Peace
The front line is local
The stories of people building peace are not the ones that make the headlines. We see the suffering in Yemen, feel the heartbreak of the Manchester attacks and witness lives destroyed in Nigeria, Syria, DR Congo, Somalia and so many more places that don’t even reach our screens or papers.

The world is battling war and violence, and conflict is tearing across communities around the world. It touches and destroys lives from Paris to Pakistan. Divisions in our communities closer to home are reaching worrying heights. The work of building peace has never been more urgent.

In 2017, we helped 22,000 people do just that in 12 countries around the world. Led by local people, we tackled the causes of violence at their root and rebuilt lives after war had torn them apart. At the heart of all this lies our passionate belief in non-violence and the power of local action. Peace will never be sustainable if imposed from the outside.

In spite of violence in DR Congo intensifying, we directly reached 2,745 people to become more resilient. In spite of the growing influence of extremist groups, we supported 620 people in Pakistan to become active peacebuilders in their communities, countering radicalisation and the reach of extremist groups. In spite of bombs leaving homes destroyed and people disabled in Syria, we helped those affected by the war to gain practical employment skills, reducing isolation and creating livelihoods for the future.

Throughout this past year, we have had the privilege of working with incredible local organisations, supporting people on the frontlines of conflict to stop war and build peace, one person at a time. With your support we have changed the lives of thousands of people, created safer communities and built better futures. With your belief and your backing, we have all made a difference, together. We’ve shown what a spirit of togetherness can achieve in a time when it seems to be slipping away from us.

All this painstaking work sits beyond the view of the international media. But local peacebuilders are taking action every day to keep not just people, but hope, alive. This impact report tells their story.

Dylan Mathews
Chief Executive
The year in numbers

Led by local people, we tackle the causes of violence at the root, and rebuild lives after war has torn communities apart. We are dedicated to making peace a practical option for as many people as possible, and these figures highlight some key successes in 2017.

22,393 people directly supported through Peace Direct in 2017.

In DR Congo, 380 community mediators were trained to support the running of local Peace Courts and resolve conflict locally.

13,772 people reached in Sudan to prevent outbreaks of violence through non-violent means.

300 women in Somalia received loans through Village Savings and Loans Associations to set up their own businesses.

2,353 incidents of violence and human rights abuses in Burundi reported on by our local partner, across all 18 provinces of the country.
In Pakistan, 620 young people at risk of military recruitment were reached and supported to become active promoters of peace.

1,194 people were supported through agricultural cooperatives in DR Congo, improving livelihoods and income for individuals and their communities.

21 local peacebuilding organisations came together for a ‘Peace Exchange’ in Zimbabwe to analyse causes of violence and future prospects for peace.

136 child soldiers were successfully rescued in DR Congo.
Our strategy

Our ambitious five year strategy (2016–2020) aims to deliver more impact for conflict-affected communities, through the power of local action. We will continue to support the vital activities of our local peacebuilding partners, saving lives, providing paths out of violence and building better futures – stopping wars and building peace, one person at a time.

Our strategy stems from our commitment and passion to provide local people risking their lives on the front line of conflict with the resources they need to carry out their work, and to amplify their voices and their actions.

We will do this by supporting local peacebuilding organisations and extending our portfolio of local partnerships. Our existing and new partners will be strengthened to enable them to play a more central role in peacebuilding efforts, and we will encourage learning and sharing with a dynamic network of partners and other civil society actors.

We will focus on supporting people affected by violent conflict in countries emerging from conflict. We will ensure that those at risk of radicalisation and extremism are helped to reintegrate into their communities and to contribute to reconciliation and long-term peace.

We will support early warning and rapid response activities, so that localised violence is stopped before it escalates, and local organisations are better able to tackle the root causes of extremism and find non-violent solutions.

We will increase our advocacy activities, continuing to be a champion for local peacebuilders globally. We will seek allies across different sectors to ensure increased support and a greater participation in decision making, policy and practice for local peacebuilders.

We will continue our commitment to being at the forefront of learning and reflection on what works in the field of local peacebuilding, as well as what support the local peacebuilding sector needs from outsiders. We will commission comprehensive evaluations for every programme and will take the time to continuously reflect and analyse existing practices and assumptions, as well as piloting new ideas and initiatives with our partners.

We will invest in fundraising to build strong relationships with supporters, and to diversify and grow our income. Through our marketing and communications activities, we will reinforce our position among key audiences as a leader in locally-led peacebuilding, and in mapping, convening and supporting local peacebuilders.
Primary goals

- Early warning, early response and violence monitoring
- Amplifying the voices of local peacebuilders
- Tackling the root causes of violent extremism
- Strengthening our existing partners and expanding our reach
- Supporting people in countries emerging from conflict to rebuild their communities
- Deepening our learning and building an evidence base

Supporting goals

**Fundraising and Communications**

We will invest in fundraising and communications to build strong relationships with supporters and diversity and grow our income so we can achieve more with our partners.

**Systems, Staffing and Structure**

We will invest in people, training and learning to ensure staff are motivated, processes are efficient and a high quality of work is maintained across the organisation.
In the last decade there has been a dramatic growth in violent extremism. Marginalised men and women are drawn in from around the world. From Paris to Pakistan, lives are destroyed. Supporting local peacebuilders who work in their communities offers a credible and important non-violent approach to tackling violent extremism, a point made in the most recent Global Terrorism Index.

In 2017, we supported local organisations in Pakistan, Nigeria, Somalia and Syria working to combat radicalisation, extremism and marginalisation in their local communities. It is as urgent as it is dangerous, and activists are at constant risk of being identified and attacked, but their brave work ensures those at risk of radicalisation and recruitment can turn away from violence.

Pakistan 009
Syria 012
Somalia 014
Extremist groups have great influence over social and political life, and often actively recruit in schools, universities and madrassas. Young people are particularly vulnerable to recruitment.

In the deeply conservative tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, we support local organisation Aware Girls, a network of young volunteers dedicated to supporting their peers to turn away from radicalisation and extremism.

**Impact**

Aware Girls continued their vital work to reach out to young people at risk of radicalisation, to enhance awareness among young women of their social and political rights, and how to access them. In 2017, their activities reached a total of 620 young people.

Through the ‘Youth Peace Network’, a group of 219 young peace activists, 497 young people were directly reached through peer to peer education, book reading circles, and peace education sessions. The ‘Youth Peace Network’ continued to maximise their reach into the community, through study circles and music workshops, providing participants with increased exposure to inter-faith dialogue, and bringing people together within a difficult context.

Many of the activists have conducted further outreach in their communities to do even more to extend the reach by providing workshops and dialogues at the University of Swabi, IM Sciences, and several secondary schools and madrassas.

Through the networks, Aware Girls are raising awareness among young people of alternatives to radicalisation and violence. Given that educational institutions are fertile ground for recruitment into extremism groups, this engagement is critical.

These outreach activities have an impact at both personal and community level in changing perspectives, especially among young people being exposed to messages of tolerance, inclusivity and non-violence for the first time.

Several members of the network took part in a small meeting with members of parliament to discuss the legislation, and how to include women in decision making processes, and one member took part in a meeting with the former President of Pakistan, and with people from the FATA region on the issue. Aware Girls, who felt the existing legislation limited women to traditional roles, reached out to women who had seen their human rights neglected in favour of tradition or custom. They supported these women by linking them with one another, with the media and with other CSOs, helping them to access justice and the services they need.

At another point several young women trained in the network came together to advocate against legislation that discriminated against women's political and social participation.

In 2017 Aware Girls established and launched the ‘Young Women’s Peace Network’. The network organised consultations with female peace activists to develop policy briefs on building sustainable peace and...
countering radicalisation, and approaching policy makers regarding the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes.

This work demonstrates critical steps being taken towards increasing the space for women in political spheres and enhancing their role in decision making processes. Further, they are significant in changing perspectives on women’s role in the construction of peace, and in supporting peacebuilding policies that are inclusive and sustainable.

In 2017 the successes of their work included developing training programmes and curricula to ensure the implementation of laws on women’s electoral and political participation. They also put together policy briefs on peacebuilding and countering radicalisation. Following recommendations made by the Network on increasing women’s electoral participation, the Electoral Commission of Pakistan committed to improve its elections rules and regulations.

