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Democratisation, conflict prevention and increased security of local people

Lessons learnt from community security approaches in the Ferghana Valley



April 2015



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SAFERWORLD

APRIL 2015

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Maija Paasiaro on the basis of information provided by staff from Saferworld and local partner civil society organisations, the Foundation for Tolerance International, the Association for Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia and Youth Initiatives for Development. We are grateful for valuable input from Stefan Stoyanov, Katie Morris, Alexey Kruk and Central Asia community security team – Farrukh Artykov, Marat Turdubekov, and Zamira Isakova. This report is published with the technical assistance of the British Embassy to the Kyrgyz Republic. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of the Embassy.

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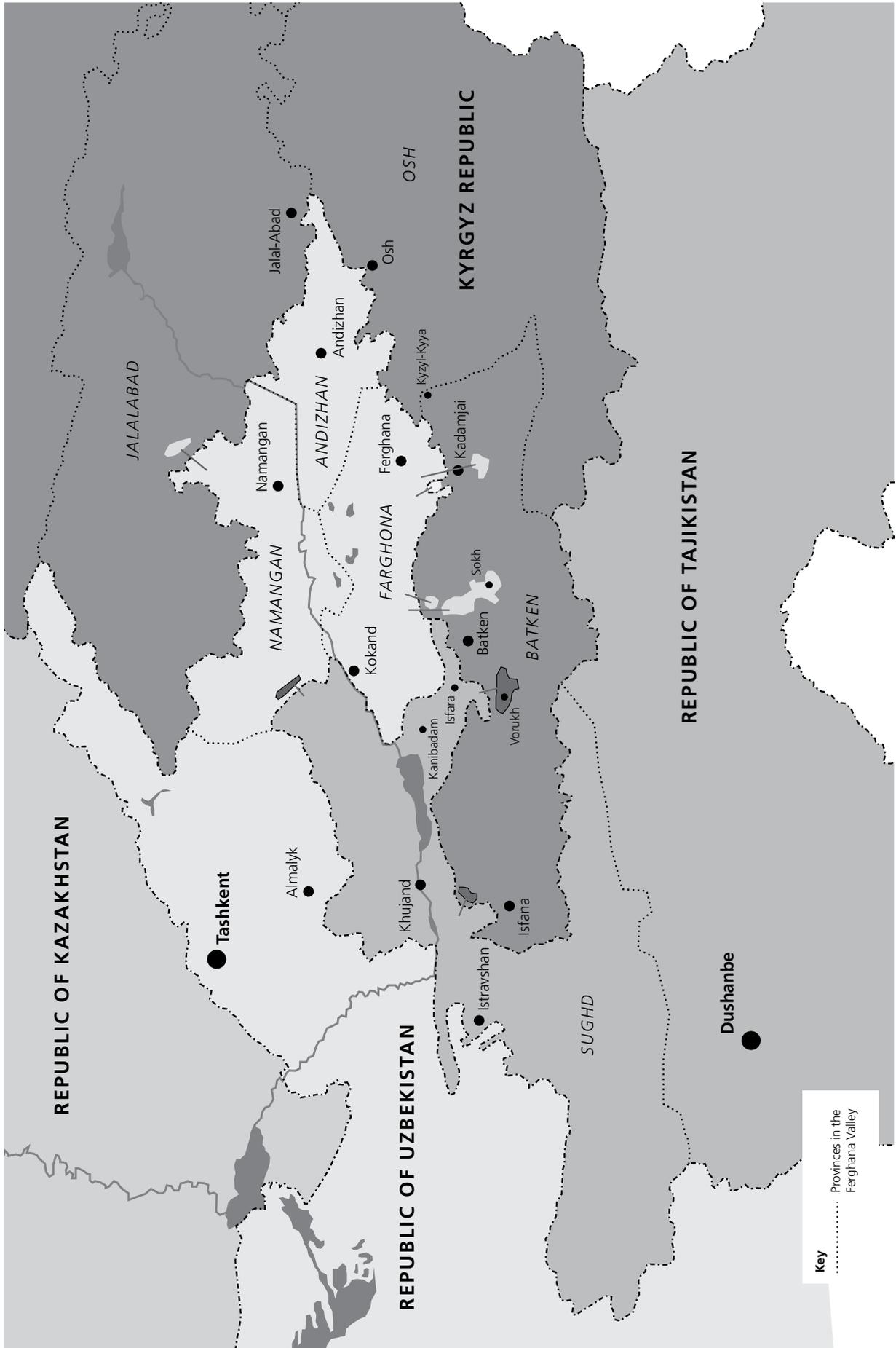
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Contents

Map of the Ferghana Valley	ii
Executive summary	iii
1. Introduction	1
2. Conflict and insecurity in the Ferghana Valley and the relevance of the community security approach	2
Conflict and insecurity in the Ferghana Valley	2
Using the community security approach in the Ferghana Valley	3
Overview of community security process	5
3. Achievements and lessons learnt	7
Part one: impact on situation	7
Part two: factors of success	11
Part three: what more needs to be done	13
4. Recommendations	14
Recommendations to international organisations and donors working on security issues in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	14
Recommendations to the national governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	15
Recommendations to local non-governmental organisations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	15

Ferghana Valley



This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Borders, names and other features are presented according to common practice in the region - Safeworld takes no position on whether this representation is legally or politically valid.

