

# SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES



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Nepal



The adoption of Nepal's constitution in September 2015 ended a long political transition to a federal republic government after the monarchy was abolished in 2008. While the new constitution was welcomed by many as a significant milestone in the country's peace process, there were some violent protests, particularly in areas already affected by conflict and fragility.

In 2018, Nepal's elections ushered in a new form of governance, with devolution of power to three tiers of government: federal, provincial and local. However, challenges to long-term peace and stability remain. These include constitutional issues like people's dissatisfaction over the proposed province borders; discontent over citizenship law; problems with the restructuring of centralised bureaucracy; and challenges with resource-sharing between the three tiers of government. Nepal is also still recovering from a series of earthquakes that devastated the country in April and May 2015.

The latest constitution and federalism arrangements provide genuine opportunities to address historic grievances. Yet, unless those with political influence and power can address social exclusion and marginalisation to improve the environment for economic development and employment, public disillusionment could quickly lead to instability and violence. Nepal will experience an increasing population of young people over the next decade. It is vital to seize the opportunities the constitution offers for young people to build sustainable peace.

Daily life in Lahan, Province 2 © GMB Akash/Panos/Saferworld



## SAFERWORLD IN NEPAL AT A GLANCE

OVER

**10**

YEARS' EXPERIENCE WORKING IN NEPAL

SUPPORTED AND WORKED ALONGSIDE NEPALI ORGANISATIONS IN

**13**

DISTRICTS OF NEPAL

HELD ADVOCACY EVENTS IN MORE THAN

**40**

LOCATIONS IN 22 DISTRICTS ACROSS SEVEN PROVINCES OF NEPAL

REACHED

**49,488**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS (21,327 WOMEN AND 28,161 MEN)

PRODUCED

**30**

PUBLICATIONS SINCE 2009



## About us

**“We believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear, insecurity and violent conflict.”**

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear, insecurity and violent conflict. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in 12 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Saferworld has worked in Nepal since 2009. We work on community safety and policing, gender, peace and security, conflict-sensitive development, and fair justice systems and societies. Our goal is to ensure that government, civil society and communities can create positive social, political and institutional conditions for peace and security. These conditions should enable people, including those from vulnerable groups, to fulfil their aspirations and lead lives free from fear, conflict and insecurity.

### CORE VALUES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK INCLUDE:



**CONFLICT SENSITIVITY**



**GENDER SENSITIVITY**



**INCLUSIVITY**



**PARTICIPATION**



**TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### To do this, we:

- help communities and civil society groups to work constructively with government to create more effective, accountable and transparent governance and security
- assist people to identify and resolve their security concerns, and to prevent and manage risks associated with conflict and violence through community safety approaches
- support and work alongside communities, including young women and men, civil society and government to address gender and social inequalities, and to challenge traditional norms, attitudes and behaviours that cause and perpetuate these inequalities
- assist communities to undertake conflict analysis and to identify early warning mechanisms
- introduce conflict-sensitive development practices to relevant people – including representatives from provincial and local governments, community-based organisations and civil society organisations – and offer support in applying these approaches.



Advocacy training in Banke district, Province 5  
© Anil Poudel/Saferworld

## Saferworld's achievements in Nepal

### In Nepal we have:

- championed conflict-sensitive approaches to development and provided training courses for civil society, community members and international actors
- pioneered a community safety programme, which has informed other national and international approaches to gender, peace and security, and conflict prevention
- facilitated citizens' participation in governance processes
- developed an easy-to-understand resource pack to help citizens engage with their local governments. We introduced this resource to over 1,600 community members, civil society representatives and local elected representatives
- supported communities to work effectively with their local governments and police, to establish police posts, deploy female police officers, and sustain their own community safety initiatives supported by the government
- provided technical support to develop the National Action Plan of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which focus on women, peace and security
- worked with the police to help them promote community-centred policing and to conduct monitoring and evaluation assessments
- developed innovative monitoring and evaluation tools, which promote community-based approaches to tracking progress and change while training communities during the process.





## Our work

Community meeting in Siraha district, Province 2  
© GMB Akash/Panos/Saferworld

### What we do

In partnership with Nepali organisations, Saferworld has been working in 16 municipalities of eight districts, to promote long-term peace and stability by supporting federalism. We help people – in particular, young women and men, people affected by conflict, and vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups – to engage with the police and local authorities to address insecurity concerns together. We work with civil society to advocate for security, justice and local governance to be more gender-responsive, socially inclusive, conflict sensitive, transparent, and accountable. We use findings from our projects to influence sub-national and national-level policy and practice.

Saferworld collaborates with partner organisations and individual researchers to produce quarterly context analyses from seven provinces in Nepal, helping us to identify and assess conflict trends. This quarterly 'early warning, early response' initiative captures changes that could exacerbate conflict drivers and triggers. This supports us to collectively identify issues and areas for action, informing the design of our research and our projects.