Local voices from Pakistan

“My name is Irfan Afridi and I was born and raised in a very religious and conservative family in the FATA region (Federally Administered Tribal Areas).

Though I always remained respectful to women, deep down I considered them weak, irrational and emotional, and incapable of decision making at personal, familial or community levels. I felt bored, at times suffocated in my village, so when I was accepted to Peshawar University, I felt very happy. One of my friends recommended that I take part in a training run by Aware Girls. When I went there and saw a young woman with short hair talking about peace and religion, I felt resentment and wanted to quit, but my friend asked me to stay.

Gradually, I got involved in the discussion and kept thinking about the issues discussed even after the session ended. Slowly I began questioning my beliefs about gender, religion and politics. I was transformed from a rigid, intolerant and slightly aggressive young tribal man into a tolerant, non-violent peace activist. I felt more committed to my community and decided to play a role in peace and progress of FATA. I joined several other forums and networks too.

One day my uncle rang me and told me about a 15 year old boy in our village who had joined a local militant organisation. I left for my village the very next day and went straight to his house. The boy had been radicalised and was preparing to carry out a suicide attack in Afghanistan.

The first day, the boy refused to meet me, but the second day, I was somehow able to engage him. I spoke to him for several hours and during my time with the boy, the knowledge and skills that I had learnt during my training helped me a lot. I met the boy for several days and even persuaded him to accompany me to Peshawar.

After two months, the boy had totally abandoned the idea of becoming a suicide bomber and wanted to live a happy normal life. The boy resumed his studies and found a job in a workshop. My peace journey has continued and now I work with street children to make them productive, peaceful citizens.”

–Irfan Afridi, Pakistan

“I felt more committed to my community and decided to play a role in peace and progress.”
The brutality of the conflict in Syria has shocked the world. At least 470,000 people have died and 45% of the population has been displaced, according to The Syrian Centre for Policy.

There has been widespread use of indiscriminate aerial attacks, chemical attacks, mass detention and torture by the Syrian government, with support from Russia. The brutality of the government attacks has enabled extremist groups to flourish in the country, with continuous attacks from both sides leaving civilians ultimately paying the highest price.

In the face of such onslaught, there has been one consistent glimmer of hope: the persistence and bravery of civil society activists and volunteers working in the most dangerous circumstances imaginable. In the Idlib Governorate of Syria, we supported Zoom In: a civil activist group working to rebuild their community.

Zoom In themselves have had their offices destroyed and security remains a crucial risk for their work. But this has not stopped them making a difference.
“You have proved to yourself and everyone that disabled people have the ability to overcome their fears.”

Local voices from Syria

“My name is Mahmoud, I am 38-years-old and I’m from Marzaf, Syria. I am disabled because of the war in Syria. I recently attended a training workshop run by Zoom In and Peace Direct to learn how to repair and maintain mobile phones. After successfully completing the workshop, I set about contacting my relatives to secure the necessary funds to set up my own mobile maintenance shop. Because of my success in the training, my relatives supplied me with the funds I needed to begin work. I felt some fear of failure when the shop opened, but this fear disappeared after my first success in repairing my relative’s mobile phone.

Following the sessions, participants were better able to deal with their life-changing injuries sustained from the war, creating more optimism towards the future. Part of the success of the project so far has been Zoom In’s decision to use trainers who have also lost limbs as a result of the war to train future cohorts. They report this has increased connection with the trainees, given them a role model or mentor, and this has been a catalyst to increasing resilience and reducing isolation among those whose lives have been affected by conflict. Since the training, nine of the trainees have already gone on to start their own businesses, for example opening a mobile or software shop, or a maintenance workshop.

My mother cried a lot when she saw me in my new shop, as everyone in my family had kept my work as a surprise for her. She used to pray for me every day. One of my friends said: ‘you have proved to yourself and everyone else that disabled people have the ability to overcome their fears and live in society naturally, despite their disabilities’.”

–Mahmoud, 38, Syria
Somalia: Instability is far from over

More than half of the population in Somalia have been affected by war and famine in the past 20 years, and roughly 3.5 million people are facing a livelihood and food security crisis. Years of civil war and attacks by extremist groups have destroyed much of the economy and infrastructure, forcing millions to flee.

Impact

In Somalia, we entered the final year of a three-year project funded by the EU, supporting livelihoods and local peacebuilding efforts in the city of Kismayo in the southern part of the country.

This project supports vulnerable young people at risk of joining al-Shabaab build sustainable livelihoods, learn life skills such as good citizenship and become peace promoters in their community.

This year, 491 young people were trained to be plumbers, electricians, tailors, beauty technicians and office secretariats. In addition, 501 young people were trained in business management and given small grants of $300 as start-up funding to boost their subsistence businesses.

The programme also supported 300 women with loans to help strengthen their microenterprises. For those who did not decide to set up their own businesses, our local partner, SADO, also supported young people in gaining jobs or internships, and provided civic education training for 641 vulnerable young people, to increase group dynamics and reduce social tensions.

Part of the aim of the project is to build relationships between different communities and sections in the city of Kismayo. SADO reported that the relationships between the project participants themselves have been excellent.

Through activities such as youth advocacy groups, which reached 30 young people this year, people from across clan divides found common ground.

491 young people were trained to be plumbers, electricians, tailors, beauty technicians and office secretariats, doubling the number of trainees from 2016.

This year, severe drought and famine caused a crisis in the country, and the largest terror attack in Somalia’s history in Mogadishu in October which killed more than 500 people, showed conflict and instability is far from over.

Still, increased stability in the city of Kismayo where we support our local partner, SADO, is a sign of hope that a more peaceful future is possible.
Running away from my home and my family was the most devastating thing I’d ever had to do. But the alternative was unimaginable.

One evening, I heard my parents shouting. I couldn’t hear what they were talking about but I heard them saying my name. I started to worry. Later, when my father had gone to pray, I approached my mother to ask her what was going on. What she told me was heartbreaking. “Your father wants you to marry to a leader of Al-Shabaab,” she said, “he will pay 5,000 dollars to marry you.”

The thought of being married to a leader of a militant group was crushing. My future was destroyed. I had hoped for a peaceful future and an education. Instead, I faced being married to a fighter. I tried to convince my father that this wasn’t what I wanted but I knew we needed the money so desperately, and my family was terrified of the consequences of refusing.

Desperate to stop this, I asked a friend for help. She told me there was a local organisation called SADO in Kismayo, a large nearby town, who might be able to help. With the support of my elder brother, who was against the marriage, I escaped Jamaame and went to Kismayo in search of an alternative to the forced marriage.

Running away from my home and my family was the most devastating thing I’d ever had to do. But the alternative was unimaginable.

When I arrived in Kismayo my life changed forever. I told the organisation about my arranged marriage, and they told me they could help me build a better future. I enrolled on a course to learn how to be a tailor and dye fabric. After a few months of training, I graduated and was given a grant to start my own small business with three other girls I had met.

Today, we sell clothes to women in Kismayo and Jamaame. I’m able to send clothes to my mother for her to sell too. I make around $300 a month. Soon, I hope I can help my other siblings to come to Kismayo and learn skills like I have. I hope one day that my whole family can move to Kismayo.

Thanks to SADO, I am free to plan my own future. I no longer face a future of violence.”

– Sahra, 22, Somalia

**Local voices from Somalia**

“I was born in 1996, in the town of Jamaame in southern Somalia. The town sits on the banks of the Juba river, with lush farmland all around it. I was born into a big family. Like many others in the town, we lived on a farm.

We had very little money, so we all worked hard on the farm to support our family. The landlord took 50% of whatever we produced, but we had no other option. I remember working eight hours a day on the farm from when I was five years old. It was a tough job, and I remember my body aching after the long days. As we had such little money, my father couldn’t afford to send any of us to school.

Where I lived, many people feared violence from militant groups, especially Al-Shabaab. There had been violence in Somalia for as long as I could remember. But my father often talked about a time when Somalia was peaceful. I hoped that one day I would see a peaceful Somalia, and not live in fear of our town being attacked.

In the mornings, I would see other girls setting off to go to school. I always felt left out and disappointed when I saw them. I dreamed that one day I would have a better future than just becoming a farmer, but every day I was back in the field. By the time I was 19, I had little hope left that I could ever have a different life.