Executive summary

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are fragile Central Asian states. There are concerns that peace and security are being undermined by segments of the Kyrgyz and Tajik population looking to religious, ethno-nationalist and criminal structures for livelihood opportunities as well as provision of order and values. There has also been an increase in ethno-nationalism in both countries. In the border areas between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, people experience everyday insecurity linked to cross-border tensions. In Southern Kyrgyzstan, the interethnic clashes of June 2010 still have consequences on the day-to-day lives of people. Although openly expressed distrust between ethnic groups has faded with time, relations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities are still often characterised by suspicion.

In this context, the role of security providers is crucial to address insecurity, but historic grievances have left a legacy of mistrust. The populations of both countries often perceive law enforcement agencies as either unwilling or incapable of providing protection from crime, illegal actions, or abuse. This perception is backed up by the actions of some security providers who do not see the need to interact with the public other than to obtain information required for investigations, or during instances of public disorder. There is little culture or practice of law enforcement agencies being accountable to the public. But there are also capacity issues as law enforcement agencies' abilities to respond adequately to the public's security requirements are hampered by limited material supplies and technical issues, such as too few neighbourhood inspectors, vehicles, radios, etc. Programmes promoting the development of relationships with and improvement of services to the public are essential in both countries.

Saferworld, working with local partners, the Foundation for Tolerance International, the Association for Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia and Youth Initiatives for Development, has been implementing a community security approach in the Ferghana Valley since 2010. Other international organisations – including Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – have adopted similar approaches. The community security approach aims to respond to perceptions of insecurity and conflict among local people by promoting greater cooperation and accountability between communities, authorities and law enforcement agencies. The process used to implement this approach is participatory and inclusive of people from different backgrounds and therefore helps to change negative behaviour and attitudes between divided communities and between communities and authorities.

This report identifies and summarises some of the most important lessons learnt by Saferworld's Central Asia community security programme over the past four years. It provides examples of where the programme's facilitation of positive interaction and collaborative problem solving has had an impact on community-authority relations; on relations between ethnic Kyrgyz, ethnic Uzbeks and ethnic Tajiks; and on improving cross-border relations on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. It identifies the key factors enabling success in these areas as effective local-international partnerships; focusing on the 'process' as much as the outcome; promoting learning through doing; building the capacity of existing institutions; and combining local-level change with national advocacy. The report also explores opportunities for responding to challenges together with other actors, including increasing sustainability; expanding to new geographic areas; increasing the impact across borders; improving gender sensitivity; and raising public awareness.

The conclusion argues for the increasing role of the national authorities to promote the community security approach and provides recommendations to national and international actors working on or supporting changes to the way that security is provided in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

1

Introduction

Saferworld and local partners, the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), the Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia (ASTI) and Youth Development Initiatives (MIR), have been implementing a community security programme in the Fergana Valley since 2010. The community security approach aims to respond to perceptions of insecurity and conflict among local people by promoting greater cooperation and accountability between communities, authorities and law enforcement agencies. The programme contributes to democratisation, conflict prevention and increased security of people at the local level, because it empowers communities and creates space for communities to raise local security issues. It is participatory and inclusive of people from different backgrounds and helps to change negative behaviour and attitudes between divided communities and between communities and authorities.

In the Fergana Valley, the community security programme has contributed to making security provision at the local level more democratic by making the relationships between security providers, local authorities and community members more cooperative and accountable. It has contributed to improving inter-ethnic relations between ethnic Kyrgyz, ethnic Uzbeks and ethnic Tajiks by encouraging positive interaction and collaborative problem solving. It has also contributed to improving cross-border relations on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border by promoting cross-border problem solving when possible and, when no direct cross-border contact has been possible, it has promoted tolerance and constructive problem solving by community members together with local authorities.

This report summarises some of the most important lessons learnt by the programme staff working on the programme over the past four years. It aims to inform key actors working on security-related reform processes in the Fergana Valley of the importance of using people-focused approaches and to identify opportunities for cooperation between actors to jointly overcome existing challenges. The first section of the report provides a brief description of the security context of the Fergana Valley, particularly focusing on perceptions of security and security providers. The second section explains the approach and methodology used for promoting community security and its relevance to the context. The third section analyses the lessons learnt during the application of the approach, providing examples of impact, explaining the factors enabling success and exploring opportunities for responding to challenges together with other actors. The final section draws some conclusions and provides recommendations to national and international actors working on or supporting changes to the way that security is provided in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

2

Conflict and insecurity in the Ferghana Valley and the relevance of the community security approach

Conflict and insecurity in the Ferghana Valley

Of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia, the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan may seem the most visibly fragile. Both countries are struggling to provide a stable and secure environment for growth and development and large sections of the population are responding by opting for alternative sources of stability and security. Some of the most common survival strategies for the populations include emigration and seasonal migration. However, there is evidence that segments of the population (including young people) are looking to religious, ethno-nationalist and criminal structures for livelihood opportunities as well as provision of order and values.¹

In the border regions between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the Ferghana Valley, the daily issues that people face are most often linked to socio-economic problems related to isolation and the presence of disputed borders. Against a background of economic decline and hardship, Saferworld and partners have witnessed a trend of increasing ethno-nationalism on both sides of the border. At the same time, the unifying factor of a joint Soviet legacy and language feels increasingly distant to the new generation of young Central Asians. Increasing differences, perspectives and values are exacerbated and brought to the fore by competition for scarce resources and opportunities and often result in mutual suspicion, displays of intolerance and disrespect and violent clashes, particularly between young people.

