

# Kenya



**Investment to date: USD 5,428,000**

**Investment started: 2018**

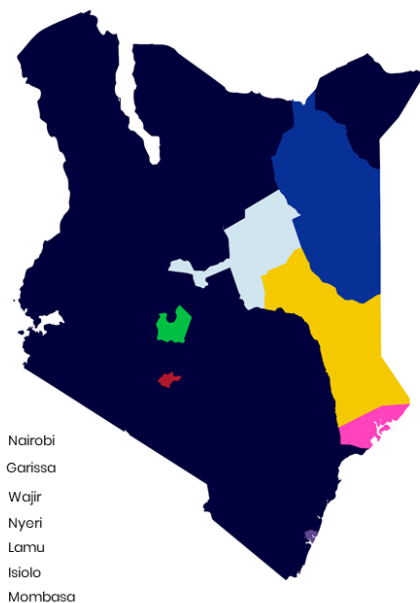
**Grant process underway for final funding round**

## Drivers of Violent Extremism

We have identified the below key drivers of violent extremism in Kenya:

- **Lack of socio-economic opportunities:** with a youth unemployment rate of 18% in 2019, many young people feel hopeless about achieving social mobility and a tolerable standard of living, making them susceptible to material incentives offered by violent extremist groups, as well as grievance narratives
- **Injustice, discrimination, and marginalisation:** The perception of historical injustices and the feeling of marginalisation among religious and minority groups in Kenya, have provided fertile ground for recruitment
- **Relationship with police:** Systemic distrust between law enforcement and its citizens, as well as civil society has created space for VE organisations to use a victimisation narrative.

These drivers were identified through a Country Needs Assessment, which was reviewed and updated in November 2020 to include the results of extensive consultations with government, local stakeholders, and GCERF's local partners.



## GCERF in Kenya

GCERF has completed two rounds of funding in Kenya: one through its core funding mechanism (long-term grants which ran 2018-2021) and another through its accelerated funding mechanism (short-term grants which ran 2019-2020). GCERF has now approved a strategy that will aim at transitioning out of Kenya in the next three years. The strategy focuses on ensuring government and CSO ownership and capacity, and the sustainability of institutional structures, in particular Community Engagement Fora (CEF). GCERF is working closely with the government of Kenya, in particular the National Counter Terrorism Center to support these local structures to become more sustainable, as well as implement key pillars of county action plans. GCERF expects the government to fully take over funding at least in GCERF target locations upon the conclusion of GCERF's support. GCERF also coordinates with in-country donors and local stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to preventing violent extremism in Kenya. **Grantmaking is currently underway, and key focus areas include:**

- Promoting socio-economic opportunities through involvement of private sector representatives on the CEF
- Trauma therapy for VE survivors
- Improving relations between security actors and communities through dialogue and local platforms
- Strengthening the role and engagement of women in the CEF and in security mechanisms
- Social cohesion events and extracurricular activities for vulnerable youth with sensitisation on P/CVE.

This programming complements **previous rounds of funding** in Kenya. Key activities are summarised below.

- Held interfaith dialogues between religious leaders
- Created Station Youth Liaison Officers to foster trust between youth and police
- Strengthened relations between communities and the security sector through trainings and dialogues
- Trained women and selected youth in entrepreneurship and provided access to microfinance
- Brought women together to discuss preventing violent extremism in their communities
- Established community peace watch groups to alert appropriate actors to early signs of radicalisation
- Conducted capacity building for Community Engagement Fora in 3 counties
- Connected youth with respected community mentors to play a leadership role in resolving conflicts
- Supported families to prevent violent extremism through positive parenting and conflict resolution.

# Results



**Total direct beneficiaries: 678,348**

**Total indirect beneficiaries: 798,443**

**Main leverage points: social cohesion, sense of purpose**

## Key Outputs (Final data not yet available)

- 101,676 participants in awareness-raising activities
- 61,512 local government actors or other stakeholders participated in capacity-building activities
- 33,646 participants in community policing, watch groups, or early warning activities
- 4,821 beneficiaries of counselling, psychosocial support, and reintegration activities
- 38,167 people used conflict resolution mechanisms
- 11,329 people benefitted from entrepreneurship training and support
- 17,089 participants in leadership training
- 8,767 participants in life skills training, including development of critical thinking and conflict resolution skills
- 3,136 participants in town hall and advocacy meetings

## STORY OF CHANGE: PREVENTING RECRUITMENT

Mama Mwaka resides in Likoni, Mombasa County. She is 50 years old and was a participant in a GCERF-funded programme which provided safe spaces for women to overcome trauma, and sensitised them on PVE, including recruitment strategies of VE groups. Mama Mwaka was selected because she was a victim of extremism. In 2014, Al-Shabaab bombed Likoni church after which Muslim men in the area, including her son, were arrested and harassed. She was also harassed. She located her son in prison in Mombasa ten months after he disappeared.