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Early warning, early response and violence monitoring

Local people are often the first to spot the warning signs of violence in their communities, and if supported early enough, they can respond effectively and stop the tensions escalating into violence. In 2017, we supported local activists and early warning and response systems in Burundi, Sudan and DR Congo to monitor and report outbreaks of violence or the threat of violence. They took action to stop local conflicts escalating, spoke out against human rights abuses, and secured the release of people wrongly arrested.
As many as 400,000 people have fled Burundi since 2015 when President Nkurunziza’s decision to run for a contested third term triggered mass protests, leading to horrific violence. The crisis in 2017 was characterised by further deadly human rights violations and outbreaks of violence. Intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrests, targeted killings, degrading treatment and forced disappearances continued throughout the year.

To combat this, we supported a network of 162 local activists to monitor and respond to incidents of violence, providing up to date information in a time when the government has closed almost all independent sources of news and information.

Impact

In 2017 the network reported on 2,353 incidents of violence collected across all 18 provinces. Thanks to the far-reaching monitoring activities of the network, a change in behaviour has been noted in the police and the government in some provinces, as the risk of being identified as a perpetrator of violence has increased. This demonstrates how the network acts as a deterrent to violence. Given that the recorded incidents included extrajudicial killings, attacks, and unwarranted searches, the impact of
citizen-led violence monitoring and accountability efforts is significant.

Our partner also responded to incidents of violence by implementing over 150 targeted peacebuilding activities, ranging from negotiating the release of people detained without charge by the security services, to youth mobilisation campaigns aimed at reaching young people at risk of getting involved in violence.

An evaluation of our work noted that due to the monitoring and reporting, interventions from police or local government were responding more quickly in almost all cases. This has led to more lives being saved due to the rapid transmission of information from citizen reporters. 26 response initiatives have been resolved, halting violence and easing tensions in communities across the country.

The cases resolved impacted the community in a variety of ways, leading to the release of those unjustly detained, the removal of a fine placed on a number of families, and returning livestock that had been wrongfully seized.

Through the youth mobilisation campaigns, our partner reached 126 young people directly, and a further 1,000 in surrounding communities. They also noted that there was a significant reduction in the amount of young people seen carrying weapons, wearing military or police uniforms, or undertaking paramilitary training.

The reports provided by our partner have been a unique source of information in Burundi, shared with 362 international actors, policy makers and peacebuilders, demonstrating the accuracy and depth of knowledge on the situation on the ground.

The network has helped to amplify the courageous actions and voices of those carrying out peacebuilding activities in a highly restrictive environment.

Local voices from Burundi

“My name is AB and I’ve been part of this work since 2016. After joining, I received training on information gathering techniques and monitoring of human rights violations. This helped me to do my work better.

One day I observed a fight. A man was being beaten up by two young men. I asked myself what I could do to help.

I called the prosecutor of a local court to intervene. Accompanied by his guard, the prosecutor arrested the boys and took them to the police station. The victim was taken to hospital.

Had it not been for the knowledge I acquired from the network, I would have entered the fight and used force to intervene. Because I did not know the origin of the conflict or who was causing it, I would have ended up as the second victim.”

-Anonymous, Burundi
Sudan: Two decades of conflict

Sudan’s devastating civil wars spanned more than two decades, with South Sudan finally gaining independence in 2011. However, violence across Sudan and South Sudan has continued, driven by a complex set of grievances and conflicts over power, identity and natural resources, with the turbulent region of South and West Kordofan in Sudan experiencing high levels of violence since 2011.

Over the year, six ‘rapid response’ interventions were implemented across six communities in the region. The aim of these interventions is to immediately mobilise to mediate and de-escalate tensions which could potentially turn violent and deadly. Their activities reached a total of 13,521 people, including the communities the Peace Committee members operated in, making them safer and preventing further outbreaks of violence.

Remarkably, despite a six month gap in funding for the work of the Peace Committees, all continued to operate and rapid response interventions continued, testament to the truly local and effective method of conflict resolution these Committees provide.

Efforts to settle conflict in South and West Kordofan remain extremely challenging and an increase of new armed groups means negotiating a final peace deal becomes fraught with difficulties.

Our work with our local partner, the Collaborative for Peace in Sudan (CFPS), focuses on their work with local Peace Committees spread across South and West Kordofan and Blue Nile states. These Committees respond immediately to outbreaks of conflict or violence, which are often the only way of mediating conflicts in rural communities.

CFPS reached 3,939 people directly and an additional 9,833 people indirectly, making a total of 13,772 people reached.
Local voices from Sudan

“A delegation of CfPS visited el Mujlad and invited representatives of the Abyei community. They came to a meeting and a committee was formed out of the Mujlad and Abyei Peace Committees. Together, they managed to resolve a dispute between herders and citizens in Anit, a district north of Abyei, which could have developed into a tribal conflict or possibly a dispute between two countries.

It started when a group of herders set out on their way to the south eight months ago. They stole food from one of the families living in the area and fled. The family informed the administration, who decided to prevent the herders from continuing their migration south – a decision which the group met with total refusal. They called for an armed group from the tribe to help them.

The joint Peace Committees immediately intervened. The intent was to stop the southern family preventing the herders from continuing their trip to the south. If prevented, herders would simply take this as aggression against them and tensions would increase. The Committees contacted local youth and the native administration (tribal chiefs) to stop them sending any armed groups, which prevented escalation of violence.

Following long consultations, the two Committees were able to persuade the herders to pay for the food they took, and they continued their trip to the south.”

– Rasha, CfPS Co-ordinator, Sudan

“Together, they managed to resolve a dispute between herders and citizens.”
For the last three decades the area has seen frequent occurrences of human rights violations, the recruitment of young people into armed groups, population displacement, destruction of the eco-system and sexual violence against women and children.

The poor governance and continued disputes over land have only exacerbated the existing frictions and violence.

The Beni Peace Forum, established in 2016, is a network of civil society organisations that form an early warning system in order to contribute to peacebuilding in the region and to find appropriate rapid responses to the worrying and escalating violence and militia attacks in the region.

**Impact**

The Beni Peace Forum has this year grown into an established Early Warning Early Response (EWER) network designed to identify low level outbreaks of conflict and address them before or as soon as they start, preventing violence from spreading.

Made up of 35 civil society representatives and peace activists, the Forum coordinates local peacebuilding efforts and sets locally driven priorities.

As a result of the monitoring and response capacity gained through workshops, training and strengthening of the growing network, the Forum was the first to report an attack by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Beni on 5 July 2017.

The Forum was also able to report on an assassination case by presumed Mai-Mai, a community-based militia group on 6 July 2017, which resulted in six referrals to local organisations able to provide legal aid and support for victims of violence.

This is one example of how the exchange among member organisations has increased opportunities for collaboration. Significant progress was made in team building, knowledge sharing and conflict management, and this increased collaboration has led to joint security committees being revitalised between civil society organisations, showing the effects the Forum has had on encouraging the local population to proactively tackle security threats through collaborative efforts.

According to an evaluation carried out in the first year of the Forum’s life, “the Forum has created a leverage effect for its member organizations by providing them with a more powerful platform to raise their voices.” The network has also led to increased training activities for local government and police authorities on understanding criminal procedures.

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Supporting people in countries emerging from conflict to rebuild their communities

In countries that have experienced years of war and conflict, there are often few livelihood opportunities, and decades of violence have entrenched deep community divisions.

People need to be given the opportunity to reintegrate into their communities, and communities need to be supported to bring about reconciliation, sustainable development and long-term peace.

With our local partners in DR Congo, Philippines, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka we rebuilt lives and strengthened local communities, helping to build resilience against outbreaks of violence in the future.

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North Kivu
North Kivu is a province bordering Lake Kivu in the eastern DR Congo, consisting of three cities; Goma, Butembo and Beni, and six territories. In North Kivu we work with our local partner Centre Résolution Conflits (CRC) to support communities to become more resilient.

In Beni, we also support the Beni Peace Forum, a network of civil society organisations forming an early warning system contributing to peacebuilding in the region.

Ituri
Ituri province is found in the North of DR Congo, and has borders with Uganda and South Sudan. Its capital is the city of Bunia, the location of our award-winning Peace Gold project, developed with our partner CRC. The Peace Gold initiative will support ex-combatants to produce ethical and environmentally friendly gold.

