Engaging with Insider Mediators

Sustaining peace in an age of turbulence

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Foreword

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require a significant and sustained investment of human and financial resources by all Member States, as well as a global commitment to preventing violent conflict and promoting peace. The political will to make this happen is strong.

Another, more subtle but equally significant, investment will also be necessary to strengthen the 'collaborative capacity' of societies. At the national level, this expresses itself as the ability to collaborate across political and social boundaries to push forward critical reforms, work together to utilize precious natural resources in the public interest and address emerging risks or disputes peacefully.

At the local level, collaborative capacity is reflected in levels of social cohesion and the ability of communities to live and work together in shared spaces. Without this capacity, the consensus and coalitions that underlie the meaningful change and critical reforms necessary to achieve the SDGs cannot be attained, nor can peace be sustained.

This capacity is partly reflected in the institutions, both formal and traditional, that mediate consensus and peaceful change, whether parliamentary committees, local peace councils, national reconciliation commissions or forums of elders.

Critically, it is also reflected in the roles and work of trusted intermediaries — 'insider mediators' — who bring influence, legitimacy, courage and unique skills to trigger the changes in attitudes and behaviours required for meaningful transformation, often mediating differences before tensions erupt into violence.

Over the past seven years, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) have collaborated to assist these agents of peaceful change in nearly 20 countries. In many other countries, development partners have provided similar assistance to insider mediators to sustain both peace and development and, sometimes, to complement formal peace processes.

The updated version of this Guidance Note, which was first released in 2014, captures key lessons from a wide variety of cases, including those supported through the European Union-United Nations partnership. It highlights viable strategies to identify and support these intermediaries without compromising their unique roles and assets. It reflects the wider commitment of the partners to build national capacities for conflict prevention and to achieve the SDGs in a successful and timely manner.

Insider mediators reflect the innate abilities of a society to imagine new possibilities and successful pathways to sustainable development and lasting peace. We hope that users of this Note, in the EU, the UN and beyond, will be inspired to provide effective and timely support to these crucial intermediaries and, especially, their roles in sustaining peace and facilitating the achievement of the SDGs.

Marc Fiedrich
European Commission, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), Head of Unit, Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)

Rene Van Nes
European External Action Service, Integrated Approach for Security and Peace, Acting Head of Division, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support

Asako Okai
Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director of Crisis Bureau, UNDP

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Executive Summary

The 21st century has seen a dramatic increase in the number and complexity of conflicts. The number of major civil wars has almost tripled since 2010 and conflict-related fatalities increased sixfold between 2011 and 2015.[1] Conflicts are increasingly **internationalized, regionalized and exacerbated by proxy warfare**. Driven by inequality, exclusion, climate change, and the politicization of religion, these conflicts have a devastating effect on lives and livelihoods. Current conflict trends have underscored the imperative of prevention and created a fundamental shift in the way the international community addresses conflict towards more comprehensive, locally-oriented and long-term efforts to promote and sustain peace.

As part of this shift, the United Nations (UN) has worked closely with the European Union (EU) since 2012 to support the **development, strengthening, and application of 'insider mediation' capacities worldwide**. An Insider Mediator (IM) is described in this Guidance Note (GN) as "an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, *personal* - 'closeness' to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace." The UN-EU partnership, therefore, has focused on strengthening the capacities of national and local actors to help establish sustainable national mechanisms, forums and/or capacities for internal mediation and conflict management.

The first phase of the UN-EU partnership culminated in the development of a GN entitled 'Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence'[2], which was written in 2013 and published in 2014. Five years later, this **revised GN seeks to inform and shape the work of UN and EU actors in their efforts to engage with IMs** by ensuring those efforts are informed by the very latest, innovative research and insights from practice. To meet these ends, this GN draws together the insights of a wide range of academics, policymakers and practitioners as the result of an extensive literature review, expert workshops, surveys and interviews. This process highlighted four key findings, which provide the structure of this GN:

Guidance Note 2014: Supporting Insider Mediation. Photo: UNDP.

- IMs have a vital role to play in sustaining peace in an age of turbulence.

- Ambiguity exists around the concepts and practices of both insider mediators and insider mediation.

- Guidance on the topic should be updated and greater nuance should be introduced.

- Practitioners can share extensive good practices on engaging with IMs are available, and case studies provide a useful tool to understand such practices in context.

Part 1 of this GN, therefore, **explores the relevance of insider mediation in 21st century practice-policy landscape**. The increase in proxy warfare by global and regional powers has contributed to an increasingly complex and dynamic conflict environment, characterized by: land and natural resource degradation; the rise of identity politics; enduring patriarchy; the exclusive nature of political and economic power; and, the fragmentation of armed groups. These complexities have reduced the political space for mediation. Just as Agenda 2030 has underscored the linkages between peace and development, the Sustaining Peace Agenda has highlighted the need for more inclusive approaches to conflict. These are epitomized by endogenous mediation capacities at the local level, which are well placed to pursue the highly political work required to

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[1] Report of the Secretary-General, 'United Nations Activities in Support of Mediation,' 27 June 2017, A/72/115, p. 3 (available at http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1291524/files/A_72_115-EN.pdf).

[2] United Nations Development Programme, 'Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence,' Guidance Note, 2014 (available at: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/Supporting-Insider-Mediation---Strengthening-Resilience-to-Conflict-and-Turbulence--EU%20Guidance%20Note.pdf)

foster and sustain peace over time as part of a 'whole of society' approach. IMs, therefore, have a critical role to play, using their relationships at vertical and horizontal levels to build trust and foster the mindset and behavioural changes required to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

Part 2 of the GN seeks to **foster an understanding of the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the IM concept**. This section of the GN explores how key individuals and organizations, such as John-Paul Lederach, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, PeaceNexus and the Berghof Foundation, have used their experience working with IMs to elucidate their key traits. Those traits include: trust and respect of the conflicting parties; deep sensitivity to cultural, religious and political differences; the ability to serve as horizontal and vertical 'nodes'; high levels of influence, authority and personal closeness to the parties; and, strong personal commitment and dedication. This section then explores the relative concept of IMs' 'insiderness', comparing IMs to 'outsider mediators' (OMs). An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of both IMs and OMs underscores the imperative for joint work in any given conflict context. This section also explores how IMs serve as mediators, often acting outside the confines of a formal peace process; that is, mediating to change both mindsets and behaviours, build connections and trust, and rebuild or strengthen relationships where the social fabric is weakened or broken.

Part 3 of the GN provides a **step-by-step guide to engaging with IMs**:

- Step one, **context analysis**, ensures that the IM engagement strategy is informed by a shared understanding of perspective, actors and dynamics, as well as an appreciation of the power dynamics and gender relations that shape and constrain options.
- Step two involves developing a **risk management strategy** that explains the interrelation among the context, programme and lead institution so as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the engagement.
- Step three shows how to **explore options for engagement** and make strategic choices by identifying entry points, potentially in key thematic areas.
- Step four outlines how to **foster consultative processes to identify relevant IMs** by developing consultative and participatory processes that are conflict- and power-sensitive. Such processes must be fully attuned to the dynamics of gender and youth.
- Step five outlines how to **determine the needs of the IMs** identified, taking into consideration their objectives, realities, capacities and resources.
- Step six presents a **menu of options** that can be used to co-develop, with IMs, an engagement strategy, including through: recognition; mobilization of political support; scenario development; intra-group facilitation; logistical support; and, training.
- Step seven explores ways to **evaluate the impact of the joint engagement strategy**, including through adaptive and participatory evaluation processes led by IMs.
- Step eight discusses **options to increase the sustainability of initiatives** through formal and informal means, with an understanding of the challenges of both approaches.

The final part of this GN, '**Learning from practice**, elaborates key principles for engagement with IMs. The GN encourages engagement strategies that are: anchored in context analysis; conflict-sensitive; 'do no harm'-oriented; risk-informed and resilience-based; responsive, not directive; underpinned by a human rights-based approach; gender sensitive; sensitive to unintended consequences; politically aware; creative and flexible; based on a willingness to learn and engage in reflective practice; and, guided by humility. The note concludes with testimonials from practitioners and policymakers on the one hand, and from IMs engaged in such processes on the other. Case studies are used throughout the GN to highlight how IMs work on a wide range of thematic issues, including peace processes, natural resource-related conflicts, electoral-related violence, building social cohesion and addressing religious and faith-related issues.

Introduction

Overview

Conflict in the 21st century is defined by two clear phenomena, one quantitative and one qualitative. Quantitatively, and in a reversal of post-Cold War trends, conflict over the past decade has dramatically increased. The extent of its impact has soared, with immeasurable impacts on the lives and livelihoods of those directly and indirectly involved. Qualitatively, conflict drivers have increased in complexity, in both public and private spheres, compounding and intensifying the dynamics and effects of power contestation in the political, economic, social and cultural realms and often leading to both sporadic episodes of violence and endemic conflicts. Together, these trends have established conflict prevention and sustaining peace as *the* priority on the agenda of the international community.

In response to these dynamics and as part of an evolving partnership, the United Nations (UN) has worked closely with the European Union (EU) since 2012 to support the development, strengthening, and application of insider mediation capacities in a growing number of countries. The partnership has helped to strengthen the capacities of key national and local actors to engage in constructive negotiation and dialogue, with a view to establishing sustainable national mechanisms, forums and/or capacities for internal mediation and conflict management. While primarily geared towards supporting national and local actors, it has also served to strengthen the collaboration between EU delegations and the UN's presence at the country level.

In an effort to capture and document the broad range of country experiences with IMs and to make those experiences available to others who may benefit from them, a Guidance Note (GN) was produced in 2013 and published in 2014, entitled, 'Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence.'[3] Recognizing the rapidly changing conflict landscape, the significant evolution of the policy terrain and developments in the policy-academic field of insider mediation, the UN-EU Insider Mediation team decided to update the GN, leading to the development of this new GN, entitled, 'Engaging with Insider Mediators: Sustaining Peace in an Age of Turbulence'.

Introducing the insider mediator concept

An Insider Mediator (IM) is described in this GN as "an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, *personal* - closeness to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace." The term insider mediator is preferred to alternative definitions that have been proposed by the field, such as 'partial-insider' or 'local mediator' since, as this GN will show, IMs are only 'partial' in certain respects. In addition, IMs may originate from and work at local, national and/or regional levels, whereas the term 'local' is often used synonymously with the word 'community' or 'grassroots.' The potential areas where IMs may be acknowledged and/or supported include but are not limited to: peace processes; political disputes; electoral-related violence; natural resource-related conflicts; humanitarian crises; preventing violent extremism; identity conflicts; intra-group tolerance; and, diverse community-level issues.

Regardless of the scope we choose to accord to the IM concept or how we define IMs, they exist in every country. One may argue that for as long as societies have experienced clashes of positions and interests leading to tensions and/or conflict, IMs – community leaders, elders, political or religious figures, rebel/military commanders, teachers, doctors, business leaders, academics, writers and artists, amongst others - have played the role of an IM, shuttling between and within fractured groups, leveraging their relationships and seeking to exert a level of influence that may make the difference, over time, between conflict and peace. Consequently,

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[3] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Supporting Insider Mediation,' 2014.

while IMs do not need outside recognition to exist, such recognition or, even, support could, in many cases, make a critical difference to their endeavours.

About this Guidance Note: Objectives, audience and structure

This GN is designed primarily to promote, inform and shape the work of UN and EU actors in their efforts to engage with IMs to prevent conflict and sustain peace. The imperative of prevention and the re-articulation of peacebuilding in the context of sustaining peace resolutions[4] means that the diverse contexts in which peacebuilding and conflict prevention actors operate are locations where engagement with IMs is essential, whether in seemingly stable countries or those where conflict has already occurred. Since the UN works with a wide range of actors, this GN may also be of interest to IMs themselves and to a wide range of regional and subregional partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), think tanks and academics, practitioners, policymakers and researchers interested in working with or understanding IMs.

The GN is based on extensive research and a wide range of primary and secondary resources and builds upon the rich literature already available on this topic.[5] It incorporates extensive insights from the UN-EU joint work in this space, including in Malawi, Togo, Honduras, Ghana, Guatemala, Peru, and Timor-Leste. It also incorporates the insights gained through two workshops held in Marrakech in February 2018, which brought together representatives from the EU, UNDP, UN-Department of Political Affairs (UN-DPA), UN-Women, academia, government representatives and CSOs. Furthermore, it is informed by more than 20 bilateral interviews conducted in March 2018 with a wide range of practitioners, policymakers and academics.[6]

The GN addresses four major findings from these extensive stakeholder consultations and is organized into four key sections. **First and foremost: IMs have a vital role to play in sustaining peace in an age of turbulence.** This finding is underscored by the affinity between what is essential to the concept of IM and the key elements of both UN and EU prevention agendas. With the growing international focus on increasing the mediation capacities of actors; the importance of the political dimension; prioritizing local and national ownership and leadership; the need for integrated and more holistic or systems approaches; and, the imperative of long-term engagements all point to the long-standing efforts of IMs as central to the global peace architecture. Their political work to mediate between divergent interests and positions - both vertically amongst different societal groups and horizontally amongst community, state and regional levels – across the peace and security, development, and humanitarian pillars of work embody a key aspect of the very local, national and regional peace engines required to prevent conflict. Part 1 of this GN, therefore, seeks to analyse how the changing nature of conflict and the evolving policy environment have contributed to a greater awareness of the critical role played by IMs and the need to explore ways to engage with and, where necessary, support them.

