



STRATEGY

to Engage Communities and Address the Drivers
of Violent Extremism (2017-2020)

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the Drivers of Violent Extremism (2017-2020)**

THE TASK AHEAD

Letter from the Executive Director

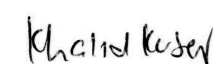
The need for strong community resilience to violent extremism is more pressing than ever. Recent years have seen a rise in conditions conducive to violent extremism. Violent extremism led to the highest numbers of recorded deaths due to terrorism in 2014 and 2015,¹ the displacement of millions,² and cost the global economy almost USD 90 billion in 2015 alone.³ The international community is increasingly realising that traditional counterterrorism efforts cannot solve this challenge alone – we need a new focus.

In recognition of the urgency and scale of the needs, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) called for the establishment of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) in September 2013. The following year, GCERF was established as the first global fund to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism. We have made significant progress in the past three years and committed more than USD 12 million in our first three beneficiary countries, Bangladesh, Mali, and Nigeria. To date, the work funded by GCERF is already reaching more than half a million people through 15 programmes, implemented through 13 principal recipients and 64 sub-recipients. We actively contribute to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. We also contribute to the fulfilment of the 2016 UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, including through support to countries to implement national action plans.

Significant work remains to be done. Through this strategy, we articulate our priorities for the coming three years. This is a living document and represents the unified aspiration and commitment of our partnership. Our primary objective will be to fund innovative community-driven efforts that contribute to local community resilience to violent extremism across at least nine countries. We are determined to secure on average approximately USD 36 million annually over the next three years to realise this strategy. We will evaluate our progress and results carefully, and review the strategy in three years to make necessary changes and updates.

We recognise that GCERF and our partners work in a challenging environment where there are few prior efforts to build on. We are committed to strengthening the sector by sharing lessons learned and helping build the capacity of the organisations we fund. GCERF takes a long-term vision since the problems we work on will not be solved overnight.

We believe that GCERF has enormous potential to make a real difference. Together with our partners and the communities on the ground, we are ready to take on the challenge.



Khalid Koser

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2016*, 2016.

² UNDP, *Preventing Violent Extremism Through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance And Respect For Diversity*, 2016.

³ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2016*, 2016.

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1. CONNECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH GLOBAL RESOURCES

The Global Community Engagement Resilience Fund (GCERF) is a multi-stakeholder global fund that works with local partners to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism. We are an independent public-private partnership that directs resources to support initiatives led by

and benefiting local communities and that empower women, girls, boys, and men. We focus on local communities because they suffer the most from violent extremism, and because they are optimally placed to understand and act upon the drivers of violent extremism.⁴

What is a multi-stakeholder global fund?

A multi-stakeholder global fund acts as a platform for resource mobilisation for a specific issue, pooling funding from multiple public and private sources; it brings together different types of stakeholders and acts as an independent agent.⁵

How does a multi-stakeholder global fund complement other efforts to address violent extremism?

GCERF goes beyond individual donors' reach and scope. We spread risks by operating independently of any one institution and combining resources from multiple donors. In addition, we mitigate risks by having a rigorous and specialised process of managing grants that leads to efficient and effective programme implementation, and ensures that we do no harm. We serve as a political focal point to mobilise resources and focus support on addressing the drivers of violent extremism. We build bridges and encourage coordination at the local and global levels. We contribute with knowledge on smart practices and actively work to expand the evidence base. We collaborate with international actors to ensure that local communities have access to funding. We use our position in the global funding landscape to avoid duplication of efforts.

⁴ Drivers include 'push' and 'pull' factors that contribute to violent extremism.

⁵ Heimans J. *Multisectoral Global Funds as instruments for financing spending on global priorities*, 2002. Note: This article uses the term "multi-sectoral" to refer to the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. We have used "multi-stakeholder" to emphasize that funds come from multiple actors in addition to multiple stakeholders.

Our work both complements and provides an alternative to traditional approaches to counterterrorism by focusing on the drivers of violent extremism and engaging local communities.⁶ By strengthening communities' resilience, we promote peaceful and inclusive societies and enable sustainable development. Our work is anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. GCERF is also committed to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006) and the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016).

Drivers of violent extremism are predominantly context specific and require local approaches.⁷ While there is a growing consensus that factors such as marginalisation, injustice, alienation, weak state-society relations, and social exclusion contribute to violent extremism, the specific combination of factors that result in violent extremism is less clear and can differ substantially between geographies and populations.⁸ GCERF operates on the underlying premise that when communities are more resilient to violent extremism, the risk of violence is reduced, contributing to a society that is peaceful and inclusive. Community actors are best placed to strengthen resilience as they are closest to, and understand, the challenges in more detail.⁹

Community actors face cultural, political, economic, and coordination barriers to address these drivers. There is still a taboo around violent extremism in many communities, and individuals can find it difficult to speak out about problems. Many communities feel excluded from political structures and processes, and national governments might have weak capacity to design participatory policies. Initiatives that originate with local communities often struggle to access the financial resources necessary to overcome the drivers of violent extremism. Finally, there is often a coordination gap among actors at the sub-national and national levels, which prevents actors from collaborating and learning from each other.

As a multi-stakeholder global fund, GCERF helps communities overcome these barriers, complements the efforts of other international actors, and supports

national strategies on preventing violent extremism (PVE). We have developed a specialised needs assessment framework to recognise where the lack of funding constrains local communities from addressing the drivers of violent extremism, and where providing additional resources can result in meaningful improvements. We adhere to our core principles of comprehensive risk management, independence, country-ownership, context relevance, sustainability, gender responsiveness, and accountability and learning in all our activities. We make multi-year commitments to support community-driven efforts that address the drivers of violent extremism. We make investment decisions independent of national or bilateral political agendas, and we are a neutral actor. GCERF strengthens the sector by building trust and encouraging coordination between actors at the local, regional, and global levels, and by expanding the evidence base on best practices.



⁶ In 2016, the OECD redefined ODA to include costs related to preventing violent extremism, thereby further reflecting the nexus between security and development in which GCERF is active.

⁷ UNDP, *Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach*, 2016.

⁸ See for example: UNDP, *Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach*, 2016.

⁹ We define resilient communities as groups of people who can anticipate, mitigate, and recover from adversity.

