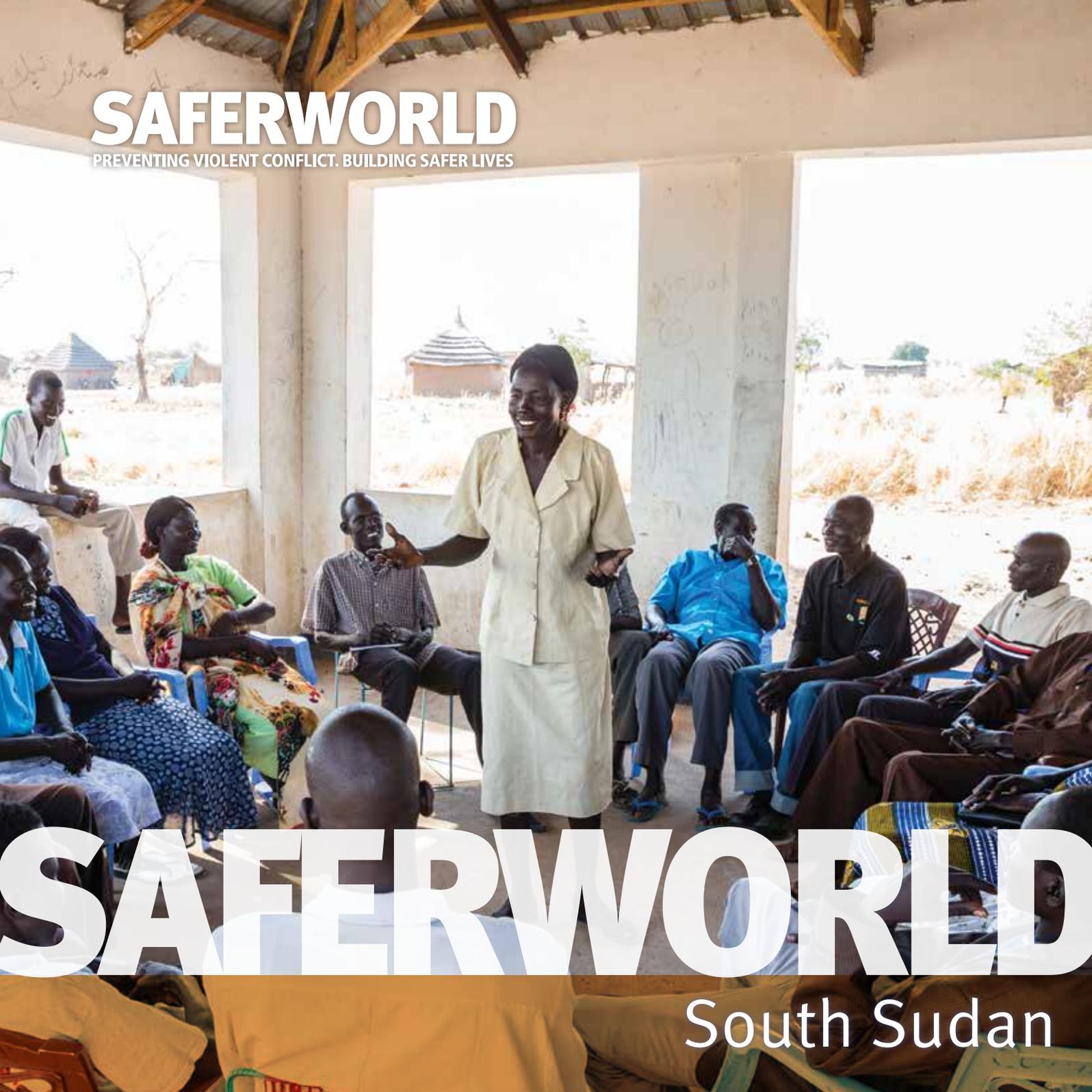


SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES



SAFERWORLD

South Sudan

In the context of ongoing war and local conflicts across South Sudan, people in the country continue to experience widespread and persistent violence. Conflicts are often exacerbated by ethnic polarisation, regional fragmentation, the proliferation and misuse of weapons, youth involvement in criminal gangs or armed groups, and cycles of violence based on revenge and cattle raiding. The role of gender – for example, resorting to violent forms of masculinity to humiliate adversaries – also drives conflict. Underlying these conflicts are complex national and political tensions, the breakdown of traditional methods of dispensing justice, and a lack of accountable, transparent and inclusive governance.