In recent years, our work in Nepal has focused on ensuring equal and increased participation of different community groups within the new federal structure, especially in decision-making and implementation processes. At the sub-national level, we work with communities, municipal governments,

political and elected representatives, civil society and media in provinces 2, 5 and 7, to build trust and cooperation to facilitate development initiatives. At the federal (national) level, we work with development partners, donors, civil society and media, as well as government ministries and department offices, to share best practices in community safety and conflict- and gender-sensitive development.

Across various provinces and municipal areas, Saferworld and partners are successfully supporting women, young people and marginalised groups to engage with their elected representatives and governments. People demand better service delivery and improved access to decision-making thereby encouraging transparency and accountability.

Working with a wide range of government and civil society organisations, we ensure that community members' concerns are heard and addressed in the new federal structure by relevant authorities such as the police, local and provincial governments, human rights defenders, and the media, among others.



## Our approach

Insecurities related to governance and conflict, experienced throughout Nepal, create fear among people and obstruct broader development. This leads to reduced opportunities, and increased poverty and migration.

Saferworld's community safety approach, developed over 12 years, is a bottom-up approach that puts people at the centre of policy and governance initiatives.

We use our community safety approach to enable people to be part of the development process, by working with their elected representatives and other local authorities. We support inclusive federalism and encourage social cohesion – defined simply as the willingness of community members to cooperate with one another – by bringing together (potentially) conflicting, marginalised and vulnerable groups.



- We facilitate group discussions, emphasising collaborative dialogue and development between community members and their local elected government. This helps community members and community-based organisations to voice their needs and concerns with elected representatives and authorities
- We then support community members to take ownership of inclusive, local development processes, and to challenge social and cultural malpractices through peaceful action
- At the provincial level, we bring together elected representatives and civil society to hold policy debates and plan joint interventions
- To demonstrate the importance of conflict-sensitive practice in local development, we share learning and best practices with community members, local and provincial government authorities, political representatives, civil society organisations, media representatives, and international and national non-governmental organisations.



Women's group discussion in Siraha district, Province 2  
© GMB Akash/Panos/Saferworld





Female police interacting with the local community in Siraha district, Province 2 © Anil Poudel/Saferworld

## Community-centred peacebuilding

### CASE STUDY

#### Respecting religious differences in Laukahi Village in the Sunsari District, Province 1

A large proportion of Laukahi's population are from the Uraw community, who belong to one of the highly marginalised caste groups in Nepal. The community is divided by faith into Hindus and Christians, and this has resulted in frequent conflicts over accusations of witchcraft, disputes over land, and violent clashes between individuals.

Between 2014 and 2016, we and our partners conducted a series of discussions in Laukahi – both individual and group – to try to facilitate harmony and reconciliation in the communities. This reduced tensions and resulted in both sides gradually accepting and respecting mutual religious differences. This was evident by less cases being filed in the local police post.

### CASE STUDY

#### Building trust between communities and police in Dhangadhimai Municipality, Province 2

Between 2007 and 2016, the southern Terai region in Nepal experienced a political uprising, where thousands of people from the ethnic Madhesi community protested against what they called 'a regional discrimination against the people of Madhes'. Angry protestors regularly vandalised government buildings and police posts, blaming police for using excessive force against protesters. Saferworld and our partners brought community members and police officers together to build trust through outreach and dialogue.

In Dhangadhimai, a police post was established as a result of dialogue between community members and the district police office, as people had spoken to the police about insecurity in the area and requested their presence. The community provided a piece of land and offered logistical support to set up the post.

**"We worked closely with community members in Dhangadhimai to bridge trust gaps between them and the police and to address local insecurity. When the protesters tried to vandalise and torch the police post they jointly established, the locals came to protect it and convinced the protesters not to torch the building. It gives me immense satisfaction every time I share this story."** Devraj Pokhrel, Project Coordinator from partner organisation Samagra Janautthan Kendra, Siraha.

### CASE STUDY

#### Communities unite against caste-based discrimination in Lahan Municipality, Province 2

In Lahan, we brought together women and men from marginalised communities and civil society in a Community Collaboration Forum. People in the forum collectively identified significant concerns around caste-based discrimination and violence, and other harmful practices like child marriage and dowry-related violence. The group recognised the need to work with 'Mainjans' – the traditional community leaders who had promoted such practices – to discuss ways to address the problems together. Following sustained engagement, a gathering of more than a hundred Mainjans from the area came up with the 'Lahan declaration', committing to discourage and prevent caste-based discrimination, child marriage and dowry-related violence in Dhangadhimai. Elected representatives from the municipal witnessed and welcomed the pledge.

**"We (Mainjans) are the leaders of our society and we should be leading by example, but a lot of what we practice and promote today is illegal and unconstitutional. We realise this and have agreed to refrain from some of these practices like dowry, child marriage and caste-based discrimination. It will take time but we are committed to it."** Hari Narayan Yadav, Case Leader (Mainjan), Lahan.

