

Human Vitality

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Be a Peacemaker: Choose to Support Post-Conflict Social Enterprises

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Post-conflict zones are countries or areas where conflict has recently ended. Social entrepreneurs are people who have the vision and innovation to make changes for the better in war-torn countries. When you support social entrepreneurs in these areas, you help provide much-needed stability, economic development, and sustainable growth. You help bring people up out of **poverty**, and reduce the incidence of a return to conflict. You give people the chance to have a successful future.

Hearts is working on the issue of peace by supporting many artisans and social enterprises around the world – some of whom are working to rebuild in post-conflict regions. The good news is that there are many simple ways *you* can become a peacemaker, too, even from far away. We're sure you'll love these solutions for making a difference in post-conflict regions without even leaving your home. After all, who doesn't love to be a peacemaker?



Quick Facts: Invest in Post-Conflict Zones and Social Entrepreneurs

- **GDP reduction in conflict regions:** Typically, for each year of conflict, the country's growth rate falls by 2.2%.^[i] In Liberia, GDP fell almost 90% over 20 years due to a combination of mismanagement and years of conflict.^[ii]
- **Social enterprises solve the BIGGEST problems:** They take a problem, come up with innovative ideas from various sources and gather investments and funding from civil society organizations, or public and private sources to get the ball rolling. The best social entrepreneurs know how to get around bureaucratic red tape to get things done, and take advantage of what **resources** are there..
- **Economies can't regrow without social entrepreneurs:** Entrepreneurs often have access to assets, investments, business opportunities, and markets from outside of the area. This is due to affiliations with certain social or political groups.^[iii]
- **Social entrepreneurs are the best fit for post-conflict regions:** Because social entrepreneurs often have that access to liquid assets and investments, they can be more responsive and flexible than local aid efforts or giant corporations. This allows for a fast response to deliver basic services, can assist with economy building, and makes a sustainable contribution.^[iv]
- **Social entrepreneurs make peace:** Research done in Iraq showed that programs designed to generate labor effectively decreases the likelihood of further violence by almost 10% while increasing labor-related spending by 10%.^[v]

Take Action! Partner with Social Enterprises

1. **Buy from BOGO social enterprises:** When you buy an item from one of these companies, one item is donated to a person in need in a refugee camp or post-conflict region. Some BOGO social enterprises you can check out are **TOMS**, **BOGOlight**, **Warby Parker**, and **Roma Provisions**.
2. **Make an investment in social entrepreneurs through crowdfunding:** Many social entrepreneurs cannot get bank funding without which they cannot do their peacemaking work. Crowdfunding uses social media platforms to reach a large amount of people who can invest in opportunities geared toward peacemaking and post-conflict regions. Some sites you can contact for more information are **Start Some Good**, **indiegogo**, **ClearlySo**, **the point**, and **buzzbnk**.
3. **Provide a microloan to a social entrepreneur:** Women entrepreneurs, according to the UN, are vital to peacekeeping efforts.^[vi] You can provide a microloan to a female entrepreneur through **Women's World Banking** or **Opportunity International Canada**. **KIVA** and **FINCA** are other sites where you can offer a microloan to social entrepreneurs in post-conflict zones (male or female).
4. **Our top picks for transformative social enterprises:** When you support one of these groups, you can help turn former instruments of violence into peace, support families living in poverty to better their lives, and contribute to the country's GDP. Our top picks for the most impactful social enterprises in post-conflict zones: **peaceBOMB** sells beautiful metal bracelets made from recovered metal in order to raise funds to pay for the removal of unexploded ordinance in Laos. **Saught** sells products made from unexploded landmines and other ordinance to support sustainability in various post-conflict countries. **Bark for Peace's** jingle bells are made from recycled landmine shells and other scraps of war metal found in fields in Cambodia.



Dig Deeper: How Investing in Startups Can Help

- Learn more about how investing in post-conflict startups can help save the world in this article from **Fast Company**.
- Read about how social entrepreneurship in post-conflict zones can bring about peace in this **Council on Foreign Relations Press** paper and this article from **Entrepreneurship.org**.

- Find out how the entrepreneurs behind [peaceBOMB](#) realized that it would take an estimated 800 years^[vii] to remove the unexploded ordinance in Laos and how they developed a strategy for local villagers to make and sell bracelets made from non-war and war scrap metal, which both raises income for those families and helps fund the removal of unexploded ordinance

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