About us

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in 12 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Saferworld has been working with the people of South Sudan since 2008 to address the deep-rooted problems of violence and insecurity. We work with partners in all ten former states and with communities, civil society, local authorities and traditional leaders. We prioritise working with women, young people and others who are excluded from decisions that affect them, and we engage with non-state security providers where appropriate.

We bring together communities and authorities to identify and respond to the major conflict and development challenges that they face. Alongside our work with communities, we promote more responsive, inclusive and community-focused engagement regionally, nationally and internationally.

We also lead the Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF) in partnership with swisspeace in South Sudan. This innovative programme – funded by the British, Swiss, Dutch and Canadian donor missions – helps donors and the aid community better understand the complex conflict dynamics across South Sudan, ensuring that aid is used in a way that contributes to peace rather than worsening tensions.

Saferworld's achievements in South Sudan

- With our partners, we **set up and trained 94 community action groups (CAGs) on community security and peacebuilding.**
- An independent external evaluation of our community security and peacebuilding programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that the programme contributed to improved peace, security and resilience of communities due to the strategies adopted by Saferworld and partners, including the formation of CAGs to lead and support local-level peace initiatives.
- Together with our partner, Solidarity Association for Rehabilitation and Recovery Affairs, we brokered a successful peace agreement between the Baari and Omorwo communities, which significantly reduced levels of violence and provided hope for an end to the seven-year conflict in Torit.
- As a result of the consistent work of CAGs and support from Saferworld and partners in organising roundtable discussions to address peace and security issues, **at least ten officials from local authorities in South Sudan (including county commissioners, mayors and the governor of Jubek State) acted on community requests.** This included issuing orders to allow communities to get legal land titles, banning random weapon fire, allocating budgets for building police posts, and closing rubbish dumping sites.
- Following a series of confidence-building meetings that Saferworld facilitated in Wau between civilians and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, the state governor of Wau directed security forces to open roads leading to opposition-controlled areas. The South Sudan People's Defence Forces released 40 forcefully recruited child soldiers, and a commander issued an order banning soldiers from carrying guns in markets and residential areas in response to communities' requests.
- **We trained 44 officials from local authorities on peacebuilding and conflict resolution techniques** and ways to work with communities. This led to a notable increase in authorities responding to requests from communities to tackle the widespread availability and use of firearms by civilians.
- After Saferworld facilitated a series of gender-based violence (GBV) awareness-raising campaigns and workshops for couples, CAG members from Nambira, Mamenze and Matakurungu in Tambura county supported communities to resolve issues related to GBV, women's property ownership and other family disputes in 15 households.
- **We provided four spaces for peer-to-peer learning for our partners,** based on their experiences of working with communities.
- Together with our partners, **in 2018 we organised eight state-level roundtable discussions** to identify safety concerns and provide recommendations for strengthening community security. The recommendations and issues raised at these state-level discussions were outlined in a national briefing paper that was presented at a national event in Juba in July 2019.

Our strengths

- **Over seven years' experience of working with South Sudanese partners on community safety and security concerns.**
- **A large and experienced South Sudanese team comprised of experts in community-based conflict resolution, gender and youth engagement.**
- **Offices in Juba, Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, Maridi, Rumbek, Torit, Wau and Yambio.**



Traditional chiefs of different ethnic groups sit together in Wau.
© Marcus Perkins/Saferworld

10

LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICIALS ACTED ON COMMUNITY REQUESTS



15

HOUSEHOLDS RESOLVED ISSUES RELATED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN NAMBIRA, MAMENZE AND MATAKURUNGU

40

FORCEFULLY RECRUITED CHILD SOLDIERS RELEASED FOLLOWING MEETINGS IN WAU



Our work

The main goal of our work in South Sudan is to contribute to the improved security, peace and development of communities. We do this by advocating for and building active, informed and inclusive societies that value women and men equally, and that have more effective and accountable institutions. We work with national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), authorities, donors and security providers to ensure that their efforts to achieve sustainable peace and development are sensitive to complex conflict and gender dynamics.

To achieve our strategic objectives, Saferworld works with partners to influence behaviours and strengthen relationships between and among individuals and communities, authorities, civil society organisations (CSOs) and external organisations. Through our programme, we aim to achieve a range of results:

- Individuals and communities can better push for effective responses to conflict and insecurity and can promote peace. Communities and CAG members use their increased analysis, dialogue and peacebuilding skills to identify, prioritise, analyse and resolve local- and state-level peace and safety concerns, engage in reconciliation processes and support the establishment and development of other groups. They do this both independently and collaboratively through established mechanisms – for example, through CAGs, police-community relations committees and peace committees.
- Authorities are responsive and accountable to people's needs and aspirations. Formal and informal authorities and service providers responsible for peace and security consult more frequently with communities and incorporate their concerns into their responses, operating to standards that are transparent, inclusive and legitimate.