Second, ambiguity exists around the concepts and practices of both insider mediators and insider mediation. This is due in part to the tendency of all concepts to take on a life of their own – expanding and evolving in nature and scope, sometimes stretching to and even, beyond, their limits. Furthermore, since concepts cannot be separated from language, we cannot conceive of insider mediators without alluding to their natural opposite, outsider mediators (OMs). This can create confusion because who is an 'insider' and who is an 'outsider' depends on who is identifying and defining these actors. However, policy, research and

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[4] Press Release on Security Council Resolution on Review of United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture (available at: https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm).

[5] Including the extensive work undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Berghof Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF), the Centre for Security Studies (CSS)/ETH Zurich and swisspeace, as well as the foundational work of John-Paul Lederach and other practitioners and academics.

[6] The GN was also subject to peer review during a two-day meeting held in New York in April 2018, as well as written comments received from expert partners during the weeks that followed.

practice all make clear that these terms and, more importantly, these actors are highly complementary and, as this GN will highlight, vast potential exists for insiders and international actors to work together. Part 2 of this GN, therefore, seeks to analyse the definition outlined here and to clarify the evolution of the concept and practice of IMs, explaining the ways in which an IM is both an insider and a mediator. This section also sheds light on the key strengths and weaknesses of the IM approach, highlighting specific, potential areas for greater collaboration.

Third, guidance on the topic should be updated and greater nuance should be introduced. Central to this finding is the awareness that IMs may not always require support. When they do, the support provided may not consistently align with or correspond to their needs or the context in which they operate. Moreover, given the sensitive contexts in which they often work, engagements sometimes require the ability to recognize that international support must simply take the form of acknowledging that IMs exist and, subsequently, providing them with the space and time to do their work without external interference. In other instances, IMs may urgently require support. There are many creative *and* practical ways in which international and regional actors can support them. This understanding has required changing the way in which this GN is framed: from supporting IMs to engaging with them to indicate a much more equal and mutually-supportive relationship. Thus, Part 3 provides an eight-point guide to engaging with IMs that is designed to help international and regional actors identify, understand and develop processes that will lead to engagements best suited to the needs and preferences of IMs themselves.

Fourth, practitioners can share **extensive good practices on engaging with IMs and case studies are a useful tool to understand such practices in context**. Since the GN on Supporting Insider Mediation was first published in 2014, many more actors have begun working with and/or analysing and writing about the work of IMs. Central to the understanding of good practices in the field of IM is the acknowledgement that what may work in one context may not necessarily work in another. This underscores the need to be context-specific and flexible when designing engagements. However, broad key principles can be identified that may help those who wish to begin new engagements or improve existing ones. In this fourth and final section of the GN, therefore, the insights gained from the literature review, the workshop, the experts meeting and the interviews are assembled in the form of key principles, advice from policymakers and practitioners, and testimonials from IMs themselves. Many of these insights result from in-depth case studies produced by a wide range of actors with first-hand experience in engaging with IMs. By putting insights in context, case studies can make them vivid. While case studies feature prominently throughout the GN, many of the insights in this section are also drawn from the studies generously written by a range of UN actors and partners specifically for this GN.

This GN seeks to inspire those who may not yet be aware of the critical role that IMs play and to provide new material for those who may be considering engaging with IMs or are already working with them. Most importantly, it is hoped that this GN will contribute to collaborative engagements between insider and outsider mediators, as well as a broad range of other conflict prevention and peacebuilding actors, who, together, play a critical role in preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

Text box 1 Overview of the Guidance Note

This GN is divided into four key sections:

- **Part 1: Why engage with insider mediators? Insider mediation in the 21st century practice-policy landscape:** This section places IMs in the context of the current conflict and policy environment, with a focus on the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

- **Part 2: Understanding insider mediators and insider mediation: Origins, evolution and key dimensions:** This section provides readers a solid conceptual understanding of IMs and their strengths and limitations.

- **Part 3: Engaging effectively with insider mediators: An eight-point engagement strategy:** This section constitutes the how-to guide and provides a step-by-step overview of how to engage with IMs.

- **Part 4: Learning from practice:** This section sets out key principles that should guide engagements with IMs. It also provides advice from practitioners and policymakers working in this space and testimonials from IMs themselves. Both may help shape and inform the design and/or implementation of IM engagement strategies.

Closing ceremony of Insider Mediation training. Photo: UNDP Guatemala.

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Why engage with insider mediators? Insider mediation in the 21st century practice-policy landscape

The changing nature and scope of conflict

The changing nature and scope of conflict, coupled with our evolving understanding of it, has been well documented in recent years. As outlined in June 2017 in the Report of the Secretary- General, the number of major civil wars has almost tripled since 2010 and conflict-related fatalities increased sixfold between 2011 and 2015.[7] Furthermore, more countries experienced violent conflict in 2016 than in almost the 30 years prior.[8] While the world has not experienced a full-scale war involving the major powers since 1945, geopolitical power configurations are in flux, contributing to a dramatic **increase in proxy warfare by global and regional powers**. As a result, conflicts are progressively more internationalized and regionalized, making them bloodier, longer and more intractable.[9] Indeed, whereas in 1950 an average of eight armed groups were engaged in a civil war, by 2010 that average had surged to 14. In 2014, more than 1,000 active armed groups were estimated to be active in Syria alone.[10] Displacement as a result of armed violence is also at its highest level, involving more than 65 million people, a five-fold increase since 2005. More than 20 million people are currently experiencing famine in (northern) Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen,[11] all of which suffer from protracted crises and endemic levels of violence.

Modern-day conflicts are characterized by the complexity of their diverse and inter-locking drivers, such as: weak governance; land and natural resource depletion and degradation and climate change; a dramatic rise in identity politics and/or the politicization of both identity and religion; political and economic marginalization of youth and other vulnerable groups; endemic gender inequality, enduring patriarchy and the continued marginalization of women from political and economic power; arms proliferation; and, violence associated with illicit economies. In this **complex and highly dynamic conflict landscape**,

[7]   Report of the Secretary-General, UN Activities in Support of Mediation, p. 5.
[8]   United Nations and World Bank Group, (2017), p. 1.
[9]   Report of the Secretary-General, UN Activities in Support of Mediation, p.5.
[10]   United Nations and World Bank Group, (2017), p. 6.
[11]   Report of the Secretary-General, UN Activities in Support of Mediation, p. 5.

criminal and ideological interests overlap and armed groups fragment and splinter, compounding the challenges associated with fostering processes that may lead to a formal peace agreement.[12] In fragile contexts, small incidents can easily become catalysts for violence as a result of the unprecedented speed at which information spreads through networks, including social media, thus contributing to the destructive rise of misinformation. Transnational phenomena, such as the trafficking of people, drugs and weapons on the one hand and violent extremism on the other, exacerbate pre-existing conflicts, while also devastating lives and livelihoods.

Taken together, these trends challenge the efficacy of the tools that the international community uses to address conflict at a time when the **political space for mediation is increasingly limited**. The broader processes of societal change required for lasting peace cannot hope to be captured within the confines of a formal peace process that is negotiated by a limited number of predominantly male, often armed, elites at the national level. The high failure rate of peace agreements - 40 percent collapse in the first two years and 60 percent in the first five years post-agreement – speaks to the limits of such an approach when it is not accompanied by efforts at different societal levels. Real transformation occurs as part of a society-wide, sustained and inclusive effort to promote tolerance, diversity, understanding and cooperation.

The adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development has underscored the notion that there can be "no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development"[13], thereby providing an overarching framework for joint endeavours on conflict prevention and peace, focused on building resilience and addressing inequalities. In essence, **the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), therefore, requires conflict prevention and mediation capacities** at different levels, in diverse sectors, over sustained periods of time and amongst different groups. This opens up and creates more innovative opportunities for well-placed intermediaries, understood here as insider mediators, to play an increasingly critical role in changing the attitudes and behaviours that promote violence, fostering more inclusive norms, forge consensus for crucial reforms and create much-needed spaces for dialogue. All are vital if the SDGs are to be achieved.

Sustaining peace and the role for insider mediators

The Sustaining Peace agenda forms a critical part of the response to the challenges of the 21st century. Sustaining peace is understood as "a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account."[14] An analysis of the major contours of the international community's policy changes in recent years, which have culminated in the sustaining peace resolutions, will show that consensus is emerging on the value of and need for mediation capacities at all levels of society, thereby opening a space for greater recognition of the work and value of IMs. Indeed, the heightened awareness within the international community of what is required to sustain peace shines a spotlight on IMs and creates opportunities to both acknowledge and support their critical work in additional and critical ways.

First and foremost, this recognition of the society-wide approach required to build peace underscores the **principle of inclusivity in general and the inclusion of women in particular.** The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda has recognized the disproportionate impacts of war on women and the pivotal role they play in conflict management and resolution and in peacemaking. As Secretary-General Guterres underscored, "Inclusive processes with strong participation and leadership of women are systematically more

[12] Ibid. p. 5.

[13] United Nations, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld).

[14] United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (UN-PBSO), Peacebuilding, Sustaining Peace, 'What does "sustaining peace" mean?', Guidance on Sustaining Peace, January 2017, p. 8 (available at: www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_262.pdf).

comprehensive and lead to more sustainable solution, whether in domestic political decision-making or in peace negotiations."[15] By expanding the definition of mediation beyond the narrow realm of peace negotiations, the Secretary-General has helped acknowledge how power manifests at all levels of society, while simultaneously recognizing women's capacity to serve as change-agents, whether as peace negotiators or insider mediators.

Second, **both the EU and the UN have recognized mediation as a key tool for conflict prevention.** For example, the Secretary-General made mediation a core part of his surge in diplomacy for peace[16] and then launched a key initiative to enhance mediation capacities and support regional and national mediation efforts. This focus is certainly not new within the UN or amongst its partners. For example, in 2006, DPA established the Mediation Support Unit; in 2009, the EU launched its mediation policy, entitled, Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities[17]; in 2011, the EU went on to create a Mediation Support Team[18]; and, in 2016, the EU established its programme, European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES). During this time, regional and subregional organizations have also established mediation support offices within their secretariat structures and/or have developed nascent mediation support capacities.[19] These concerted global efforts have underscored the centrality of mediation as an indisputable tool for prevention.

Third, there is an **increasing focus on the need for national or local – that is, endogenous - mediation capacities**. The 2012 UN Guidance on Effective Mediation underscores the importance of engaging with local and community-based entities "to encourage the use of mediation, to liaise with and ensure support for local peacemakers and, wherever appropriate, use indigenous forms of conflict management and dispute resolution."[20] Furthermore, the EU 'Concept on Strengthening Mediation Capacities', states that by supporting local mechanisms for mediation and dialogue, EU activities on the ground "help transform relationships between conflict parties, leading to genuine and sustainable solutions in conflict-prone environments."[21] The Secretary-General has also noted the critical need to support such efforts, stating, "Enhancing national and local mediation capacities is one of the priorities of my mediation initiative" due to the ability of such actors to "facilitate local-level dialogues, lay the groundwork for formal peace negotiations, address recurring conflicts over issues such as land and natural resources, and help minimize electoral violence….[and] generate buy-in and support for peace agreements."[22]

Fourth, the focus on local mediation capacities is accompanied by an understanding that **politics is central to the work of preventing conflict and sustaining peace**. The Secretary-General has underscored that mediation "requires consistent political engagement."[23] Indeed, whereas peacebuilding has traditionally been understood as largely programmatic or technical, the context of the Sustaining Peace Agenda has shifted and it is now understood as fundamentally political.[24] This recognition underscores the importance of acknowledging the role of power as an organising, structuring force in all societies. In such contexts, engagements should be led by people with an inherent and intimate understanding of the power dynamics and the interrelationship between power and historical, social, cultural and religious dynamics. In this sense, 'insiders' are best positioned to locate the entry points to gain access to those with the capacity to shape power dynamics.

[15] United Nations Secretary-General's remarks to the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women side event, 'Women, Peace and Security and Prevention: New directions and opportunities', 15 March 2017 (available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/secretary-generals-remarks-61st-session-commission-status-women-women-peace-and).

[16] Report of the Secretary-General, UN Activities in Support of Mediation.

[17] European Union, 'Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities', General Secretariat of the Council, Council of the European Union, 15779/09, November 2009 (available at: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/concept_strengthening_eu_med_en.pdf).

[18] European Union External Action, EU Mediation Support Team, Fact sheet; May 2013.

[19] UN Activities in Support of Mediation.

[20] Roepstorff, (2013), p. 163.

[21] Taken from ibid, p. 163.

[22] Report of the Secretary-General, UN Activities in Support of Mediation, p. 5

[23] Ibid, p. 5.

[24] De Coning, Cedric, 'Adaptive peacebuilding', *International Affairs*, 94: 2 (2018), page 303.

Participant of Insider Mediation training. Photo: UNDP Philippines.

The role of IMs in peace processes: The Philippines

After several years of on-and-off violence between the Philippines Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the two parties signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014. The joint Government-Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) then pursued the task of drafting the legislation – the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) –establishing the autonomous entity of Bangsamoro with greater powers than those of the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). However, a ceasefire violation led to a clash between Government troops and insurgent fighters in February 2015, resulting in the death of 46 government troops and 18 insurgents, and the BBL process stalled.