South Kivu
South Kivu is a province of DR Congo made up of eight territories, the most southern of which is set on the Ruzizi plain. We work with our local partner Fondation Chirezi, based in Uvira, to support communities affected by conflict to rebuild their livelihoods.
North Kivu, DR Congo

Two decades of conflict in the DR Congo have left as many as 5.4 million people dead, and over 1.5 million displaced. In the volatile eastern region, ongoing violence wrecks lives and livelihoods. North Kivu suffers from multiple armed militias which destabilises an already fragile situation.

Impact

In North Kivu, we continued working with Centre Résolution Conflits (CRC) to help war-affected communities rebuild and become more resilient.

Over the year, CRC supported 1,194 people through agricultural cooperatives that bring together vulnerable citizens and ex-combatants to run community cooperatives. They break down mistrust and support vulnerable community members to earn an income.

Poverty and a lack of formal justice mechanisms often result in local conflicts spiralling out of control. President Kabila’s refusal to step down in elections supposed to take place in December 2016 saw scores of nationwide protests which often turned violent. The UN recently categorised the DR Congo as a ‘level three emergency’: the highest warning and on par with Syria and Yemen.

Rescue and rehabilitation of child soldiers

CRC continued their work rescuing and resettling child soldiers drawn into local militia groups. In total 136 child soldiers were demobilised, and of these 81 child soldiers were housed either with their families or with close relatives. This is an extremely difficult task as communities and families fear the returning soldiers.

By the end of the year CRC had provided vocational training in mechanics, hairdressing and carpentry to 142 child soldiers rescued in 2017 or before in the Lubero region of North Kivu. In addition, many of the rescued child soldiers have been able to return to education, a significant achievement in a community where education is not highly valued, especially among girls. CRC reported that through their training, education and integration activities, less stigma has been reported towards ex-combatants, and the community is more accepting and tolerant towards former child soldiers.

In light of this work MONUSCO, the UN stabilisation mission in DR Congo, showed interest in working with CRC to carry out more child soldier projects for Beni and the surrounding area. This is significant, and testament to the excellent work CRC is carrying out, and their impact within the local community.

For the women receiving business training and microfinance credit, all have more than doubled their incomes and are able to afford basic necessities such as paying for school fees and medical care, buying household essentials like mattresses and solar lights, and learning to invest and enhance their savings.

CRC reached 135 women to provide access to business training and microfinance credit for women in order to stabilise their lives. 80 women received micro loans as part of this and 125 women received business management support helping them to maximise profits from their loans. This supported a further 2,554 people in the community, including their families, a crucial aspect in rebuilding war torn communities.

Credit Diana Zeynab Alhindawi

8,359 people directly benefited from the increased income, increased food security and stability in their communities.
Local voices from DR Congo

“My name is Kakule Wassi. I’m 14 years old. I’ve been attending a locally run vocational training centre for the last seven months. I’m learning skills to build motorbikes and to repair bicycles. This vocational training centre has had a very positive impact on my life. It has changed my mind about joining local militia groups.

I know of a few young boys from my village who have joined a local militia group and told me many things about joining the armed group, they eat well every day, steal goats from villagers and drink alcoholic drinks when they want.

I almost joined.

Then we learned the leader had been arrested by the government, and we then didn’t have any clear direction to follow. That’s the moment we heard about this CRC project and the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge to allow us to start a new life.

We had two choices: enroll in the militia or get involved in vocational training to stay out of reach of the militia. I chose the second option.

During the first few months in the vocational training centre we received life skills support. They taught us about the rules of conduct in society, how to behave when with adults and our own parents so we easily find back our place into the community.

So far, I feel well accepted and valued in the community. I’m very thankful to CRC and its staff for starting this programme. It has made such a difference to my life.”

–Kakule Wassi, DR Congo

“At that exact moment we had two choices: enroll in the militia or get involved in training.”
South Kivu, DR Congo

South Kivu has been affected by violence and conflict in many of the same ways as neighbouring North Kivu. The year was marked by cases of human rights violations, insecurity, gender-based violence, massacres and violent protests. All this has caused waves of unrest, displacement, severe poverty and extreme insecurity.

Impact

In South Kivu we continued our support to Fondation Chirezi (FOCHI), who work to strengthen the resilience of war-affected communities in the Ruzizi plain.

Over the year, 6,120 people were supported to live safer, more productive lives through their activities. FOCHI continued support to a network of ‘Peace Courts’, (known locally as ‘Barazas’), that provide free access to justice in an area where this is virtually non-existent, or too expensive.

Over the year, 36 Peace Courts continued to receive support from FOCHI, and 40 new courts were created. A total of 76 active Peace Courts bring the community together to address their divisions. Of this total, 38 are run entirely by, and for, women.

The courts have an important role in the community, as they provide safe spaces for women to bring issues such as domestic or gender-based violence to be resolved.

Over the year, 380 community mediators were trained to support the running of the courts and 1,020 members of the local community were supported through cases referred to the courts on issues relating to the environment, gender discrimination, and power among traditional authorities.

For one participant it was “a door to regaining the confidence of the entire community.” Of the 467 conflicts referred to the Barazas, 91% were resolved, an increase from 84% in 2016, having a significant impact in increasing social cohesion. FOCHI estimated that this work has improved relations and stability within, and between, over 1,000 households who had previously experienced animosity or mistrust.

FOCHI also worked with 755 local authority leaders such as police officers or low-level justice leaders as part of their work to embed mechanisms of justice in what has been a historically lawless area.

FOCHI also continued to provide small business grants and training to those whose
livelihoods have been damaged by war.

An impressive 3,561 people were involved in the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) run by FOCHI over the year, and grants totalling $11,671 were given out. Of the 120 VSLAs set up over the year, an impressive 97.5% were still operating at the end of 2017.

Through the loans a further 21,366 people benefited, including families, the local community and businesses.

An additional 606 people benefited from agricultural cooperatives, with one participant doubling the amount of land he cultivated.

FOCHI’s efforts to boost income-generating activities have had a positive effect on the economic resilience of communities.

The small business grants have enabled families to generate income to sell their own goods, send their children back to school or pay for health care.

**Local voices from DR Congo**

“My name is Jeanne, and I’m 30 years old. I live in a village in DR Congo and have three boys and a little girl. I am one of the ten members of the Peace Court (Baraza) in our village.

We are all women.

I feel indebted to FOCHI for their support in building this Court and their training. It is thanks to their training on leadership, peaceful resolution of conflicts and running the Peace Court that I managed to put an end to a dispute between a mother from our village and a police officer.

The cause of the dispute was that the mother accused the police officer of stealing her phone. He refused to say he had committed this act.

I had to use all the techniques that I learned during the conflict management training. I began to listen in turn to each party to find out exactly where the problem was coming from and think about the consequences if we could not reach peaceful conclusion.

It was then that I spent a lot of time with the policeman, encouraging him to speak truthfully about the situation and his responsibility in it. Eventually he told the truth and agreed to pay the women the cost of the phone. After the people of the village had experienced this, they all asked me: “How did you convince them to resolve their differences?” I replied that it was thanks to my training.

We are up to these tasks, however complex they may be. The conflict between the mother and the policeman has definitely ended. I do not know how to thank FOCHI for the training and self-confidence it has placed in me to promote peace and development in our village. I take my hat off to them!”

–Jeanne, 30, DR Congo

“We are up to these tasks, however complex they may be.”
Peace Direct was delighted to be one of the five winning submissions in the inaugural BridgeBuilder Challenge 2017.

The challenge is a global competition run by the GHR Foundation in collaboration with OpenIDEO that recognises innovative and impactful initiatives tackling some of the world’s most urgent problems that are at the intersection of peace, poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

Our winning project, which we developed with our local Congolese partner, Centre Résolution Conflits, (CRC) will support ex-combatants affected by war in DR Congo to produce ethical and environmentally friendly gold, leading to increased incomes and strengthened prospects for peace in the region.

From 660 applications received globally, our proposal was one of five winning applications.

Over the next three years we hope to reach 1,260 Congolese gold miners (men and women) and their families, totalling 6,300 people. These people, currently living well below the national poverty line, will receive a boost to their income from increased gold production.
Over the course of the project, we will be working towards fair trade certification for the gold, which will increase the price the cooperatives will be able to sell the gold for.