- CSOs play an active role in influencing authorities and building capacities for peace. CSO partners and other civil society actors plan, facilitate and implement conflict- and gender-sensitive community security and peacebuilding programming with formal and informal authorities, service providers and others. They advocate on behalf of communities for transparent and accountable policies and services, contributing to community resilience at the local, state, regional and national levels.
- National authorities, donors, international NGOs, and multilateral institutions listen to communities' security priorities and start to integrate them into national and international policies, practices and interventions.

“

Day-to-day living in Wau is based on fear and a lack of trust. It is based on the belief that communities are against you or that the government favours one particular community. Person-to-person initiatives like these are crucial for bridging the gaps between communities and reaching out to other groups to address tensions.

Peter Machar, Saferworld Policy, Advocacy and Communications Coordinator in South Sudan.

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Partners

Saferworld works in partnership with the following organisations in South Sudan:

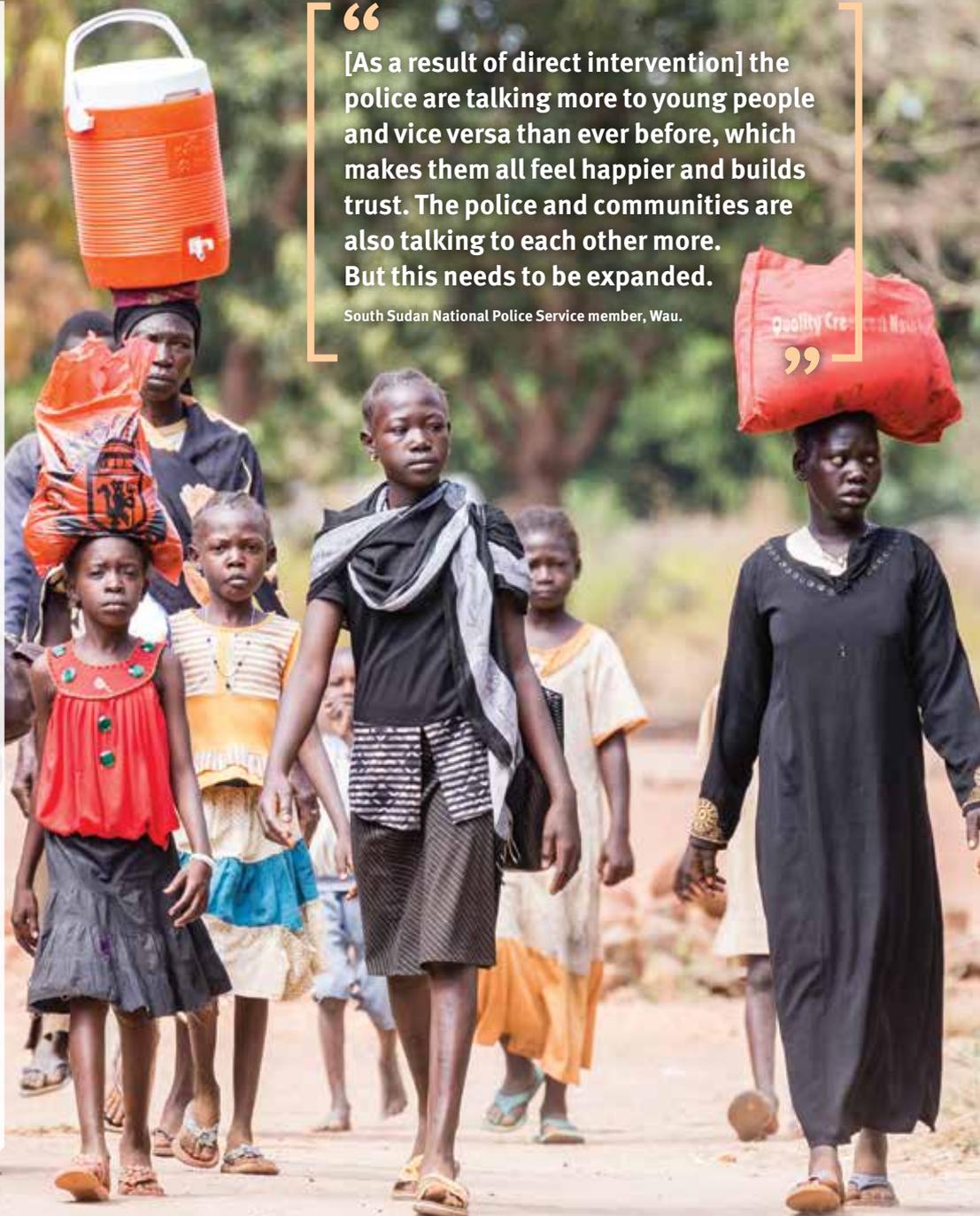
- **Community Initiative for Partnership and Development** (CIPAD) – Aweil Centre and Gok Machar
- **Action for Children Development Foundation** (ACDF) – Aweil East
- **Maridi Service Agency** (MSA) – Maridi
- **Church and Development** (C&D) – Bor, Duk and Twic East
- **Disabled Agency for Rehabilitation and Development** (DARD) – Rumbek Centre, Rumbek East, Aluakluak and Cueibet
- **Upper Nile Youth Development Association** (UNYDA) – Malakal
- **Centre for Livelihoods, Peace Research and Poverty Reduction** (CLIP Poverty) – Bentiu
- **Arise Socio-cultural Foundation** (ASF) – Yambio and Tambura
- **Organization for Non-violence and Development** (ONAD) – Juba
- **Organization for Children's Harmony** (TOCH) – Kuajok, Gogrial West, Tonj North and Tonj South
- **Solidarity Association for Recovery and Rehabilitation Affairs** (SARRA) – Torit

