



THE REAL PEACEMAKERS OF 2025



**PEACE
DIRECT**

**IMPACT REPORT 2025
HIGHLIGHTS**

Foreword

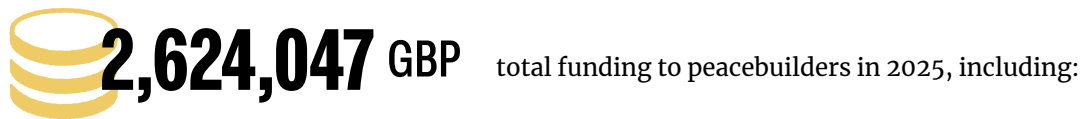
2025 will be remembered as the year when the international aid system came crashing down. The wilful destruction of USAID was followed by sweeping cuts to overseas aid by governments across Europe. Some peacebuilders had 70% of their funding stripped away overnight.

But the need for peacebuilding didn't disappear with the money. Far from it. Which is why, in 2025, we supported 76 local peacebuilding organisations across 33 different countries, the highest number in almost five years. Our partners saved lives, bridged divides and prevented violence every day. They amplified young women's voices in peace processes, delivered lifesaving care, created community-based justice approaches that ended cycles of conflict, and more. But they seldom have the chance to tell their stories.

So, as we confront the division being sown by right wing populists and powerful governments in 2026, we look to the stories that don't make the headlines. Stories of hope, community, and a relentless commitment to peace. **Join us.**



Dylan Mathews, CEO of Peace Direct



To read our full 2025 Impact Report, visit: www.peacedirect-impact.org

Cover Photo: Peace Connect attendees, photographed by Brian Ongoro.

Our partners

Not all of our partners are listed, for safety.

AFGHANISTAN

- 1 anonymous partner
- 2 micrograntees

Grants to 33 women-led organisations.
Humanitarian support to 1315 families.



DRC

- 4 partners
- 5 micrograntees

Addressed 17 conflicts affecting 6,900 households.
Saw 40% rise in community use of early warning system.
Supported 225 other local peace actors.



PALESTINE

- 1 (new!) partner



MYANMAR

- 5 anonymous partners

First responder network distributed essential humanitarian support post-earthquake.
Tackled gender-based violence.
Bridged divides between neighbouring communities.



SYRIA

- 3 partners
- 1 micrograntee

Supported 192 children and parents to access education.
Food baskets to 100 families.



SUDAN

- 2 partners

Fed 12,000 people daily in community kitchens.
Nobel-Prize nominated Emergency Response Rooms.
Distributed 25 microgrants totalling \$28k across 10 states.



COLOMBIA

- 3 partners
- 1 micrograntee

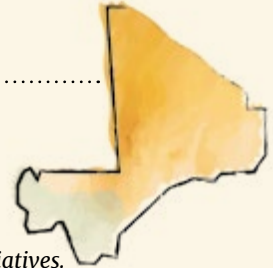
Helped create nationwide Social Service for Peace



MALI

- 1 partner
- 2 micrograntees

17 regional dialogues led to 28 grassroots initiatives.



NIGERIA

- 2 partners
- 4 micrograntees

Reached 850+ people.
Tackled gender-based violence.



PAKISTAN

- 2 partners

Hosted National Youth Peace Festival.
Helped restore water access.



ZIMBABWE

- 2 partners

Empowered 60 local Women Peace Champions.



The Real Peacemakers of 2025

What does it mean to be a peacemaker? In 2025, even the US President tried to claim the title. We think that building lasting peace doesn't mean airstrikes or real estate proposals, but working tirelessly, with care, love and patience to support your community, saving lives and ending cycles of violence.

So, we'd like to introduce the real peacemakers of 2025: local people whose work ranged from supporting women's inclusion and empowerment in Afghanistan, to bringing lifesaving care to isolated communities in Myanmar. One partner, Adeela, contributed directly to the lifesaving humanitarian work of the Emergency Response Rooms in Sudan, which were even nominated for that coveted Nobel Peace Prize.

Find more stories of impact at peacedirect-impact.org.

Bridging divides: Women helping women in Myanmar

In Rakhine State, women from different ethnic communities rarely spoke to one another. Hate speech, propaganda and rumours kept neighbours as strangers.

Our local partner instigated change, bringing women from across the region's ethnic communities together for something simple but radical: a regular, safe space to talk. They took care that every woman, regardless of her background, felt genuinely welcome. Respect, trust and friendship began to grow.

When armed confrontations between the army and rebel forces made it dangerous for the group's Rohingya members to leave their homes, the other women didn't wait to be asked for help. They bought sanitary pads, medicine and food, and made sure it reached their friends.

As the bonds deepened, their group became something more: an informal early warning network, with members sharing information about potential outbreaks of violence before they could escalate.



Saving lives: Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms



Sudan is living through intense violence and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. But communities are coming together.

Adeela, a youth-led organisation we partner with, has helped coordinate a network of Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) that are changing what crisis response can look like. From mobile health convoys to community kitchens in El Fasher that fed 12,000 people daily, the solutions are practical, local and shaped by the people who need them most.

That last part matters enormously. By involving both displaced people and host communities in defining priorities, ERRs reduce the tensions that poorly coordinated aid can inadvertently stoke.

Women-led ERRs have been especially vital – coordinating kitchens, organising grassroots initiatives, and shining a light on the disproportionate burden that displacement places on women.

Nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, the ERRs are proof of something important: that local, community-rooted organisations aren't just capable first responders. They can be architects of recovery and of peace.