Newly-elected President Duterte launched a new 'roadmap to peace' in August 2016 to "converge" the fragmented Moro leadership and obtain special autonomy for Bangsamoro, as envisaged in prior peace agreements. A new, more inclusive BTC was formed and submitted a draft of new autonomy legislation to the President in July 2017. However, it could not obtain the broader convergence among Moro leadership that he sought. Many leaders remained sceptical of the MILF's ability to constitute a Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (to be formed once the Congress passed the new legislation) in an inclusive or consultative manner. Despite these concerns, the BBL was expected to pass by May 2018. During this period, ISIS-linked and *jihadi-*affiliated groups and networks emerged, driven by the perception that anti-Moro discrimination would not end, regardless of peace agreements.

IMs played critical roles throughout this period. With United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support to initiate and convene efforts, in 2014, Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, the Archbishop of Cotabato and a highly respected public figure, led a group of eminent persons called the Friends of Peace. These high-level intermediaries facilitated conversations about the legislation and the wider issue of lasting peace in Muslim Mindanao. Through informal conversations and engagements with the media, the group sought to: ensure that the BBL respected the constitution; conduct advocacy through the media and their own constituencies

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[1] The residents of Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines are known as the Moro.

(universities, churches, and professional associations) for a lasting peace in Mindanao; and, engage members of the Congress through informal meetings and committee sessions to promote the BBL and special autonomy for Bangsamoro. While the group made a significant impact overall on both Congress and public opinion, it faced challenges related to aligning the messages of individual members.

In 2016, advisors forming a cross section of the Moro leadership took part in UNDP-supported workshops on insider mediation, designed to build participants' mediation and negotiation skills. Each exercise also involved informal sessions aimed at converging the senior advisors around: elaborating a joint strategy to engage the Congress; developing a common engagement on violent extremism; and, ensuring that all Moro political factions support the engagement in Congress on the BBL. When the ISIS-linked Maute Group besieged the city of Marawi for six months in 2018, group members their skills to bring out civilians from the city, serving as intermediaries to obtain humanitarian ceasefires and corridors.

These engagements showed how IMs can quietly address potential and actual political blockages in a peace process. The Friends of Peace efforts may be considered a classic 'Track 3 initiative, bringing together a group of civic actors conducting advocacy and informal diplomacy for the peace process (akin to private eminent persons), while the 'insider mediators group', on the other hand, was a 'Track 2 or 'backchannel' initiative, involving intermediaries and senior advisors but not the primary parties themselves. This engagement reveals that both elements were highly complementary, strengthening the resilience and inclusivity of efforts. In both cases, efforts were most successful when individual members of each group were aligned on objectives and communication strategies.

Source: Peace and Development Advisor, the Philippines

While the world has not experienced any full-scale war involving the major powers since 1945, geopolitical power configurations are in flux, contributing to a dramatic increase in proxy warfare by global and regional powers

Fifth, **sustaining peace is conceptualized as a long-term endeavour because our understanding of what peace means has evolved**. More than five years ago, analysts had already recognized that violent tensions were "increasingly *in*susceptible to one-time external mediation or local conflict resolution."[25] Similarly, the World Bank's foundational 2011 World Development Report highlighted the extended periods of time needed for meaningful transformation to take place.[26] These sentiments are echoed in the sustaining peace resolutions. They view prevention not as a time-bound, externally-driven activity relevant only in conflict-affected societies[27] but, rather, as a long-term engagement (of between 20 and 40 years[28]) that is relevant in fragile and stable countries alike. In this light, the term 'sustaining peace' is associated closely with Johan Gaultung's seminal work on 'positive peace,'[29] which requires building and strengthening the factors that foster peace over time.[30]

Lastly, **sustaining peace requires a paradigm shift which, in line with the SDGs, views peace as multisectoral and rooted in a whole of society approach**. Recent major global policy processes such as Agenda 2030, the World Humanitarian Summit, and the Secretary-General's reform efforts emphasize a growing recognition that humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts must overcome siloed ways of working. This paradigm shift entails working on everyday peace, such as "solidarity and compassion between different ethnic groups, and systemic factors, such as equitable distribution of resources, well-functioning institutions, tolerance for diversity, respect for the rights of others, security from physical harm, and access to food and clean drinking water."[31] The World Bank-UN report (2017), 'Pathways to Peace', recognizes the importance of lasting coalitions and substantive consensus across divisions to achieve crucial economic and political reforms necessary to sustaining peace. For instance, the reform of educational curricula to better reflect the history and culture of all groups in a society, or an effort to extend education to marginalized communities, may not just be a technical matter of designing an appropriate curriculum. It may require collaboration across lines of polarization and prejudice. IMs can play a vital role here.

Insider mediation in the 21st century

It is evident that IMs, alongside a diverse range of other actors, have a critical role to play in fulfilling the aspirations of the Sustaining Peace Agenda. As mediators from or closely affiliated with the context where actors are or could be in conflict, IMs are well positioned to perform the socio-political work required to **foster attitudinal changes over the long-term and at an early stage**, often before tensions have given rise to violence and long after a peace agreement is signed. After all, IMs are able to deal with the extended processes associated with managing the "nested and shifting forms of conflict that emerge during periods of transition and in countries that have been affected by violence."[32]

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[25] Kumar, Chetan and De la Haye, Jos, 'Hybrid Peacemaking: Building National "Infrastructure for Peace", Global Insights, Global Governance 18 (2012), 13-20, p. 13 (emphasis added).

[26] World Bank, World Development Report, 'Conflict, Security and Development', 2011.

[27] International Peace Institute (IPI), 'UN Regional Political Offices and Prevention for Sustaining Peace', May 2017, p. 1.

[28] World Bank, 2011.

[29] Galtung, Johan, 'Peace, Positive and Negative', Blackwell Publishing, November 2011.

[30] International Peace Institute (IPI), 'Sustaining Peace: What Does It Mean in Practice', IPI, April 2017, p. 2.

[31] Ibid, p. 2.

[32] African Insiders Mediation Platform, 'Turning African mediation outside in, towards a deeper understanding of the role that the African Insider Mediators Platform will play in support of transforming conflicts in Africa', Reflections informed by the 3rd AIMP consultative conference 2013, p. 2.

Given the closeness of their relationships, IMs are likely to be able to identify entry points into even the most complex conflict contexts, including in increasingly complex identity conflicts, where actors' aims and goals may appear intransigent or even unnegotiable. Since IMs can be found in almost all communities and contexts and at all levels, they can work on peace processes, humanitarian crises, development processes, security issues, natural resource-related conflicts, issues related to political reform, illicit economies, preventing violent extremism and on fostering tolerance and diversity within their own communities. Indeed, in **any area or sector where power is contested, resources distributed, relationships fraught and narrative divisive**, IMs are able to carry out their instrumental work of mediating between divergent interests and positions, both horizontally amongst different societal groups and vertically across community, state and regional levels.

An appreciation of IMs, therefore, begins with the premise that all countries – whether stable or experiencing conflict – have inbuilt capacities for peace. This observation aligns with what has been referred to as a "'local/insider turn' in the fields of peacebuilding and development cooperation",[33] which acknowledges the role played by local, indigenous methods of conflict prevention and resolution "that are *owned* and *driven* by actors 'intrinsic' to the conflict system".[34] Recent research in this field has sought to quantify that effect, at least in the domain of peace processes. Research on mediation in unarmed insurrections from 1970-2006 finds that IMs significantly increase the likelihood of a negotiated agreement: **when an IM is present, the probability of a negotiated agreement increases from 5 percent to 19 percent.**[35] As several case studies in this GN will make clear, IMs also play an important role in linking processes at different levels, thereby increasing buy-in for a particular process.

As the next section discusses in greater detail, IMs are not without limitations. Irrespective of the context in which they are engaged, these limitations are best overcome – and the quality of the process and the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes enhanced – by **greater collaboration between international actors and IMs**. As that section will show, this is due to what Lederach, a founder of the IM concept, saw as the "interdependence of multiple levels of society, from grassroots to high level political processes."[36] He consistently emphasized the need to overcome the gap between community and political processes of negotiation. He believed that the capacity to link these different processes holds the key "to social and political transformation that promotes a whole of society movement from extended periods of civil war toward the more robust expression of constructive peace."[37] So, what role can IMs play in linking such processes? How do we understand the origins and evolution of the term? How do we understand IMs' two key traits as insiders who mediate? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

[33] Mir, Mubashir and Luxshi Vimalarajah, 'Tradition- and Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs) in Conflict Transformation: Potential, Constraints, and Opportunities for Collaborative Support', Baseline Study, Synopsis. Berghof Foundation & Finn Church Aid, 2016, p. 4 (available at: https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TFIM_Synopsis_web-2.pdf?x49085).

[34] Ibid. p. 4.

[35] Svensson, I., Lindgren, M., 'Peace from the Inside: Exploring the Role of the Insider-Partial Mediator,' *International Interactions*, 39:5, 2013, pp. 710-711.

[36] Lederach, John Paul, 'The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace: a personal reflection', J*ournal of Peacebuilding and Development*, March 3013, p. 9.

[37] Ibid, p. 9.

Female Insider Mediators. Photo: UNDP Uganda.

The role of women in preventing electoral-related violence: Uganda

In the run-up to the 2016 elections, Ugandan women played an active role in contributing to violence-free elections. In mid-2015, a civil society women's coalition, including Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), the Institute for Social Transformation (IST) and others convened the Women's Situation Room (WSR), an early-warning and rapid response mechanism to address and mitigate any incidents or conflicts likely to lead to violence before, during and after the elections.

The WSR is a platform for women, in collaboration with youth, to participate, actively and directly, in peace and conflict prevention processes, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. This mechanism was first implemented during Liberia's 2011 presidential election, based on the recognition that election-related violence was becoming common in African countries. The initiative's objective is to serve as a non-political, non-partisan advocate for peaceful elections, inclusive of both women and youth. Adopted as a best practice by the African Union (AU), through its Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), it has been replicated in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Guinea and Ghana with tremendous results.

During the election period, the Ugandan WSR was supported by 10 Ugandan Eminent Women (EW) and five International EW from Africa. It responded to almost 1,500 reported incidents that could have led to violence or conflict. Post- election, some called for continuing the WSR as a peacebuilding mechanism. With support from UN Women, the initiative was extended to pursue efforts to help prevent post-election violence.

On 27 February 2016, the EW of the Uganda WSR launched a strategy of shuttle diplomacy to encourage the principals and main political parties to engage in a dialogue on issues that were creating fear of insecurity and other long-standing problems related to Uganda's political history and governance. The WSR initiatives focused primarily on mediation among the rival parties. They included negotiations with the principals of

the two main political parties and, later, with technical teams of the two parties appointed by the principals. The negotiations focused on generating consensus on the objectives of a dialogue and agreement on the agenda, facilitation, funding, guarantors and a post-dialogue mechanism to implement the decisions emerging from the dialogue.

EW mediation has sought to temper hostility between the two main political parties and organize a formal dialogue to address the underlying issues that threaten peace during elections. Simultaneously, the goal is to involve the parties to build and maintain a culture of peace, tolerance and work together in the interest of the nation. The EW have shown leadership in their engagement with the two opposing political parties and have remained impartial and optimistic during the process, demonstrating the value of women's participation in concretely addressing peace and security issues. Through the post-election mediation efforts, the EW have made new progress towards Uganda's first political dialogue. Women's participation has brought different perspectives, raising issues that might otherwise be ignored.

Support from UN Women for a series of mediation trainings for the EW strengthened this process. Five civil society organizations (CSOs) and 10 EW received two capacity building trainings, facilitated by ACCORD, on post-election peacebuilding, conflict resolution and mediation. With the skills gained, the participants have been able to manage negotiations that can help the parties enter into a political dialogue. The training identified the need for ongoing research on conflict triggers and Ugandans' expectations about participating into the process. The EW and the mediation team recognized that peacebuilding processes are unpredictable and could take time. Following the training, the EW reviewed the stakeholder list, develop its code of conduct and established a strategy to support the dialogue process.

In July 2016, the United Nations Security Council recognized the WSR as a best practice to promote women's participation in peacebuilding at the national level, particularly during and after elections. This recognition has underscored the importance of the WSR and increased interest in the WSR Uganda peacebuilding efforts. In 2017, the EW's efforts to advance the dialogue showed progress and the WSR was invited to join a working group to organize a national dialogue process for Uganda.

Source: UNWomen Uganda

Participant of Insider Mediation training. Photo: UNDP Ghana.

Understanding insider mediators and insider mediation: Origins, evolution and key dimensions

The evolution of a concept: Insights from theory and practice

The concept of insider mediation is tied intimately to the practice of IMs and with practitioners' evolving understanding of IM approaches and methods. Entities engaged with IMs, therefore, have each contributed an additional dimension to our understanding of the term in theory and practice. The concept was introduced by Lederach and Paul Wehr in 1991 based on their experiences in Central America, where they noticed that trust, or *confianza*, was central to mediators' success in the conflict between the Sandinista government and Atlantic Coast Indian leaders.[38] Trust was perceived as the result of the mediators' personal connection with the conflict parties before, during and after the intervention. **Trust**, Lederach and Wehr argued, was tied to the fact that the mediator "does not leave the post-negotiation situation because he or she is part of it and will and must live with the consequences of the mediation, ensuring that any settlement is implemented."[39] These mediators were described as having other unique traits, including: connectedness to the parties; intimate knowledge of the conflict; and, unique entry points for mediation.[40] They proposed to introduce the concept of 'insider-partial mediators' and suggested, crucially, that mediation teams should include both insider-partial and 'outsider-neutral' mediators.[41]

While insider and/or local elements of mediation were largely neglected in the international peacebuilding agenda of the 1990s,[42] the concept was expanded in the 2000s by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) on the basis of its extensive work with IMs. HD defined IMs as individuals "from within the conflicted society who have a deep knowledge and perspective on the conflict that is valued and respected by all

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[38] Wehr, Paul and Lederach, John Paul, 'Mediating conflict in Central America', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1991, pp. 85-98.