“

[As a result of direct intervention] the police are talking more to young people and vice versa than ever before, which makes them all feel happier and builds trust. The police and communities are also talking to each other more. But this needs to be expanded.

South Sudan National Police Service member, Wau.

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Our approach

For more than 15 years, Saferworld has been using community security approaches in over ten countries and diverse contexts affected by conflict and insecurity. In 2012, Saferworld began working with civil society partners in Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal States in South Sudan to pilot community security approaches in the three counties of Wau, Kuajok and Tonj North.

Since then, we have used our ongoing experiences, evaluations, outcomes and lessons learnt to refine and improve our programme design and approach. Since 2014, we have expanded our community security programme to cover an additional 19 counties across South Sudan (Aweil, Aweil East, Gok Machar, Bor, Duk, Twic East, Juba, Rumbek Central, Rumbek East, Yirol West/Aluakluak, Cueibet, Torit, Maridi, Tambura, Yambio, Tonj South, Gogrial West, Bentiu and Malakal), bringing the total number of programme locations to 22.

Saferworld has helped to set up 94 community working groups. These groups bring together nearly 3,000 members – women and men, ethnic and faith groups, young people, CSOs and local authorities – to better understand security and justice needs and how different groups can work together to address them.

With our support, CAGs identify and prioritise community security concerns by examining underlying sources of insecurity, coming up with action plans, implementing projects with the support of Saferworld's seed funds, and involving the wider community, security providers, local authorities and other service providers in addressing security issues.

Since 2014, we have expanded our community security programme to cover an additional 19 counties across South Sudan

We set up monthly police-community relations committee meetings, bringing together police and the communities they serve to discuss safety concerns and come up with solutions. We also discuss issues with 'hard to reach' non-state groups such as the *galweng* (cattle protectors).

Through our advocacy, Saferworld links our local-level community security work to state, national and international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the European Union.

Our work in community security aims to promote community ownership and leadership and to improve relationships between communities, civil society, authorities and institutions by providing opportunities for collective action. Community security is not just about the end result of safer communities; rather, it focuses on the process of changing behaviours and building relationships.



Gender, peace and security

According to the UN Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index, South Sudan has one of the highest levels of gender inequality in the world, characterised by various forms of discrimination against women and girls and by GBV. Institutionally and culturally, responses to gender-related problems have been weak.

We integrate a strong gender perspective in to our community security programming, working with partners to understand the particular challenges faced by women and girls and supporting women's participation in public debate, policy-making and peace processes. By including a gender focus in our planning and programming, we ensure that issues surfacing in the programme design phase, especially those raised by women and girls, are addressed in implementation.

With our partners, we conduct research with women's organisations on what meaningful participation means and on how donors and other national and international groups can better consult women and integrate their concerns into their programmes. To ensure active and meaningful participation of women in our community security programmes, we make sure that they are represented in community action groups (CAGs). We have also formed 'women sub-clusters' within the groups to give women a safe space where they can freely discuss issues specifically affecting women and girls. They then bring these issues into discussions within the CAGs to ensure their action plans are built into wider community action plans.