The presence, behaviour and attitudes of law enforcement agencies (police and border guards) in the border regions can exacerbate tensions between communities. There are frequent incidents related to border crossings due to a lack of transparency about legal border-crossing requirements, corruption and lack of awareness of rights and procedures among citizens. Local communities almost unanimously report bad relations with neighbouring border guards and police and often accuse them, particularly those belonging to neighbouring states, of harassment, intimidation and extortion. This not only has the obvious direct effect on negative perceptions of security in the communities, but also has an impact on relations with ordinary members of neighbouring communities. Community members who have been mistreated by neighbouring state representatives sometimes transfer their grievances to neighbours of the same ethnicity/nationality, especially when encountering competition and disagreement over resource use (water, land, soil, stones, building materials, roads,

¹ See Saferworld's research into youth perspectives on peace and security in Central Asia <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/640-nobody-has-ever-asked-about-young-peoples-opinions>

etc.). Even road traffic accidents in the border regions regularly lead to eruptions of violence or aggression along ethno/communal lines when authorities are not perceived to respond adequately and fairly to incidents.

In Osh and Jalalabad oblasts (provinces) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the violent conflict of June 2010 still has ramifications on everyday life. Although various national level aspirations for inter-ethnic harmony have been expressed and strategies for achieving them drawn up (e. g. National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2013–17), many of the grievances and structural inequalities at the root of the conflict remain largely unaddressed. While openly expressed fear and distrust between ethnic groups have faded with time, the relations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities are still often characterised by reservation and latent resentment.

One of the major complaints of communities in the isolated and peripheral regions in the Ferghana Valley is that they feel abandoned, unprotected and uncared for by their state authorities. At best the population perceives law enforcement agencies as either unwilling or incapable of providing protection from crime, illegal actions or abuse and, at worst, law enforcement agency representatives themselves are perceived as being complicit in or perpetrators of crime or abuse of power.

The Soviet legacy in both Tajik and Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies is that the police (and the public) typically understand their roles as agents of state control rather than as representatives of institutions charged with providing services and responding to the security needs of the population. They often do not see the need to interact with the public other than to obtain information required for investigations or during public disorder. There is little culture or practice of law enforcement agencies being accountable to the public. There are also material and technical issues (too few neighbourhood inspectors, vehicles, radios etc.) which limit law enforcement agencies' abilities to respond adequately to the public's security requirements. However, if these material needs are addressed without proper attention to fundamental shifts in behaviour, attitude and ways of working, any technical police support programme potentially risks supporting further corruption and abuse of power. This is why programmes which promote the development of relationships with and improvement of services to the public in general, and to vulnerable communities in particular, are essential in both countries.

Using the community security approach in the Ferghana Valley

Saferworld, working with local partners, has developed 'community-based approaches to security provision' ('community security approach' for short) in a range of conflict-affected contexts.² This approach seeks to improve security by supporting communities and security actors jointly to identify and implement locally appropriate ways of responding to causes of insecurity. The approach has also been taken up by other international organisations in Central Asia, including the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In Central Asia, Saferworld and local partners the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), the Association for Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia (ASTI) and Youth Initiatives for Development (MIR), have applied a community security approach to develop a programme specifically tailored to address the conflict and security challenges facing people in the Ferghana Valley (identified above). The Ferghana Valley Community Security Programme therefore aims to change the kinds of relationships and behaviour that leave conflict and security issues unresolved and lead to violence. Specifically, the programme activities build constructive relationships and cooperative behaviour firstly between communities and law enforcement agencies and local authorities, and secondly between ethnic groups in conflict-affected communities in Osh and Jalalabad and across contested areas of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Together, these changes contribute to people feeling safer in their communities and the environment being more conducive to peaceful development.

2 Saferworld's community security approach and experience are explained in Community Security handbook, Saferworld, 2014

The rationale behind the programme is to bring about long-term changes in the behaviour and attitudes of community members by building their skills (a) to analyse their own security challenges and find ways to address them collectively, and (b) to communicate and work constructively with relevant security/government authorities to implement locally developed solutions to their security challenges. Through this process, community representatives learn to direct their needs and demands to the right authorities in a constructive way, and also understand what they can expect from these authorities and how to hold them to account.

At the same time, the programme helps community representatives to work together across divisions of ethnicity and nationality (but also power and affluence) to address local security concerns. By working together, community members witness improvements in relationships and a reduction in tensions. This is because communication channels are created between them and people appreciate and learn that addressing issues in a constructive manner jointly is more effective than fighting about them or harbouring grievances.

The involvement of law enforcement agencies (police and border guards) and local authorities in planning and implementing local solutions to security issues identified by communities means that local representatives of security providers gain personal practical experience of the community security approach. Through this experience, they become more connected to the communities they serve and their image improves among community members and thus they are better able to prevent and respond to crime and insecurity. This improvement in the personal working conditions and the ability to do their jobs better helps law enforcement agencies and local authority representatives to understand that it is more effective to provide security in a respectful, accountable and responsive way.

Of course such changes in the attitude and behaviour of local law enforcement agency representatives are not enough to effect change at a national level. Therefore, the programme also provides information and evidence about the impacts of the community security approach in the Ferghana Valley (as well as its application in other contexts) to national level authorities and law enforcement agencies. This way, the people who are able to effect change nationally can follow practical examples of how the current law enforcement system needs to be reformed in order to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement by making sure that it is responsive to people's needs and accountable to the people it serves.

Overview of community security process

The programme uses a ‘community security process’ to put the approach into practice in the communities we work in. The steps of the process from identifying communities to evaluating impact are described below.

Identification of the target location

Through a community security assessment, locations are identified with existing or potential for conflict and instability and key conditions in place to engage on these issues.