[39] Hove, Mediel, and Ndawana, Enock, 'Regional mediation strategy: The case of Zimbabwe', *African Security Review*, 25: 1, 63-84, March 2016, p. 65.

[40] Svensson, I., Lindgren, M., 'Peace from the Inside,' (2013), p. 701.

[41] Wehr, Paul and Lederach, (1991).

[42] OSCE, 'The OSCE as mediator instruments – challenges – potentials', German OSCE Chairmanship, Conference, July 2016, p. 16.

parties."[43] Here, the added notion of **respect** relates not only to the knowledge that IMs possess, but also their roles in society. In 2010, the PeaceNexus Foundation, whose work focused on supporting IMs in diverse contexts globally, expanded HD's definition, insisting on the importance of sensitivity to cultural, religious and political differences.[44] As a result, PeaceNexus chose to define IMs as "trusted and respected insiders at all levels of a conflicted society who have a deep knowledge of the dynamics and context of the conflict, and a **sensitivity** in their contribution to finding solutions that are recognized and valued by all parties."[45]

Part of the work by PeaceNexus aimed to elucidate the multiple areas where IMs have a role both at the micro-level in resolving interpersonal disputes and at the macro-level as part of a wider peacebuilding and democratization agenda.[46] While Lederach and Wehr had focused on the complementary roles that insider and outsider mediators could play in the context of peace processes, i.e. in building **horizontal connections**, PeaceNexus helped shed light on IMs' critical role in building relationships *between* levels (local, sub-national, national and regional), i.e. **vertical connections**. This work contributed to an understanding of IMs as connectors, or nodes, able to build bridges both horizontally and vertically. PeaceNexus thus underscored the critical notion that efforts to build "local dispute resolution capacity and to foster a culture of democratic dialogue across a society should not be delinked from the more formal processes of mediation that are associated with responses to periods of crisis."[47]

Text box 2 Key traits of insider mediators

- **Trusted** by one or more parties to the conflict;
- **Respected** by key stakeholders as a result of their role in society;
- Possess a **deep sensitivity** to cultural, religious and political differences;
- Serve as nodes or bridge builders, both **horizontally and vertically**;
- **Cultural and normative closeness** to the conflicting parties;
- Benefit from **influence and authority** with the conflicting parties, which gives them unparalleled access;
- Critical **behind-the-scenes actors** working alone, with other IMs and/or with international actors;
- Have **relationships and reputations**, built over time, that put them in a position to influence the conflicting parties;
- **Personal closeness** to the parties; and,
- **High levels of commitment and dedication** and strong personal resilience.

In parallel, other entities have used their experiences of working with IMs to contribute to our understanding of who these actors are and how they work. In 2009, for example, the Berghof Foundation, swisspeace and the Centre for Security Studies (CSS) defined IMs as having "geographical proximity to the parties, or as having stakes in the conflict"[48] and drew attention to the important **cultural and normative closeness** of IMs to the conflict parties.[49] Similarly, in 2016, the Berghof Foundation, working with the Organization for Security and

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[43] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 'A guide to mediation, enabling peace processes in violent conflicts', 2007, p. 16.

[44] Smith, Richard and Deely, Scott, 'Insider mediators in Africa, understanding the contribution of insider mediators to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa', Summary report of phase one, PeaceNexus Foundation for the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, Division for Human Security, July 2010, p. 3.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, swisspeace, CSS, 'Insider Mediators, Exploring their key role in informal peace processes', 2009, p. 4.

[49] Ibid.

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), elaborated on the sources of legitimacy of IMs, noting that this legitimacy derives from their "rootedness in the context as well as their **influence and authority**, which provides them access to conflict actors that is unavailable to others (e.g. radical, hard to reach and armed actors)."[50] Building further on the concept, the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) used and expanded prior definitions, adding that IMs are often "key, **behind-the-scenes actors** working on their own or as part of broader processes involving international actors."[51]

In the first iteration of this GN in 2014 and building upon UNDPs extensive experience supporting IMs in diverse contexts, IMs were described as "Individual(s), groups, entities or institutions possessing high levels of legitimacy and trust with the individuals and institutions involved in a specific conflict setting by virtue of their **relationships and reputation** with the parties and who/which possess a unique ability to directly and indirectly influence the conflict parties' behaviour and thinking."[52] As a result of the extensive stakeholder consultations conducted for this GN and the evolution of the field since the 2014 publication, three main weaknesses with this definition were brought to UNDP's attention. First, by focusing on legitimacy, trust, reputation and the ability to influence conflict parties as key attributes of IMs, many argue that the definition also applies to OMs or regional/international mediators, making it difficult to distinguish the unique attributes of IMs. Second, including institutions in the description has led some to question how to differentiate IM from other concepts in the peacebuilding field, especially 'national capacities for peace' and 'infrastructures for peace' (I4P). Third, the description pays insufficient attention to the psychological factors that motivate IMs to become involved.

The revised description (see Text box 3) maintains that IMs share key traits with OMs, including legitimacy, credibility and influence, but suggests that the source/origin of those traits differs. The revised description also excludes institutions, because even when institutions are engaged in a peace process, for example, it is the individuals affiliated with the institution who are **personally close to the parties**. This reduction in the scope of the description is designed to help avoid confusion, which is detrimental to the understanding of the term and engagement with IMs in practice. In the same spirit, the revised understanding also seeks to distinguish IMs from I4P. Defined as a "dynamic networking of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that help build constructive social and political relationships and enhance sustainable resilience of societies against relapse into violence"[53], I4P has increasingly been used as a term in the peacebuilding field, sometimes interchangeably with IM. To ensure conceptual clarity, this GN suggests that I4Ps represent one of many ways to ensure greater sustainability of IM endeavours, but IMs may ultimately exist as part of, or independent from, I4Ps. Clearly, however, the work of IMs may provide an important opportunity to form, expand or consolidate I4Ps.

Furthermore, IMs become involved in their work as a result of their **personal commitment and dedication**. Resilience is often a remarkable trait that helps them remain engaged despite the challenges. Consequently, they have a vested and, once again, personal interest in the outcome. This vested interest relates to their interest in the outcome based on their rootedness in the conflict context, rather than on political or profit-based motives. Lastly, implicit in the understanding of IMs is also an appreciation of the critical role they play as connectors or nodes, connecting actors, groups and communities vertically and connecting civil society, governments and regional actors horizontally.

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[50] Mubashir, Mir; Engiellushe Morina and Luxshi Vimalarajah, 'OSCE support to insider mediation, strengthening mediation capacities, networking and complementarity', Berghof Foundation, OSCE, December 2016, p. 8.

[51] Garrigues, Juan, 'The case for contact: overcoming the challenges and dilemmas of official and non-official mediation with armed groups', NOREF, June 2015, p. 6.

[52] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Supporting Insider Mediation,' 2014.

[53] Giessmann, Hans J., 'Embedded Peace, Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned', Swiss Agency for Development and cooperation, Berghof Foundation, and UNDP, 2016.

IMs are understood here as "an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, *personal* - closeness to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace. IMs are driven by personal conviction and dedication to the cause and have a vested interest in the outcome."

This understanding of IMs is based on the practice of working with and supporting IMs and is conceptually useful for the purpose of this GN. However, the way in which people understand what an IMs is may differ from one context to another and the way people understand the concept depends on their own perceptions and terminology. Consequently, not all IMs will necessarily identify as an IM or agree with all aspects of the term as outlined above. Practitioners should be open to using terms that IMs themselves feel comfortable with and should use the above understanding as a means to clarify rather than exclude.

What makes insider mediators 'insiders'?

A key question that emerges both in the literature and in engagements with policymakers and practitioners concerns how to differentiate insider mediators (IMs) from outsider mediators (OMs). While conceptually speaking, some lines can be drawn, these are **inherently relative** terms that only make sense as part of a comparison. For example, Kofi Annan "is more of an insider mediator in the Kenya post-election peace process than a Martti Ahtisaari would have been, but less of an insider compared to someone like Dekha Ibrahim Abdi or General Lazaro Submbeiywo."[54] Furthermore, the perspective of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' depends on who is perceiving the actor in question. In addition, that perspective is dynamic and may vary over time. An IM who is perceived as having become too close to one party, or even too close to international actors, may begin to be perceived as an outsider by certain parties to the conflict.

IMs and OMs should, therefore, be understood not as conceptual opposites but as **ideal types that exist on an extended continuum**. Both IMs and OMs share legitimacy, credibility and influence with the conflicting parties. However, at one end of the spectrum we find IMs who derive those traits from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, *personal* – closeness to the parties of the conflict. Indeed, they are "familiar with the cultural norms, the language and ways of communication, as well as the social structures, power configurations and hierarchies exigent in the conflict context."[55] IMs have more in common with the conflicting parties as a result of their shared experience of the conflict and/or their socio-cultural affiliations with the conflicting parties. They must live, directly or personally, with the consequences of their actions.

IMs tend to use approaches and methods of communication, conflict resolution and mediation that derive from their **deep appreciation of the importance of socio-cultural tradition, symbols and ways of being**. One example of an IM – although many categories of IMs exist – is a tradition- and faith-oriented insider mediator (TFIM), such as an imam, priest, spiritual leader or clan elder. TFIMs' insiderness derives from their shared tradition, faith, culture and/or spirituality. Positioned inside a system of belief they thus play a critical role in reaching out to groups that are alienated from the political mainstream and that may be influenced by divisive and/or radical discourses. In this context, mediation processes depend upon insiders who can use relationships of trust to make people aware of alternative narratives. These IMs are thus able to promote tolerance and diversity within groups.

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[54] Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, swisspeace, CSS, 'Insider Mediators, Exploring their key role in informal peace processes,' 2009, p. 4.
[55] Roepstorff, K, (2013), p. 164.

OMs, on the other hand, derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a host of diverse factors tied to their **experience and track record; institutional affiliation; character; networks; and, potentially, ability to use 'carrots and sticks'.** In general, OMs originate from outside the conflict context, have some distance from the conflicting parties and context, and have a level of knowledge of the conflict and/or relationships with the conflicting parties that is not tied to personal closeness. While many OMs may be familiar with, and possibly incorporate, traditional methods into their approaches, they are more likely to use Western and/or professionalized mediation methods.

Unlike IMs, OMs have "the opportunity to choose whether and to what extent they want to be involved in the conflict and its resolution process."[56] While many types of OMs also exist, the UN Special Envoy and Special Representative offer two examples. This individual's 'outsiderness' derives from the fact that he/she is **formally appointed to a position**, normally from outside the conflict context, by an organization that is mandated to play a role in a given setting. The Special Envoy or Special Representative is unlikely to have grown up in the same context as the conflicting parties and may not share the same religious and/or socio-cultural worldview.

Rather than setting them apart from one another, these different roles, attributes, approaches and methods underscore **the imperative for IMs and OMs to work together**. As will be demonstrated below in the analysis of IMs' and OMs' strengths and constraints, both exhibit a conceptual complementary that has been reinforced time and time again by practice. Where IMs and OMs work together, in sensitive, harmonious and contextually-appropriate ways, the chances of finding a comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable solution to a conflict - and doing so in a way that helps rebuild the social fabric - are dramatically increased. Furthermore, since different IMs bring different relationships, traits and approaches to the table, teams of IMs, working in partnership with OMs, often prove to be the most constructive means of engaging in a given conflict context.

Text box 4 An example of an insider mediator at work

"**Padma Ratna Tuladhar** grew into the political mediation work through his engagement as a human rights activist. In the 1990s he was a member of parliament, elected as an independent leftist. He helped to bring various communist parties together into the single United Left Front (ULF). He then facilitated talks between the ULF, other democratic forces and the Royal government to restore parliamentary democracy. This experience led him to be trusted by both the communist, Royalist and the democratic forces, which enabled him to be a facilitator in the 2001, 2003 and 2006 peace talks in Nepal … [He] worked as a mediator between the main conflict parties, but his role also involved being in touch with the wider population and being a key point of contact for diplomats and mediators from the international community. Due to lack of coordination or even competition between some of the international outsider mediators, he also ended up in some cases having to coordinate the outsider mediators. Padma said that what he appreciated from these outsider mediators was to learn from experiences elsewhere."

From Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, swisspeace, CSS, Insider Mediators: Exploring their key role in informal peace processes, 2009, p. 7.

What makes insider mediators 'mediators'?

IMs may be defined as mediators in line with two of the most important UN definitions of mediation. First, they assist with the **peaceful settlement of disputes**,[57] as defined by Article 22 of the UN Charter and second, they assist "two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements", as per the UN definition of mediation in the 'Guidance for Effective

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[56] Ibid, p. 165.

[57] United Nations Charter.

Mediation'.[58] Engaged in both formal and informal mediation initiatives, IMs play the critical role of connecting different diplomatic tracks[59] in a way that helps prevent conflict and enable peace agreements to endure. Even in contexts where IMs are not *directly* involved in helping parties reach an agreement, they often contribute to the processes that foster the attitudinal changes necessary to create a conducive environment for a peace agreement. They also often perform the vital behind-the-scenes work of managing tensions, promoting tolerance and encouraging diversity both within and between groups.

