

From Saferworld's executive director, Paul Murphy

When accounting for our achievements and considering our challenges each year, we also ask ourselves: "How well do we live up to the core principles and values that shape our work?" Foremost is a certainty that people must remain at the centre of what we do, particularly those affected by conflict and insecurity; people's concerns and difficulties must always be at the heart of efforts to build peace.

Last year, I listened to testimonies from people we work with in South Sudan, Myanmar, Sudan and Kenya. It's always humbling to spend time with those who have to contend with or flee conflict and insecurity. In each context, to a greater or lesser extent, I heard familiar stories of distress and what it means to live with the traumatic consequences of insecurity, violence or being dispossessed. I also heard many inspiring accounts of people fighting back to reclaim their rights, and people working for peace in their communities.

We can only legitimately add our voice to those demanding protection, justice

and necessary political change for peace if we stand beside and listen to people affected by violent conflict, such as women, young people and socially and politically marginalised groups – not as victims, but as agents of change. That's why, as you'll see in this review, we are spending more time with diverse peacebuilders around the world – from Yemen and Kyrgyzstan to South Sudan and Kenya – where we support people to identify problems and to come up with ways to address their biggest safety concerns. This includes working closely with women's groups, ensuring peace processes include women's voices in discussions and decisions, and supporting youth groups and youth leaders as they address violence and exclusion in their lives and communities.

Last year was not without its challenges. In particular, we experienced the ongoing pressure being put on civil society and peacebuilders everywhere. Public scepticism of international efforts to bring peace remained, but also justified calls for the ethical norms

people rightly expect international assistance to adhere to (such as higher safeguarding standards). Now, more than ever, we and our partners must make the case for what we do and why it works, but we must also continue to reflect critically on our own efforts – learning from them and finding ways to improve our effectiveness. With this in mind, over the last year we initiated an assessment of how we work with others, to explore practical ways of how we can better fulfil our commitments to our partners.

Overall, despite the challenges, it was still a year where we exceeded our goals, illustrated in this review by some examples of our work. Appreciation goes not just to my colleagues for their dedication and expertise, but especially to our partners who made it all possible, and to our donors who entrusted us to use resources effectively in bringing positive change. Through ongoing collaboration with others, I look forward to achieving even more in the future.

Paul Murphy, executive director

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