Children who currently work in the mines will be able to return to school as their parents earn a decent income. The local population will also benefit from a less polluted environment due to fewer chemicals being used, and a more peaceful environment as ex-combatants will be supported to manage conflicts non-violently.

If successful, this model could be replicated in other parts of eastern Congo, where hundreds of thousands of people still live in abject poverty as low paid and often exploited artisanal miners.

“Peace Direct’s BridgeBuilder project in the DRC truly embodies the spirit of “building bridges” between peace, prosperity, and planet to solve complex challenges. Even though it is an extremely difficult geography in which to work, GHR believes the community engagement approach of Peace Direct and its partner CRC will yield positive and powerful results.”

–Mark Guy, GHR Foundation

Given the innovative nature of the project and its potential to be replicated across the country, we also hope to use this for our advocacy efforts, and to champion an infrastructure that is currently lacking in DR Congo, one of economic growth, environmental action and peace.
Philippines: Bridging religious divides

For decades the Philippines has been victim to a bloody armed struggle between the government and Muslim separatists seeking an independent state in southern parts of the country.

At least 150,000 people have been killed and since 2000 three million people have been forced to flee their homes. The violence has left a legacy of suspicion and mistrust between Christian and Muslim communities.

We support local organisation Kapamagogopa Incorporated (KI) to bring the two communities back together in Mindanao, the region worst affected by the conflict. They tackle prejudice between Muslims and Christians by placing Muslim volunteers into predominantly Christian communities across the region.

Impact

In May 2017 an outbreak of violence by an ISIS-linked group in the city of Marawi, just 40km from KI’s operating base led to widespread fighting between the militant group and the army. The city suffered almost complete destruction.

KI quickly reacted to the violence in Marawi, taking on the running and support of a temporary camp for internally displaced persons (IDP). Through setting up the camp, KI provided substantial assistance to over 200 IDPs in the surrounding area and provided vital shelter and sanitation facilities to over 30 families, providing stability in a time of uncertainty and fear.

Thanks to funding from the Folke Bernadotte Academy, we supported KI to implement an ambitious new project to empower female ex-combatants and war-affected women to participate more fully in their communities and the wider peace process. 1,202 women took part in training sessions on women’s rights and advocacy.

KI reported a marked increase in participants’ awareness of civic responsibility, as well as approaches to advocacy and peacebuilding as a result of the training. Women’s groups in five targeted communities have been able to express and exercise their rights as citizens, but also actively contribute to the discussion on issues and rights that previously felt out of reach, including access to social services, rights for young people, peace and security, and women’s political and economic participation.

In 2017, KI also placed seven Muslim volunteers in Christian organisations, one of the core aspects of their inter-faith work. The volunteers provided an additional workforce and support to the communities they worked in, providing guidance and information on mental health, and ensuring child protection and care in disaster affected areas. This reached an estimated 10,980 people either directly or indirectly.

As well as distributing urgent aid to people unable to access government services, the volunteers provided training on reproductive health to young people from the camp, and supplied learning materials so that children could continue their education.

In addition, through supporting the set-up of small farms, KI volunteers have supported those at the camp to develop income generating activities, many of which have enabled women to grow and sell their own produce and support their families financially.
Local voices from the Philippines

“I’ve been a teacher for more than ten years now and I felt ready to contribute to our society something other than teaching.

As a teacher it is important to understand what you are sharing and teaching. This brought me to ask myself, “Am I really teaching the right things? Am I really providing knowledge that will foster understanding?”

When I reached home I heard our neighbour talking about different issues such as political tensions and the armed conflict issues affecting the lives of thousands of my fellow Meranao Muslims. “Poor Marawi,” I said to myself.

“Joining the women’s group I became aware of reality and began to recognise the things I had been blind to.”

I am affected too though we are far from the battle area and the whole community. I had a chance to join a group of women and I attended different training sessions and seminars on creating a culture of peace. This changed me a lot.

The way I thought before and the way I think now is very different. It made me realise that I limited myself to the classroom and did not look outside the windows to see the bigger picture. In joining the women’s group I became aware of reality and began to recognise the things I had been blind to.

Knowing my strengths and weaknesses, I can use this as my instruments to overcome challenges and to bring positive change.”

–Anonymous female, Philippines
Zimbabwe: A year of turbulence

Zimbabwe faced a turbulent year in 2017. An urgent cash crisis, high unemployment, a military coup, and President Mugabe departing political office after 37 years has left behind a trail of uncertainty.

Impact

In this chaotic environment, our local partner, Envision Zimbabwe Women’s Trust, worked to address a deeply embedded culture of violence by training traditional local leaders and engaging the police force in conflict transformation.

Envision Zimbabwe carried out refresher training sessions on conflict transformation and violence prevention with 60 traditional leaders, Chiefs and Village Heads to ensure that communities are resilient in resisting violence. A further 221 community leaders were reached by strengthening existing violence prevention mechanisms at community level. Such mechanisms include early warning and response platforms and local peace committees.

Peace Gardens established by Envision Zimbabwe not only contributed to much needed livelihood and food security, but also served as platforms where ordinary members from different political affiliations came and worked together. This further encouraged the spirit of reconciliation among divided communities.

As part of Envision Zimbabwe’s conflict transformation training for the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Envision Zimbabwe produced a Conflict Transformation Training Manual. This manual will serve as a much needed in-house training resource, providing members of the police force with information, knowledge and skills in handling conflict through non-violent means.

In April 2017, Peace Direct held a consultation (‘Peace Exchange’) in Zimbabwe in partnership with Envision Zimbabwe Women’s Trust. This brought together 21 local peacebuilding organisations to analyse causes of violence and future prospects for peace. It was a crucial moment for Envision, who have suffered from chronic underfunding, and yet continue to carry out effective projects. A full report from the consultation has been published.

In order to better understand the impact of Envision Zimbabwe’s work, we commissioned an independent evaluation in the districts of Hurungwe and Murewa. This found that, despite a serious lack of funding there had been many long-term changes in the communities. In particular, Envision Zimbabwe’s work with traditional leaders and conflict transformation training had had a positive effect for many communities. The results of this were published in a Learning Summary, which is available online.

“This group is there to keep reminding our girls to learn in order to break away from poverty and build better lives.”

The year was characterised by increased protests, such as the #ThisFlag movement that began on social media, moved to the streets and was met with riot police, tear gas and water cannons. By the end of the year a new president was in place promising to serve all citizens equally. It remains to be seen if this will be the clean slate and the chance for peace and prosperity that Zimbabweans so deeply crave.
Local voices from Zimbabwe

“I am Mai Mapurisa and the coordinator of Women and Girls groups formed under Envision Zimbabwe. In this quarter we have gone to three schools with our message of giving girls and boys equal opportunities towards learning, working and decision making.

Most of our young girls continue to drop out of school early to get married. We have realised that parents are often to blame as they accept bride prices from older men to marry their children. We hope that we can start a programme with parents of the girls who have dropped out and encourage them to pull back their girls from those early marriages and send them back to school. The future of these girls is doomed and there is no hope for them without an education.

This Women and Girls group is there to keep reminding our girls to learn and learn in order to break away from poverty and build better lives.”
– Mai Mapurisa, Zimbabwe
An unexpected change in government in 2016 saw the establishment of institutions intended to support peacebuilding, transitional justice and reconciliation processes.

Nevertheless, mounting tensions and anti-Muslim demonstrations have continued to stifle the opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation between the different religious and ethnic communities in Sri Lanka.

Hostility, mistrust and divisions continued to pervade the country that has seen 25 years of conflict, threatening to undermine the peace process and reconciliation efforts. Addressing the root causes remains as crucial as ever to bring about trust, tolerance and sustainable peace.

Impact

To raise awareness of the work of our local partner, the Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (CPBR), we organised a media trip to Sri Lanka in conjunction with our corporate partner, AWAY.
“Their hearts are broken because of war. It is my job to heal them. I shake everyone’s hand and make them feel welcome, so I can break down the barriers to building peace.”

One Buddhist leader said: “Their hearts are broken because of war. It is my job to heal them. I shake everyone’s hand and make them all feel welcome, so I can help break down the barriers to building peace.” Although difficult to measure this impact, CBPR reported that this activity had been a significant example of fostering interreligious cooperation and strengthening peace in Sri Lanka.