At the global level, the practice of mediation requires adhering to generally accepted principles, including **impartiality**, preparedness, inclusivity and national ownership.[60] The most important aspect of mediation, and the area where conceptual confusion can arise with respect to IMs, often concerns this notion of *impartiality* and the related concept of 'bias'. According to the UN Guidance on Effective Mediation, "if a mediation process is perceived to be biased, this can undermine meaningful progress to resolve the conflict."[61] Since, from their origin, IMs have also been referred to as insider-partial mediators, could their implicit bias disqualify them from being considered mediators?

The response has two key components. First, analysis of mediation processes suggests that neutrality and impartiality are not necessary preconditions for effective mediation processes. Moreover, in certain contexts, "these characteristics can have inhibiting effects on the conflict parties' openness to talk and agree on a compromise."[62] The IM concept, therefore, contests the notion that impartiality is a prerequisite for conducting mediation and suggests, on the contrary, that **partiality has its advantages**, including high-levels of *trust*. Second, impartiality is a complex term with three key dimensions: process-related; outcome-oriented; and relational.[63] One may argue that IMs are partial in ways that can help mediation processes; that is, in terms of relational aspects/closeness to the parties. However, they remain impartial both to avoid favouritism during the mediation process and/or in terms of the specifics of the outcome. Their vested interest in the outcome refers to their preference for peace over violence, rather than a specific form of peace. This argument thus suggests that insider mediators' partiality is relational, rather than processual or outcome-oriented.[64]

It is important to recognize that for IMs, mediation takes place outside the formal confines of a negotiating room. **IMs are constantly mediating in order to prevent conflict**, rather than necessarily always mediating to *resolve* it or to reach an agreement. In this sense, mediation becomes part of an everyday practice for IMs and part of their engagement with different conflicting parties. They mediate in order to change both mindsets and behaviours, to build connections and trust, and to rebuild or strengthen relationships where conflict has had a negative effect on those relationships.

Above all, it is important to recognize that **there are no perfect mediators**. All mediators, including OMs and IMs, have their strengths, weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages. By developing a more complete understanding of these diverse traits, we can leverage the diverse opportunities for these actors to work together.

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[58] United Nations, Guidance for Effective Mediation, June 2012 (available at: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GuidanceEffectiveMediation_UNDPA2012%28english%29_0.pdf).

[59] "Track 1 diplomacy: Official discussions typically involving high-level political and military leaders and focusing on cease-fires, peace talks, and treaties and other agreements; Track 2 diplomacy: Unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships and encouraging new thinking that can inform the official process. Track 2 activities typically involve influential academic, religious, and NGO leaders and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials. Some analysts use the term track 1.5 to denote a situation in which official and non-official actors work together to resolve conflicts. Track 3 diplomacy: People-to-people diplomacy undertaken by individuals and private groups to encourage interaction and understanding between hostile communities and involving awareness raising and empowerment within these communities. Normally focused at the grassroots level, this type of diplomacy often involves organizing meetings and conferences, generating media exposure, and political and legal advocacy for marginalized people and communities." Taken from: Glossary, 'Tracks of Diplomacy', United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

[60] United Nations, Guidance for Effective Mediation, June 2012, p. 3.

[61] Ibid., p. 10.

[62] Roepstorff, (2013), p. 166.

[63] Operation 1325, 'Mediation and Influence, Insights: Views and Experiences on Influencing Peace Processes', 2017, p.3 (available at: https://operation1325.se/sites/default/files/mediation_and_influence_insights_0.pdf).

[64] Roepstorff, (2013), p. 166.

The role of tradition- and faith-oriented insider mediators (TFIMs): South Sudan

South Sudan has a complex legacy of violence and conflict. Diverse international initiatives have sought to end the civil wars between 'the North' and 'the South'. In 1972, these efforts culminated in the Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first civil war, and, in 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the second civil war.

South Sudan became an independent state in 2011. Prior to the act of secession, tensions began to build and were compounded by a brutal power struggle between South Sudan's new leaders following the declaration of independence. In 2013, the political crisis took a violent turn when fighting broke out between different factions in the army. Within days fighting escalated into a civil war with evident ethnic dimensions. Dinka soldiers loyal to President Kiir enacted attacks against Nuer soldiers loyal to the former Vice President Riek Machar, and then began targeting the civilian population, causing massive internal displacement and horrendous human rights violations.

The fighting laid bare the extreme fragility of state institutions and the destructive history of hostility between different ethnic groups. In August 2015, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar signed a peace agreement that, in April 2016, led to the formation of a transitional government of national unity. The political settlement, however, did not last. Already in July 2016, political tensions again escalated into fighting between troops loyal to the Dinka President and the Nuer Vice-President, and the civil war reignited. With the support of the countries in the region and the international community more broadly, IGAD continued to invite the two sides to return to the negotiation table.

Throughout decades of war, the church in South Sudan has organized an ecumenical body known as the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). The SSCC has a history of working to resolve conflict through work with traditional leaders, blending both modern and traditional methods. Dr. Bill Lowrey, a Tanenbaum Peacemaker, was with the Council in 1991 when it was formed and has built relationships of trust with many of the leaders. Over the years, Dr. Lowrey has continued to support them, ensuring they remain in the lead while recognizing their need for support, encouragement and coaching. In 1999, the SSCC launched the **People-to-People peace process**, using indigenous methods of conflict resolution. This process, supported by Dr. Lowrey, produced one of the most significant reconciliation agreements between the Dinka and Nuer to date. The agreement held until 2013 and enabled the South to unite and achieve independence. Similar reconciliation agreements are required to end the current conflict.

In 2015, SSCC developed an Action Plan for Peace that outlined the role of churches and faith communities in advancing peace. Faith-based organizations present in South Sudan coordinate their support in Juba and some staff are seconded to the SSCC to provide technical support. Resolving inter-community conflicts and disputes is a complex challenge for the religious peacemakers but, as noted, the SSCC is trusted by both grass-roots and high-level actors and has worked with all sides.

Until recently, the SSCC's ---participation in government negotiations has remained on the margins. In 2018, IGAD, the government and the opposition jointly invited the SSCC to provide assistance to find a way forward. As the number of organizations seeking to support the SSCC has increased over the years, the need for coordinated support has become more pressing.   The Consortium for Reconciliation, launched by the

Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, connects Track I, II and III actors by hosting strategic retreats that increase collaboration among partners, including: the World Council of Churches; the Reconciliation Ministry of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury; Rose Castle; and, the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (IPTI). Together and bilaterally, these organizations have continued to assist faith leaders and communities. The Consortium unifies these critical resources to support the process, and help surmount the diverse challenges that have prevented peace from being sustained to date.

In 2017, for example, IPTI's director, Dr. Thania Paffenholz and researcher Dr. Andreas Hirblinger wrote a paper on the country's proposed National Dialogue, using comparative research from IPTI's qualitative database. IPTI was then able to engage with actors close to the process and provide them more in-depth advice, thereby transferring research to policy and practice, supporting the work of IMs.

Lessons learned/good practices

Church leaders in South Sudan have maintained a **sense of unity** across their differences of faith, enabling the various denominations to come together with a focus on peace. Within the SSCC, they refer to themselves as 'the Church' rather than 'the churches', which underscores their ability to work as one organization. For decades, they have reflected this unity at both the local and national levels by organizing Inter-Church Committees at the local level, connecting with the grassroots and building trust from communities up to the national level, where they interact with and have relationships of trust with top political leadership.

The national networks of the Church, linked with tribal networks of traditional leaders, **expands the reach** of the Church among the wider population and links the tribe-based networks of traditional leaders to the national political level. Few peace processes have become successful in South Sudan without support from both traditional and faith leaders. Unlike traditional leaders, including chiefs and elders, the Church provides an institutional structure that creates connections across tribal lines and at the national level. The Church has successfully built bridges of trust and cooperation with these traditional leaders and has worked in partnership with the chiefs to mediate conflicts, using a blend of modern and traditional methods and indigenous rituals.

The IMs (i.e. including church, traditional, women, and youth leaders) are able to incorporate **cultural patterns and methodologies** to resolve conflict. IGAD and other external mediators are yet to fully capitalize upon this potential in the peace processes. However, a deeper transformative reconciliation may be required to create sustainable peace in the world's newest country. People-to-people methods, together with guidance from religious and traditional leaders, may ultimately offer be the best opportunity to establish and sustain peace.

The typical profile of an insider mediator is a complex one that "combines certain core skills and personality traits with ready networks. Relevant work experience and local knowledge are obvious prerequisites, but other, less tangible qualities are equally important – including trustworthiness, respect, dynamism, and influence.

Insider mediators come from diverse backgrounds. In some cases, their previous experience and networks led them to HD; while in others, it was their conviction of the value of dialogue and of the usefulness of an impartial third party in bringing protagonists together to talk peace."

Paul Dziatkowiec, 'The inside story, the impact of insider mediators on modern peacemaking', Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), 2017, p. 13.

What are the key strengths and constraints of insider mediators?

In addition to the key attributes outlined in the definition, which IMs share with Oms, IMs typically have a combination of some of the below key strengths and weaknesses. By understanding the multiple dimensions of the IM function, it is possible to gain greater clarity on where and how to foster greater collaboration among diverse actors.

IMs' strengths include:

- Access to **critical information** about the conflicting parties' level of resolve and capabilities[65] and an in-depth, inherent understanding of the context and ability to interpret information.

- The capacity and knowledge to focus on the **relational aspects** of the conflict and its historical roots and the long-term processes required to help sustain peace.

- The ability to use **moral persuasion**, which derives from socio-cultural and community-related values (e.g. virtue of forgiveness, compassion, respect and reason),[66] including the ability to extract concessions in order to show respect for or give face "to the mediator, to satisfy their community, to restore the relationship and social harmony."[67]

- A strong **sensitivity to cultural, religious and political dynamics** and the way these impact on forms of communication, understandings of the conflict and approaches to finding solutions that insider mediators appear to contribute."[68]

- Adeptness at understanding the **rules and informal power structures** that shape the conflict and the ability to navigate them constructively.

- An ability to reach out to groups that are **alienated from the political mainstream's** peace processes and often influenced by divisive and/or radical discourse.

- **Reputational considerations** to keep in mind, given their close ongoing relationships, which "gives them an incentive to stay honest as information carriers".[69]

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[65] Julius, Adinoyi Adavize, 'Bias in Mediation: Policy Implications', April, 2015, pp. 2-3 (available at: www.academia.edu/16923496/BIAS_IN_MEDIATION_POLICY_IMPLICATIONS).

[66] Roepstorff, (2013), p. 166.

[67] Ibid.

[68] AIMP, (2013), p. 8.

[69] Svensson, I., Lindgren, M., 'Peace from the Inside', (2013), p. 703.

- A level of **agility** based on their independence from "the long chain of command and the mandate mindset" of state and intergovernmental organizations.[70] This agility can increase the scope to manoeuvre of the IM.

- **Personal conviction** and motivation.

Conversely, IMs are often constrained by:

- Limited **space and little recognition** for their work.

- **Lack of inclusion** by the international community, leading to parallel realities, i.e. confusion about what is happening/who is doing what, etc.

- Minimal opportunities for **learning, sharing and reflecting** on their experiences.

- Partial or no access to both **human and financial resources** that could improve the nature of their work.

- Attempts by actors who do not want inclusion or agreement (**spoilers**) to use funding and/or other resources to influence IMs.

- Few **opportunities to connect** with formal processes and/or regional/subregional and/or international processes.

- Limited understanding of the **international community's operating constraints**.

- Significant exposure to **security risks** given a lack of mechanisms and protocols in place to ensure their safety.

- Potential risk of isolation and low **levels of psychological and/or peer support** due to the complex and sensitive nature of IMs' work.

Text box 6 The diverse and sustained roles that insider mediators play: Somalia

"To become an IM was something I inherited from my late father. In 1998, I joined him on his travels with other elders from Mogadishu to villages in north eastern of Somalia. In a period of 90 days they solved a very deadly conflict between Somali clans. Through this experience, I learned a lot including that being an insider mediator requires dedication, firmness, god fearing, humanity, ripeness of wisdom, knowledge of culture and the history of the area. Furthermore, it requires to be trusted and enjoy strong legitimacy and leverage.

During my course of acting as an IM, I trained myself to be in the middle of every party. This enabled me to solve over 50 large-scale deadly conflicts. I paid a lot of efforts to equip myself with relevant academic knowledge, culture and the Somali literature to draw the attention of the audience. This gave me chance to analyze, diagnose, map the issues, actors, and factors of every conflict before I set general criteria of intervention, and eventually intervened.

Being an IM is **a matter of acting as a facilitator/mediator, being deep inside in the context**, investing enough time on communications, mentoring others, building the trust of the parties, setting the climate, breaking deadlock and hurtling stalemate, and making the situation ripe for talks in order to prevent, resolve and transform the conflict. Being an IM in the communities with a conflict involves high risks and can be very complicated. It also has some shortcomings, such as lack of adequate finances, logistical support and training. However, compared to many other means to resolve conflicts, it is also highly accepted by the community, less costly and based on already gained access. As an IM, I can engage in efficient and timely peace action."

Insider Mediator testimony, Somalia, provided by the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

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[70] Quoting Martin Griffiths, taken from: Garrigues, Juan, 'The case for contact: overcoming the challenges and dilemmas of official and non-official mediation with armed groups', NOREF, June 2015, p. 6.

Inclusive training for youth. Photo: UNDP Bosnia Herzegovina.

