



Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Social Accountability (PoVETSA) Project

BACKGROUND

Ghana is considered a relatively peaceful country, owing in part to the sustenance of democratic rule since 1992. In 2021, Ghana ranked 2nd in Sub-Saharan Africa on the Global Peace Index. Despite this achievement, there are still considerable levels of violent conflicts in targeted communities, especially in northern Ghana. The emerging threat of violent extremism in the region has heightened the need for a strategic and contextual approach to preventing violent extremism.

Key stakeholders and experts in peacebuilding and security in Ghana have all pointed to the rising threat of violent extremism, especially in the border communities of northern Ghana. In the context of this wide array of motivations, a socially accountable civilian community and security service is a critical factor in not only combatting violent extremism, but also reinforcing a strong foundation for Ghana's civic participation.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) received funding support from the Netherlands Embassy in October 2022 for the implementation of the Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Social Accountability (PoVETSA) project. The project aims to translate an iterative learning process into a trust-building mechanism for Ghanaian national peace building institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), security services, and civilians.

The emerging threat of violent extremism in Ghana has heightened the need for a strategic and contextual approach to preventing violent extremism. The project is

being implemented in partnership with the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies (CECOTAPS). The National Peace Council, supported by the government, and CECOTAPS, a Ghanaian CSO, present a national voice for dialogues that can facilitate state-citizen communication mechanisms. National Peace Council will lead regional level engagements and facilitate key activities with national institutions whereas CECOTAPS will lead the learning phase of the project through a contextual analysis.

The project is also building on the gains of the Sahel Peace Initiative which CRS has been implementing since 2019 to promote peace and social cohesion in Ghana and the Sahel. CRS in partnership with the leadership of the Catholic church in West Africa has rolled out interventions under the SPI in five countries: Ghana, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Cote D'Ivoire. In Ghana, the SPI leverages several community level interventions as well as high-level advocacy events to promote peaceful coexistence and social cohesion among conflicting groups across the five regions of Northern Ghana

The strategic activities under PoVETSA will be held in Ghana's capital, Accra. Other regional engagements will be held in the Northern and two Upper regions (Hamile and Paga) due to their proximity to Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire which have recently experienced violent extremism. Ghana has also experienced incidents of civilian - police/military clashes and protracted conflicts which could trigger violent extremism in the long-term if not curbed.

GOAL

The overall goal of PoVETSA is to aid Ghanaian peacebuilding institutions improve public trust and build confidence in security services for the prevention of violent extremism.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the project seeks to aid:

- Ghanaian national peacebuilding institutions improve their ability to contextualize and implement social accountability mechanisms.
- Ghanaian national peacebuilding institutions and CSOs strengthen their support for inclusive, accountable, and responsive governance.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Location	Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions
Budget	€250,000
Donor	Netherlands Embassy
Participants	Top-level hierarchy of the security agencies in Ghana, Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, CSOs, youth groups, women groups, and other civilian groups

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY APPROACH

Stages	Activities	Lead	Supporting
Analyze	Project Validation and Inception Workshop	CRS	CECOTAPS/NPC
	Political Economy Analysis (PEA)	CECOTAPS	CRS/NPC
	Conduct contextual analysis of civilian-security forces challenges in Ghana and the link to violent extremism	CECOTAPS	CRS
Convene and contextualize	Facilitate a national level dialogue bringing together Civilians and security services on improving civilian-security agency relations for the prevention of violent extremism	NPC	CRS
	Technical Committee Meetings to draft national Framework for Improving Civilian-Security agency relations for the prevention of violent extremism	CRS	NPC
	Launch and dissemination of national framework	CRS	NPC/CECOTAPS
Implement	Capacity building and sensitization for Security Forces on Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - Regional level Workshop	National Peace Council	CECOTAPS
	Peace Forums with Regional Peace Councils (at the regional level): Bringing together CSOs, youth groups and Security Forces	National Peace Council	CRS
	Training and Dialogue sessions with youth from selected border communities in Northern Ghana on countering violent extremism	CRS	CECOTAPS
Monitor	Simple Measurement of Indicators for Learning and Evidence-based Reporting (SMILER) Workshop	CRS	NPC/CECOTAPS
	Mid-Year Check-in Workshop	CRS	NPC/CECOTAPS
	End-Year Reflection Workshop	CRS	NPC/CECOTAPS