One day, Mama Mwaka overheard her friend Riziki mentioning that her son, Abdul, had gotten a job in Lamu and was expected to bring his documents to the recruiters the following day before travelling to Lamu. Mama Mwaka informed Riziki and other women about how youth are being recruited to extremism and Al-Shabaab through such job offers, which she learned in the trainings. Mama Mwaka asked Riziki if she could accompany Abdul the next day to ascertain if the job was legitimate. When Mama Mwaka asked Abdul for details, he told her that someone at the mosque had approached him about the job and directed him to the recruiting place. Mama Mwaka talked to Abdul and educated him about recruitment and radicalisation and he agreed that she should accompany him. When they arrived, Abdul noticed that the people were different to the ones he had previously met. Mama Mwaka started to ask the men questions about the job and noticed that they were hesitant to answer. The men started making phone calls, then disappeared into a taxi and left. Mama Mwaka warned the other youth present that they were possibly being recruited into Al-Shabaab and took the youth to the police station where they explained the situation. The police investigated and scouted the place to see if the people would resurface but they never did. Today, Mama Mwaka continues to talk to mothers, young men, and girls in her area about the dangers of recruiters.

## STAKEHOLDER TESTIMONY

**GCERF provides funding for staff and running costs to local, credible organisations, which gives them the flexibility to respond to conflicts as they arise.**

"With the assistance from [GCERF's local partner], we peacefully resolved conflicts regarding constructing this church within a predominantly Muslim community. [GCERF's local partner] assisted in calming tensions between religious leaders, and now we are received and perceived well in Hongwe. This will go a long way in proving that Muslims and Christians can live together happily and in peace."

- Pastor of a Pentecostal church, Hongwe in Lamu County

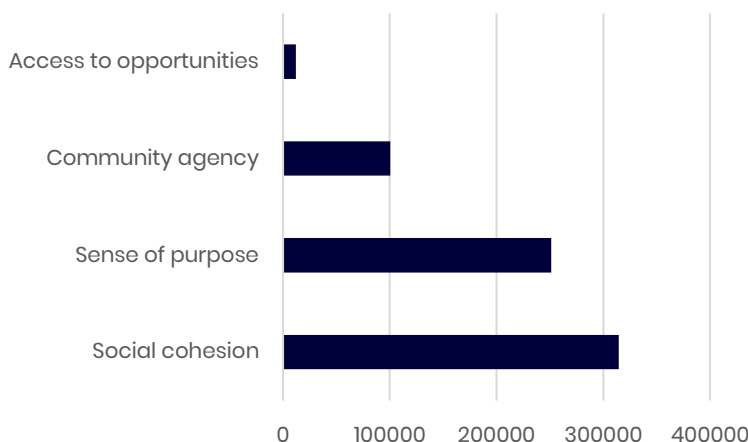


Figure 1: Total beneficiaries by focus area 2018–2021



# Case Study: Station Youth Liaison Officers

## Improving Relations between Vulnerable Youth and Police

In the wake of the COVID -19 pandemic, a host of political, social, and economic issues emerged, challenging the resilience levels of vulnerable populations. One of the most affected population groups in Kamukunji Sub-County, where SOWED Kenya was implementing a GCERF-funded programme, is **youth living in informal settlements**. The impact of the pandemic, and especially the way the government enforced containment measures such as the dusk to dawn curfew, **increased confrontations between police and youth**. Youth accused police of extortion, looting, beating, and unfair targeting. This strained an already **poor police-youth relationship**, which has been identified as an important driver for youth joining violent extremist groups.

In July 2020, youth leaders trained by the programme noted this worrisome trend and approached SOWED Kenya to intervene. SOWED convened an **open-air dialogue at the Shauri Moyo police station**. The dialogue brought together 22 youth, government stakeholders, and 14 police officers drawn from different departments. During the meeting, both youth and police described a relationship of mutual suspicion and a lack of trust. During the dialogue, **youth requested the establishment of a youth department in police stations** dedicated to youth affairs. This is how the concept of the Station Youth Liaison Officers (SYLO) was created. Since then, the SYLO programme has shown promising results in restoring the relationship between police and youth. SYLOs are young officers trained in community policing approaches who are responsible for handling youth affairs within a police station. They are both youth case managers and advocates within the station. At the end of the programme, there were five SYLOs in two police stations. They attend to youth security-related issues within and outside of the police stations with a youth-friendly approach, therefore **mediating the conflict between the youth and police**. Working from the community policing model, they engage youth in relationship- and trust-building activities, including tree planting, station beautification, case and information management, periodic dialogue, mentorship, environmental clean-up, and sporting activities. One of the stations (Buruburu) has gone further to embrace the concept of a youth-friendly police station. The station has installed Wi-Fi, retrained officers on youth-friendly approaches, and established linkages and a roster with 19 local youth groups to support the station in beautification activities.