3

Engaging effectively with insider mediators: An eight-point engagement strategy

Having explained the place of IMs within the current policy landscape and equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the conceptual and practical underpinnings of the term, this part of the GN provides a step-by-step guide of how to engage with IMs. While efforts have been made to demonstrate a logical" sequence of the steps required to support IMs, most engagement processes do not happen in such a strictly linear manner. In reality, as a practitioner, you may come to this GN with an engagement strategy in place, or perhaps with an IM support programme already underway. Even if that is not the case, most of these steps will need to be continually revisited to ensure that you are making necessary adjustments as and where necessary. Consequently, whether you are reading this GN because you want to develop an IM engagement strategy from scratch or because you want to adjust one that is already in place, each step should be understood as part of a comprehensive approach. You should take each step and revisit it to ensure that your strategy is high-quality, risk-aware and conflict-sensitive.

3.1 Step one: Analyse the context

As with any type of programming, especially in fragile or conflict-affected contexts, it is vital to start with an analysis of the context and, since that context will evolve over time, to ensure that the analysis is ongoing. The objective of the analysis is to ensure that your IM engagement strategy is anchored in a full understanding of the context in which it will unfold and tailored to the specific interrelation among structural factors, medium- and short-term dynamics, and key stakeholders and, informed by a full understanding of how gender dynamics shape the conflict context. Given the intense contexts in which insider mediation often unfolds, there can be a tendency to feel compelled to either skip the analysis and move straight to action or to become so overwhelmed by the complexity of the context that understanding it becomes an endless task, leading to 'analysis paralysis'.

It is essential, therefore, to balance the imperative for a solid understanding of the context with the need to design and begin the engagement within a reasonable timeframe. This means undertaking an analysis with the resources and time available to you, whether a few months, a few weeks or just a few days. It also

means recognizing that analysis is not about trying to arrive at a precise or scientific outcome., More importantly, it involves:

- Fostering a process that allows for a **shared understanding** of perspectives, actors and dynamics: the process is as important as the outcome.

- Developing an appreciation of the **power dynamics**, including those related to gender, that shape and constrain options for peacebuilding and the nature of the peace engines at work: power and politics are at the heart of the analysis.

- Identifying **entry points** for engagement related to IMs: how you intend to use the analysis that you produce (see Step 3.3).

If you do not have a pre-existing, up-to-date analysis already available, therefore, it is vital to conduct one before developing other aspects of the programme. There are many analysis tools that you can use for this purpose, including the UN Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA)[71]. If you already have a CDA or similar analysis completed, and it is relatively up-to-date, the objective of this phase is to understand the role of peace engines, broadly speaking, in the conflict and how IMs fit in with other peace engines.

Foster a shared understanding of the context

Regardless of the time available, in general, the more participatory the analysis process, the more useful the product is likely to be. Moreover, the process itself is an important part of developing a shared understanding of the conflict and the narratives that underpin it. 'Participatory' should mean including relevant members from the UN and EU, bilateral and multilateral partners, and national counterparts, including government, civil society representatives and communities. However, participatory does not mean consulting all groups in the same way at the same time. You will need to adapt your consultation strategy to the power dynamics and particular needs of those whose views you wish to reflect, whether government entities, women, youth, elders, armed groups or others, to ensure that the consultation process itself is not detrimental in any way to any of the groups concerned or to the process as a whole.

If you are revisiting this step to update an existing analysis, you may also be able to include IMs you have already identified. This can further strengthen the quality of the analysis. It is important to recognize that the context will evolve, as will IMs' understanding of that context. Returning to the analysis frequently will help ensure that the engagement remains adaptive.

Develop an appreciation of power dynamics and gender relations

The analysis should focus on developing an appreciation of power dynamics, including gender relations. Such an approach sheds light on the forms of power that may foster or perpetuate conflict dynamics, marginalization and inequality, as well as forms of power that may counter such dynamics. Power is present in all relationships and institutions as part of the way in which society and culture operate.[72] Gender is also a system of power. Analysis will reveal how notions of masculinity and femininity, for example, interact with other power factors, such as age, class and race, producing a multitude of masculinities and femininities in each context.[73] Women and men have different needs related to key areas such as peace processes, land and natural resources and electoral processes, so conducting an analysis of gender dynamics at this early stage will be critical for developing an engagement strategy later on.

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[71] United Nations Development Group, 'Conducting a conflict and development analysis', UNDG, February 2016 (available at https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf).

[72] Pettit, Jethro, 'Power Analysis: A Practical Guide', Swedish International Development Agency, 2013 (available at https://www.sida.se/contentassets/83f0232c5404440082c9762ba3107d55/power-analysis-a-practical-guide_3704.pdf).

[73] Conciliation Resources, 'Gender and Conflict Analysis Toolkit for Peacebuilders', Conciliation Resources, December 2015, p. 7 (available at http://www.c-r.org/resources/gender-and-conflict-analysis-toolkit-peacebuilders).

The role of insider mediators in conflicts involving natural resources, indigenous peoples and development: Peru

From 2005 to 2015, Peru´s GDP increased by 76 percent (an average of 6 percent a year) and poverty fell from 42.4 percent to 20.7 percent. The country´s economic expansion was strongly linked to extractive industries, mainly mining and hydrocarbons, which represent 13.4percent, on average, of gross domestic product (GDP) and 70 percent of the country's exports. The sector has also provided considerable income for the State, contributing up to 19 percent of total income tax and special tax revenues. Despite the positive macroeconomic impact of these activities, they have become a major source of social conflicts. Peru experiences an average of 200 conflicts per year, of which 70 percent are linked to extractives. Between 2006 and 2016, social conflicts were responsible for 264 deaths, 4,436 injuries and the ousting of key ministers and public officials. In economic terms, studies reveal that from 2011 to 2014, social conflicts resulted in a loss of USD 62 billion, or 2.2 percent of annual GDP.

In 2011, the newly elected government promoted a state-led approach to engage and work with local communities in extractive-related areas, targeting indigenous people and peasant communities through *multi-stakeholder dialogue* processes. With funding from the Government of Canada, UNDP and the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers, joined efforts to support the prevention of social conflicts. The approach sought to engage IMs in local and regional dialogue processes by working with organized and non-organized civil society actors, including community leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous communities, universities, mining companies and guilds, to support dialogue processes and consolidate a nationwide peace infrastructure.

As of 2010, 241 multi-stakeholder dialogue processes have been implemented, leading to 2,856 commitments addressing territorial development needs across 14 of the Peru's 24 regions. Of these, 62 percent are the responsibility of the state, 27 percent of the private sector, 7 percent of non-specified actors, and 4 percent of civil society. Peru is the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to adopt a law on prior consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues have created a more coordinated intervention procedure among state institutions to address territorial development gaps, while guaranteeing respect for human rights and the maintenance of internal order. As the National Office for Dialogue and Sustainability has evolved into the Vice Ministry of Territorial Governance, the new government has strengthened the linkages between dialogue and territorial development.

Community empowerment and democratic practices have also been strengthened by formalizing venues for public participation in developing policy agendas and supporting territorial development. A critical mass of civil society and community organizations throughout Peru are leading initiatives to promote and consolidate multi-stakeholder dialogues, including the Dialogue Group on Mining and Sustainable Development (GDMDS). Community organizations such as the nine-region National Network of Leaders for Dialogue have enhanced communities' capacities to promote dialogue to redress grievances and address

development gaps. Several extractives companies have also committed to the multi-stakeholder dialogues. Many have coordinated venues for multi-stakeholder dialogues, helping them improve the design of social investments and community relations programmes in the territories.

IM involvement in multi-stakeholder dialogue strengthened democratic governance and sustainable development by reducing conflicts related to natural resource use. It also helped to create highly innovative mechanisms to finance development and infrastructure projects through public-private partnerships and territorial social development funds. Dialogue mechanisms have also helped improve participatory and democratic processes that have opened the way for decisions and actions consistent with the needs and expectations of involved parties. A critical aspect of institutionalizing dialogue has been to develop the capacities of women leaders and women's groups, organizations and networks to take a more proactive role in the dialogue roundtables. A capacity-building platform has helped strengthen female leaders and their network in eight of the country's regions.

Source: UNDP Peru

Sustaining peace requires a paradigm shift which, in line with the SDGs, views peace as multi-sectoral and rooted in a 'whole of society' approach.

An in-depth understanding of power helps ensure that your engagement does not strengthen and reproduce the power dynamics underpinning the conflict but, rather, strengthens those dynamics, – or 'peace engines,' that foster peace. The CDA defines peace engines as "elements within a society that mitigate the emergence and proliferation of violent conflict and strengthen the foundations for peace by drawing upon the innate resilience of a society. Peace engines operate at different levels – state, regional and local – and can take many different forms (both formal and informal), such as institutions, groups, individuals, specific processes, or even specific places, symbols or social constructions."[74] Your starting point for an in-depth analysis of peace engines should be the notion that they exist and that IMs form part of them. Your analysis may then wish to consider:

- Which actors have the potential to affect change (peace engines)?
- What role do peace engines play in the current context? What are their strengths, weaknesses and the factors that shape or constrain the role they play?
- To what extent and how do gender relations inform, shape and constrain the nature of peace engines and to what effect?
- Are there thematic areas where peace engines and IMs specifically play or could play a particularly constructive role?
- How does the conflict affect men and women differently? To what extent do peace engines and/or IMs address these impacts?
- To what extent are the current peace engines inclusive of women, youth and other marginalized groups? What are the normative frameworks and cultural factors that shape these dynamics?

> **TIP:** Undertaking an analysis is also about discovering what you don't know and directing your attention to those areas where you need to know more. With that in mind, however, it is important to remember that you will never have a complete understanding of the context. You should aim for an analysis that is 'good enough' to move on to other steps of the process.

3.2 Step two: Develop a risk management strategy[75]

A risk management strategy involves assessing risks and putting in place a plan of action to mitigate the likelihood that they will occur and/or their effects. A risk assessment is designed to foster an understanding of the potential positive or negative impacts that any engagement could have on the programme, partners and beneficiaries, as well as the institution as a whole. It should be undertaken as early in the process as possible and remain a living document.

Risk assessment and risk management should be considered prerequisites for developing an engagement strategy with IMs. IMs invariably work in extremely sensitive contexts, on sensitive issues and in contexts where their security may be compromised if engagements are not designed and managed effectively. Given the changing context, the risk management strategy should then be re-visited as often as possible and validated or adjusted as and where necessary. A good risk management strategy should ensure sufficient flexibility so that an engagement strategy or programme can be adapted to shifting risk dynamics.

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[74] United Nations Development Group, Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis, (2016), p. 21.

[75] Taken and adapted from the generic aspects of: Kaye, Josie Lianna, 'Risk Management for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Programmes, Guidance Note for Practitioners', United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), January 2018 (forthcoming).

While the security of IMs and those engaging with them is paramount, security is not the only area that a risk assessment covers. For example, an effective risk assessment helps identify the impact that a context may have on the achievement of outcomes; the ways in which the programme may be affected by changing circumstances; and, the risks that a programme may pose for an organization's reputation, integrity, values and relationships with beneficiaries and partners. Some of the identified risks can be addressed by the programme/engagement with IMs, whereas others may be beyond the scope of the risk management strategy.

At its core, risk management is inherently an *enabling process*. Rather than provoking decisions to *stop* programming, effective risk management processes create the conditions necessary for the programme to proceed, and, indeed, succeed. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO)[76] has developed a guide entitled 'ISO 31000: 2009, Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines', which defines risk as "the effect of uncertainty on objectives". The effect can be positive (provide benefit/opportunity) or negative (serve as a threat, provoke damage). Risk management, therefore, is the systematic approach and practice of managing uncertainty to minimize potential harm and loss[77] and to maximize potential opportunities and gains. Risk management has five key components:

1) Identify the (contextual, programmatic and institutional) risks.[78]

2) Calculate the likelihood and impact (both on a scale of 1-5) that the realisation of such a risk would have on beneficiaries and partners, the programme and the institution.[79]

3) Ascertain the risk level (likelihood x impact).

4) Put in place measures to mitigate the likelihood or manage the impact of the risk.

5) Assign responsibility to monitor the risk.

Risk management considerations when supporting insider mediators

The process for identifying and managing risks, while not complicated, is too long to address here and is covered extensively elsewhere.[80] When applying the risk management model to the IM domain, it is helpful to consider the extent to which the risk identification process is participatory. As with conflict analysis processes, generally speaking, the more participatory the process for identifying risks, the more comprehensive and accurate the risk assessment process is likely to be. Different actors bring new knowledge and different perspectives, helping to nuance conversations around scenarios, potential consequences and levels of impact. All of these aspects are required in risk assessment processes. However, when deciding who to include (and how), you should consider concerns such as the sensitivity of the issue (and the impact of this sensitivity on the individuals you may include), how the end product will be used and whether it will be made public.

The same principles offer participatory engagement (i.e. sensitivity to power, gender and conflict dynamics) should be applied here as for the context analysis (see above).

Questions to consider when identifying risks related to insider mediator engagement

The below questions have been organized into three categories – contextual risks, programmatic risks and institutional risks – although it should be noted that they overlap. The answers to the questions will therefore also have a bearing on all three categories of analysis.

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[76] 'ISO 31000: 2009, Risk management – Principles and Guidelines', International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (available at: https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html)

[77] Hyslop, Daniel,' Feasibility Study for a Global Risk Informed Development (GRID) platform, July 2017, p. 16.

[78] Context/conflict analyses are a key reference/starting point to develop a risk management strategy.

