

Sri Lanka



GCERF

Investment to date: USD 1,000,000

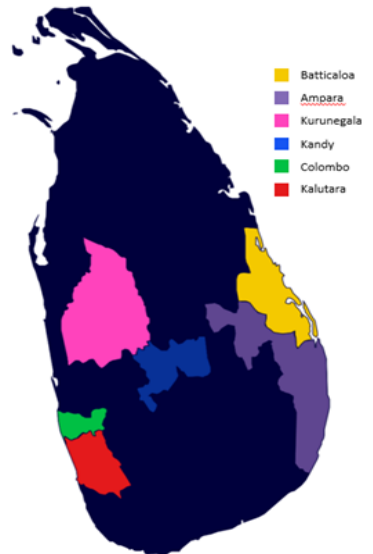
Investment started: 2021

Current investment: USD 1,000,000

Drivers of Violent Extremism

While Sri Lanka has mainly been known for Tamil nationalist extremism, Sinhala and Muslim communities have been polarising since the end of the civil war, with increasing instances of violence. This culminated in the Islamic-State inspired Easter Sunday bombings, which killed over 250 people and raised international concerns about violent extremism in Sri Lanka. GCERF has identified key drivers of violent extremism as:

- Ethno-religious tensions between Sinhala, Muslim, and Tamil communities. These divisions are quite deep and in recent years have manifested themselves in boycotting businesses and burning houses. A sense of marginalisation among Muslims seems to be an important driver
- Media outlets and the spread of misinformation fuels these ethno-religious tensions
- Economic grievances and unemployment exacerbate these tensions, which can then turn to violence
- Frequent online recruitment and radicalisation.



GCERF in Sri Lanka

GCERF began programming in Sri Lanka in 2021, partnering with key government institutions and other stakeholders to support activities to build social cohesion and a sense of purpose. GCERF works through a host model in Sri Lanka, where we work in partnership with a high-capacity organisation on the ground who in turn make sub-grants. The host organisation will select approximately 30 sub-grantees. These will be local grassroots organisations who will enhance resilience of youth aged 15 to 29 and will empower young women and girls, men and boys to initiate, lead, and implement community-level PVE actions under the following thematic areas:

- Promoting communal harmony and PVE by engaging with Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim religious institutions
- Working with role models to promote mediation and setting positive examples
- Putting youth in the driver's seat to lead community-based reconciliation and to participate in decision-making
- Enhancing dialogue between youth and community-level government authorities, including the rule of law authorities
- Promoting critical thinking of youth in educational institutions by strengthening relations between mainstream and religious educational institutions through inter-institutional activities
- Countering hate speech through online and offline engagement with youth.

Sri Lanka strategy



GCERF's programme in Sri Lanka is aligned with the Country Strategy for Investment in Sri Lanka aiming to

- Promote social cohesion in communities with limited economic opportunities, exposure to protracted conflict, and ethnic and religious grievances, which violent extremists may exploit for recruitment to VE. This will be achieved by promoting youth engagement in dialogue with religious leaders, role models, authorities, and other stakeholders and influencers.
- Promote a sense of purpose by strengthening critical thinking skills of youth in educational institutions, countering hate speech through online and offline engagement with youth, and disseminating alternative PVE messages.

AT A GLANCE

Host organisation: Helvetas Sri Lanka

Estimated number of sub-grants: 30

Current round: March 2021–December 2022

GCERF

Geneva, Switzerland

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

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GCERF Outreach