The programme has been remarkably well received, with three police Directorates (Directorate of CVE and Organised Crime; Directorate of Reforms; and Directorate of Gender and Community Policing) requesting to join the **Memorandum of Understanding between SOWED Kenya and the National Police Service in the national roll-out of SYLO**. The concept also caught the attention of the State Department for Youth Affairs, Reinvent Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) Safer Cities Programme who have engaged SOWED Kenya in several consultative meetings with a focus on the future of SYLO in relation to the implementation of the Kenya Youth Development Policy 2019. The concept is improving public perceptions of police, especially amongst youth, and is contributing to the improvement of service delivery as well as police accountability. The National Police Service, through the Directorate of Organised Crime and Violent Extremism, has already identified 11 counties earmarked for the first phase of the national roll-out of the SYLO programme in 2021.

### GOVERNMENT TESTIMONY

"I can assure you that you guys have made a real impact here. The inclusion of the community and the administration has led to an enhanced partnership between the two and a good example is the meeting we had in Shauri Moyo that resulted in the youth liaison office being established at the police station. **This project is different, and it is what we need.**"

- Senior Chief in national government administration in Kamukunji

### COMMUNITY TESTIMONY

"Youths now interact freely with the police officers through organised dialogue sessions where **gaps between police and youth are addressed**, creating a crime free environment."

- Ezekiel Kamauwathaka, 27, Youth from Shauri Moyo area, about the results of SOWED's police-youth programming.

# Round 1 Results



GCERF commissioned an independent evaluation of its Kenya portfolio in 2020, which looked at two partners from the Core Funding Mechanism (Kenya Red Cross Society – KRCS, and I Choose Life Africa – ICL) and one from the Accelerated Funding Mechanism (African Child Development Organisation – ACDO), using OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

## Independent Evaluation Findings

- **Relevance:** The three grant activities were all reviewed as relevant because they **target the correct populations, consider local needs, and are designed in line with Kenya's National Strategy** to Counter Violent Extremism.
- **Effectiveness:** The evaluators cited multiple examples of success, even before the end of the programmes. Examples cited included:
  - After KRCS formed three Community Peace Watch (CPW) groups, the **beneficiaries asked to expand the CPWs to a further five hotspots**. The programme also **successfully built upon current peace and security initiatives**, selecting members of community policing groups to join its CPW groups. Qualitative data showed evidence that activities have **improved the relationship between the community and security actors** in Masarani subcounty in Garissa.
  - ICL's training with 600 youth was assessed as **strategically efficient and powerful**. This is particularly because under the approach, each change agent **must pass the acquired information on to a minimum of ten other people** in order to prove their changed attitude. Focus Group Discussions with participants in Garissa and Nairobi confirmed that they had passed the message to 10 peers.
  - ICL's programme in Nairobi successfully helped form an association made up of over 200 churches, **creating an effective mechanism to reach out to and address youth at-risk**. ICL also used the same approach with an association of mosques. Since March 2020, both associations have been meeting regularly and **jointly spearhead community dialogues and initiatives**.
  - ACDO **successfully facilitated a Garissa County Action Plan reformulation process in a conflict sensitive manner**. All 25 CEF respondents reported that GCERF's assistance was critical in bringing CSOs and security actors together to address security issues through the CEF structure.
- **Efficiency:** Overall, the findings confirmed that the GCERF programme has been relatively efficient, with a lean core project team per grantee.
- **Sustainability:** The evaluation team found that almost all the activities had a **participatory approach and gender sensitivity is taken seriously**, which bodes well for sustainability of impact. While there were challenges, such as regular transfers of government officials and civil servants (including police), the evaluators found that this movement also has the potential to expand the reach of the programme to other regions. Moreover, the evaluators found that a key factor for sustainability of GCERF programmes in the area is through the creation of synergy between old and new PVE actors and actors that have been working in these communities in related-fields but are now starting to work on PVE. However, the macro political instability and lack of safety represent great challenges for the impact and sustainability of the projects.

## AIMS OF EVALUATED GRANTS

1. **KRCS:** building trust between youth and security sector, establishing Community Peace Watch Groups
2. **ICL:** behavioural change of youth, reducing vulnerability to VE
3. **ACDO:** coordinating the implementation of the Garissa County Action Plan through its Community Engagement Forum

## COMMUNITY TESTIMONY

"I am a member of the Community Engagement Forum and have regularly attended meetings since early 2019. I can see that the meetings and discussions became more active and inclusive; it's my first time to see security actors on board."

- Community Engagement Forum member in an area of ACDO intervention

## COMMUNITY TESTIMONY

"We (in Wajir county) need the same support that ACDO is providing in Garissa. The ACDO project's concerted effort to improve the relationship between the communities and authorities is a project that needs to be duplicated in our county as well."

- CEF member in Wajir county

## GCERF

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

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