

# The Sahel

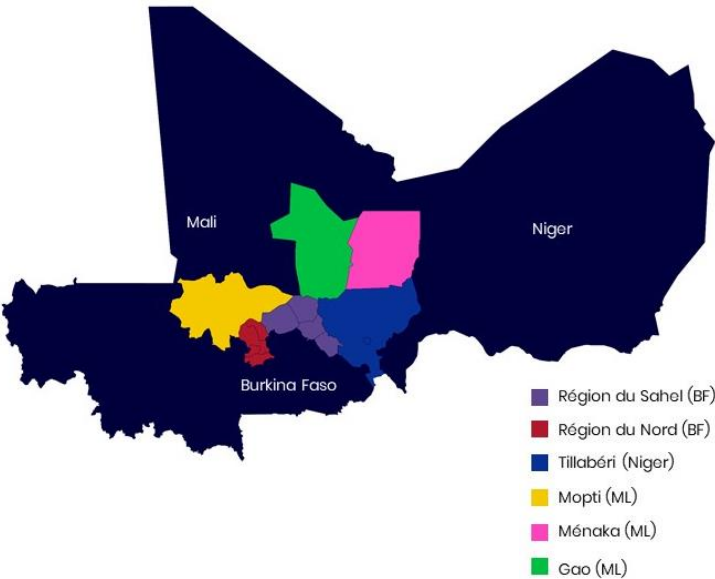


Investment to date: USD 12,726,000  
Investment started: 2016  
Current investment: USD 8,350,000  
Current round: 2022–2024

## Drivers of Violent Extremism

The main drivers of violent extremism identified by GCERF, through Needs Assessments’ and information from local partners are:

- **Youth unemployment**, which leaves youth vulnerable to material incentives from violent extremist groups
- **Farmer/herder conflicts**, which create tensions and a sense of insecurity that is exploited by VE groups, who prey on community fears and provide protection in exchange for loyalty
- **Governance-related grievances**, which make communities receptive to narratives of injustice and offers of security from violent extremist groups.



## GCERF in The Sahel

GCERF started investing in Mali in 2016. Due to the increasingly regional nature of the violent extremism phenomenon, GCERF developed a regional strategy for the Sahel, expanding to Burkina Faso and Niger. Programming for this started in 2022. GCERF works with both national governments and the G5 Sahel to implement national action plans and joint strategies by investing in local organisations who design and run programmes that contribute to prevention-related outputs of the plans.

## Portfolio Overview as of February 2022

	Funding since	No of CSOs	Focus populations	Key activities
Mali				
Think Peace (2 grants)	2020	3	Youth, prisoners, ex-combatants	Conflict resolution structures, reintegration of detainees and ex-combatants, local PVE action plans; emergency programme
Action Mopti	2020	4	Talibés, community leaders, local authorities	Training youth ambassadors and local leaders on PVE, community dialogues, economic empowerment
AMSS	2017	4	Community members, leaders	Creation of social cohesion mechanisms; training youth on PVE; training leaders on identifying at-risk youth
ENDA	2016	2	Children, youth, teachers	Enrolling children in formal education; training and IGPs for young people; training teachers, religious leaders on PVE
ICD-Mali	2022	2	Pastoralists, youth, women	Improving pastoral resilience through infrastructure investment, local management mechanisms for natural resources and conflicts, establishment of a credit and savings collective
Burkina Faso				
UFC-Dori	2022	2	Farmers and herders, VE victims, youth	Local conflict prevention and dialogue mechanisms, improved awareness of land regulations among communities, psychosocial support to victims of VE groups
Réseau Afrique Jeunesse	2022	3	Young pastoralists, IDPs	Improving the management of natural resources to reduce local conflicts; strengthening local conflict resolution mechanisms

# Results



**Total direct beneficiaries: 237,708**  
**Total indirect beneficiaries: 3,040,000**  
**Main leverage point: social cohesion**