[79] Although a risk management strategy is intended to **manage** the identified risks, this does not immediately imply avoiding risks (and potentially reducing the scope of the programme), but, rather, being aware of them (and their potential impact on a programme) and possibly putting in place additional measures, contingencies, etc. to manage them, should they materialize. Risk management may be less about reducing risks and more about being prepared to confront them, particularly in challenging contexts, thereby reducing risk aversion in some cases.

[80] ISO 31000: 2009, Risk management – Principles and Guidelines', International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (available at: https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html)

The role of IMs in building social cohesion: Yemen

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has caused large-scale damage, spurred a humanitarian crisis and exacerbated existing social tensions. Following the promise of the 2011 revolution and the failure of the political transition, Yemen's conflict is straining local social cohesion, entrenching divisions that follow pre-existing rifts and creating new ones (e.g., between Sunni and Shi'a, host and refugee communities), and are eroding common interests that could unite the country. This is the context in which IMs were engaged as agents of peace in the Taiz and Abayan regions, seeking to bring people together to discuss issues affecting their lives, reach collaborative solutions to resolve conflicts and improve lives.

The IMs were selected in two phases. First, they were identified by the EU and UN joint project implementation team and trained as master trainers. In the second phase, a consultative workshop was held to identify additional IMs, based on the selection criteria (belonging to the same target district, possessing previous experience in community mediation, enjoying community acceptance and, willingness to engage in community meetings and mediation sessions). Representatives from community development committees (CDCs), local authorities and CSOs evaluated the nominations and approved the final list. The IMs received trainings to build their capacities in conflict scans, conflict resolution, mediation, effective communication, and dialogue design and facilitation. To help them absorb and practice their new skills, the trainings were divided into modules and conducted over time. The IMs were also mentored and supported throughout their engagements. This involved mobilizing senior trainers who were trained when the program started to support and mentor the IMs as required. A network of 120 IMs was created, involving four targeted districts.

The IMs engaged their communities in activities including conflict scans, dialogue processes and community initiatives. Conflict scans focused on local-level conflicts, conflict drivers, conflict parties and resources for peace. The results were validated/prioritized in inclusive community meetings with the main stakeholders. IMs then helped to identify entry points and developed proposals to lead dialogue processes around these conflicts. Each process was designed to provide opportunities to discuss and explore best available options to resolve the conflict. Simultaneously, IMs worked to restore community relations and trust. Where funding was required to fully resolve the conflict, community contributions were emphasized to ensure ownership. IMs supervised the implementation of initiatives to ensure the agreement was respected. IM facilitation of community dialogue has established a self-referral forum to resolve conflicts around access to basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health facilities and community infrastructure, where protracted crisis has rendered basic institutions inoperative and created a trust deficit between the country's institutions and its affected communities.

Mediation is not alien to the Yemeni community. However, it is frequently conducted by traditional sheikhs and leading community figures. IM empowers other community stakeholders, women in particular, to be part of the process and help to promote peace and enhance social cohesion. In Yemen's current context, IMs have contributed significantly to restoring stability to communities experiencing conflicts. IMs have helped Yemenis bridge the gap that existed previously between local authorities and local communities. Local communities have begun to engage effectively in the non-violent resolution of conflict drivers. IMs have also restored relations among community members by enabling them to: listen to differing viewpoints; reach agreements; and take action collectively and contribute personal time and funds. This has enhanced local resilience to violence and increased social cohesion through cooperation.

Source: UNDP and SFCG Yemen

Contextual risks

What could happen at the local, national, regional/transnational and/or global levels that may impact the IM programme, institutions, partners or beneficiaries?

- In contexts where multiple issues are at stake, what impact could the choice of thematic area to prioritize have on other thematic areas that are not addressed?

Programmatic risks

- Will the selection of some IMs to engage with have any negative impact on them or their ability to do their work? Are there resource or other constraints that may impact your ability to engage with all relevant IMs? If so, is there a potentially negative consequence for not engaging with other IMs?

- To what extent will engagement with IMs on certain processes entrench or exacerbate power dynamics or norms that contribute to conflict and/or go against UN values?

- Does the programme take into account the work of other actors engaging with IMs? How can you ensure effective collaboration and distribution of resources?

- Does the programme include or exclude women, and to what effect?

- To what extent will the origin of your funding affect the IM's/group of IMs' ability to accept your support (if direct support is what you have in mind)?

Institutional risks

- Will engagement with the IM/group of IMs impact your relationship with the government? How and in what way?

- Have you conducted any necessary financial due diligence? Can you be sure that funds will not be diverted by violent, criminal or extremist groups? What mechanisms have you put in place to that effect?

- Will the programme expose staff, partners or stakeholders to increased security risks? If so, to what extent are resources in place to manage those increased risks? Do they also pose a threat to buildings, assets, information etc.? Are the IMs you are supporting sufficiently aware of these risks and to what extent can they be managed?

- What are the risks of doing nothing?

> **TIP:** Your organization's risk criteria may be thought of as a combination of 'red lines/no go areas on the one hand and issues where you have more leeway to 'push the boundaries' on the other. These should be decided upon collectively with all relevant stakeholders.

The type of questions you will need to ask depends on the context in which you work and the thematic area(s) you have chosen to engage in/with. Ultimately, the answers are designed, first, to enable you, first, to ascertain the level of risk posed based on your organization's risk criteria and, second, develop an effective risk management strategy that protects the IMs you will engage with, the programme, the staff involved in the programme and the institution as a whole.

3.3 Step three: Explore options and make strategic choices

Equipped with your context analysis, a comprehensive understanding of the conflict drivers, peace engines and power dynamics at play and an in-depth appreciation of the contextual, programmatic and institutional risks, you are now ready to explore and identify options for engagement. This may involve narrowing down to focus on particular thematic areas (see Text box 7), such as natural resource-related conflicts, preventing

violent extremism, humanitarian crises or gender issues. Alternatively, you may decide to focus on clusters of conflicts at the local level or particular blockages at the national level resulting from political conflict or within a peace process, for example. The decision of where to focus efforts will be based on a combination of your context analysis, your risk assessment, your institutional priorities and the resources available.

This process can be understood as identifying the entry points for supporting IMs. An entry point may be defined as the "intersection between the sector (socio-economic, political, reconciliation/justice, security), the level (government, civil society, grassroots community) and the dimension of change (personal, relational, structure, and cultural levels)."[81] Given IMs' unique ability to foster horizontal and vertical connections, entry points may cut across several levels. For example, land conflicts are likely to be deeply unsettling for the local communities involved, but they will also involve engaging with businesses that may have violated land rights on the one hand and with the government on the other. The entry point then becomes the focus of your efforts to identify IMs (see Step 3.4).

Text box 7 Thematic areas where insider mediators work and the typical roles they play

To undertake the analysis, it is important to recognize that peace engines and, therefore, IMs may be active in a wide variety of contexts. Indeed, IMs are likely to be active and/or have an important role in any area where power is contested and/or where interests and positions can lead to tensions, clashes or, even, violence. Some of the areas where IMs have typically played an important role are listed below, but this list is meant to provide examples of areas where IMs may be active. The analysis of the specific context in which you work will bring to light the specific thematic areas of relevance.

- **Typical thematic areas of engagement for IMs include:** Peace processes (Track 1, Track 1.5, Track 2, Track 3); social conflicts and development issues; institutional reform processes; preventing violent extremism (PVE); national reconciliation and dialogue processes; promoting tolerance, diversity and social cohesion; electoral-related matters; indigenous settlement issues; humanitarian issues, such as access to those in need; land and natural resource-related conflicts, including farmer-herder conflicts and land grabbing; gender relations; issues related to norm contestation, such as the role of women, people with disabilities, youth, and minorities; reintegration processes; release of prisoners and hostages; intra-group dialogue processes; and, engagement with armed groups, including extremist groups (see Text box 6 for more information).

The roles played by IMs are wide-ranging and will depend very much on the context and the thematic area in which they are engaged. Many of the below roles can be applied to many different contexts, whereas others are specific to particular themes. (The below list is meant to be indicative rather than exhaustive.)

- **Typical roles for IMs include:** analyse conflicts; design and prepare for dialogue; facilitate, negotiate and mediate; provide early warning and response; build consensus /build bridges; serve as messenger/go-between; act as human rights defenders/advocates; maintain contact with conflicting parties/armed groups and extremist groups; build trust; train, coach, mentor; heal and rebuild relationships; build or restore confidence in a process; open doors and identify entry points; serve as connector or node between different groups and processes; ensure voices are heard; and, manage spoilers.

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81 Campbell, Susanna, 'What is Successful Peacebuilding?', A report prepared for Catholic Relief Services, April, 2007, p. 6 (available at http://www.susannacampbell.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Campbell-FINAL-CRS-Report-2007.pdf).

"In the besieged Damascus Yarmouk camp, the Jafra Foundation has dealt with different sides to the Syrian conflict to establish brief ceasefires for humanitarian relief. With some of its members having grown up with individuals that have joined the Syrian government forces, the Free Syrian Army, Jabat al-Nusra and various Palestinian factions active in the area, Jafra was able to use its relationships of trust to reach agreements involving various armed groups for humanitarian relief. While Jafra would never have expected to find itself in such a situation, by interacting with various armed groups it has managed to advance its main objective of relieving the suffering of as many people in the camp as possible."

Juan Garrigues, 'The case for contact: overcoming the challenges and dilemmas of official and non-official mediation with armed groups', NOREF, June 2015, p. 5-6.

3.4 Step four: Foster consultative processes to identify relevant insider mediators

To maximize local ownership, IMs should be identified through consultative processes with stakeholders affected by the issue you have selected to focus on. For example, you may wish to identify an individual/ group of individuals with access to the leaders of the conflicting parties. You will, therefore, need to identify someone who has influence with and is acceptable to both parties. You will need to identify current IMs as well as *potential* IMs, i.e. those with the ability to provide leadership, encourage dialogue and/or mediate, combined with the appropriate relationships, who can play a game-changing role. Part of this initial process of selecting IMs involves identifying, learning from and leveraging local resources, whether cultural, traditional or religious, that are core to the IM approach. Identifying the relevant IMs, therefore, means also seeking to understand these approaches and what gives them meaning and legitimacy in any given context.

In Version 1 of this GN, this part of the step-by-step process developed the issue of levels of analysis i.e., determining whether to work with an IM at the local, subnational or national level. Since our understanding of conflict and how IMs work has since evolved, this GN maintains that the levels approach can lead to a siloed or even rigid approach. In reality, what often makes IMs effective is not only their ability to connect *horizontally* with diverse or fractured groups across society, but also their ability to make connections *vertically* amongst grassroots populations, local and national authorities and other entities working at the state, regional or global levels. Using a network approach, it is possible to facilitate processes to select IMs to engage with who are well placed, both vertically and horizontally, to have influence. These actors will be well-known to key stakeholders and by engaging with those stakeholders in a sensitive manner, the most relevant IMs can be identified.

As with the participatory processes elaborated in prior steps, power dynamics should be considered when engaging stakeholders. Efforts should be made to avoid giving legitimacy to actors who may use it in unconstructive ways. In some contexts, it may be challenging to avoid self-proclaimed IMs or tribal chiefs (i.e. 'the usual suspects'), so baseline studies can be helpful in understanding the parties, influencers and power dynamics at any given time. In all contexts you will need to ensure that the diverse views of women, youth and other typically marginalized groups are heard in a manner that will not affect their safety or the ability to express themselves freely. This may mean engaging with stakeholders in different times/places or working through pre-existing local structures, such as indigenous or traditional authorities.

Gender and generational dynamics must receive serious consideration during such processes. Given enduring patriarchy and the endemic exclusion of youth, the challenge can be twofold: first, identifying women and youth IMs; and, second, enabling IMs to support processes that are inclusive of women, youth and issues that concern them. In recognizing these issues as challenges, we must not overlook the unique contributions of

Ceremony at community dialogue. Photo: UNDP Timor-Leste.

The role of insider mediators in early warning; Bolivia and Timor-Leste

Recognizing the role of early warning and response (EWR) in preventing and mitigating conflicts, many such initiatives - including insider mediators - exist regionally, nationally and locally. In 2015, UNDP and the **Organization of American States** (OAS) developed a practical guide on developing and creating early warning systems for social conflicts. Consequently, UNDP supports the development of early warning and response systems to prevent and resolve potential social conflicts as a part of a comprehensive prevention strategy that incorporates other approaches in many Latin American countries. They include insider mediators addressing conciliation, mediation and dialogue, as well as the inter-institutional coordination of actors responsible for the adoption and promotion of a culture of peace among public officials and citizens. UNDP provided key technical support to Peru's National Office for Dialogue and Sustainability to design, develop and implement an early warning system for social conflicts. In **Costa Rica**, UNDP provided technical and technological assistance to the Office of the Ombudsman to develop a pilot early warning system, including conceptual definition, process, database, initial recording of alerts, and software development and support. With that ombudsman's offices playing a major role in the region to prevent and deescalate social conflicts and imminent violence, UNDP works in close partnership with the **Guatemalan** Office of the Ombudsman to share knowledge and capacities to identify options for early action and use conflict management tools, particularly facilitation, dialogue and mediation, in the region.

In **Bolivia**, the EU and UN provided technical advice and training to the mining sector, including government institutions, civil society organizations and rural and indigenous communities affected by mining operations. The work included conflict analysis and management and a study on mining conflict in Bolivia, which allowed common patterns of conflicts to be identified. This pointed out the need for and resulted in support to the Ministry of Mining and Metallurgy, particularly the Department of Environment and Public and Prior Consultation (DEPC) to consolidate and improve the Early Warning, Monitoring, Analysis and Early Response System for mining conflicts (M-SAART).