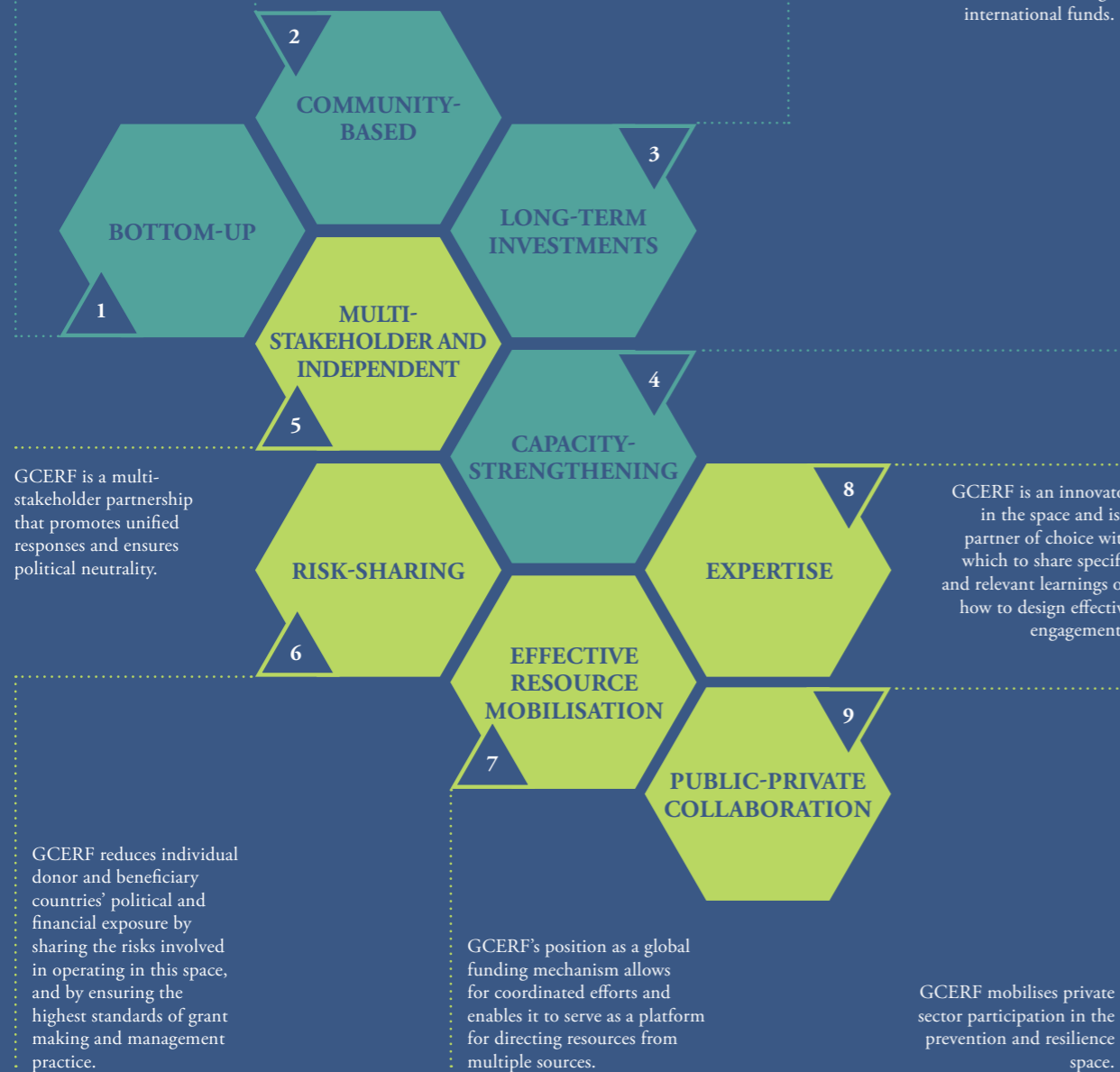
GCERF'S UNIQUE ADDED VALUE

GCERF focuses on funding initiatives that originate from local communities to support national strategies to prevent violent extremism.

GCERF supports local communities through comprehensive approaches that mutually empower women, girls, boys, and men to address the drivers of violent extremism.

GCERF takes a long-term approach to its investments, recognising that transformational change requires sustained intervention over time.

GCERF reaches local community-level actors, and enhances their capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and recover from adversity; thus enabling actors to build community resilience to violent extremism. In addition, GCERF strengthens the capacity of local actors to mobilise and manage international funds.



2. GCERF'S PRINCIPLES

We abide by the following core principles in all aspects of our work:



COMPREHENSIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

We adopt a comprehensive risk management approach in all aspects of our work. To ensure the optimum performance of our funding, GCERF systematically conducts risk assessments in areas of institutional, programmatic, and contextual risks, with special focus on ensuring that the risks to grantees and beneficiaries are minimised.¹⁰



INDEPENDENCE

We are guided by our own principles and priorities. We never let the political agendas of stakeholders interfere with accomplishing our goals.



COUNTRY-OWNERSHIP

We ensure that activities are led by local communities and support the strategic objectives of national governments to prevent violent extremism. We only engage in projects or activities that are previously agreed to by the states where we work.



CONTEXT RELEVANCE

We always base our funding decisions on thorough assessments of context-specific factors that act as drivers to violent extremism. Addressing context-specific needs often calls for new and innovative approaches.

¹⁰ We anchor our work in a thorough context and needs assessment to recognise where lack of funding is a constraint and where providing additional resources aligns to our principle of comprehensive risk management.



SUSTAINABILITY

We focus on long-term preventive solutions rather than mitigating initiatives. As part of our engagement with communities, we assess how long GCERF needs to engage to achieve impact and what the plans forward are when direct GCERF support stops.



GENDER RESPONSIVENESS

We promote the empowerment of women, girls, boys, and men towards achieving community resilience against violent extremism.



ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

Our work is anchored in evidence and learnings. We develop and adapt methodologies and tools to monitor and evaluate results, learn from experience, and continuously improve performance.

GCERF's principles apply and uphold the *OECD Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States & Situations* (2007), the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005), the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008), the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* (2011), and the *Mexico Communiqué* (2014). GCERF is a signatory to the *International Gender Champions Geneva Pledge* and incorporates gender responsiveness into our work.

3. GCERF'S PRIORITIES

3.1 GCERF'S PATHWAY TO CHANGE

This strategy is guided by our long-term vision of peaceful and inclusive communities that are resilient to violent extremism and achieve sustainable development.

Our core objective is to strengthen communities' resilience to violent extremism. To do so, we focus on four leverage points – social cohesion, community agency, equal access to opportunities, and sense of purpose – that influence radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism. Based on current research, we believe that these are effective ways for local communities to address the drivers of violent extremism.

As a multi-stakeholder global fund, we support local communities through three complementary approaches:

We fund community-level initiatives; we support national governments and international partners to align their activities to local contexts and needs; and we build and share knowledge that enriches global understanding of how to strengthen community resilience.

Our success depends on four strategic enablers. To achieve our goals, we: ensure access to adequate resources, effectively engage country leadership, create constructive partnerships with local, national, and international actors, and continue to build a solid evidence base of effective – and ineffective – initiatives.

Our pathway to change is illustrated in the figure below, and discussed in more detail in the following sections.

What do we mean by community resilience?

Our engagements support initiatives to strengthen community resilience and address the drivers of violent extremism.