“

There were rumours that if we go to other areas of the city, we would be killed. We wanted to break the chains of fear, suspicion and mistrust among our people.

Agum Majak, a member of a women's group organising inter-ethnic exchanges.

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Young people

Despite the fact that 72 per cent of people in South Sudan are under 30 years old, young people are overwhelmingly marginalised by the political establishment. They are excluded from peace processes and kept out of government and political posts. They are often unable to voice their concerns in debates about constitutional reform, development planning or political decision-making – areas that are typically dominated by a small political elite. Because of this lack of representation, young people across the country feel disenfranchised and disillusioned, and continue to be vulnerable to manipulation by political leaders and mobilisation into armed groups.

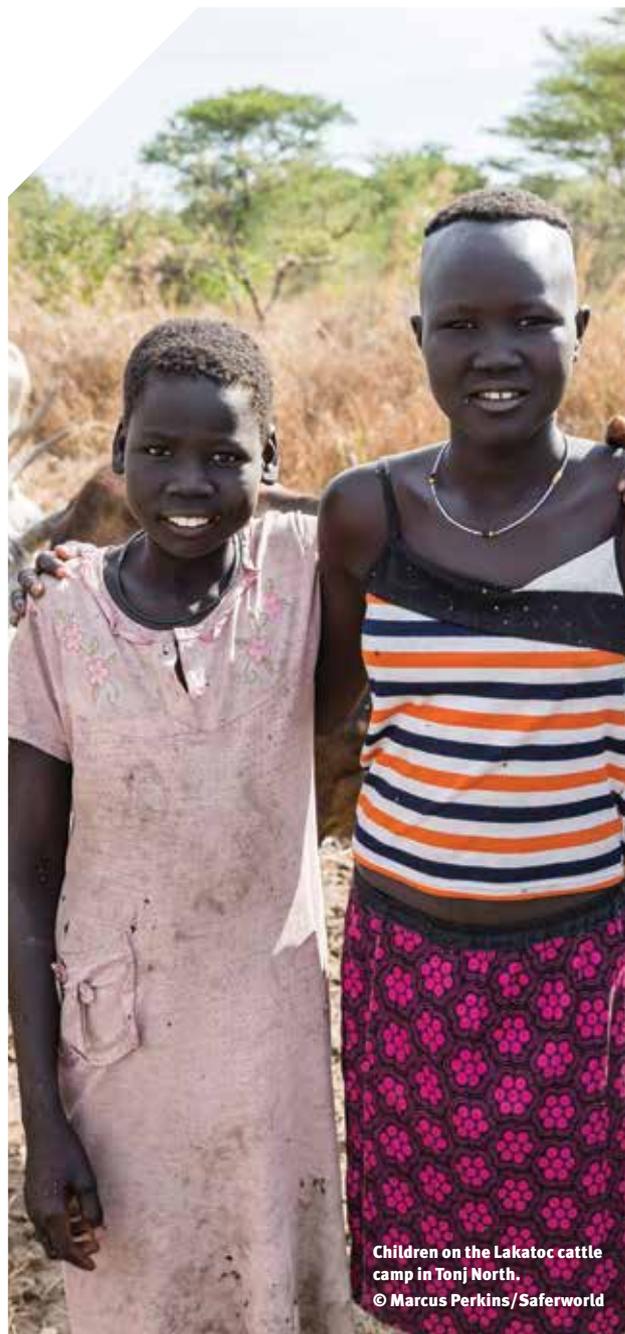
Saferworld aims to bring young people together from across South Sudan. We encourage these young people – who are geographically, ethnically and economically diverse – to talk to each other, build trust, and develop their skills and knowledge, leading to better coordination and constructive dialogue on peace and democratisation nationally and in their regions. To ensure active and meaningful participation and involvement of young people in our community security programmes, we make sure that they are represented in the CAGs and that they are involved in various community initiatives. Within the CAGS, we have also established ‘youth sub-clusters’ and we have employed a specific youth coordinator to drive forward this important work to ensure that young people’s voices are heard.

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Today marks the beginning of a new relationship among the youth groups ... a relationship based on mutual trust and togetherness.

Joseph Silvio, a leader of a ‘protection of civilians’ youth group.

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Children on the Lakatoc cattle camp in Tonj North.