## Key Outputs

### Rounds 1&2 (final data):

- 20 early warning mechanisms established
- 217 interfaith, intercommunity, or intergenerational consultation frameworks established
- 40,311 people participated in PVE prevention initiatives
- 6,581 people received economic or material support for livelihoods
- 22,284 participated in awareness raising activities
- 280 people trained in leadership skills and conflict resolution
- 2,885 people trained on PVE, conflict sensitivity, and critical thinking
- 2,355 people trained on vocational skills
- 13 advocacy meetings
- 327 media programmes developed and disseminated

### Round 3 progress so far (final data not yet available):

- 9,974 participants in awareness-raising events
- 1,235 beneficiaries of civic education and public debates
- 1,183 participants in intercommunity dialogues
- 3,457 people have used conflict resolution mechanisms
- 785 have participated in cultural and sports activities
- 12,578 beneficiaries of entrepreneurship training or support
- 540 participants in town hall meetings or advocacy initiatives
- 1600 children enrolled in formal education and regularly monitored and supported

### PARTNER TESTIMONY: COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

"The communities steer the projects. In one commune, we don't pay to rent the room because the communities decided to give it to us for free, even though they make us pay for it for other projects. They say that with the GCERF project, it's us who lead the activities, it's something that we started so we don't have to pay."

- Abdoul Kassim Fomba, Think Peace. GCERF partner since 2020

## Community Ownership: A Model for Insecure Contexts

As attested to above, GCERF grants in Mali have achieved a remarkable level of community ownership. This has fostered wider mobilisation and partnership with the private sector, reducing project costs and increasing prospects for sustainability. In Kayes, for example, 7 town halls were offered 2 hectares of land each to support the implementation of the project's socio-economic activities. Community ownership has also enabled the implementation of activities in a difficult security context, because outsiders do not have to travel to communities to implement activities. This has meant that activities have been able to continue even when roads are closed due to insecurity and weather conditions.

### PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY

42 participatory diagnostic sessions engaged 583 participants (43% women). The activities brought members of the community together to identify factors preventing the meaningful participation of women and youth in local decision-making bodies, and local drivers of violent extremism.

**"I am learning for the first time, through this participatory diagnostics workshop, that a citizen has the right to challenge an elected local official on the management of communal affairs."**

- Youth Participant - Douentza

### COMMUNITY TESTIMONY

ENDA-Mali, GCERF's partner in Mali, identified the lack of educational and socialisation opportunities for Koranic students as a driver of recruitment. In response, they provided training to 132 Koranic students in the vocation of their choice, linked them to apprenticeships, and provided the locations of apprenticeship with equipment. They conduct regular monitoring and follow-ups to track their progress and resolve problems. They are doing the same with 100 youth in precarious work, who they identified as another vulnerable group. As part of the programme, youth were also trained on PVE.

**"In the past, we thought that the sole occupation of Koranic students was the study of the Koran. Thanks to the actions of the project, this mentality has changed. Now a lot of Koranic students are being integrated socially and economically thanks to the project."**