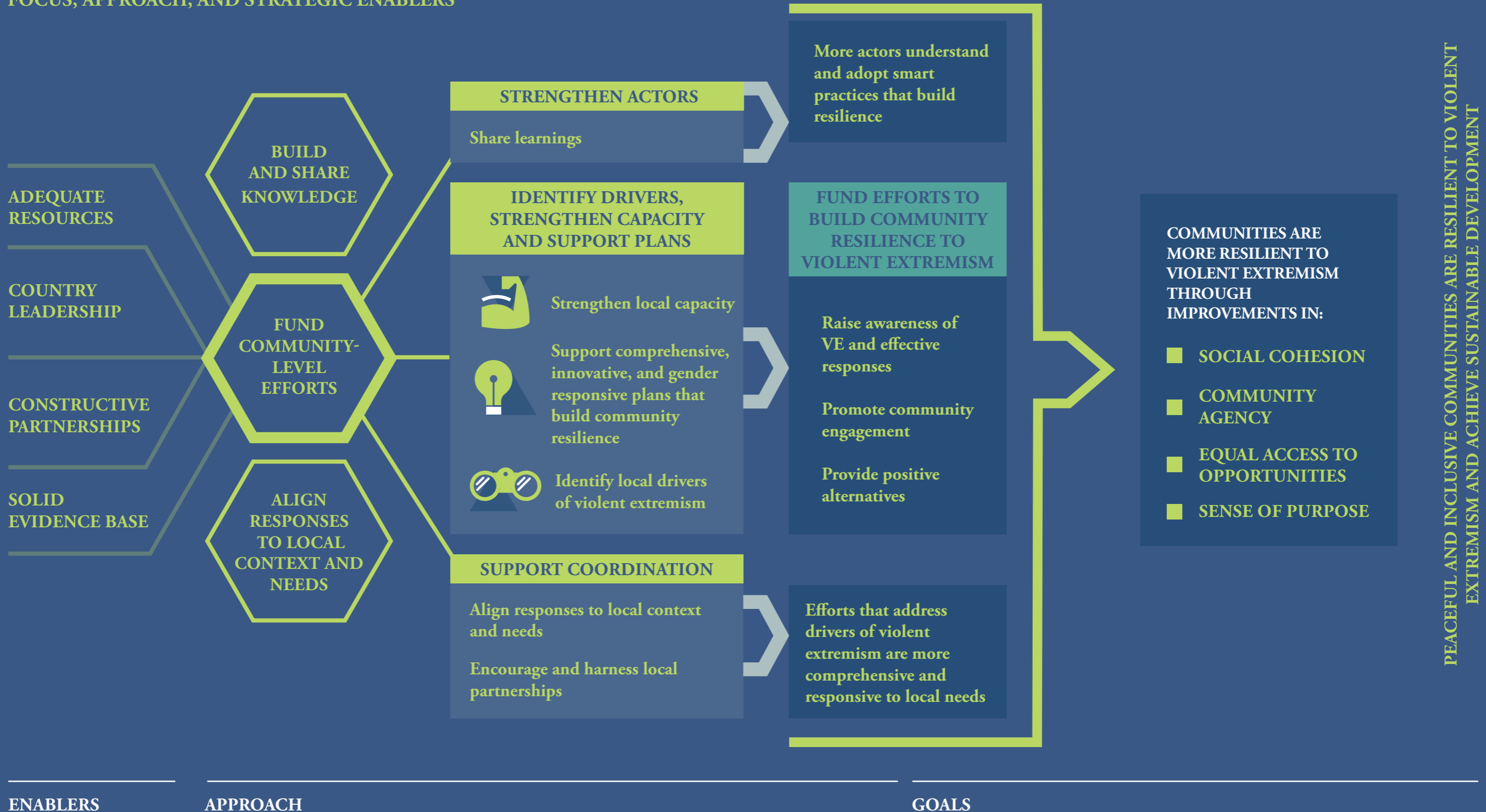
For GCERF, resilience is a dynamic attribute of a community; it is a positive cycle of endurance and resistance against violent extremism.¹¹ Resilient communities can anticipate, mitigate, and recover from adversity – including the prevalence of violent extremism. Adaptability is at the core of our approach to support community resilience and results in a positive trajectory, whereby a community can recover from and improve its functionality after a crisis.

¹¹ This definition of resilience was suggested by a GCERF Principal Recipient.

FIGURE 1

OVERVIEW OF GCERF'S PATHWAY TO CHANGE:

FOCUS, APPROACH, AND STRATEGIC ENABLERS



3.2 GCERF'S VISION AND MISSION

This strategy is guided by our long-term vision:

Peaceful and inclusive communities are resilient to violent extremism and achieve sustainable development.

To realise our vision, we have adopted the following mission statement:

We are a multi-stakeholder global fund that strengthens community resilience by supporting local initiatives to address the drivers of violent extremism.

3.3 GCERF'S GOALS – COMMUNITIES ARE MORE RESILIENT TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Over the coming three years, we will aim to make communities more resilient to violent extremism in at least seven countries. We will continue to focus on the six countries where programmes have been approved (Bangladesh, Kenya,

Kosovo, Mali, Myanmar, and Nigeria) and add at least one additional country. We will work in critical regions of concern and strengthen our regional engagements. We aim to be supporting communities in nine countries by the end of 2021.



We will support communities through a comprehensive approach that seeks to identify and address drivers of violent extremism. Our programmes will support communities to reduce tacit acceptance and community-level support for individuals who perpetrate violent

extremism and to develop new initiatives that can address the drivers of violent extremism. Through our preliminary work, we have prioritised four leverage points that we believe can address drivers of violent extremism:¹²



SOCIAL COHESION

GCERF aims to help communities build and strengthen positive options where communities and their members maintain cohesion during times of societal change. We aim to enhance community members' sense of belonging to an inclusive, constructive, and positive group or community. We define an inclusive, positive, and constructive group or community as one where different ideas, ideologies, and identities are embraced and incorporated, and that does not resort to violence.



COMMUNITY AGENCY

GCERF aims to strengthen the capacity of communities to mobilise, organise, and represent their own interests. GCERF strives to increase the number of communities that actively and effectively engage with authorities on topics that are relevant to them. Community agency contributes to more effective dialogue between state authorities, other stakeholders, and local communities.



EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

GCERF aims to lift barriers that limit access to social and economic opportunities. We strive for more members of the community to feel that they have equal opportunities for self-improvement and for achieving their aspirations. Members of the community believe that they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to access meaningful livelihoods.



SENSE OF PURPOSE

GCERF aims to help individuals become more resilient to radicalisation to violent extremism through a stronger and more positive sense of self. We seek to provide individuals with confidence, critical thinking, and other life skills that can enhance their sense of self-worth and resilience to violent extremist agendas.

We may not pursue all these components in all communities. Each community faces context-specific drivers which determine the necessary responses. Through our work, we will build the evidence base around the drivers

and continuously re-evaluate if these are the most relevant resilience objectives to prioritise.¹³ Over time, we expect our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism to evolve, and we will adjust our priorities accordingly.

¹² Specific targets will be developed on a country by country basis, based on a prior baseline assessment.