Identification of existing local mechanisms

Within the identified locations, existing community groups, initiatives or mechanisms (e. g. crime prevention centre members, *mahalla* (neighbourhood) committees, village committees) are identified with the potential to form or work as a community security working group (CSWG).

CSWG capacity building

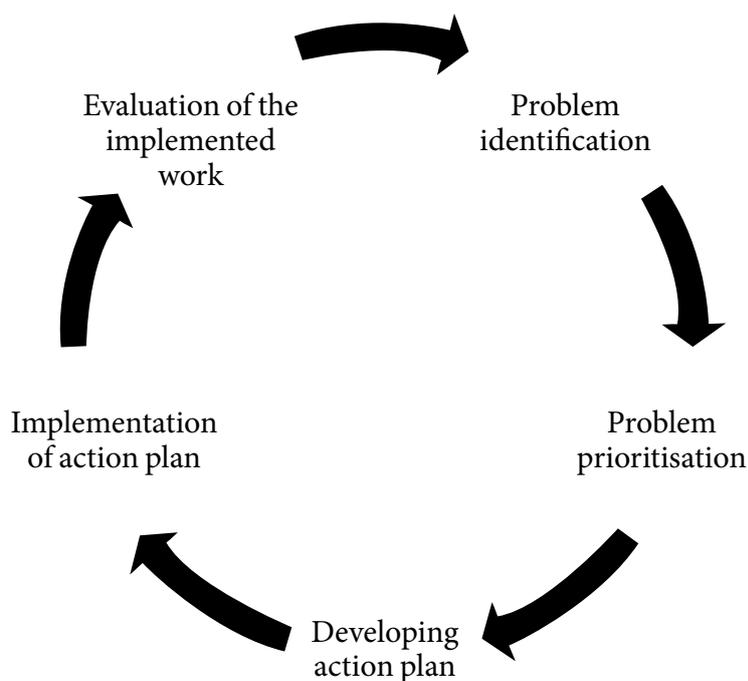
Members of potential CSWGs, which include marginalised community members such as ethnic minorities, women or young people, (and where appropriate, local authorities and law enforcement agencies), are introduced to ideas about people-centred conflict prevention and security provision and receive training on participatory and democratic approaches to conflict prevention and community security. This approach emphasises the equal role of community members, law enforcement agencies and local authorities working together to solve community security issues. Capacity building on different themes is continued regularly throughout the programme.

Identification of CSWG problem and solution

CSWGs are supported to go through a process of identifying => analysing => prioritising conflict and security concerns, a process that is crucial to understanding the underlying causes of conflict and insecurity (rather than just focusing on their most obvious manifestations), and to hear different perspectives and concerns. These can be perspectives of different ethnic groups, but also of women and young people, whose security concerns are often not taken seriously by authorities and security providers. Wherever possible, local authorities and law enforcement agencies are involved in the working group meetings. While Saferworld and partners facilitate the first cycles, skills are gradually transferred so that CSWGs are increasingly able to facilitate these processes on their own.

CSWGs are then supported to go through a process of planning => implementing => evaluating responses to causes of conflict and insecurity. In those responses, emphasis is placed on finding solutions built on consensus, ensuring that they are conflict-sensitive and do no harm, and that they can realistically be implemented using local resources. While small seed grants are provided for the implementation of responses, local contributions (e. g. local authority budgets, labour, materials) are vital to avoid creating dependency on outside funding. In addition, while these small seed grants contribute some means for communities and authorities to address some of their community security issues immediately, the emphasis is on the participatory discussion and decision-making process – a change in attitudes and behaviour – rather than the grant. Saferworld and partners support the capacity and fundraising efforts of the communities who are told from the beginning that they will have to fundraise and find local resources to implement their community security action plans, which means that the results are more sustainable than conventional ‘small grant’ projects.

These problem-solving steps in the community security process can be seen in the cyclical model below. The reason we describe the process as a cycle is that CSWGs in target communities are supported through the process several times, each time with less and less direct facilitation from Saferworld and partners and with CSWG members taking on more tasks themselves, thus increasing ownership and sustainability.



Participatory evaluation

During the process, communities are supported to define their own criteria for success and how they will tell if there is change occurring. This form of participatory monitoring supports the aim of changing attitudes and behaviour and at the same time contributes to the participatory evaluation methodology.

Trust-building activities

Depending on the specific situation, further parallel steps might be required to build trust between and within communities (especially if there had been tensions before, such as in the border area or between different ethnic groups), and between communities and police/local authorities. In this case, further trust-building activities, such as sporting, cultural or skill-sharing/educational activities involving the different parties, are supported. Rather than organising these activities on behalf of or for the relevant parties, Saferworld and partners support community members to engage in the organisation and facilitation of the activities themselves, thus learning valuable communication and organisational skills at the same time, making these activities more sustainable.

3

Achievements and lessons learnt

Part one: impact on situation

The community security process has improved relations between communities, law enforcement agencies and local authorities. It has therefore led to security provision that is more responsive to local concerns and more accountable to local people and thus more democratic.

Case study 1

When the programme started its activities in Jalalabad oblast, CSWG members in Bazar-Korgon were resistant to cooperating with local authorities and law enforcement agencies. When Saferworld and partners proposed involving these authorities in the CSWG's action plans, the response was often "We don't need to involve them in our work. We can do this alone. They will just turn up at the last minute and claim it was all their doing". Therefore, Saferworld's partner FTI engaged separately at first with the local police representatives and specifically helped the local Juvenile Police Inspector develop an idea which he wanted to propose to the CSWG members. FTI then facilitated a meeting between the inspector and the CSWG, during which they decided to work together to organise an information campaign for schoolchildren on how to behave in an emergency situation. The local Juvenile Police Inspector had had this idea for a long time, but had not known how to go about implementing it or had not had the appropriate community contacts to support him. Together, the CSWG and the Inspector organised for representatives of the fire inspectorate, the Ministry of Emergency, local authorities and police to present and discuss information for children about what to do in case of earthquakes, fire, floods, etc. This first positive experience of organising something quite uncontroversial together resulted in closer cooperation and trust between the CSWG and the local authorities and law enforcement agencies and subsequent action plans were developed and implemented jointly.