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CASE STUDY

Not child's play: Recognising explosives in Kuajok

On his way home from school in Kuajok, a village in north-west South Sudan, 12-year-old Angelo ran into a group of kids his age playing with a rocket-propelled grenade shell on the side of a road. “The shell was stuck in the mud and the children dug it out and began to play with it,” he said. “I told them that this was a dangerous device that can kill all of us.”

Scenes like this are common in many towns like Kuajok, which are littered with unexploded remnants of the 1983–2005 civil war between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the government of Khartoum. For almost five years, South Sudan's people have suffered from the ongoing conflict between government and opposition forces. Despite efforts to clear the country of explosives, exposure to them continues to threaten

people's lives, and they are a particular hazard to children who are unaware of their dangers.

But Angelo is astutely aware of the threats they pose – he has learnt from training and awareness-raising campaigns delivered by Saferworld and our partner, the Organization for Children's Harmony, who have set up three community groups in Kuajok. As part of these campaigns, participants organise public meetings and radio talk shows and give presentations to state parliaments on the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the threats they pose. After Saferworld trained community groups in Kuajok on SALW, they found that illicit weapon ownership was the single most pressing concern for many people in the community.



When Angelo came across the curious children on the roadside, he instantly recognised the rocket-propelled grenade shell from the presentations he had attended during the training. His quick action may have saved their lives. Angelo contacted Majak Akol Manyiel, a member of one of the community groups who has taken part in efforts to tackle the risks of SALW.

Once Majak arrived at the scene, he cordoned off the area and alerted residents to stay clear until further notice. He reported the incident to the UN Mission in South Sudan – the peacekeeping operation in the country – which removed the device and detonated it at a safe distance from residential areas.

The presence and proliferation of weapons is one of the most pervasive problems facing South Sudan. Armed violence and accidents have killed many civilians, including women and children. Last year, a child accidentally shot and killed his brother in Gogrial, using their father's gun which was left unattended in their house.

Angelo is taking forward what he has learnt to play an active role in raising awareness about the dangers of arms. His story proves that children can contribute significantly to making communities in South Sudan safer.

CASE STUDY

Road to recovery:

Addressing conflict through dialogue in Torit

Decades of conflict in South Sudan have torn communities apart. Many people still struggle to live in peace or earn a living. Esther and Hakim work in Torit county to bring people together to address tensions and to discuss their concerns.

“I lost my husband during the war in 1994,” said Esther, a mother who lives in Bur, in the south-east region of South Sudan close to the Ugandan border. 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 could get an education. “There was no proper schooling for the children here,” she said. “They were constantly disturbed by the gunfire. I almost ran away also. When I have some money, I send it to them for their school fees.”

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

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

Esther’s colleague Hakim talks about the ways that the Solidarity Association for Rehabilitation and Recovery Affairs reconciles different members of the community after violence broke out several years ago. “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 said. “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.”

While armed conflict has disrupted travel across much of South Sudan, Hakim and Esther have worked with communities to take a proactive approach. “We also engage communities on child protection,” said Hakim. “We bring people together with armed groups and authorities to discuss how to better ensure child protection and road safety.”

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.”

“

We bring conflicting communities into dialogue.

Hakim from the Solidarity Association for Rehabilitation and Recovery Affairs.

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Esther, who works for Saferworld's partner Solidarity Association for Rehabilitation and Recovery Affairs, facilitates a focus group with women in Torit West.

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CASE STUDY

“Why do people want to kill each other?”

Addressing conflict in Malek, South Sudan

With support from Saferworld and our partner, Church and Development (C&D), communities played a critical role in de-escalating tensions in Malek, South Sudan, bringing over 2,500 people together to find a solution to the resource-based conflict.

The majority of the Longar and Akuei sub-clans of the Guala community in Malek in South Sudan are pastoralists and they rely heavily on grazing land and water for their animals. In 2017, a decree was issued to replace the country’s existing ten states with 32 new ones. With the establishment of the new states, the resource-rich area of Matok in the village of Malek – around 19 kilometres south of Bor – became off limits for the Longar clan. Tensions flared with the Akuei over restrictions on access to these resources – which were vital for the livelihoods of both groups.

Young people from both clans took up arms in a show of territorial defence. Forces from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army responded rapidly and tried to defuse the situation but the army was outnumbered and unable to calm the tensions.

There was a three-day stand-off between the two clans, with communities caught in the middle. Eventually community elders stepped in and, after some time, managed to convince the young people on both sides to stand down and talk things over. But the potential for violent clashes remained.

Community groups – a platform for peace

Together with our partner C&D, Saferworld has been working in the Malek area since July 2017. We support a community group of 30 people to meet regularly to discuss the security concerns of the community and to lead on finding solutions.

