



## International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations Conference

Saferworld's Conflict Analysis Work in Kosovo  
by Jérôme Mellon  
27 June 2007

### Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome the opportunity to speak to you today and would like to take the next few minutes to introduce my organisation Saferworld and discuss with you some approaches to working in a challenging, conflict-affected environment like Kosovo. Amidst all the other activities and topics we are discussing at this conference, I believe that we should also take a step back to look at how our work impacts on the long-term prospects for peace and development in Kosovo.

### Saferworld in Kosovo

Saferworld is an independent international NGO that works to prevent armed violence and create safer communities, with programmes in Africa, Europe and South Asia. We have been involved in Kosovo since 2001 and, like in the other places where we work, we have entered into a partnership with a local organisation, in this case the Forum for Civic Initiatives, or FIQ.

Our focus of work has evolved during the years and has recently centred on working with communities to make them safer, supporting the development of institutions in the security sector, and researching perceptions of safety and conflict among the general public and civil society. As you know, issues of safety and security are often highly sensitive, and security concerns can vary greatly across different communities. With this in mind, Saferworld and FIQ spend a lot of our time making sure that we really understand what the key tensions and divisions are within Kosovo's society, and how our work can help to address these.

### Conflict analysis in Kosovo

To this end, in February and March 2007, Saferworld and FIQ conducted a participatory conflict analysis in Kosovo, and we plan on undertaking a second analysis to build on the first one in the autumn of this year.

As you may know, a conflict analysis is a process aimed at better understanding the society in which we work, particularly in terms of the factors that may cause tension, insecurity or conflict. A conflict analysis process should also highlight any ongoing initiatives, people or institutions that have the potential to influence the situation *towards* or *away* from violence. At the heart of any conflict analysis is the need to understand the opinions and perspectives of a wide variety of people. A conflict analysis process therefore needs to be participatory, and in our study we drew heavily on interviews and focus group discussions with citizens living in different areas of Kosovo.

The purpose of such a conflict analysis is to help us all think about how we work and what we do in Kosovo, so that we design and implement our work in a conflict-sensitive manner. This means that our work does not have a negative effect on any existing or potential driver of conflict, and can instead contribute as much as possible to peace and stability.

For example, imagine a town with several different communities and a high rate of deaths on the road. The local police therefore want to introduce a new traffic patrol system to try to improve road safety. Before doing so, in order to be aware of and prevent any negative responses from the public, the police need to understand the attitudes and concerns of the different communities in this town. For instance, one community could be particularly concerned about not being able to communicate with authorities in its own language, which may make members of that community wary of communicating with police if stopped by the new patrols. Awareness and understanding of such concerns, in advance of any traffic safety initiative, may alter the way the police work, and could be obtained by holding public meetings to consult with town residents about how best to reduce road deaths, for example, or introducing bilingual police teams, or providing clear information in all appropriate languages about how to make a complaint if a citizen is unhappy with the new patrols.

All of you certainly have a very good understanding of the peace and conflict dynamics in Kosovo, which can be very complex. The benefit of a conflict analysis is that it helps us think through some of these complex issues and gain more knowledge through talking to the people affected by these questions – making it part of our already existing planning and implementation processes.

For Saferworld and FIQ, this first conflict analysis was mainly aimed at helping us design our own strategies and programmes, and work out how to best implement these in Kosovo. But we believe that conducting a conflict analysis is useful and relevant for any organisation and for any intervention in a tense, fragile or post-conflict context, including in the fields of development, employment generation, public administration reform, and security sector reform. And others agree with this: in the course of the analysis, the Kosovo Police Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs already expressed an interest in developing *their own* capacity to conduct such an analysis and possibly integrate it into their policy development process.

And this sharing of insights and joint analysis of the Kosovo situation is actually very important. Gathered here today are representatives from the donor community, international organisations, Kosovar authorities and civil society organisations. If we all base our work on completely different understandings of what is happening in Kosovo, we could waste a lot of time and effort undermining each other's work. The better we can get therefore at sharing analysis – even if there are still points we don't all agree on – the more likely we are to make progress on some of these difficult issues.

With this in mind, Saferworld and FIQ are keen for our next conflict analysis, planned for this autumn, to be a larger process that will involve a broad range of other institutions and organisations. We are aware that some of you already undertake conflict analyses in some form or another and we are therefore keen to learn about this work in order to co-ordinate our efforts and learn from each other. In addition, we would like to reach out to the organisations and institutions which do not, at the moment, incorporate an element of conflict analysis in their programme development. We would like to discuss the importance of making this kind of analysis an integral part of policy and programme development to ensure that their work in Kosovo is designed and implemented in a consultative and conflict-sensitive manner.

## **Conclusion**

We strongly believe that conflict-sensitive approaches to the work all of us do lie at the core of a successful partnership between Kosovars and the international community in ensuring a peaceful future in Kosovo. And we are keen to work with all of you on this.

### **Please check against delivery**

#### **Biography**

Currently based in Pristina, Kosovo, Jérôme Mellon is Project Co-ordinator for South Eastern Europe with the London-based international NGO Saferworld, which works and advocates for the prevention of conflict and armed violence. He previously worked as Programme Analyst for Security Sector Development with UNDP Kosovo from 2004 to 2006, and before that as a litigation lawyer in Canada.