Case study 2

Quarterly police 'reporting days' – open police-community meetings – were introduced by presidential decree in June 2012 in Tajikistan in order to increase police-community collaboration and accountability. However, such reporting days were not widely implemented. Police officers were not comfortable with holding and organising the meetings, and residents were distrustful of the police and uninterested in attending, believing that police officers would not address their concerns anyway.

As part of its support to CSWGs, Saferworld and local partner ASTI worked on building relations between the police and communities, and were able to increase both police confidence and communities' interest and trust to make these meetings a success. ASTI worked closely with Isfara district police to arrange a series of local and regional police reporting days in the communities of Khoja Alo and Somonien in the cross-border area: together with the local CSWGs, they contacted local government officials and mobilised the community.

At the meetings, police answered questions from community members, informed them about the general security situation, reported the results and achievements of their work, shared their contact information and introduced new police staff members. Communities also received information about new laws and legal procedures (like border crossing and foreign land pasture usage). Over time both police and communities have come to see the value of these meetings. Communities have gained confidence to ask about more sensitive issues, such as violence between Kyrgyz and Tajik youth, conflict between local community members and border guards, and domestic violence. The police have also improved their presentation and communication skills and have started holding the meetings regularly on their own, even changing their location (e. g. in the fields during harvest season), in order to be more convenient to local people.

Community security has contributed to improving inter-ethnic relations in the programme's target communities. By working together in CSWGs to identify and address security issues in their communities, people from different ethnic groups have been encouraged to interact and build constructive and cooperative relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The CSWG provides a 'safe place' for raising and discussing sensitive issues and offers a permanent joint, multi-ethnic mechanism for addressing fears and tensions in a conflict-sensitive and locally relevant way.

Case study 3

Relations between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in Bazar-Korgon, a predominantly Uzbek village in the Jalalabad region, deteriorated after the violent conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks which shook southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010. Fifteen people were killed and 205 buildings destroyed in the village, and those living there feel that the causes were deep-seated inter-ethnic hostility and the inability of law enforcement agencies to stem the violence. Many perpetrators of offences in the 2010 events were not officially named or punished, which led to ongoing accusations between ethnic groups and distrust towards government employees, who are perceived as unable to prevent and solve inter-ethnic problems.

Saferworld and partner organization FTI helped to establish a CSWG in Bazar-Korgon, comprised of both ethnic Uzbek and Kyrgyz representatives. At the beginning of the programme in 2010, the relationships within the group were tense (reflecting the tension in the wider community) and the group was reluctant to work together and to discuss and address issues other than some basic needs of school children or community sanitation. They avoided mentioning the most pressing community security issue in their district during working meetings – the fear of reprisals from police and of attacks by representatives of the other ethnic group – yet when within their own ethnic groups, they blamed the other group for past violence and expressed fears it would happen again. Through a carefully facilitated process through which the CSWG members consulted their wider communities on security threats, the topic of inter-ethnic distrust was raised as a security concern and brought to the table for CSWG members to analyse. Because the group had built up enough trust through their work on the basic needs of the community and because the CSWG had developed into a 'safe place' for discussing sensitive issues, Saferworld's partner NGO FTI was able to facilitate a very sensitive discussion on inter-ethnic relations and help the group to develop a comprehensive action plan to address the tensions and distrust identified. The CSWG went on to implement an action plan involving roundtable discussions with the local authorities and law enforcement agencies to raise the community's concerns as well as some practical confidence building actions with the wider community. This CSWG has built on its success during subsequent community security cycles by taking on additional sensitive issues for the community, such as fears of radical extremism, most recently in 2014.

Case study 4

The CSWG in Amir-Temur district of Osh in Kyrgyzstan identified and prioritised violence between young people as a source of insecurity for their community. The district is predominantly ethnically Uzbek, but its neighbours are predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz areas and is located along a significant artery of city traffic and is the site of regular fighting between teenagers, not necessarily inter-ethnic in nature, but at times coloured by inter-ethnic divisions. Through the community security process, in 2014 the CSWG members supported its younger members to lead a campaign they called 'Youth without Violence'. The campaign promoted peaceful coexistence and raised awareness of non-violent ways on how young people could address problems, including through support of relevant authorities.

Case study 5

The CSWG in Masaliev municipality of Batken oblast identified inter-ethnic tensions between young people as a community security priority in 2014. In response, they organised a Youth Festival of National Traditions during which four schools (monoethnic Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and a multi-ethnic school right on the border with Uzbekistan) within the municipality presented their skills in handicraft and cooked together. The festival served as a platform for inter-ethnic dialogue and trust-building between youth from different communities. After the success of the festival, the young organisers developed a joint plan to celebrate forthcoming holidays together, for which the local Youth Committee has secured funds from the local authority.