¹³ Resilience will either be determined on an absolute or relative scale (by detecting changes in a community's resilience).

3.4 GCERF'S APPROACH

A. Fund community-level efforts

Our operating model reflects the belief that local communities are critical in preventing violent extremism. We will rely on national partnerships and support mechanisms to fund comprehensive approaches that are designed and implemented by locally based civil society organisations and other relevant actors.¹⁴

We will ground the initiatives we fund in a thorough understanding of the local drivers of violent extremism. GCERF's approach is highly context-specific and always builds on a comprehensive assessment of

local needs. We prioritise high-quality assessment before committing to funding. We will therefore continue to fund comprehensive local needs assessments that inform the development of bottom-up plans that address the drivers and build community resilience.

We will also encourage innovation, as we believe that communities are best positioned to identify, test, and adapt approaches. Innovation may come in the form of new specific initiatives or in the form of specific combinations of tested approaches.

These initiatives will be proposed and developed by the local community. Based on our experience, we anticipate continuing to support three types of activities:



¹⁴ Including local leaders, practitioners, activists, and volunteers.

GCERF's approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

GCERF recognises the complexity of strengthening community resilience and relies on continuous learning and feedback mechanisms. Monitoring and evaluation is essential to our operations. Lessons learned from our programmes contribute to good practices in this nascent, complex, and challenging field.

Our business model is designed to improve the evidence base around strengthening community resilience. Our investment cycle allows us to review our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and provides us with a dynamic and long-term perspective. Funding decisions will be informed by recent research, our experiences, and consultations with key stakeholders.¹⁵

B. Align responses to local needs

We will strive for a national response that is better coordinated and suited to local needs. We will do this by enhancing coordination through the Country Support Mechanism (CSM). Through the CSM, GCERF creates or strengthens a national forum for conversation and coordination on the funding of PVE. GCERF funding will contribute to the implementation of national PVE action plans at the local level. GCERF will work with the CSMs to coordinate the funding of national and local PVE action plans.

We will strengthen local capacity through all our work and seek to effect lasting changes that address the drivers of violent extremism. GCERF often works with local civil society that starts off with limited experience on how to raise funds, manage grants, conduct M&E, and strengthen community resilience to violent extremism. GCERF will continue to invest in enhancing the capacity of our local partners.

National PVE Action Plans

Through the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, each Member State is encouraged to 'consider developing a national plan of action to prevent violent extremism. This plan sets national priorities for addressing the local drivers of violent extremism and complements national counter-terrorism strategies where they already exist.'

Effective PVE action plans should be developed in a multidisciplinary manner that brings together a range of governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors. Plans should be informed by analyses of local and national drivers of violent extremism, and should fortify the social compact against violent extremism.¹⁶

¹⁵ The measurement indicators we will use to track performance against this strategy can be found in section 4.4.

¹⁶ United Nations, *UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, 2016.

C. Build and share knowledge

We aim to expand the evidence base and share lessons with all actors; we will contribute to regional and global fora by sharing insights from the community level to inform partners' work. Through our work, GCERF is developing a broad base of expertise on the subject, and we will actively share it with the broader PVE and development sectors. We will promote learning and sharing across GCERF communities and projects; grassroots, national, and international organisations; host governments; donors; UN Agencies; and, other GCERF partners through visits, reports, and conferences.

We will aim for more actors to know about and adopt smart and effective practices that strengthen

resilience to violent extremism. There is limited understanding across the sector on what works and what doesn't in strengthening community resilience to violent extremism. We will strive for local, national, and global decision-makers to be better informed and aligned, and better able to respond to signs and symptoms of violent extremism affecting women, girls, boys, and men in different ways.

GCERF will strive to serve as a platform to connect actors and projects across prevention and resilience-building interventions, to improve and widen impact. We will do this through the CSM at the national level, and through regional and global fora.



3.5 STRATEGIC ENABLERS

Our strategy relies on four strategic enablers. These represent critical underlying requirements that must be present for us to implement our strategy and fulfil our goals and vision.

ADEQUATE RESOURCES

As a funding mechanism, our work is enabled by support from donors. GCERF's resource mobilisation is multi-faceted and is positioned at the nexus of security and development. GCERF must to the greatest extent possible secure sufficient, stable, and multi-year unrestricted funding to fully implement its comprehensive, bottom-up approach. We will do so by strengthening our relationship with current donors. We will rely on our current donors to sustain and increase their financial support over the coming years. We also recognise the need for expanding our donor base, and we will pursue prospects through other potential funding streams, including from other GCTF countries, the traditional development sector, as well as private and philanthropic sectors.



COUNTRY LEADERSHIP

GCERF's work is enabled by the approval, support, and commitment of beneficiary countries. We will support countries to respond to drivers of violent extremism and contribute to the implementation of national PVE action plans. Prevention of violent extremism will only be successful if local and national authorities support community engagement and align PVE action plans to local needs.



CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

We recognise that partnerships are essential effectively to strengthen community resilience. At the country level, we will seek to work with technical partners to help select, implement, and learn from grant projects. We will also seek to work more closely with our donor representatives in countries to enhance coordination across initiatives, and to receive technical and advocacy support.¹⁷ At the global and regional levels, we will partner with organisations that can help assess findings and translate them into relevant learnings, or use them for advocacy purposes. We will also participate in relevant international fora. We will focus on facilitating and encouraging connection and collaboration between all actors, to increase the efficiency and sustainability of our combined efforts.



SOLID EVIDENCE BASE

GCERF works in new and challenging environments where there is limited understanding of what works and what doesn't. We recognise that the evidence base around community resilience needs to be strengthened. Therefore, we are building both the qualitative and quantitative evidence base on community resilience, and sharing our learnings with all interested parties.



¹⁷Including embassies, missions, and other representations.

4. THE PATH FORWARD



While this strategy covers the coming three years, we focus here on five-year milestones and resource requirements to provide a vision for how we expect to evolve. Given the ongoing changes in approaches to addressing violent extremism, we will revise these milestones when we revise the strategy in three years.

