

A woman wearing a yellow and red sari with a white border and a red bindi on her forehead stands in a doorway. The doorway is framed by a blue-painted wooden frame. The wall to the left of the doorway is made of blue-painted brick. A red cloth is hanging from the top left corner of the doorway. The woman is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

SAFERWORLD
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

**INTRODUCING
SAFERWORLD**

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The truth is, peace can only be achieved by giving justice to the oppressed and telling the truth about the oppressor.

Abyan, widowed mother of six living in a Mogadishu displacement camp, Somalia

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Conflict in the world today

Violent conflict is on the rise in many parts of the world and the effects are disastrous. It destroys lives, forces people to flee their homes, creates poverty and shatters economies, making it difficult for people to earn a living – while instability prevents governments from focusing on the issues that improve people's lives, like health and education.

Conflict usually escalates when people's basic rights are violated – through oppression, inequality or exclusion. It leads to a cycle of poverty, suffering and further violence, and this cycle is difficult to break. It is only when people can address the underlying drivers of violent conflict that peace and prosperity become realistic goals.

From South Sudan and Somalia to Kyrgyzstan and Nepal, violence and conflict take many different forms. In some places, people are forced to contend with armed clashes and displacement that fundamentally affect their lives. In other parts of the world, it is subtler – for example, ethnic tensions compounded by social and political exclusion and poor governance that threaten to boil over into fighting, often with regional and global implications; or violence against women and girls that increases insecurity and obstructs growth. But no matter what form it takes, violent conflict ruins lives and hinders progress.



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Who we are

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We are working towards a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.

We started as a small UK-based research organisation in 1989, pioneering approaches for more effective arms controls. From there, we began to look at other

drivers of conflict, such as poor governance, the misuse of power, social and political exclusion, marginalisation, access to resources and underdevelopment. We supported efforts to address these issues to build peace. In 2000 we set up our first country programmes in Kenya and the Western Balkans, and over the next two decades we expanded to focus on 12 countries that are affected by conflict and insecurity.

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What Saferworld has achieved, often in volatile and dangerous places, is testament to the competence and dedication of our staff, partners and the communities with whom we work.

Jeremy Lester, Chair of the Board of Trustees

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We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security and to address the factors that drive violent conflict. We also research the causes of conflict and use evidence

to advocate for policy changes that contribute to peace. We do this in the countries where we work, and also at the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) levels and in the US and China.



Supporting better and more inclusive governance

Transparency, accountability and meaningful inclusion of different groups of people – not just the powerful few – is central to good governance. We work to amplify the voices of those who have been marginalised so that they are included in decisions and other processes that affect their lives – from political transitions to peace processes and constitutional reform.



Ensuring security and access to justice

Insecurity and injustice are often major factors at the heart of conflict. We work with partners to bring communities and security providers together to address problems that lead to violence or insecurity.



Addressing the links between gender, peace and security

Women, men, boys and girls are all affected by conflict differently, and the pressures on them to fulfil 'masculine' or 'feminine' roles can further drive violence. We work with communities to identify and address the particular challenges faced by women and girls, and research the links between gender and conflict.

What we do

We focus on several major issues that are central to building peaceful and just societies:

Advocating for global change

For global peace strategies to be successful, they need to deliver real improvements to people's lives. We work to ensure peacebuilding is at the heart of global initiatives like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and that governments are accountable to their people.



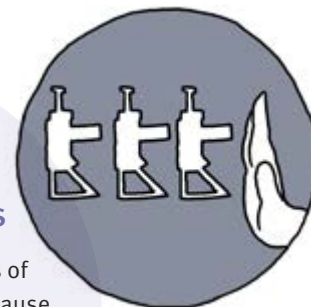
Working with young people to build peace

Young people are often blamed for violence and instability, and excluded when it comes to building peace. Getting young people on board with peace efforts is crucial for long-term sustainability. We work with youth groups to support projects that make them and their communities safer and give young people a stake in peace. This support includes training, advice, coordination and micro-grants to fund innovative initiatives.



Controlling the flow of dangerous weapons and materials

Weapons are used to kill hundreds of thousands of people each year and cause mass destruction to property and infrastructure. We work with governments and industry to better regulate the arms trade, and ensure that weapons don't fall into the hands of those who would use them to fuel violent conflict.



Finding better alternatives to counter-terror and migration control strategies

Today's conventional, militaristic responses to irregular migration and violent armed groups can make life harder for people living in conflict-affected countries.

Peacebuilding responses offer lasting solutions by addressing people's grievances and the root causes of conflict (which may lead them to join violent groups or force them from their homes). Based on our research, we advise governments to change how they respond to these issues by focusing more on people's real concerns and on long-term peace, not just on short-term military solutions.



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We learnt how to go through a process of identifying, analysing, and prioritising safety concerns of the communities where we live. The best part is that we learnt how to do it together with the police and other authorities.”

A member of the Bokhtar public council, Tajikistan

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How we do it

Over the last 30 years, we have promoted peace on the global stage and in the countries where we work. We run security, gender, justice and development programmes, working with people affected by conflict, and we push for long-term policy change at national, regional and global levels.