- Member of a communal committee in Bamako

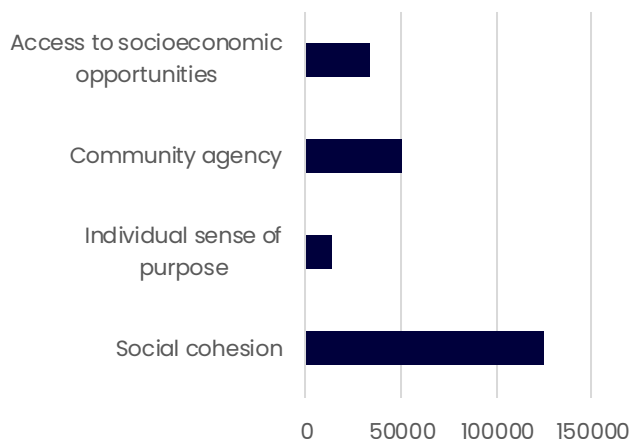


Figure 1: direct beneficiaries by focus area 2017-2021

## Healing Divisions Caused by Development Actors

Well-intentioned development programmes can sometimes end up having negative side effects. This could have been the case in some communities in Mali, where a development programme put in place committees to support community development. However, these were created without considering the pre-existing community decision-making structures, and community leaders resented them as they felt like they were being replaced. This threatened both local governance and social cohesion in the affected communities, and reduced community resilience. Action Mopti, GCERF's partner in Mali, identified this driver undermining resilience and good local governance and brought the actors together to work out a plan for collaboration. The event led to the elaboration of an annual action plan for collaboration, the implementation of which will be followed up by the local government in the region. This shows the importance of community-led programming by organisations with a deep understanding of the complexities and tensions within communities and empowering them to support communities and local actors to resolve these conflicts.

### STORY OF CHANGE: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This testimony is based on a video technology training activity the Think Peace consortium delivered in Nara, Koulikoro region in August 2020. It is an excerpt of a video produced with a 25 year-old beneficiary, Modibo Keita. Modibo was one of the 352 beneficiaries of the training. Participants were selected from members of the network of community-based organisations in each locality and criteria were used during selection to identify those most vulnerable to recruitment into VE groups, but also to ensure that they were representative of the community. A careful, participatory approach to beneficiary selection is an important consideration to ensure that our programmes do no harm, a key GCERF principle, and experience has shown that this is particularly important in economic empowerment projects, for which demand is always greater than supply.

"I can say now that thanks to this training in video editing techniques, my life has really changed. I save the money I used to spend on editing my videos. In addition, I am currently in demand by partners in the prefecture for video reporting and advertisements.

Every day I feel improvement in terms of income, and I gain time. This opportunity was for me a job opening which benefits me and others around me through the quality of video editing services provided. This allows me to meet my monetary needs and not be tempted to commit acts of violence."

## Youth Inclusion: Resilience Beyond Violent Extremism

One of GCERF's local partners trained 4,200 youth ambassadors in conflict resolution and prevention techniques, in particular prevention of violent extremism, in order to engage youth in decision-making and conflict resolution in their communities. This was done in response to drivers of youth exclusion and a lack of youth integration into community structures, which left them feeling disillusioned and unable to exercise their agency through legitimate community structures, making them vulnerable to violent extremist recruitment. Due to the credibility and proactivity of this local structure with experience mobilising the community, the youth ambassadors were selected for funding through another donor to conduct sensibilisation on the COVID-19 pandemic and sanitary measures to combat it. This shows the sustainability and flexibility of the local structures created under GCERF grants, contributing to overall community resilience and youth inclusion, which enables communities to respond to a variety of crises, not just those related to violent extremism.

### Emergency Programme: Responding to Emerging Needs

The situation in Mali has evolved quickly in recent years, and multiple coups have left a political vacuum that violent extremist groups have moved to fill, expanding operations to the south of the country. To respond to this, GCERF opened an emergency programme, where existing local partners were asked to respond to emerging drivers. Local partners identified modern slavery and human trafficking as a key part of financing for VE groups and designed a programme that aims to engage local communities and groups vulnerable to recruitment in creating their own solutions to these issues.