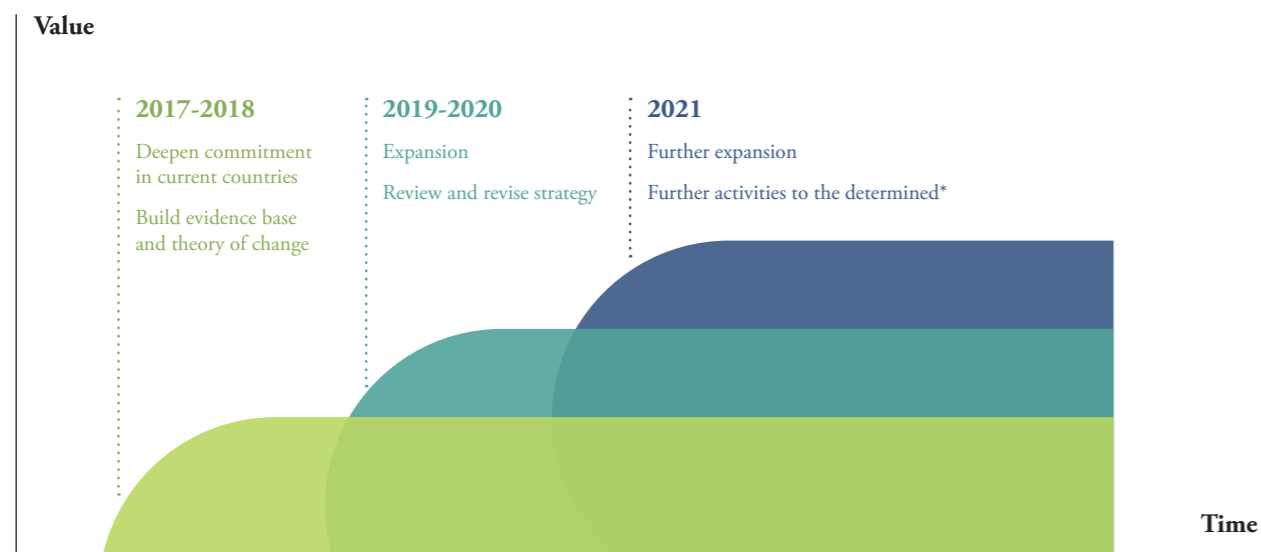
4.1 MILESTONES

Over the next five years, we will prioritise deepening our engagement in current beneficiary countries before gradually expanding our activities to start funding initiatives in at least three new countries. In 2017 and 2018, we expect to operate in our current six beneficiary countries, where we will focus on deepening our engagement. We will use these two years to expand the impact and strengthen the evidence base of our work. In 2019, we will start to gradually expand the scope of our

work by at least one additional beneficiary country per year. We foresee working in nine countries by the end of 2021.

We will continuously strengthen our work, informed by a growing evidence base. We will use the evidence and learnings gathered in the coming years to pressure-test our ongoing hypotheses, and strengthen our theory of change.¹⁸ To ensure that we are continuously fit for purpose, we commit to a full strategy review after three years.

FIGURE 2
Overview of key milestones



* Preliminary, to be refined as part of the next strategy.

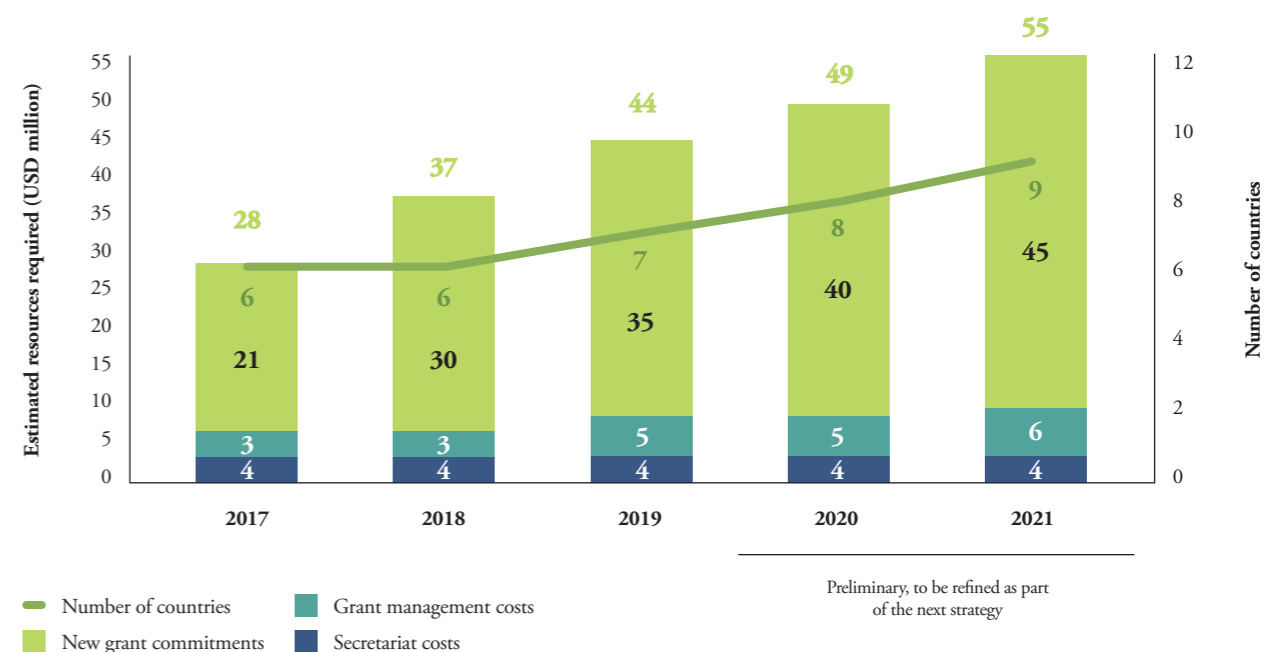
¹⁸ GCERF is currently developing its theory of change, which further articulates GCERF's priorities and approach as described in Figure 2.

4.2 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

To implement the strategy, we estimate that GCERF will require an increase in annual commitments from \$28 million in 2017 to \$49 million in 2020.¹⁹ The resources will cover grants, grant management costs, and

Secretariat costs.²⁰ In addition, GCERF may decide to establish regional or local presence in select countries. Our Secretariat costs will proportionately decrease as our total portfolio under management grows.

FIGURE 3
Estimated annual resources required to implement the strategy²¹



To implement the strategy, we need to mobilise significant additional resources per year. Moreover, GCERF must have the flexibility to channel these funds strategically based on the needs assessments conducted in beneficiary countries. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with current donors, and engage them through regular board meetings and progress reports. We will continue to target GCTF countries

and other countries that focus on preventive measures in their CT and PVE work, and work closely with our Board members to identify sources of development funding that can be used to achieve our goals. We will also seek to expand our donor base to include more agencies from the private and philanthropic sectors. Below we provide our resource mobilisation targets for the coming three to five years.²²

¹⁹ Note that this strategy covers the period from Q3 2017 to Q2 2020.

²⁰ Secretariat costs include costs associated with running the GCERF Secretariat, including additional regional offices. Grant management costs are solely associated with managing grants; and include grant officers, M&E officers, and finance officers.