### CASE STUDY

#### Addressing marginalisation through policy dialogue and change in Province 5

In Province 5, we brought together parliamentarians and civil society from Muslim communities to respond to a much-neglected issue: the government's recognition of Madrasa education. Madrasas are Muslim community schools typically hosted within mosques, where students learn Urdu and Arabic languages, Quran texts, and a range of basic subjects prescribed by local government. However, not all Madrasas and their curriculum are recognised by the Nepal government. This lack of recognition has prevented thousands of young Muslim girls and boys who have studied at Madrasas to transition to higher education.

A joint working group of Province 5 elected representatives and civil society held meetings and consultations with relevant groups, including the provincial government, Madrasa teachers, and leading educators. As a result, the government recognised the need for a policy intervention on Madrasa education, and agreed to work towards recognition of Madrasa schools and harmonisation of its curriculum with the national school curriculum. The government included the issue as a priority in its annual programme for 2019–20, developed a terms of reference for addressing it, and allocated money to support 350 registered Madarsas in Province 5. In September 2019, Province 5's government formed a Provincial Madrasa Board with a mandate to harmonise Madrasa school curriculum in the province.

**"Once our Madarsa curriculum is harmonised with the government's, thousands of young Muslim girls and boys will benefit and be eligible for state-recognised higher education. This will give students hope for a better future, and more importantly bring Muslim communities closer to the state. We are really happy and thankful to Saferworld and its partners for facilitating this conversation with the provincial government."** Maulana Masood Khan, Vice-Chair of the Provincial Madarsa Board, Province 5.



## Gender, peace and security in Nepal

Nepal has one of the highest levels of gender inequality in the world, ranking 149<sup>th</sup> in the UN Gender Inequality Index. Gender inequality is characterised by various forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls, including domestic violence, marital rape, dowry-related violence, child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, witchcraft accusations, *Chhaupadi* (restricting women and girls from participating in everyday life events during menstruation), and trafficking women and girls for sexual exploitation. Institutionally and culturally, responses to gender-related problems have been weak.

We work with partners to understand the particular challenges faced by women and girls, and we encourage and support women's participation in public debate, policy-making and peace processes. Saferworld includes a gender focus throughout all stages of our planning and programming, to better address gender-specific concerns and needs, especially those of women and girls.

With our partners, we have conducted research on masculinities that explores attributes, roles and behaviours associated with boys and men that cause and perpetuate insecurity and gender-based violence. We have drawn lessons on how donors and other national and international organisations can better consult women, as well as sexual and gender minorities, to better integrate their concerns into policies and programmes. To ensure women's active and meaningful participation in our community security programme, we make sure that they are represented in the Community Collaboration Forum (CCF) we work with. We also encourage 'safe spaces' within those groups, where women can freely discuss issues specifically affecting women and girls. They then bring these issues into discussions within the CCF to influence and inform future work.

### CASE STUDY

#### Improving awareness of sexual and reproductive health

Basundhara Gaire, a women's rights activist from Mahagadhimai rural municipality of Province 2, has used the Saferworld-supported Community Collaboration Forum (CCF) to draw the local municipal government's attention towards women's sexual and reproductive health. Gaire is a trained health volunteer. Her door-to-door campaign to support adolescent girls, pregnant women and new mothers in a marginalised Dalit community has helped to improve the health of mothers and their babies, and has raised awareness among young girls regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

Gaire has highlighted various issues to the local municipal government, including the need for affordable sanitary pads for women and girls. She has also held awareness classes at schools to teach young adolescent girls about menstrual hygiene – an issue that is still taboo in rural Nepal.

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I try to reach each and every family in my village, especially with pregnant women or young nursing mothers. I teach how best they can take care of themselves and their children. I also inform them about the vaccinations available at public health posts, and share community health related information with the local municipal and ward offices.

Basundhara Gaire

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Basundhara Gaire visits the mother of a new born in Bara district, Province 2 © GMB Akash/Panos/Saferworld





Saferworld staff in discussion with partner Jana Jagaran Youth Club  
© GMB Akash/Panos/Saferworld

## Learning from our work

To increase our effectiveness and impact, we encourage staff and partners to take the time to reflect on their performance and to learn from each other and from our successes and challenges. This means creating space to share ideas and insights and to strengthen skills. We hold learning exchanges between our different country and regional teams, and we encourage people in different parts of the organisation to work together. We have specialist staff who are experts in learning and growth, and they help us to keep track of how we are doing by recording the results of our work and supporting our teams to manage risks.

Saferworld's learning approach in Nepal encourages people from different communities to work together to prevent conflict and contribute to lasting peace. We support, influence and work closely with communities, civil society, media, authorities, politicians and political groups, and national and international development partners. We believe in equal partnership and in the sharing of skills and resources for mutual learning.

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**In making learning a critical part of our programmes, we have ensured that we are improving on an ongoing basis. We get to take a step back and reflect on some of the work that we're doing, draw out lessons learnt and consider adjustments and adaptations to our own programmes.**

**Sudhir Malla, Saferworld Nepal Programme Manager**

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For further information about us and our work, please visit: [www.saferworld.org.uk/nepal](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/nepal)

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