Community security can improve cross-border relations, even in very difficult circumstances. When cross-border collaboration has been possible, the community security approach has allowed community representatives from neighbouring communities from across the border to work together to address commonly identified security challenges. This has opened up channels of communication, allowed cooperative relationships to be built and has given such communities constructive rather than destructive ways of addressing their particular problems. During times of heightened tension when cross-border collaboration has not been possible, the community security process has taken place in parallel in both countries, focusing on improving relations and cooperation between communities and authorities to address priority security issues. This has enabled community members to take their grievances to authorities and try to resolve them with their help, rather than taking matters into their own hands and so risk a deterioration of relations with the neighbouring community.

Case study 6

The security situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border has been strained since the 1990s and there have been regular inter-communal tensions and incidents of violence during the past 20 years. Saferworld and its partner in Kyrgyzstan, FTI, and in Tajikistan, ASTI, set up CSWGs in parallel/neighbouring communities in Batken/Isfara oblasts in 2010. The CSWGs were supported through the community security cycle in parallel and participated in cross-border confidence building activities in order to prepare them for joint community security work. Then, when two or more CSWGs from across the border prioritised the same problems, they were brought together to develop plans to address them. One such problem was related to a road crossing on an undemarcated part of the border area where a Kyrgyz and Tajik road met. This crossing was the location of frequent accidents, which often resulted in fights and violent incidents, because the victims of traffic accidents did not feel that there was a fair means of investigation or compensation and community members accused corrupt authorities and traffic police (particularly from the neighbouring country) of abusing the situation. The community security process brought together community representatives from five affected communities, as well as local authorities and law enforcement agencies from both countries to analyse the problem and find solutions. A joint working group was formed, measures were implemented to improve road safety at the crossing and the contact details of the relevant authorities were distributed to both communities.

Case study 7

In January 2014 there was a sharp deterioration in the security situation for communities after a series of incidents involving exchanges of fire between national border guards on both sides of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Since then, it has not been possible to continue cross-border community security processes and CSWGs have instead continued to work in parallel (with the hope that eventually joint work can resume). CSWGs on both sides of the border have organised public discussions on cross-border tensions and clashes between youth; police open days, during which young people have met with Neighbourhood and Juvenile Police Inspectors; and training in conflict resolution and tolerance. While this parallel activity has not facilitated cross-border cooperation and relationship building directly, it has contributed to reducing tensions by (a) continuing to promote non-violent and collaborative problem solving and (b) encouraging community representatives to take their concerns and grievances to the authorities and work with them to resolve them, rather than taking matters into their own hands and risking another outbreak of violence.

Community security has helped to empower women and young people, who are often excluded from decision-making. By developing specific mechanisms that allow women and young people to participate actively and make their voices heard in the community security process, the community security approach gives women and young people the confidence to speak up about issues that concern them and to work with authorities and police to resolve them.

Case study 8

The Tajik village of Somonion in the cross-border region between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is described as a conservative area, in which decision-making has traditionally been dominated by male village elders. When Saferworld and ASTI established a CSWG there in 2010, only the older men of the village participated in meetings, while the young men and women either sat quietly in a corner or did not show up to meetings. Saferworld and ASTI coordinators organised several separate meetings with both women and youth representatives in order to build their trust in the process and their confidence to express their views. Programme staff supported women and youth representatives to conduct their own consultation meetings with their peers on their particular security concerns and then supported them to present these during the CSWG analysis and security problems prioritisation meetings. The reaction of the older men of Somonion was at first dismissive, but as it became clear that the female representatives had identified important issues (for example, wolves threatening women and children who collected water from a stream), they acknowledged that the problem was considerable and that they would not have thought of it themselves. Over time, the young and female members of Somonion's CSWG have become increasingly active and confident participants within the community security process and the value they add to the group has been acknowledged by village elders.

Case study 9

The issue of domestic violence was identified by the CSWG in the Vorukh enclave of Tajikistan in 2014 during community consultations with women. Domestic violence was prioritised as the most pressing security concern and a community action plan developed. The action plan included a roundtable discussion of the issue, which was intended to raise awareness among the authorities and law enforcement agencies as well as village elders and subsequently resulted in a permanent working group being formed to tackle the issue locally. Such a result was only possible because of a gender-sensitive consultation process, which enabled women to express their concerns in a safe and comfortable environment, and because of the growth in confidence of the women's representatives in the CSWG to raise the women's concerns and argue for them to be prioritised. As a result of the increased awareness and mobilisation of the local authorities around this issue, they organised further sensitisation sessions in 15 mahallas on domestic violence; more than 500 citizens took part in it, and information on how to prevent and where to address the cases of domestic violence was broadcast on local TV.

Part two: factors of success

The impact on the situations detailed above has been achieved over a four year process that has been constantly monitored, reviewed and adapted by Saferworld and its local partners (FTI, ASTI and MIR) as well as external evaluation experts. The programme team has produced a wealth of materials and guidance on best practice for community security programming in the Ferghana Valley, but in the section below, the team has distilled the key factors in the success of the programme.