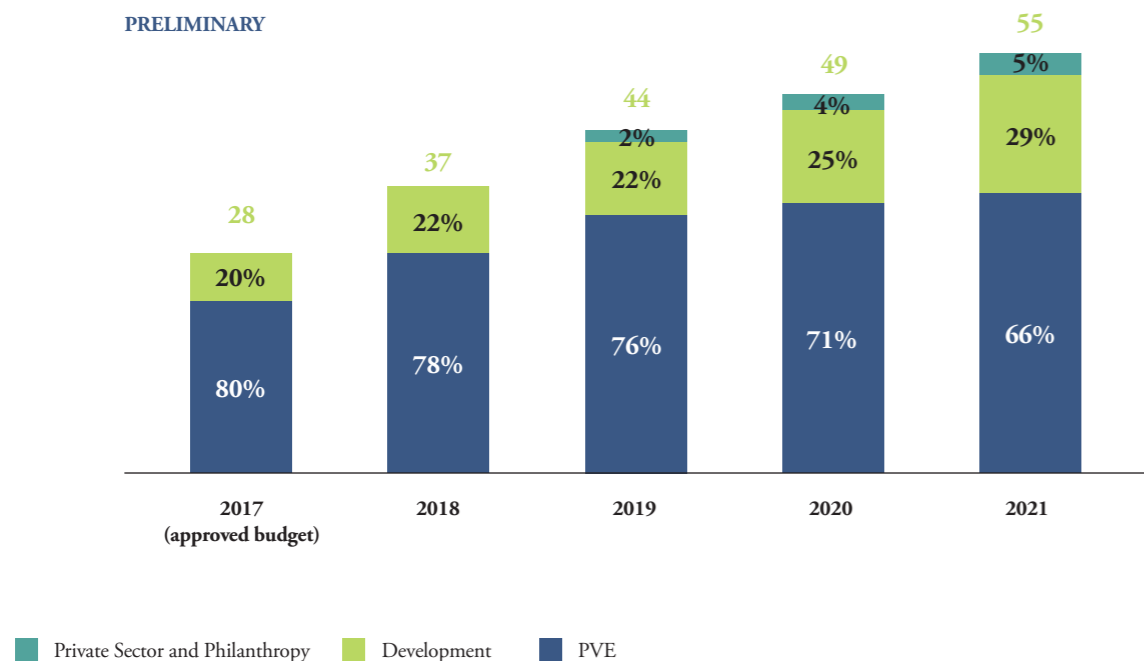
²¹ Note that 2017 numbers refer to the 2017 approved budget, whereas the following years are estimates only.

²² BM.03/DOC. 12: Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2016-2018. This strategy will be updated as part of the implementation plan for this strategy.

FIGURE 4

Estimated potential sources of funding

(USD million per year and % of funds from a given source)



4.3 COUNTRIES OF OPERATION

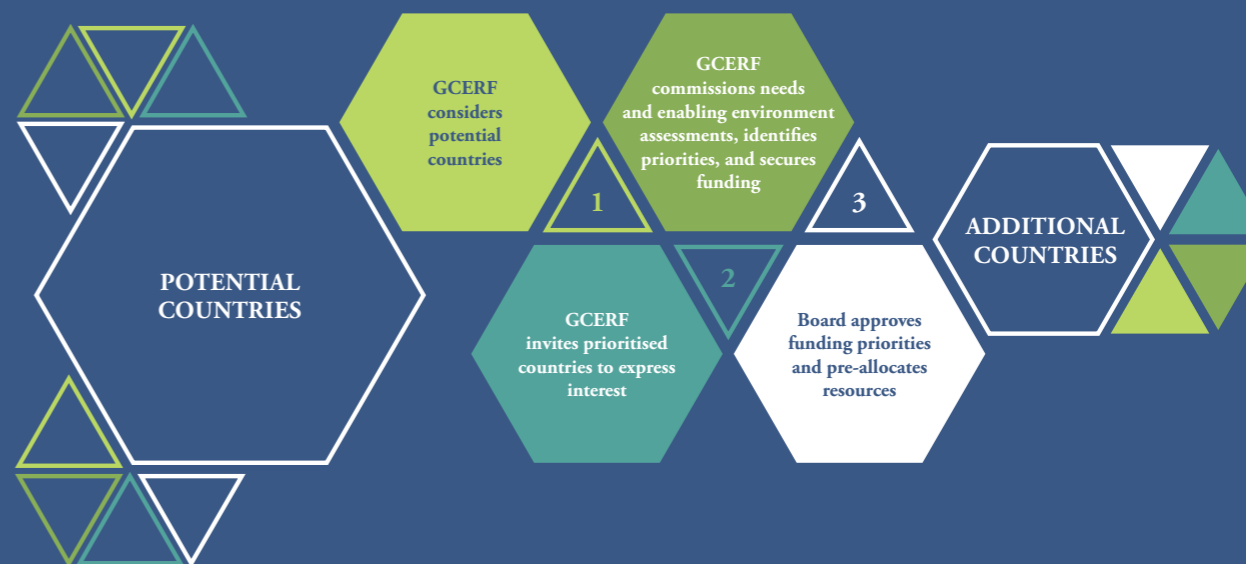
GCERF will continue to work and deepen our engagements in the current six beneficiary countries: Bangladesh, Kenya, Kosovo, Mali, Myanmar, and Nigeria. To ensure the continued strategic value of GCERF engagement in each of these countries, we will periodically reassess with national and international stakeholders the performance of GCERF’s existing portfolio, the opportunity for scaling up, the need and demand for GCERF support, and the feasibility of operating in each country.

As we begin funding programmes in new countries, GCERF will only work where there is a need and where our support can effect lasting changes. GCERF will only expand to additional countries once sufficient resources to make long-term investments are likely.²³ Additional countries will be selected from among countries that score high against the eligibility and prioritisation criteria, and will be prioritised through a three-step approach, as illustrated in the figure below.

²³ GCERF operates through long-term investments because we realise that the issues we are working on require long-term commitments. The necessary time-span of support will differ by country and be context-specific.

FIGURE 5

APPROACH AND CRITERIA TO PRIORITISE AND SELECT ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES



	1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITISATION	2. CONFIRMATION	3. SELECTION
NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high risk of a developing environment that is conducive to violent extremism The country is ODA eligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a confirmed funding gap on PVE at the community level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs assessment confirms the threat of violent extremism and demonstrates that there is an opportunity to leverage community action
DEMAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government is committed to the prevention of violent extremism The government requests support from GCERF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government agrees to adhere to GCERF’s established operating requirements, including the establishment of a CSM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is widespread local recognition of the relevance of the priorities identified
FEASIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The country’s legal framework recognises and facilitates the role of civil society Working in the country would reinforce GCERF’s engagements in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a conducive enabling environment for civil society to work on PVE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community resilience approach can effectively address the drivers identified in the needs assessment The enabling environment assessment confirms that GCERF could effectively fund work in the country Community resilience work would result in positive change

4.4 AREAS OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

GCERF will develop an overarching monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) framework and practices to provide a unified understanding of how GCERF and its partners jointly will achieve the intended outcomes; allow for comparability and learning across grants; inform the revision of the GCERF strategy, programme development and project design; and strengthen the M&E capacity of partners and grantees. Our MEAL framework and practices will allow us to test our ongoing hypotheses, such as the effectiveness of the four leverage points that we have currently prioritised.²⁴ Over time, we expect our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism to evolve. We will revise and refine our pathway to change accordingly.²⁵ We will track

our performance against this strategy through assessing the following:²⁶

GCERF distinguishes between three reporting and accountability levels: (1) fund performance looks at how GCERF contributes to strengthening community resilience for the prevention of violent extremism; (2) the focus of portfolio performance assessment is on the achievement of outcomes, such as changes in attitudes and behaviours, resulting from the implementation of programme activities and delivery of outputs; (3) corporate performance considers how GCERF secures and utilises resources in pursuit of its mission.