Visual content collected by the filmmaker, photographer and communications experts during the trip, and shared on varied social channels, allowed CBPR’s vital work to reach a wider and more varied audience.
Growing our portfolio of partnerships

We are committed to supporting small organisations to foster a peace that is owned and sustained by local communities. We continue to establish and nurture new partnerships with local organisations, to support their growth, and to ensure that peacebuilding initiatives that are locally led have a wider reach and strengthened capacity. Through expanding our existing portfolio of local partnerships, we are determined that more grassroots organisations will be supported to play an active and central role in peacebuilding efforts.

Nigeria 040
Yemen 041
Mali 043
Young people, both male and female, are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by Boko Haram. Faced with high unemployment and a lack of opportunities, the money that Boko Haram can pay to burn down a school or commit an act of violence can seem like an enticing option.

2017 saw us establish a new partnership with the Peace Initiative Network (PIN) in northern Nigeria. We look forward to supporting their work in developing peace, socio-economic development, and reaching young people in the communities they work in, through training, sports, research and coalition building.

In this fragile environment PIN worked hard on setting up a new project that will support young people to gain practical livelihoods skills as a way of preventing them getting involved in violence, gangs or extremist groups.

Over the next year, this will reach 650 young people, transforming lives and building peaceful and productive futures.

PIN will work closely with community and religious leaders, local organisations and clubs. Factors such as involvement in violence and theft, drug abuse and gangs will be considered, as well as working on engaging those who are hard to reach.

PIN will prioritise women who are from families where they or another family member is at risk of joining extremist groups.

The young trainees will then receive training from the best local tradesmen, learning skills ranging from soap making to tailoring. Trainees will attend the centre once a week for six months.

Once trained, the young people and women receive kits made up of tools or material to help them start their business. PIN will provide regular follow up support to ensure the young people are thriving.

A special thanks goes to the People’s Postcode Lottery for funding this project.
Yemen: War rages on

The war in Yemen has left thousands dead and caused the world’s largest humanitarian crisis of 2017 according to the UN. By the end of 2017, over 7 million people faced starvation, with thousands dying as a direct result of a lack of access to healthcare and medical aid.

Save The Children reported that 130 children were dying every day. As the war rages on with no end in sight, the humanitarian situation has long reached catastrophic levels, and vital peacebuilding work amongst civil society by local organisations is more urgent than ever before.

Impact

In 2017, we supported a number of pilot projects in Yemen with the aim of exploring how civil society can play a role in supporting local peacebuilding efforts in a country bombarded daily by war. Projects included a series of radio announcements promoting peace which were broadcast in the capital, Sana’a, workshops for civil society activists to strategise together on how to strengthen the resilience of communities affected by the war, and an ‘Art for Peace’ project which sought to raise awareness of the effects of the war on children.

Through all activities, 2,600 people were reached directly through pilot projects.

Local voices

“I want to be a teacher. I dream of flying in space. I dream of a better Yemen. I fear the sound and noises of rockets. I wonder where it will land. I fear the airstrikes so much. My message is that Yemen should have peace and the war should end.”
– Art for Peace participant

“I have a lot of fear when I hear the sounds of the military planes. I fear they will hit near us. My message to the world is that Yemen should go back to how it used to be. My message is enable the kids in Yemen to finish their education in peace.”
– Art for Peace participant

“I dream for all kids in the world to live in peace in their homes and schools having all their basic needs. I dream of a good education. I fear I’ll die in the war. I fear that many kids will die. My message to the world is that peace is good for kids; for all kids in the world.”
– Art for Peace participant

“I dream of being a kids' doctor. They have so many pains and no one to help them. I fear that Yemen will not be the same anymore. I fear this war in my country.”
– Art for Peace participant

“My message is that Yemen should have peace and the war should end.”
Mali: A country at a crossroads

Historically, violent conflict in Mali has been most common in the northern part of the country, existing between communities wishing to establish a form of autonomy or independence from the rest of Mali.

Violence continues between armed groups and state forces, and within communities in the north of the country, occurring in parallel to other factors contributing to violent conflict including state failure and fragmentation, external influences, and mass atrocities occurring across the country and the Sahel region. The absence of effective state authority, poverty, religious militancy and conflicts over resources contribute to the existing volatility felt in the country, where economic hardship is long-term and nationwide.

Our Work and Plans

In late 2017, we began working in Mali in collaboration with the national office of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). With over 500 member organisations across West Africa, WANEP is well placed to increase the resilience of and coordination within civil society, including women led organisations. We look forward to supporting WANEP in its aims to increase the sense of security and social cohesion among communities across the country, and to enhance the number of peacebuilding activities implemented by local civil society.

Over the next year, WANEP will continue to enhance the capacity and coordination of local civil society organisation by mapping out information on approximately 200 local peacebuilding organisations from five regions, in order to assess existing initiatives and existing points of collaboration.

Following the mapping research and supported by Peace Direct, WANEP will convene a national practitioner-led workshop in Bamako to bring together representatives from grassroots civil society organisations from across Mali to exchange views and perspectives and conflict and peacebuilding.

Building on the process from the national workshops, WANEP will then go on to support the convening of regional practitioner workshops across Mali’s regions to build capacity, conduct further in-depth conflict analysis, and explore how to enhance the sustainability of locally-led initiatives. As well as providing local organisations greater access to tailored technical support, the workshops will allow WANEP to increase collaboration between civil society organisations, and increase their ability to prevent and respond to violence locally.

In an environment where local organisations often find themselves cut off from funding sources, sub-grants will be distributed to directly support the development of sustainable and effective projects, allowing local organisations to design and implement their own peacebuilding activities.

We will also work with WANEP to provide advocacy opportunities to ensure civil society actors can better engage with local authorities and other stakeholders.

We would like to give a special thanks to the Canadian Government for their support.
Very little funding from international donors reaches local organisations, with donors often arguing that the capacity of local organisations is too low for them to provide direct funding. As funding for capacity building is often in short supply, local organisations are locked in a cycle of being too small to attract external funding and therefore never having the chance to grow. We are determined to change this, and are committed to investing time and effort to work with donors and INGOs to shift the balance of power and resources in favour of local civil society efforts to stop violence and build peace.
Stopping As Success

It has been a successful year for the "Stopping As Success: planning for success from start to exit" (SAS) collaborative learning project, which is led by Peace Direct with support from Search for Common Ground and CDA Collaborative Learning. The project is directly linked to a growing number of learning initiatives in the wider international aid sector focused on locally-led development, local ownership and localisation.

The SAS project looks at 20 case studies of INGO exits and transitions in support of locally-led development in a number of social, economic and political contexts.

In 2017, Peace Direct completed a case study of one international organisation’s decision to devolve their Colombia office. We spoke to a range of local Colombian actors (CSOs, governments, local peacebuilders, academics) about their experience with international aid. A Colombia civil society leader told us that

“INGOs should play the role of the yeast, and not the flour.”

We have presented the learnings and insights from Colombia on various international forums in the UK and USA to donors and international NGOs.

Last year we organised a global online consultation which brought together almost 100 practitioners, researchers, academics and thought leaders from 40 countries to critically engage with discussions around power dynamics in the aid sectors, the role of local actors, capacity development and sustainability. This created a platform for dialogue and learning exchange between donors, INGOs and local partners. The discussions from our global online consultation that took place in October 2017 were captured in a report that was published in April 2018. The full report can be downloaded from our website.

Already, we have garnered support and interest for this project within the development and peacebuilding sectors. A number of INGOs have expressed a genuine interest in the research, seeing it as a potential basis for developing their own organisational exit strategies. Insights generated from this ongoing project has informed strategies for building responsible exits and transitions, that highlight existing local capacity, and strengthen the case for more inclusive peacebuilding and development programmes.

In 2018, Peace Direct will be conducting case studies in the Philippines, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other countries. We will be presenting our early findings from case studies in various public forums in Washington DC, New York and London. We also have plans for a number of learning exchanges in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe, which will bring together international, regional and local actors to critically engage on issues that are at the centre of aid transitions and locally-led development.