The stand-off between the Longar and Akuei clans became a major concern of the community group. They suggested that a dialogue between the clans could de-escalate the situation. After three weeks of negotiations between the two clans, community leaders and the armed young people finally agreed to attend a three-day dialogue meeting – organised by Saferworld and C&D in collaboration with local and state authorities.

Promoting peaceful coexistence

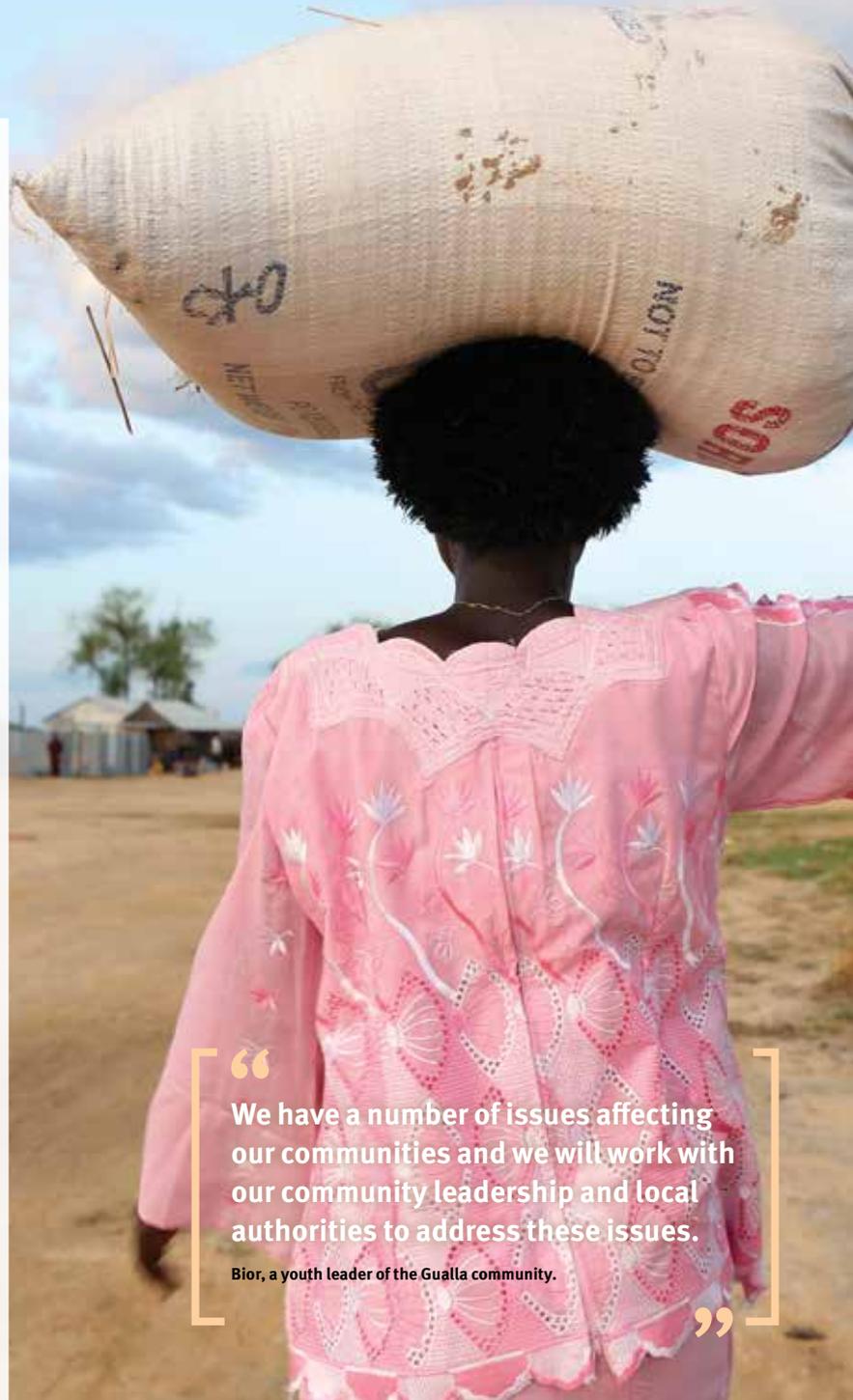
After a lengthy process of planning and encouraging people to participate, the meetings were held in a local church. The attendance was overwhelming. “People just kept coming in,” said Diing Kuir, Saferworld’s Project Coordinator in Bor. Around 2,500 participants, including women, young people, army commanders and religious leaders, attended.