# Round 1 Results (Mali)



# GCERF

**2016–2018**
**Total direct beneficiaries: 77,745**
**Total indirect beneficiaries: 864,816**
**Main leverage point: social cohesion**
**Investment: USD 2.45m**

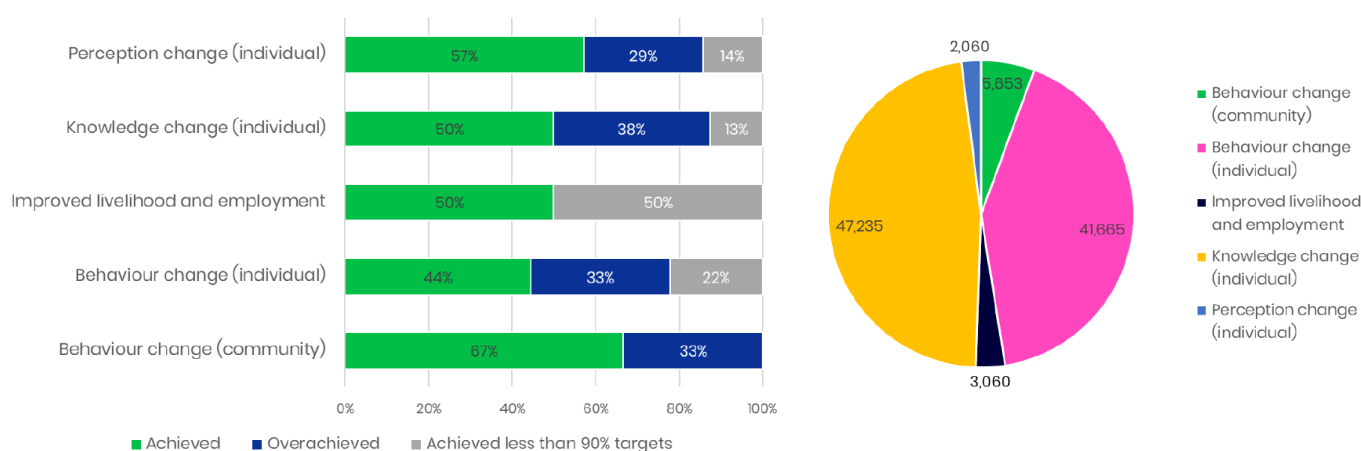
## ROUND 1 IMPACT

- **315 local conflict resolution or dialogue platforms established.** During the grant monitoring, one of these platforms evolved and its members joined state level negotiations by establishing a dialogue between the Dogon and Fulani groups (which are traditionally farmers and herders respectively, and between whom there have often been tensions and clashes) in Badiagara, Bankass, and Koro as part of the Regional Reconciliation Commission.
- **At the end of the programme, the majority of beneficiaries of the income-generating activities felt that they were now able to meet their basic material needs.** Some beneficiaries interviewed by our partners say that the activities have created social cohesion, because recovering livelihoods have increased people's capacities to communicate, cooperate, and build networks. Moreover, some leaders of rural communities have observed a **change in the local seasonal migration patterns**: the youth supported by the programme no longer move to urban areas after the harvest. Community leaders consider this an important factor preventing violent extremism, because the youth do not need to live alone in cities without their family support networks.
- Following the programme activities, **2,099 religious or traditional leaders launched PVE initiatives on their own**, according to partner reports. Their number exceeded the expected 1,753 leaders. Moreover, one consortium monitored the use of PVE awareness raising material by Imams and pastors in their Friday prayers or Sunday sermons. The material proved to be highly successful— while only 100 of them were expected to use the material, finally **244 Imams and pastors were reported to use it**. Even Imams not participating in the programme were reported to have photocopied the brochures at their own cost.

## Do the programmes work?: Independent Evaluation Results

Towards the end of the programme period (September–October 2018), GCERF commissioned an independent evaluation of grants in Mali. Its overall results are encouraging: across activities, population groups and locations, **GCERF activities received consistent positive feedback**. While the activities under the leverage points Equal Access to Opportunities and Sense of Purpose have generated **significant optimism and motivation** amongst participants, activities under Social Cohesion and Community Agency have created a series of **new and useful local relationships and structures**.

### Achievement of project outcomes: Round 1 Results



Figures 2 & 3: achievement of Round 1 project outcome targets (April 2017–December 2019) by type of change observed, percentage of the target achieved, and number of beneficiaries