCERF's impact depends on the people who make it possible – a team that embodies our values and drives innovation and integrity every day.

5.6 OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

As an organisation committed to meaningful and sustainable impact, GCERF recognises that operational accountability and risk management are essential to the integrity, effectiveness, and credibility of our work. In this strategy, we reaffirm these as core operational principles – not merely compliance requirements, but strategic enablers that help us deliver results responsibly, ethically, and sustainably. They guide our internal processes, shape our partnerships, and ensure we fulfil our mission with integrity and resilience.

We will continue to deliver and report on results transparently, defining clear roles and responsibilities, using key performance indicators to track progress, and learning from both successes and failures. All decisions and operations will align with our values, policies, ethical principles, and legal obligations.

We will further strengthen our risk management approach by systematically identifying, assessing, and mitigating operational, financial, reputational, and programmatic risks that could affect our objectives. Regular monitoring of the risk environment will enable timely adaptation and informed decision-making. We will also ensure that stakeholders understand our key risks and the controls in place to manage them. Together, these efforts will foster a culture of reliability, integrity, and transparency across the organisation.

6. Conclusions

BUILDING on the lessons learned from the previous strategic cycle, this strategy identifies three key challenges for GCERF in the years ahead: to extend our reach with limited resources, to promote national responsibility, and to preserve the flexibility of our funding model (**Section 2**). Fully aware of the changing funding environment, this strategy sets out how we will meet these challenges to sustain GCERF’s impact and relevance.

We will extend our reach by lowering eligibility barriers for new partner countries, supporting former partner countries and communities, strengthening strategic partnerships, and sharing our experience and expertise as a global public good. We will promote national ownership through more deliberate engagement at the outset of each new partnership, a modular investment cycle with built-in review points, and clear pathways to sustainability and transition. And we will demonstrate our value by accelerating co-funding, cultivating public–private partnerships, and reinforcing the case for prevention as smart investment.

Looking forward, GCERF will continue to evolve as the global fund for community-based prevention of violent extremism – combining the agility of a lean organisation with the legitimacy of a global partnership. We will remain guided by our values, driven by evidence, and grounded in the realities of the communities we serve. Together with our investment partners, partners, and grantees, we can reshape the global agenda – using results-based advocacy to advance prevention as a pillar of peace and security and ensuring that the next generation inherits a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society.

Community dialogue for peacebuilding in Kenya.
(© Action Life Kenya, Kenya)



6.1 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This strategy draws on extensive consultation across diverse partners and perspectives – including those of women, men and young people working on the frontlines of prevention. We have engaged our Board, the entire Secretariat, partner governments, investment partners, civil society organisations, and independent experts to ensure that it builds on a decade of learning and responds to the realities of today's global environment.

The process has been both inclusive and adaptive – shaped in real time by shifts in the funding landscape, evolving multilateral priorities, and emerging geopolitical and

security challenges. The strategy reflects the shared commitment of GCERF's partners to sustain prevention, strengthen impact, and continue to innovate in the face of change.

In combining continuity with renewal, the 2026–2029 Strategy reaffirms GCERF's founding purpose while equipping the organisation to deliver lasting results in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

We extend our gratitude to all those who contributed their time, insights, and expertise to this process – a collective effort that embodies the principles of partnership and resilience that underpin our mission.

Effective Partnerships for the Prevention of Violent Extremism

GCERF works with partners who share a commitment to effectiveness, selectivity, and responsible engagement. We focus our support where conditions enable credible impact, and we take deliberate decisions on when to enter, implement, and exit in order to safeguard resources and results.


Organisations interested in understanding how this strategic approach informs GCERF's partnerships may request a partnership alignment conversation to explore whether and where collaboration could be appropriate.



Request a
Partnership
Alignment
Conversation



The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of GCERF and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the organisations and individuals named herein.

 Geneva, Switzerland

 info@gcerf.org