The state governor, Phillip Aguer, kicked off proceedings by trying to get to the heart of the conflict. “Why do people want to kill each other?” he asked. This opened the floor for discussions, and the sub-chiefs, representing the feuding clans, expressed their thoughts on the potential drivers of the tensions and how these could be addressed. Grievances were critically examined and ideas were presented from across the community.

By the third day, considerable progress had been made. The Longar and Akuei sub-clans had committed to living together in the new administrative units and to sharing the area’s rich resources. “We have a number of issues affecting our communities and we will work with our community leadership and local authorities to address these issues”, vowed Bior, a youth leader of the Gualla community.

The Gualla community as a whole committed to settling future disputes peacefully and asked for further support from Saferworld, C&D and the South Sudan Peace Commission to support people to build peace in their communities.

Despite positive signs of cooperation, the bishop of Kongor Diocese, Right Reverend Gabriel Thuch Agoth, highlighted the need for these meetings to create a legacy of peace and understanding: “Community members need to forgive each other if any agreement between the parties is to last.”



“

We have a number of issues affecting our communities and we will work with our community leadership and local authorities to address these issues.

Bior, a youth leader of the Gualla community.

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Research and analysis

Saferworld's research focuses on ensuring that concerns and recommendations from communities, authorities and CSOs feed into state and national dialogues. We work in close cooperation with South Sudanese partners to ensure that our research is grounded in their nuanced understanding of conflict, peace and security. Topics we have researched include community-based solutions to the threats posed by the proliferation and misuse of weapons, community perspectives for peace, and the role of non-state actors in the country.

Between July 2017 and February 2019, Saferworld – together with our partners – organised eight state-level roundtable discussions to identify peace and safety concerns and provide recommendations for strengthening community safety. The events brought together state-level and local authorities, heads of organised forces (military, police and national security), UN agencies, national and international NGOs, community-based organisations, community members, religious leaders, youth leaders and women leaders. We published briefings to present the main findings of these discussions, and we gave recommendations for national, state and local government as well as for CSOs for improving peace and stability.

Based on identified concerns and recommendations from communities across the country, in July 2019 we brought together over a hundred national and state authorities (including a representative of the Ministry of the Judiciary) for a discussion in Juba on the findings of the Saferworld briefings.

The discussions addressed how the recommendations could be taken forward for improved security and peace in communities.

Following on from our 2017 publication on informal armies and the role of community defence groups in South Sudan's civil war, we conducted research between November 2018 and March 2019 on how state and non-state security and justice institutions respond to (and create) conflict and insecurity in Torit and Kapoeta States (located in the former state of Eastern Equatoria). The findings – which seek to understand the ways in which formal and informal institutions interact and how this affects people's security and access to justice – can help guide recommendations on how to improve security and justice in the country.

Community security assessments

Together with our partners, Saferworld uses community security assessments as an entry point to understand security and conflict dynamics in all our project locations. These assessments help inform and adapt our work to better address people's needs. These community security assessments have allowed us to identify a range of factors contributing to conflict, including ethnic tensions, intra- and inter-communal conflict, cattle raiding and revenge killings, domestic violence, proliferation of weapons, and a lack of resources and services such as access to healthcare, education and water.

Learning

Saferworld is committed to creating and sustaining a culture of learning. Saferworld's 'outcome harvesting' approach focuses on behaviour and relationship change across five categories (communities, civil society, local authorities, and national, regional or international actors) and at all levels (local/community, state/sub-national, national, regional and international). The approach allows for programmes to be more sensitive to complex conflict and gender dynamics. It also promotes analysis of and adaptation to changing contexts, and brings frontline staff, partners and beneficiaries into wider conversations with different groups (including civil society, local authorities and development actors).

With partners and communities, we collect and analyse evidence about what authorities (local, state and informal), communities and individuals have started to do differently, and we aim to assess the extent to which this change is a result of our work. We work backwards to determine whether and how the project contributed to the change by asking a few core questions about the change in behaviour.

A recent external evaluation of our community security programme found that as a result of our support, communities were better able to analyse conflicts, engage in dialogue and contribute to peace. It also found that local, state and informal authorities are increasingly consulting with communities prior to making decisions on security issues, especially in cases of emergency response. In addition, partners have developed their skills and are now doing more peacebuilding, monitoring and research.



Madelina is a community security working group member in Wau.

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Front cover photo: A community security working group meets in Warrap state.

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Back cover photo: Water collection in Kuajok.

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