Over the last decade, together with our partners:



488

action plans were implemented by community groups with our support to address community security concerns



13,650

men and women were trained by Saferworld on peacebuilding and tools for analysing conflicts



6,434

representatives of international organisations and donors received advice from Saferworld on how to make their programmes more sensitive to different conflict dynamics around the world



1,266

research reports, policy briefings, case studies, discussion papers, videos, news articles, and comment and analysis pieces were produced by Saferworld



1,829

men and women were trained by Saferworld between 2014–18 on how to be sensitive to gender and conflict dynamics



Partners at a workshop in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

© Kate Stanworth / Saferworld

Our partners

Lasting change will only be possible if power and resources are invested in the people and places most affected by conflict.

Building effective partnerships with organisations that are driving change is central to our strategy, approach and ways of working. We support partners who work in communities affected by conflict, recognising them as best placed to create change. We acknowledge the power imbalance between ourselves as an international organisation and our partners, and we aim to address this by sharing decision-making and ensuring a fair distribution of funds on joint projects.

We have formal partnership agreements with over 60 partners in the countries where we work. We also work in close collaboration with other national and international coalitions, networks and alliances to push for policies that help people affected by violent conflict and create conditions for peace worldwide.

What communities have achieved

The **community programmes** we run with partners have improved people's safety and security by addressing what they themselves have identified as priorities, from road safety in Nepal, to domestic violence in Bangladesh, street lighting in Yemen, school safety in Kyrgyzstan and refuse collection in Somalia. Our programmes focus on improving relationships between people and the police or other security providers and helping authorities to effectively respond to people's needs. Through community forums, crime prevention centres and community security groups, we have supported people to understand their rights and demand better services.

We have tackled gender-based inequalities, working with our partners to understand the particular challenges faced by women and girls and supporting their participation in public debate, policy-making and efforts to build peace.

We also support those who seek peaceful political transition from conflict by amplifying the voices of those who are historically discriminated against or marginalised from political power. Our work in this area includes supporting efforts for free and fair elections, fighting corruption and ensuring that changes in government structures – such as decentralisation – capture the concerns of all people.

Violence behind closed doors

Saw Mar Lu Ku has first-hand experience of the long-standing conflict between Myanmar's government and ethnic armed groups in the country's south-east.

"My village didn't exist where it does now because we had to move a lot to escape fighting." The situation today is much better. "We are happy to stay in one place and to survive."

But the town isn't free of conflict, although it has taken on a much different form. "Most of the conflict is happening in the village between husbands and wives," says Lu Ku. As he explains, this violence is made worse by alcoholism, poverty and cultural expectations placed on men to provide for their families. Traditionally, women are not encouraged to talk about family problems, so the issue often goes unaddressed.

Since 2017, Saferworld and partner Karen Women's Empowerment Group have supported Lu Ku and others in his community to come together to get a better understanding of the problem of violence in the home, and to start to address it. "We connect households to different authorities and religious leaders who can help them solve the problem." For example, the community asked police and lawyers to talk about laws protecting women from violence.

Lu Ku also says he has noticed changes in his own mindset as a result, and hopes that the same is happening with others. "There might be disagreements between couples, but I want them to be able to negotiate with each other."

“There might be disagreements between couples, but I want them to be able to negotiate with each other.”

Saw Mar Lu Ku

The road to recovery


“I lost my husband during the war in 1994,” says Esther, a mother who lives in Bur, South Sudan. When conflict broke out again years later, she sent her two teenage boys to a refugee camp in Uganda where they would be safe and be able to get an education.

The fighting has calmed recently, but tensions still linger. “Conflict took so many lives here and left a lot of orphans behind.” Esther now works with the Solidarity Association for Rehabilitation and Recovery Affairs (SARRA), Saferworld’s partner, to reconcile differences and bring peace back to her community.

“It’s not good to continue living in chaos,” she says. “We need to stop this conflict so we can bring development into our community.”

Esther’s colleague Hakim talks about the ways that SARRA and Saferworld reconcile different members of the community. “We bring conflicting communities into dialogue, often for a number of days, for them to look deep into the problems that might be creating this mess between them,” he says. “We’ve focused a lot on road safety because roads are crucial for the transportation of medicine, educational materials and humanitarian aid. Roads connect you to the market, to the government and to organisations that want to assist communities. For example, in 2017 a community was struck by a disease just because medication couldn’t get through.”

Esther hopes the peace will last so that her community can focus on improving quality of life for its residents. “We need to stop this conflict, so the orphans from this conflict can get an education. They are the ones who can change this village for the next generation.”



A vote on the Arms Trade Treaty takes place at the United Nations General Assembly Hall.

What we've achieved at the policy level

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When I joined Saferworld in 1993 the idea of global standards for regulating the international arms trade was only just beginning to be discussed among a small group of organisations. Twenty years later, the hard work that went into building an international ‘coalition of the willing’ finally bore fruit.