- *The facilitators of any community security process need to have in-depth and reliable local knowledge and to build trust with communities* over a lengthy period of time for the process to be successful. Saferworld formed long-term partnerships with reputable local NGOs and has, over time, developed close working relations and integrated international and local teams, with staff from a range of backgrounds, ensuring that teams have the right mix of international experience and local knowledge and understanding. In the first instance, Saferworld, as the international partner, kept a low profile and did not interact directly with communities, but instead supported local partners to analyse and plan their work based on international experience and knowledge of the local context.
- *Communities need to be considered as partners, rather than beneficiaries.* Communities' experience of international donor-funded programmes is often that they disperse large grants and there is therefore often an expectation that this is what all programmes will do. Our partners were often asked 'how much have you got to spend?' when they started engaging with community members. Countering such expectations is difficult and takes time. It requires regular explanation of the programme aims, the long-term nature of the programme and that it will take a long time for people to feel a change in their environment and there is therefore a risk that people will become demotivated. However, this time and effort has paid off, because CSWGs have developed into proactive, long-term partners of the programme, with a real commitment – beyond any immediate material gain – to changing the way that their communities deal with security problems.
- *The process of building relationships between communities, authorities and law enforcement agencies is as or more important than the issues they are addressing together.* At the beginning, the programme team were sometimes frustrated by the 'banality' of the security issues prioritised by communities and were tempted to push them to address harder security and conflict issues. However, it became clear that the experience of addressing less serious issues together with local authorities and law enforcement agencies gave the CSWGs the skills and confidence to tackle more complex issues later on. Because of the consultative and participatory nature of the community security process, CSWG members learnt valuable skills about the benefits of inclusive decision-making and collaborative action. Local authorities and law enforcement agencies also developed their understanding of the benefits of democratic and responsive services by working together with CSWGs. Therefore, what the CSWGs address together is often far less important than how, because the how creates long-term change in behaviour and attitudes.
- *Changing behaviour requires different ways of learning.* The programme provided some training to CSWGs, local authorities and law enforcement agencies. However, the programme team has witnessed that the greatest impact on understanding and behaviour change has actually been through 'learning by doing' with programme team accompaniment and facilitation and also through 'learning by seeing and sharing' (most often in the form of experience exchanges between CSWGs and authorities). This is a long-term approach that is more costly (in staff time), but it is well worth the effort, as short training sessions are easily forgotten, while experiencing something oneself can have a life-long impact. At the same time, these kinds of 'experiential' learning activities have the added value of exposing participants to people from different backgrounds and facilitating relationship- and confidence- building. This works equally well for different ethnic groups visiting each other's communities or travelling to another community together as well as community representatives visiting another community together with their local authority or law enforcement agency representative.

- *Work is more effective if linked to existing local (conflict-prevention) structures.* There are existing structures in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPC) and mahalla committees, respectively³ – which are rooted in local history (in the case of mahalla committees) and have official legal foundations, making them more sustainable than newly formed initiative groups. Both these types of institutions come with their own historical challenges. Mahalla committees are often men-only, traditional and non-democratic institutions, while LCPCs are often dysfunctional, non-funded and composed of community representatives without the will or ability to undertake the centres' work. Where the programme was able to gain access to these structures immediately and felt it was constructive, we worked with them directly. Otherwise, the programme formed separate CSWGs to build the credibility of its representatives and the approach and has then later succeeded in merging CSWGs with or placing CSWG members into these existing institutions in order to spread the good practice developed. For example, in Mady district, in Osh oblast, Saferworld and partners established a separate CSWG comprised of community activists who were representative of the district, because the local LCPC was dysfunctional and had no credibility with the community or local authorities. By 2014 the CSWG had become active in addressing the very issues that the LCPC should have been addressing and had gained respect and credibility. Therefore, the members lobbied the authorities to reform the membership of the official LCPC and eventually succeeded in allowing them to become members and gained an officially recognised role in the community. The local authorities also allocated premises for the LCPC members to meet and resources to refurbish the premises in recognition of the useful work that the CSWG/LCPC was doing for the community.
- *In order to create systemic change beyond the local level, it is necessary to conduct advocacy at a national level simultaneously and work in partnership with other organisations.* Having learnt how the community security approach can be effective in changing attitudes and behaviour at the local level, the programme engaged with national policy makers to promote the uptake of the approach elsewhere and to ensure that the challenges that could not be addressed at the local level were addressed at the national level. For example, the programme provided training in community security approaches and processes to mid-level police managers from the Kyrgyz and Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs in order to help gain higher-level understanding of and support for what neighbourhood inspectors in the programme's target communities were experiencing and implementing. In order to increase effectiveness, the programme partnered with other organisations to advocate community security approach with national decision-makers. In Kyrgyzstan, the programme helped to establish a coalition of civil society organisations and activists interested in improving security provision and law enforcement – the Civic Union for Reforms and Results. Through the Civic Union, the programme staff were able to raise locally identified challenges at a national policy level. For example, the Civic Union conducted research and analysis into the different existing mechanisms for police-community cooperation and accountability, including Saferworld and partners' CSWGs, and recommended that these be replicated nationally.

3 Mahalla committee (neighbourhood committee) – traditional local authority structure at village level in Tajikistan; LCPC (Local Crime Prevention Centre) – district level forum established in 2008 in Kyrgyzstan, which brings together local authorities, police and community representatives to prevent crime and conflict at the local level.

Part three: what more needs to be done

Although a lot has been achieved already, Saferworld and partners still have further work to do to ensure that people feel safe and secure in their communities and that authorities and law enforcement agencies are responsive to people's needs. Saferworld and partners have identified the following areas of work that need to be developed in order for community security programming to have greater impact.