Local works

In 2017 we made great progress in our two USAID funded ‘Local Works’ research projects, ‘Facilitating Financial Sustainability’ and ‘Stopping As Success’. Managed through the USAID Office of Local Sustainability, ‘Local Works’ is a unique programme designed to advance locally-owned development and enhance local actors’ self-reliance, sustainability, and capacity to take the lead in identifying and addressing challenges to development and peacebuilding.
Facilitating Financial Sustainability

For peacebuilding organisations working in areas experiencing active conflict, tension, or unrest, remaining financially sustainable remains a significant challenge.

The ‘Facilitating Financial Sustainability’ (FFS) project has had an extremely successful first year and has already produced key insights regarding how local organisations can improve financial sustainability and how donors can provide better support through their funding approaches.

Since the project began in March 2017, Peace Direct has successfully conducted background research in three countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Philippines, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with donors, local government officials and civil society actors. As a result, we now have a greater understanding of how local organisations can successfully overcome contextual challenges, and how donors can work to better support the organisations they fund.

By understanding and improving the underlying conditions that affect the finances and funds for local organisations, we will be able to develop strategies for financial sustainability, breaking the cycle so that organisations can develop resilience and autonomy.

The FFS project now moves into the next phase of the research, where we will be disseminating some of the research findings, and leading an Action Learning Group in the DRC and co-leading one in Uganda.

‘Supporting Local Organizations’ research report

In November 2017 we published a report based on the findings of a research collaboration between Peace Direct and the Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG). The research was initiated to understand the extent to which PSFG members fund local organisations; highlight the achievements of such funding, identify best practices, and share limitations and challenges.

Through the research and its findings, we observed a positive shift over the last several years in which more funders, of all types, are attentive to the value of local peacebuilding.

The most encouraging and surprising research finding was that 80% of survey respondents confirmed that there is a culture and practice of funding locally within their organisations. In this regard, PSFG members deserve recognition for leading in an area where many government and institutional donors still lag behind.

We wanted to understand and further encourage this trend so that donors and INGOs change their practices and funding approaches so that local organisations receive more funding directly. The full report is available online.
Our advocacy activities focus on improving the policies and practice of governments, the UN, funders and policy makers to include local peacebuilding.

We use the knowledge of local peacebuilders to inform and shape national and international policies. We speak out so that people suffering because of war are recognised and given the attention and support they deserve. We ensure that the voices of local people building peace are heard and acted upon. Peace only lasts when local people are part of the solution.

We won’t stop until those in power are responsive to the needs and rights of people in conflict zones. With enough support we can ensure that wherever local people are building peace, the international community stands behind them.
Local Voices for Peace

In 2017 we supported a Peace Exchange in Zimbabwe, with 21 local peacebuilders coming together from across the country to discuss the current and future prospects for peace. The findings from this were published in the LVP report, available online.

The findings from the consultation were published by Peace Direct in a publicly available report.

For one participant of the consultation on countering violent extremism:

“I have been trying to develop my own understanding of the topic using experiences from other places in the world. The material that was developed here will help me to help my colleagues and the local partners to build a consensus that can be used in the Syrian context.”

In November we held a second online consultation on atrocity prevention, in which 96 participants from the field shared their insights and local experiences, and the findings were published in early 2018. We look forward to establishing further global consultations.

The reports include specific recommendations and are shared with peacebuilders and other stakeholders in country. They are also disseminated widely to international decision-makers at the UN and in US and UK government.

Through the publication and dissemination of the LVP reports, direct meetings were organised for representatives from local peacebuilding organisations from Burundi, Nigeria, and Lebanon in Washington DC and New York.
Attending high level meetings

We organised visits for our local peacebuilding partners from Nigeria and Pakistan to Washington DC and New York, allowing them to speak directly to key decision-makers, funders, and peacebuilding colleagues about their work preventing and countering radicalisation and promoting youth-led peacebuilding.

These visits also enabled us to further disseminate our LVP reports on Northern Nigeria and Pakistan. The reports have been praised by US government officials for their effectiveness and focus on grassroots issues.

The opportunity to engage with donor governments on peace and security issues means that policies are likely to better reflect the needs and realities of those on the frontline of conflict.

A non-violent hero

In a first for Peace Direct, Gulalai Ismail, the co-founder of our partner organisation Aware Girls in Pakistan, took the stage at TEDx Exeter.

In her talk, Gulalai revealed how she is building an equal and peaceful world, starting from her local community. From witnessing inequality as a young girl in Pakistan, to defying the Taliban and founding a peacebuilding organisation, this is a story of a courageous and inspiring woman who has made waves of change. It is a story of one woman’s courage in battling violent extremism, and the power of building peace, one person at a time.

By the end of 2017, the talk had already been viewed online close to 10,000 times, and was received as inspirational, brave and an example for young women in Pakistan and around the world wishing to make changes in their own communities. The full talk is available online.
Advocacy at the UN

This year, our increased engagement in advocacy activities at the UN has not only allowed us to engage with a growing number of country delegations and staff from political, humanitarian, and peacebuilding units, but also to advocate for increased research and engagement on particular issues such as the Youth, Peace and Security UN resolution (2250), women’s participation in peace processes, and the role of local actors in atrocity prevention and preventing violent extremism.

In June, we partnered with the International Peace Institute (IPI) to conduct an informal survey with 40 local peacebuilders from 22 countries to gather their input on the UN’s Sustaining Peace Agenda. The results of the survey were published in a policy brief and blog post, published in early 2018, highlighting how to increase the recognition, support, and resources available to local peacebuilders. The findings were further shared with key UN audiences at a variety of events and speaking engagements including an event with the IPI that reached 92 UN stakeholders.

We took part in a range of events to coincide with the UN General Assembly, where we highlighted the work of local peacebuilders. In September, we co-hosted an event with IPI, the Centre for International Cooperation at NYU (CIC) and the US Institute of Peace (USIP) on non-violent movements, which reached a broad audience of UN stakeholders with messages and stories on non-violent action as a key part of sustaining peace. The event also gave international exposure to local peacebuilders from Pakistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar, and gave them the opportunity to speak to a broader UN audience. We also secured a speaking opportunity for Saba Ismail from our partner in Pakistan Aware Girls at a UN event on youth and peacebuilding for International Peace Day, September 21st, in New York, further contributing to our ongoing efforts to advocate for increased engagement with the Youth, Peace and Security UN resolution (2250).

As the UN remains the most important international platform for peace and security, our increasing engagement and targeted advocacy propels the voices of local peacebuilders, and drives attention to their work, so that solutions from the grassroots level are included in the discussion on tackling conflict and humanitarian issues.
A local presence at the Alliance for Peacebuilding Conference

In October 2017, three of our local partners from Nigeria, Lebanon and Pakistan attended and spoke at the Alliance for Peacebuilding annual conference. Talking to an audience of nearly 100 people, which was also webcast, they also took the floor as part of a workshop on our new violent extremism report to share their views on the topic. This workshop, in collaboration with Saferworld, Mercy Corps, and Search for Common Ground, was attended by over 40 people.

Our partner Saba Ismail from Aware Girls in Pakistan spoke at several events during the conference. In addition, we also secured a speaking opportunity for Saba at a UN event on youth and peacebuilding for International Peace Day, September 21st, in New York. These examples encourage us that local peacebuilders are increasingly having the opportunities to share their perspectives with the international peacebuilding community, meaning that the merits of initiatives that are locally led are magnified, shared and valued among an ever-wider audience.

Peace Direct had a high profile and led on several events during the conference. These included our Senior US Representative and Head of Advocacy Bridget Moix being invited to be the civil society respondent to the Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding’s keynote address. We also hosted a joint reception with the Alliance for Peacebuilding to highlight local peacebuilders at the conference, and several representatives from local organisations were vocal at workshops and sessions during the event.

By continuing to speak about, and on behalf of local peacebuilders, we are confident that this will have an impact on the knowledge among the international community on the presence, and the power of organisations building peace from the grassroots.

Continuing our work on the Burundi crisis

Building on our continued activities in Burundi, we took a leadership role in the Burundi Working Group in Washington DC, and were one of a small group of NGOs invited to a briefing with the US Ambassador to Burundi and the new Special Representative to the Great Lakes. Through this meeting, we were able to discuss our work and recommendations for advancing a peaceful resolution to the crisis thanks to the insight of our partner in Burundi.