At a fund level:

We assess performance in reference to the four leverage points that we have currently prioritised.

- Stronger social cohesion (observed through the availability of more positive options, and an enhanced sense of purpose, inclusiveness, and acceptance of diversity among the community)
- Stronger community agency (observed through enhanced mobilisation, organisation, and representation of communities and their interest; as well as increased engagement and dialogue with state authorities and other stakeholders)
- More equal access to social and economic opportunities (observed through the removal of barriers to access opportunities, and a more diverse range of members of the community accessing opportunities)
- Stronger sense of purpose (observed through enhanced critical thinking and life skills, as well as through more positive sense of self, of contribution and of belonging among members of the community)

At a portfolio level:

- Reach and coverage of GCERF funding in communities identified for support
- Degree to which a country portfolio addresses the drivers of violent extremism identified in the national and local needs assessment

- Degree to which the achievements of a country portfolio are sustained beyond GCERF funding
- Alignment and relevance of GCERF funding to the objectives of national action plans
- Usefulness of the evidence and knowledge generated and shared by GCERF with local, regional, and global actors

At the corporate level:

- Degree to which resource mobilisation targets are achieved
- Degree to which available resources are used in accordance with plans and requirements

We will monitor and report on progress against plans and milestones on a regular basis to our governing board and other stakeholders. Monitoring will be the responsibility of the sub-grantees at the community level and principal recipients at the grant level. They will provide regular updates on project implementation. In addition, they will share qualitative insights on progress, and highlight risks and mitigation plans.

GCERF will provide technical capacity strengthening and oversight to grantees to improve their monitoring and reporting capabilities. GCERF may also utilise third-party monitoring to validate information. Financial management will be monitored on a regular basis and verified through external auditors.²⁷

4.5 GCERF'S STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GCERF is a Swiss foundation with a Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland. GCERF is composed of a Board of members and a Secretariat, which is supported by an Independent Review Panel. GCERF channels funds

to principal recipients and sub-recipients. In most countries of operation, GCERF also relies on Country Support Mechanisms for guidance, oversight, and facilitation.

²⁴ Social cohesion, community agency, equal access to opportunities, and sense of purpose

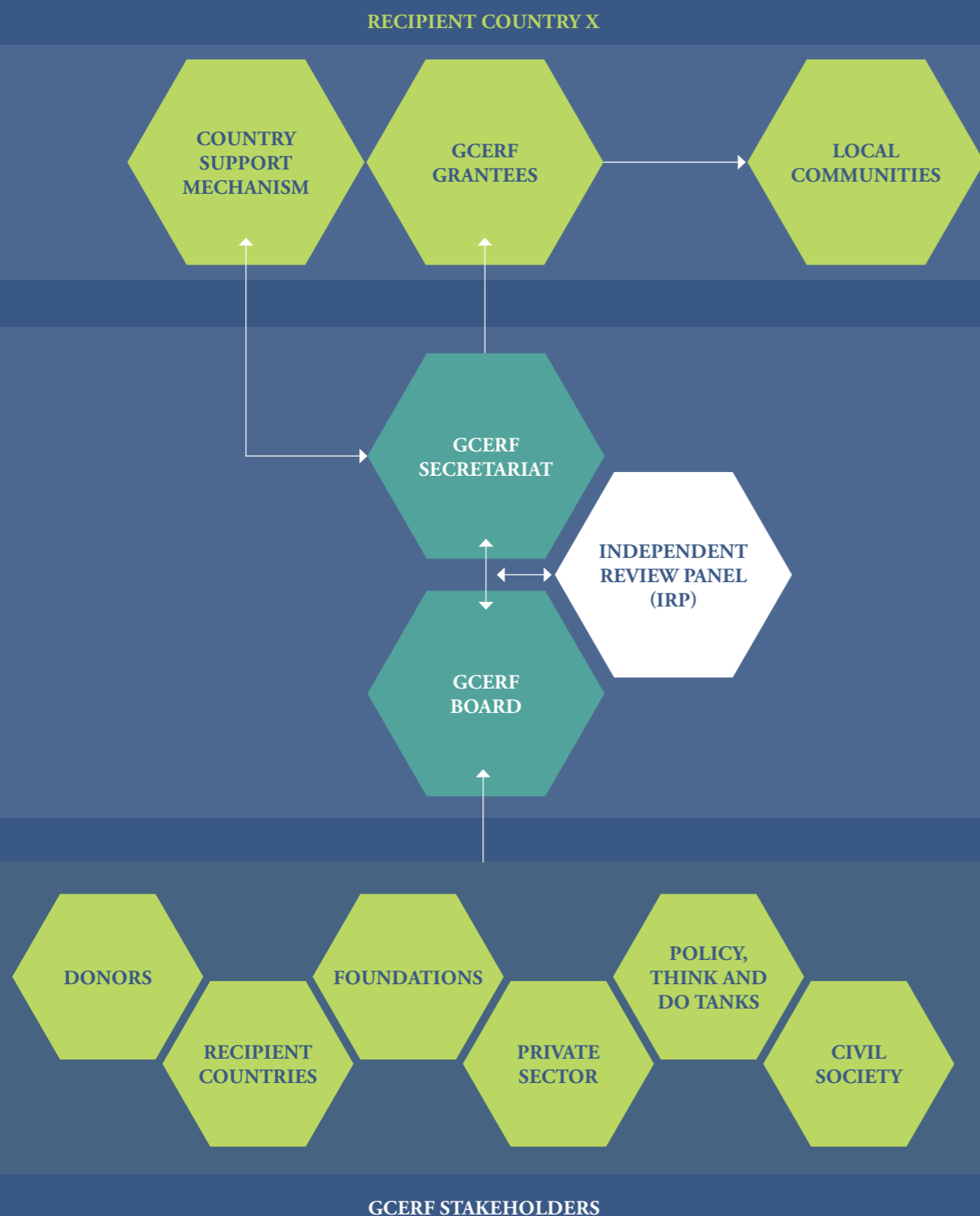
²⁵ GCERF is currently developing its Theory of Change, which will be a living document that we continuously revise in light of new findings and learnings.

²⁶ The indicators will be revised and refined as part of the M&E framework development process.

²⁷ More details on our monitoring and reporting plans will be developed as part of the implementation strategy and M&E plan.

FIGURE 6

GCERF'S STRUCTURE



GCERF Board. GCERF's supreme governing body is a multi-stakeholder Board with representatives of beneficiary countries, donor countries, policy think and do tanks, the private sector, foundations, civil society, Switzerland (host), international organisations, Chair, and the Executive Director. The GCERF Board provides the Secretariat with overall strategic guidance, approves key decisions, and supports resource mobilisation.