Preventing violence: Super Peace Courts in DRC



In Uvira, disputes over land can turn deadly, with no reliable justice system to turn to. Our partner FOCHI stepped in.

FOCHI has built trust among local communities already, establishing 76 Peace Courts – local, accessible spaces where communities can find a way through their grievances. These courts are now the go-to mechanism for resolving disputes before they escalate into violence.

But some conflicts run deeper, spiralling beyond what a local court can contain. In 2025 FOCHI went further, launching three pioneering 'Super Peace Courts'. 30 skilled mediators – ten per court – bring together activists, community members, police, and local government officials around a different kind of table: one built on dialogue, dignity, and reconciliation.

The results speak for themselves. Across all three courts, land-related conflicts that once risked turning violent have been met with skilled, patient mediation instead, and so far 17 collective conflicts, affecting 6,900 households, were diffused.







Peace Connect



In October 2025, 563 peacebuilders began the journey to Nairobi, Kenya, from 88 countries across the Global South. Their destination? Peace Connect, a first-of-its-kind gathering co-hosted by Peace Direct and IPHRD-Africa. Peace Connect created space for peacebuilders to think collectively, reflect, rest, and explore what peacebuilding looks like in today's uncertain world.

What made Peace Connect different? The agenda was designed and led by participants on topics that truly mattered to them.

Through discussions, workshops, art, poetry, and a focus on wellbeing and reflection, Peace Connect helped build community and solidarity. Participants came together to learn, take collaborative action, build alliances, reflect, create, rest, and recharge.

"[...] the most incredible gathering I've been a part of."



When surveyed afterwards, almost all participants had made new connections or strengthened existing bonds, and loved the atmosphere of solidarity, wellbeing and global connection.

**Peace Connect doesn't end here
– we are carrying the spirit of peace.**



All Peace Connect photographs by Brian Ongoro.



#PeaceStartsHere

Peace Starts Here is a global campaign to spotlight and drive support for peacebuilders everywhere.

Over the past three years, we've supported 10 local peacebuilders to co-create the campaign's identity, narrative and vision. Highlights from Peace Starts Here include:

A [manifesto](#) – signed by more than 1,600 people around the world – to:

- 1** Make space for local peacebuilders to lead.
- 2** Fund more local peacebuilding efforts.
- 3** Support and strengthen local peacebuilders.
- 4** Centre peacebuilding around local people.
- 5** Learn from local peacebuilders.

[The Real Stories of Peace](#), an online and in-person space for peacebuilders to share their experiences.

And in 2025, sending 38 microgrants to peacebuilding organisations across 26 countries that would otherwise struggle to access resources. These initiatives range from protecting civilians and fostering reconciliation in the DRC, to amplifying young women's voices in Sudan's peace process. The grantees also joined a peer-to-peer learning and mutual support platform.

The campaign will continue, led by the co-creators, with financial support from Peace Direct until 2030.

“This campaign is relevant, necessary, and powerful. It has a huge role in breaking the wall that separates activists and much-needed support.”

Anna, campaign co-creator and peacebuilder.



Peacebuilders' voices



We've sat beside peacebuilders at the UN, with UK MPs, EU officials and in the US Congress. In 2025 we directly supported four partners from the DRC, Myanmar and Pakistan to join the annual CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding in Geneva – a space where local peacebuilders' voices are rarely heard.

We worked with the four partners to co-lead an event with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office on measuring peacebuilding, and supported Afghan women to advocate at the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

We co-organised the [Stand with Civil Society](#) campaign in June 2025, in response to sweeping funding cuts across the globe. And we published [Decolonising Philanthropy](#), which shares 197 recommendations on how philanthropy can become more equitable and effective in supporting local civil society.

We've also supported our partners' own advocacy work. In 2025, we visited our partner AJCAD in Mali to attend their National Forum for Youth and Women, which explored the roles of women and young people in peace advocacy and leadership.



Acknowledgements

We exist to support local peacebuilders, and we are endlessly grateful for the incredible work our partners do around the world. We sincerely thank all of our supporters – from the members of the public to trusts, foundations and governments funders who put their faith in us. We are particularly grateful for the kindness of those who give regularly, and those who remembered Peace Direct with a gift in their will, ensuring peace is a part of their legacy.

As in previous years, we would like to thank Google for providing us with free advertising, which helps drive traffic to our website. We also received pro bono support from Pracedo, a Salesforce consulting firm. We're grateful to the values-driven businesses who chose to work with Peace Direct this year – Ben & Jerry's, Teemill, Ebury, and Vivienne Westwood's Foundation. This was not just solidarity, but active, creative and tangible support.

Thanks to the designer of this report, Alexander Heming-Johnson, and the freelance editors who supported us. Finally, Peace Direct's staff, interns and Board should be recognised for their dedication and hard work to ensure that we advance in our mission every day.

We have used AI tools to support us in drafting some of the content in this report, in careful consideration of Peace Direct's AI usage policy.

Our funders in 2025

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Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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J A Trust

Sulney Fields Trust

Network for Social Change

William P Bancroft Charitable Trust

Peace Nexus



Photo credit:
PSH Micrograntee,
Wimat Development
Foundation, Uganda.

Read our full 2025 Impact Report: www.peacedirect-impact.org.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US

info@peacedirect.org

+44 (0)20 3422 5549 (UK)

+1 (202) 734 8053 (USA)

Peace Direct UK

1st floor, Dynamis House
6-8 Sycamore Street
London EC1Y 0SW
UK

Peace Direct US

1203 K Street, NW
Washington, DC
20005
USA

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