Elizabeth Kirkham, Saferworld Arms Unit Adviser

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We work globally to push for national, regional and international peace and security policies that help people affected by violent conflict and create conditions for peace worldwide.

We have also advocated for security and justice to be recognised as development goals in their own right, and we engage with international institutions and governments – including the UK, EU and other Western countries – to ensure that their strategies reflect the needs of people in conflict-affected countries.



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The long haul: 20 years of work on the Arms Trade Treaty

On 1 April 2013, a substantial majority of the UN General Assembly voted in favour of a resolution to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This was a historic international agreement regulating the international trade of conventional weapons such as armoured vehicles, aircraft, warships, and small arms and light weapons. It is also the only legally binding international

treaty that specifically refers to gender-based violence. While deliberations at the UN lasted a little over six years, they were the result of over 20 years' work.

As part of a coalition working in support of the ATT, Saferworld provided policy and technical expertise and forged strategic relationships to build and sustain the momentum that would encourage states to come on board. By the early 2000s, the EU had agreed a code of conduct on arms exports, and

the landscape was beginning to shift as more and more governments recognised the need for a level playing field.

“With strictly limited resources, we had to make sure we got the biggest bang for our buck,” says Roy Isbister, Head of Saferworld’s Arms Unit. “You could say that getting the treaty agreed was the easy bit. The ultimate challenge is what confronts us now: implementation. Building the national systems and then getting each state

to actually follow the rules is a huge undertaking, but critical if the treaty is to meet its purpose to reduce human suffering. We continue to play our part at international and national levels by challenging those who don’t live up to their commitments. We also work with national authorities, for example in Liberia and Lebanon, to help them become fully compliant with the ATT, and we work with the EU to support implementation in countries such as Ghana and Zambia.”

Putting peace on the map

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – or the 2030 Agenda as they are also known – are a set of 17 goals that aim to improve the lives of people around the world by committing countries to end poverty, ensure equality and strive for peace and prosperity.

The inclusion of goal 16 – dedicated to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies by addressing the drivers of violence – was not always guaranteed. There was no 'peace' goal under the 2030 Agenda's predecessor (the Millennium Development Goals), and many thought that including one in the SDGs would be impractical and difficult to achieve.

From the beginning, Saferworld believed that the SDGs provided an unprecedented opportunity to commit states to pursuing peace. To build support, we spoke with both enthusiastic and sceptical governments, as well as non-governmental allies and

influential people within the UN system. We provided evidence showing the close link between peace and development, and suggested some practical ways that conflict could be addressed within the new framework – for example, suggesting targets and indicators to measure progress.

This work resulted in deepened support for the inclusion of peace and conflict in the agenda, even from global powers that had initially been resistant. After the 17 SDGs (including SDG16) were adopted by world leaders in September 2015, we supported governments and civil society around the world to make progress towards their commitments for more peaceful and inclusive societies. We now work with governments, civil society and communities to come up with priority actions that fall under the SDGs. We have joined partners in highlighting civil society action around the world, including at international events such as the High-level Political Forum at the UN in New York.





Where we work

We work in countries across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. We also work with international, regional and national institutions to advocate for changes in the policies and practices that affect people's peace and security.



A meeting on Sustainable Development Goal 16 work in the Horn of Africa, Kampala, Uganda.

© Malaika Media/Saferworld

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I love these workshops. They help us to stop racing through project implementation activities and to reflect on what works and what does not work, and how we need to adapt our interventions to be more effective and sensitive.

Bakhran from Foundation for Tolerance International on his experience of Saferworld's outcome harvesting workshops

Learning

To increase our effectiveness and impact, we encourage staff and partners to take the time to reflect on their performance and to learn from each other and from our successes and challenges. This means creating space to share ideas and insights and to strengthen skills. We hold learning exchanges between our different country and regional teams, and we encourage people in different parts of the organisation to work together. We have specialist staff who are experts in learning and growth, and they help us to keep track of how we are doing by recording the results of our work and supporting our teams to manage risks.



Safeguarding and accountability

Our integrity as an organisation depends on how we embody our core values and beliefs. We believe in the worth, equality and dignity of all people. Our safeguarding policies seek to protect the people we work with – particularly children, vulnerable adults, and communities and partners – from any harm that could be caused because of our work. To help us ensure we do this, we have developed a range of policies and procedures – from those preventing sexual exploitation and ensuring child protection, to a code of conduct that all staff must follow.

We have systems to ensure accountability, including confidential channels for whistleblowing and complaints. Each year we publish our spending figures so that we are as accountable as possible to our donors and the communities we work with.

Cover photo: A Dalit woman outside
her home in Birgunj, Nepal.

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SAFERWORLD

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict. We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and we conduct wider analysis, research, and surveys of local perceptions. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national, and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace.

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How to donate

With your help, we can continue to strengthen our programmes and support even more people affected by conflict and violence around the world.

If you would like to support us, you can give through regular or one-off donations by visiting our website:
www.saferworld.org.uk/support-us

If you are an institutional donor, please get in touch with our funding team to discuss how we can work together to support efforts to build peace:
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