GCERF Secretariat. The Secretariat manages the day-to-day operations of the Fund. The Secretariat is also tasked with oversight and monitoring, evaluating results, and reporting on progress to the Board.

Independent Review Panel (IRP). The IRP is a group of independent experts. They provide technical and expert advice to the Secretariat and the Board.

Country Support Mechanisms (CSM). The CSM is a multi-stakeholder entity composed of representatives of national government, sub-national authorities, local civil society, the private sector, as well as bilateral donors, and multilateral and regional organisations active in the country. The CSM acts as a catalyst and facilitator to inform, coordinate, and support GCERF's grant making.²⁸

Grantees. GCERF channels resources directly or indirectly to civil society organisations working at the local level in beneficiary countries.

4.6 FUNDING MECHANISMS

We will tailor individual funding decisions to the local needs and context of each beneficiary country. Based on identified funding priorities, we will direct funding through the Core Funding Mechanism (CFM), the Accelerated Funding Mechanism (AFM), or another funding mechanism, as appropriate. Strategically, we will channel most funding through the CFM, as this allows GCERF to take a bottom-up, community-driven approach.

Through the CFM, GCERF will issue multi-year grants to comprehensive, community-driven initiatives. The CFM is a bottom-up funding mechanism that facilitates and strengthens community resilience to violent extremism. Funding decisions are based on expert technical analysis and rigorous due diligence by the Secretariat. Independent technical experts make funding recommendations to the GCERF Board.

The CFM provides a comprehensive approach by funding flexible and long-term grants to consortia of national and community-based organisations led by a principal recipient. The amount to be funded per round will be defined based on the needs assessment, with an average of USD 5 million per round, distributed across three to five principal recipients over multiple years. Each year, GCERF expects to launch a new round in each country as relevant based on the needs assessment.

Through the AFM, GCERF will provide small grants to local organisations to achieve specified objectives. The focus of funding of the AFM will be defined by and aligned with the Board-approved geographical, demographic, and thematic priorities. Potential grantees for the AFM will apply on a rolling basis in response to specific funding calls. Grant processing and approval will be completed within three months, from the date a final application is submitted.

4.7 RISK AND RISK MITIGATION

We will likely face various risks and challenges in implementing this strategy. We will conduct strategic risk assessments prior to commencing any work, to plan for and mitigate potential risks. During our day-to-day work and with help from our stakeholders, we will proactively reassess the situation to identify and pre-empt potential risks.

- **Strategic risk: sub-optimal programme relevance.** We anchor our work in a thorough needs assessment framework to ensure GCERF funding is highly context-specific and achieves clearly defined objectives based on local needs and opportunities. However, we recognise the risk that programmes may cease to be strategically

²⁸ GCERF collaborates closely with CSMs in countries where GCERF channels funds through the Core Funding Mechanism; see section on Funding mechanisms.

relevant due to shifts in local contexts. We work closely with our partners on the ground to identify and respond to changes, and shift our responses accordingly.

- **Strategic risk: doing more harm than good.** We recognise that financial support is not the right solution for all communities, and in some cases poorly deployed resources can do more harm than good. We conduct rigorous needs assessments to recognise where lack of funding is a constraint to addressing the drivers of violent extremism, and where providing additional resources aligns to our principle of comprehensive risk management. We carefully select our recipients. We support them in designing and developing strong programmes. We engage in strong monitoring and evaluation. Our principal recipients uphold GCERF's core principles.
- **Strategic risk: working with evolving underlying assumptions.** There is currently limited understanding of what works and what doesn't in strengthening community resilience to violent extremism. Our ongoing hypothesis is based on preliminary insights from early-stage investments, and available research. We expect that some of our underlying assumptions may not be validated. We will therefore focus the coming years on generating evidence and learning. We will continuously revise our ongoing hypotheses, theory of change, and approach to reflect the emerging best understanding. We will seek to share such learnings with all relevant stakeholders.
- **Financial risk: insufficient funding to implement the strategy.** To achieve our goals and operate sustainably, GCERF requires stable, sufficient, multi-year, and to the extent possible unrestricted sources of funding. We will manage existing resources carefully. We look to our current donors to become long-term investors and increase their levels of funding. We will pursue additional prospects by expanding our donor base.
- **Strategic risk: providing unsustainable support.** Uncertainty at a country level on the future of ongoing engagements may lead to sub-optimal results. As part of our engagement with communities, we therefore assess

how long GCERF needs to engage to achieve impact. We also work with beneficiary countries, supported communities, donors, and other partners to develop plans for when direct GCERF support stops. We revise our assessment and plans on a continuous basis.

- **Fiduciary risk: lack of accountability of funds by grantees.** Because we provide financial support, we face the risk that the grants are not used for the intended purpose or in compliance with the applicable principles, or that grantees are unable to report reliably on the use of funds. We have systems, processes, and tools to assess and mitigate these risks.
- **Delivery risk: insufficient absorptive capacity of grantees.** We work in a relatively new field and with local communities. Thus, we often face limited absorptive capacity among grantees and sub-grantees to deliver on expected outputs and outcomes. We have tools and systems in place, and dedicate time and effort to build our grantees' capacity throughout the design and implementation of the grants.
- **Security risk: risks to our grantees and programme participants.** Our grantees and sub-grantees often work in high-risk environments. This risk might be aggravated by a perception that they are funded by international money that drives hidden agendas. Our communications will continue to stress that we do not adhere to the political agenda of any one government. Moreover, we will continue to execute extreme care in our external communications, and safeguard the anonymity and safety of our grantees and programme participants.
- **Reputational risk: misuse or misunderstanding of GCERF's work or that of its partners.** We face the risk that actors misinterpret or misuse the work and information generated by GCERF or its partners. The misuse might be for political reasons. Our external communications are carefully calibrated to avoid and mitigate such risks. We also engage with grantees, our donors and donor representatives in countries, and other relevant partners to establish common communications standards and practices.

REPORT DESIGN CONCEPT

When designing a report, we usually start by developing a creative concept to visualise the report's main theme, which is then used to define the identity of the report, on its cover and for icons, graphs, and layout design.

For GCERF's Strategy we wanted to depict the concept of community resilience. We took inspiration from the structure of rural villages. Seen from an aerial view, village houses are often organised in a circle, in order to create a protected area. The closer the houses are, the better the area is protected. The same can be applied to the community: the closer the individuals are, the stronger a community is, and the better it is able to protect itself.

Starting from a picture of an aerial view of a village, we developed a hexagonal form to represent a resilient community, composed of six hexagons representing individuals within the collective, to show that, the stronger a community is, the better it is able to be resilient.



Design: blossoming.it

²⁹ For details on how we mitigate fiduciary risks, see Governing Board Decision by No Objection 7 April 2017.



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