By continuing our advocacy activities and participation in working groups and meetings, we are committed to acting as a principled and practical expert on local peacebuilding.
Expanding our reach

Mapping peace

Peace Insight, our flagship mapping project, was rebranded and relaunched with exciting improvements in 2017. The dedicated website highlights the work of local peacebuilders and connects them with international decision makers and each other. It now pulls together real time outbreaks of violence, coupled with direct cases of peacebuilding initiatives happening on the ground.

By the end of the year over 1,500 local organisations had been profiled across 44 countries experiencing conflict, an increase on our 2016 mapping. We also integrated conflict data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and other sources.

Across the year our Local Peacebuilding Experts published blog articles on Peace Insight on the urgent issues facing their communities. From the escalating war in Yemen, to the removal of Mugabe in Zimbabwe, to the Rohingya crisis, these unique insights attracted 443,827 visitors, meaning that more people are taking part in important conversations on the challenges in conflict-affected environments, and the people driving change in their communities.

Local peacebuilding organisations

- African Centre for Peace Research, Empowerment and Documentation
- Association of Youth for Peace and Development
- Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria
- Centre for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights
- Children & Young People Living for Peace
- Christian Foundation for Social Justice and Equity
- Community Policing Partners for Justice, Security and Democratic Reforms
- Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Initiative
- Development Education and Advocacy Resources for Africa Initiative
- Displaced Women & Children Foundation
- Islamic Counselling Initiatives of Nigeria
- Women and Girl Child Rescue and Development Initiative
Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders

Our annual Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders Awards entered its fifth year attracting a record 268 applications from local organisations across 57 countries. These are the global awards for local peacebuilders, recognising the inspiring individuals building a better tomorrow for war-torn communities across the world.

The 2017 winners are illustrative of the competition’s diversity of organisations and methods. They all received $10,000 for their projects and international promotion of their work. This year, the winners run their peacebuilding activities in India, Myanmar and Nigeria.

01

Women-led Peacebuilding Award: Safecity

Red Dot Foundation (Safecity) is a local peacebuilding organisation based in India working to eradicate sexual violence in public spaces and make it safer for both women and girls. They created a platform named Safecity which enables women to publish anonymous personal stories of sexual harassment and abuse. Since its launch in 2012, Safecity has collected over 10,000 stories from 50 cities in India, Cameroon, Nepal, Nigeria and Trinidad & Tobago, and has directly reached over 400,000 people. With the help of the Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders prize money, Safecity hopes to reach a further 100,000 young women over the next two years and add new languages to their mobile app. Safecity were the winners of the women-led peacebuilding award in 2017.

02

Youth-led Peacebuilding Award: Centre for Social Integrity

Centre for Social Integrity (CSI) works in the Rakhine region of Myanmar, as well as other parts of the country, in response to the ongoing crisis. Their aim is to strengthen the Rohingya civil society and people’s ability to strategically advocate for their own civic, political and human rights. CSI remains one of the only civil society organisations actively working in this part of the country. The team has been recruiting, interviewing and selecting participants to build social cohesion between Rohingya and other Myanmar ethnic groups. With the help of the Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders prize money, CSI will launch its ‘Emerging Leaders’ project. This project, including all the alumni it has trained, will create a collective platform able to respond peacefully to political, social or economic change. CSI were the winners of the youth-led peacebuilding award in 2017.

Image: Patrik M. Loeff. Picture representative, not of actual work.

03

Inter-religious Peacebuilding Award: Islamic Counselling Initiative of Nigeria

The Islamic Counselling Initiative of Nigeria (ICIN) is a community based interfaith project established to support vulnerable groups affected by recurring conflicts in Plateau State, northern Nigeria. Starting with humanitarian response activities, the organisation has grown to cover peacebuilding, security and governance, gender issues and addressing the root causes of conflicts. The Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders prize money, will enable ICIN to expand its advocacy and peacebuilding training forums. ICIN were the winners of the inter-religious peacebuilding award in 2017.

Image: A scene from northern Nigeria. Photo by Greg Funnell. Picture representative, not of actual work.
Deepening learning and reflection

We believe that to really advance the peacebuilding field, we need to aspire to the highest standards in learning and reflecting on our own practice, particularly when things don’t go well. Being a learning organisation is more than just having good Monitoring and Evaluation systems.

We believe that it is an entire way of thinking about our work and requires discipline and practice to analyse success and failure. If we can model this behaviour internally, we believe we will be a better partner and will make a better contribution to sector thinking.

Evaluations and learning summaries

In 2017 we completed evaluations of our work in Zimbabwe and Pakistan. Both evaluations provided invaluable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the work. As part of our efforts to disseminate the key learning more widely we produced ‘learning summaries’, four-page designed summaries which can be read quickly, and provide key reflections and recommendations. We also had evaluations undertaken in DR Congo, Afghanistan, Sudan and Burundi which we look forward to sharing with the sector, to contribute to learning that helps improve policy and practice.

Research on Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year we conducted a stocktake on our partners’ capability, tools and approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E). We intend to develop a more systematic and locally-led approach to M & E that increases the opportunities for local organisations to adapt their systems to the changing context or to devise their own approaches.

In addition, we also began work with Harvard University exploring the utility of creating a peace scale to aggregate data across all our projects. We hope that the peace scale will also provide a way of more efficiently capturing the impact of our activities, and those of our local partners.
Our finances
Our income was £3,095,307, an increase of £1,273,908 (70%) from 2016. This was mainly due to growth in restricted grants and increased corporate income. We are delighted that donors, individuals and institutions continued to support us in 2017. While financial conditions remain tough for small charities, we are proud to have a strong funding basis for our work, testament to the power of local peacebuilders to transform communities from the inside out.

The charts on this page give an overview of the main sources of our income and how money was spent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants from Trusts and Foundations</td>
<td>£623,228</td>
<td>$832,433</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual donations</td>
<td>£273,137</td>
<td>$364,824</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government income</td>
<td>£1,518,321</td>
<td>$2,027,991</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract income</td>
<td>£450,303</td>
<td>$601,461</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate income</td>
<td>£221,450</td>
<td>$295,786</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated services</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>$4,007</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>£5,868</td>
<td>$7,838</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£3,095,307</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,134,340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today’s exchange rate 1.33568
**Expenditure**

**Expenditure 2017**

£2,913,815  $3,891,924

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early warning, rapid response</td>
<td>£371,711</td>
<td>$496,487</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling the causes of extremism</td>
<td>£730,301</td>
<td>$975,448</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting communities emerging from conflict</td>
<td>£863,794</td>
<td>$1,153,752</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting local peacebuilders</td>
<td>£197,920</td>
<td>$264,358</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>£72,806</td>
<td>$97,246</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>£372,396</td>
<td>$497,402</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>£35,884</td>
<td>$47,930</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of raising funds</td>
<td>£269,003</td>
<td>$359,302</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£2,913,815</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,891,924</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organisations and institutions that supported us in 2017 include:

Alistair Berkley Charitable Trust
AWAY
Big Lottery Fund
Blandford Lake Trust
Brillig Charitable Trust
Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
Global Affairs Canada
CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust
Chino Cienega Foundation
Commonwealth Foundation
Cotton Trust
Didymus
European Union
Folke Bernadotte Academy, Sweden
UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
German Federal Foreign Office
GHR Foundation
J A Clark Trust
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
Network for Social Change
People’s Postcode Lottery
Pickwell Foundation
Ploughshares Fund
Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation
PRBB Foundation
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Scurrah Wainwright Charity
Sir James Reckitt Charity
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation
Spears-Stutz Charitable Settlement
Terra21 Foundation
The Mrs Wingfield Charitable Trust
WF Southall Trust

We continue to seek new members of our family – supporters, donors and allies. Please get in touch if you would like to work with us and help us to build a just world, free from violent conflict.

Acknowledgement and thanks

Our work would not have been possible without the commitment and support of a wide range of donors, including individuals, corporate organisations, private trusts and foundations, and governments.
About Peace Direct

Peace Direct works with local people to stop violence and build sustainable peace. We believe that local people should lead all peacebuilding efforts, and this report highlights the impact of our local peacebuilding efforts in 2017. People around the world are taking action every day to build better futures in their communities and to create peace, starting from the grassroots. Our Impact Report 2017 shares their stories.

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