- In order to **increase sustainability**, LCPCs and mahalla committees need to be provided with institutional development support to ensure that their members have and continue to develop the right skills for working with community members to analyse their problems, plan solutions and mobilise people to implement change. Saferworld and partners have done this in the 19 target communities, but in order to increase the impact on peace and security in the Ferghana Valley, this change needs to be amplified and replicated in other communities. National and local authorities can play a part in allocating resources to these institutions, but international and local NGOs are probably best suited to build their capacity through training, coaching and mentoring.
- In order to **replicate the community security approach** across Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, national authorities need to endorse and enshrine the approach and the process in national policy and seek partners to help implement the approach at country level. This will require significant reform within and support from the Ministry of Interior of both countries. It will also require continued support and good coordination among international organisations working on security issues including OSCE, UN agencies and EU Delegations.
- In order to **increase the impact of cross-border work**, it is necessary to (a) ensure that the perspectives of local people living in cross-border communities are considered during inter-state negotiations affecting life in the border regions (e. g. demarcation/delimitation, road construction, natural resource management, etc.); (b) change the behaviour and attitudes of border guards. As well as suffering from institutional weaknesses (corruption, low capacity, bad equipment, etc.), the conscripted soldiers posted in the border regions of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan perceive their role as protectors of state territory, rather than policing and regulating the border. If responsibilities were clarified, they could facilitate legal cross-border trade and interaction and prevent illegal cross-border activities. While Saferworld and partners have been able to influence the behaviour of a small number of border guards for a short time (before they are rotated), to have increased and sustainable impact and potentially to change the mandate of border guards would require the cooperation and partnership of the border agencies of both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (which are a part of the state security services – State Committees of National Security (GKNB)). Such national level changes could be supported locally by the inclusion of border guards in cross-border community security processes. That way, they would be able to tap into local information, needs and concerns and could improve the effectiveness of their border policing activities too.
- In order to **increase the gender sensitivity of security provision**, more needs to be done to ensure that the authorities and law enforcement agencies tasked with responding to the security needs of all citizens are more aware of how they need to adapt in order to understand and respond to the needs of women as well as men. While Saferworld and partners have worked hard to empower women in the communities where they work to voice women's concerns and argue for them to be taken up by the CSWG, it is clear that many problems remain unaddressed because of the way that authorities are used to dealing with 'women's issues'. Domestic violence and abuse is known to be widespread, but law enforcement agencies and local authorities are ill-equipped and often unwilling to address these so-called 'family issues'. Institutional reform is required to ensure that law enforcement agencies and authorities reflect the communities they serve and that they have the capacity to protect all citizens.
- In order to increase the effectiveness of community security approach, it is necessary to **raise public awareness about programme achievements**. Broader public outreach of programme activities by engaging the mass media, including partnership and press tours, will improve understanding of the community security approach by all stakeholders, including state and international actors.

4

Recommendations

Saferworld and partners will continue to work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to ensure that the achievements and changes described above are built upon further. However, in order to increase the positive impact of the programme on the lives of people living in and beyond the Ferghana Valley and to help it grow into a peaceful and prosperous region, we need the support and cooperation of local, national and international actors. Therefore Saferworld and partners have developed the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND DONORS WORKING ON SECURITY ISSUES IN KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

1. Ensure that any assistance provided to the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's law enforcement agencies addresses not only their material needs for equipment and training, but also the behavioural and attitudinal changes that are required to ensure that these materials are used appropriately and do not potentially further contribute to violence and insecurity in the region.
2. Continue to support the development and implementation of community security approaches to address conflict and insecurity in Central Asia.
3. Support the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to develop and implement comprehensive reform to the security sectors of their respective countries by providing the information, experience and advice needed to make real changes to the systems and also ensuring that support is conditional on achieving agreed milestones. These milestones should be independently monitored by civil society organisations with expertise in the security sector.
4. Encourage the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to remain open to civil society cooperation in the security sphere.
5. Ensure that international support to security sector reform is well-coordinated between different international donors. For this purpose, a forum for international actors working on security sector reform (and related policy areas) should be established and regular meetings held to share information, achievements and challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS OF KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

1. Ensure that a thorough reform process is carried out in the Ministry of Interior to make sure that the principles of community security are reflected at all levels and in all sections of law enforcement agencies. The reforms should focus on developing the mechanisms, structures and institutions that will change the behaviour and attitudes of law enforcement agency representatives, making sure that they are providing a responsive and accountable service to all citizens and working with communities and other authorities in a cooperative manner.
2. Encourage and enable the state border agencies to work together with local and international organisations to change the mandate and mentality of the agencies at the national level and change the attitudes and behaviour of border guards at the local level. This will ensure that the agencies contribute to peaceful coexistence and constructive relations with the citizens of neighbouring countries and will help them become more effective at policing and regulating illegal activity at and across international borders.
3. Ensure that the perspectives of local people living in cross-border communities are considered during inter-state negotiations affecting life in the border regions (e. g. demarcation/delimitation, road construction, natural resource management, etc.). This means that local people on both sides of the border should be consulted prior to decisions being made about issues which affect their lives and that constructive and mutually beneficial solutions should be developed together.
4. Continue to work together openly with national and international organisations to promote peace and security in Central Asia.
5. Allocate funds and develop a strategy to support the capacity of LCPCs and other local police-public partnerships to ensure that they can become effective mechanisms for addressing insecurity and conflict across Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This will be best achieved with the support and cooperation of civil society organisations which have long-term experience of working with local-level institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

1. Work together with national and local authorities to ensure that the reforms necessary for community security approaches to be implemented across Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are developed and realized in the relevant ministries and national institutions. This will require civil society organisations to both advise the national governments on policy choices based on their experience of working on security issues and also to monitor the implementation of these policies at the local level.
2. The 'Civic Union for reforms and result' has had considerable success in its advocacy for evidence-based policy changes in Kyrgyzstan and there is a lot that civil society in Tajikistan could learn from their approach. Tajik civil society organisations which are interested in conflict and security issues should seek to put this learning into practice in their own context.

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

COVER PHOTO: A young man in traditional Kyrgyz “kalpak” hat enjoys the opening of Tash-Bulak’s tolerance festival.

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