The West African early warning and response system (ECOWARN) is led by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Economic Community of **West African States** (ECOWAS). The system relies on the civil society-led National Early Warning Systems (NEWS), which complements the ECOWAS regional early warning structures by providing information from community-level monitors. NEWS creates the crowdsourcing platform, providing real-time incident reports at national level. It provides ECOWARN with greater access to community-level information, which in turn feeds into the Continental Early Warning System of the African Union.

The Uwiano Platform, a joint initiative of the government and civic groups in **Kenya**, used local monitors to identify and provide early warning on emerging hotspots through an SMS messaging system and local monitoring networks. The platform then helped local peace committees and other mediators to resolve these tensions during the country's constitutional referendum in 2010 and national elections in 2013. Both exercises were peaceful, in contrast to the violence of 2008.

The NGO, Belun, manages the civil society-led Sistema Atensaun no Responde Sedu (AtReS) system in **Timor-Leste**. This Early Warning, Early Response System relies on an extensive network of local volunteers trained to monitor and report on local conflict dynamics in their community. In addition, volunteers have been trained as mediators so that they can respond to small-scale violent incidents at the local level through customary conflict resolution mechanisms, known as 'Tara Bandu'. These well-connected community members can also directly engage with local security and justice providers to ensure that responses to conflicts comply with human rights standards. The AtReS system uses real-time data collection methods to rapidly disseminate information and, after rigorous data verification, makes this information accessible through an online database. This transparent and inclusive approach has increased the trust and buy-in among the country's policymakers and has helped strengthen engagement between NGOs and the government. The AtReS system thus served as a basis for dialogue on preventive action strategies and priorities prior to the 2017 general elections.

Source: UNDP

women and youth to conflict prevention and sustaining peace, which help transform conflicts in vital ways through what might be called 'everyday practices' that exist outside of the narrow confines of a formal peace process. It is also important to remember that youth and women are not homogenous categories, but diverse groups of individuals. Lastly, while both women and youth are affected by marginalization and, often, exclusion, the experiences of, reasons for, and effects of excluding women and youth certainly differ. For the purposes of time/space they have been grouped together here, but when identifying and engaging with such groups they should be treated as unique, culturally embedded and worthy of consideration as distinct, albeit sometimes overlapping, non-homogenous groups.

One approach to dealing with these challenges is for the donor/partner to require that women/youth IMs be included or to make support conditional on their inclusion. There are two major problems with this approach, First, it can potentially turn the issue of inclusion into a quantitative exercise by focusing on the number of women/youth to be included. The more important issues involve capacities, the extent to which they are embedded in their societies, the reasons they are excluded and what kind of role they will be able to play, given the enduring norms and attitudes in the contexts in which they operate.[82] Second, the approach can undermine local or national ownership and may ultimately derail the process. For many, this can pose the dilemma of balancing the equally important values of local ownership and inclusion. It should be recognized, however, that transitional moments present important opportunities for locally-led normative change. The issue, therefore, is not whether women or youth can serve as effective IMs but, rather, how to ensure that they do so in a way that capitalizes upon ruptures in society, such as conflict, while remaining an inherently endogenous process. This is made possible by focusing on and leveraging local knowledge about how to foster such changes.

Text box 9 Insider mediators as gender advocates

Extensive research has documented the benefits of societies in which women are empowered and processes are inclusive of women and their needs. For example, where women are more empowered, the state is less likely to experience civil conflict.[83] Those countries that rank highest in the Global Peace Index, for example, have higher percentages of women in leadership positions[84]. With each five percent increase in women's representation in parliament, the state is five times less likely to use violence in the face of an institutional crisis[85]. Women's participation also increases the legitimacy and credibility of peace processes and, by incorporating women's perspectives, generates more comprehensive proposals to resolve them. Furthermore, if women participated equally in the economy alongside men, global GDP would increase by up to $28 trillion by 2025.[86]

Despite the recognition of these benefits, the inclusion of women in peacebuilding broadly speaking and in mediation in particular remains a challenge across the board. Efforts to engage in processes of transformation in this area require a considerable humility and a recognition that many 'advanced societies' are still far from achieving gender equality. This is even more pertinent in traditionally male-dominated spaces of politics, peace and security, where many women globally often still struggle to have influence and make their voices heard. Despite progress in recent years, therefore, engagement must be initiated with the acknowledgement that the marginalization of women from formal processes of dialogue is real, enduring and highly problematic.

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[82]   For more information on how to engage meaningfully with youth, see https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy.

[83]   International Peace Institute (IPI), 'The SDGs and Prevention for Sustaining Peace: Exploring the Transformative Potential of the Goal on Gender Equality', November 2016, p. 2 (available at https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/1611_SDGs-and-Prevention.pdf).

[84]   Ibid.

[85]   Ibid.

[86]   Ibid., p. 3.

When identifying and seeking to engage with IMs, it is important to recognize that while in most societies, men dominate at the interface between communities and government, women are nonetheless often very active, albeit in less visible roles. Due to the more visible nature of men's roles and the fact that men's participation in such roles is often more broadly accepted, IM engagement strategies can often reinforce male-dominated processes. While international actors cannot *impose* new ways of being in society, they can work within pre-existing structures, processes and relationships to find ways to support normative changes by relying on the knowledge and guidance of local actors. More specifically, outsiders can:

- Facilitate processes that focus on identifying IMs in both **visible and less visible roles**, since women are more often likely to fall into the latter category.

- Use (both male and female) **IMs as entry points** to facilitate more inclusive processes by raising awareness amongst both IMs and the stakeholders they are working with of the benefits of more inclusive processes; in contexts where women 'leaders' or the inclusion of women in participatory processes is not accepted, men themselves must champion women's inclusion.

- Convene fora in which women's voices can be heard in order to **raise gender consciousness** and create opportunities for men and women to interact in impartial spaces, where possible. If necessary, host forums in which men and women separately can first discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with greater equality, before bringing them together for a dialogue if the context allows/when the moment is appropriate.

- Nuance engagement strategies by shifting the conversation away from quantitative objectives (i.e. ensuring that a certain number of women are included in such processes) towards the **identifying and/or empowering capable women** who will be able to participate in a meaningful manner.

- **Avoid referring to women as a homogenous group** and, therefore, expand efforts (and raise awareness) to ensure that women of different ages, social groups, religions and ethnic groups, for example, are encouraged to participate.

- Acknowledge that this is a **normative change**, that it may take time and significant efforts from men and women alike, and, ultimately, that this change must be locally-led.

Most importantly, it is vital to recognize that IMs (both men and women) can serve as gender advocates. As gender advocates, IMs can, for example:

- Provide briefings on gendered issues, for example, gender dimensions of land reform and disarmament.

- Advocate for consultations with female constituents and female civil society, making the necessary connections.

- Advocate for women's needs to be addressed and included in the outcome document.

- Advocate for gender quotas at the peace table and gender electoral quotas.

TIP: You may identify more IMs than you are able to engage and/or than are required for the process/programme you have in mind. You may consider developing a roster of IMs that can be provided to other entities working in this space if the IMs would be happy to participate.

When an IM is present, the probability of a negotiated agreement increases from 5 percent to 19 percent.

3.5 Step five: Understand the needs of IMs

Once IMs have been identified, it is vital to understand and assess their needs, which should be determined through a collaborative and sustained effort that involves getting to know the IMs, the realities in which they operate, how they feel about their engagements and whether any areas require support. Do not assume that IMs need support necessarily. As stated previously, rather than explicit support, or what might traditionally be understood as support, they may need recognition and space to go about their work. Answers to these four key questions will help to understand their needs:

- What are the objectives of IMs?
- What are the realities that inform, shape and constrain their ability to reach these objectives?
- What capacities and resources do IMs have already to achieve these objectives?
- What additional capacities and resources would be required for IMs to achieve these objectives?

When asking IMs to identify their objectives, you may encounter an initial need: to help them articulate their vision and strategy for engagement in the processes in which they may already be deeply enmeshed. Helping them to articulate these objectives may serve as an engagement strategy in itself. As the next step will show, this can be an instrumental part of an engagement process. It is important to take into account the fact that different IMs and IMs engaging as a group of IMs may have varying needs and capacities, which will need to be taken into consideration. In addition to considering IMs' individual needs, for those IMs who seek to engage as a group, you may also wish to consider the group needs, i.e. intra-group trust and ability to work together, for example.

TIP: The needs that IMs express may differ depending on who is asking, so be sensitive to the power dynamics in this context. You may wish to consider age, gender and other elements when assessing the dynamics between you - as the person facilitating the process - and the IMs present. You may wish to provide IMs the opportunity to express their needs through different avenues in order to take into account these dynamics.

Text box 10 Understanding the needs of IMs

"Outsider support to insider mediation processes requires a fundamentally different set-up to those initiated and led by high-level outsider mediators. Essentially, such support would first acknowledge the existence of insider mediation processes: the mediation space, the actors, and actor-networks. Then it would listen to their challenges and needs, point out (conflict-sensitively) any limitations that may be embedded in the process, investigate support gaps, keep an eye out for opportunities, and offer organizational, procedural, logistical, and advisory support — all as per stated needs. The best kind of support is dialogic mutual support, i.e. support based on conversation and interaction between the insider and outsider, which nurtures joint-learning, methodological exchange, knowledge-building, and problem- solving. In some cases, outsiders can simply act as a sounding board or advisors".

Mir Mubashir, Engiellushe Morina and Luxshi Vimalarajah, OSCE support to insider mediation, strengthening mediation capacities, networking and complementarity, Berghof Foundation, OSCE, December 2016, p. 9.

3.6 Step six: Co-develop an engagement strategy: potential elements

The engagement strategy, which must be based on a combined context analysis (Step 3.1) and needs assessment (Step 3.5), should be elaborated in a joint and participatory manner. As mentioned in previous steps, this means considering the different participation needs of different IMs as and where necessary. While the below list of potential options is long, it is meant to be an illustrative, rather than an exhaustive, list of the possible elements of an engagement strategy. Depending on the IMs' needs, the strategy may include one, two or all of these elements. Some elements of an engagement strategy are difficult to capture easily as deliverables. The extent of the support will be shaped by the context analysis, the risk assessment, the IMs' needs and the resources available.

A common mistake at this stage is to assume that IMs need capacity-building and, therefore, to offer trainings. Most individuals, IMs included, are likely to accept an offer of training, regardless of whether they need it, as people in general welcome opportunities to learn and/or will be reluctant to turn down offers of support. If IMs do indicate that they need capacity-building, it will be important to understand what kind of capacity-building is required. IMs are commonly assumed to need training in mediation and conflict resolution, but most likely have been mediating for years, if not decades. Of course, mediation and conflict resolution training will be useful in some contexts but, again, it should not be the default offer. When understanding capacity-building needs, it will be important to ascertain the IMs' pre-existing knowledge of the issues highlighted so that any capacity-building programmes can be tailored accordingly.

It is vital to ensure that IMs always lead the process. The UN, the EU and/or other external entities should act solely in a supporting role. This will ensure ownership of the process and minimize any adverse effects. These elements of an engagement strategy may be appropriate for any of the thematic areas in which IMs may be involved and can apply to IMs working at the local, subnational, national and regional levels.

a) **Recognition/acknowledgement:** Recognition and/or acknowledgement of IMs may help create the necessary space for their work. In other instances, this recognition may lead to greater coordination and/or collaboration between IMs and national, regional or international counterparts. Recognition can also have negative consequences by bringing attention to actors who may be working below the radar or by affiliating IMs with international actors. This may put IMs in potentially dangerous situations. As with all efforts, the risks/benefits must be assessed carefully with IMs.

b) **Mobilizing political support:** The provision of political support is tied closely to the issue of recognition and acknowledgement. For example, international counterparts may be well-placed to encourage the state to recognize the work of IMs in instances where such recognition may prove beneficial to their work. Other forms of political support may be required from a wide range of other actors operating in same area/sector.

c) **Strategy design:** IMs may require support to elaborate and design a conflict-sensitive strategy that matches their vision of what they want to achieve.

d) **Joint analysis:** Since IMs are based within the context where they engage, they are likely to know and understand that context intimately. However, they may feel that they would benefit from a more systematic/common analysis. Their efforts may also benefit from assistance conducting a risk analysis.

e) **Scenario development:** Scenario development can be a useful way to help IMs prepare for specific engagements. It allows them to think through the best- and worst-case scenarios for engagements and how to build upon best-case scenarios and prepare for, mitigate and/or know how to react in the case of worst-case scenarios.

f) **Intra-group facilitation:** If engaging with a number of IMs working as a group, inter-group facilitation may help build trust and mutual understanding concerning their efforts. This may involve, for example, developing a code of conduct to be signed by all members. It may also touch on issues such as confidentiality, non-disclosure agreement, communication and other ground rules and principles.

The role of tradition- and faith-oriented insider mediators and electoral violence prevention: Lesotho

The fissures in Lesotho can be traced back to the pre-independence political formations which coalesced around two rival parties, the Basotho National Party and the Basutoland Congress Party. As this rivalry hardened, it often reproduced racial and ethnic divisions. Consequently, decisions to include or exclude, as well harassment of rivals or rewards to allies, were based on party lines. The country experienced the first major political repercussions after the 1970 elections, leading to insecurity and, eventually, a military takeover (1986-1993). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was forced to intervene militarily following post-election violence in 1998 and appointed an Eminent Person/Facilitator following a post-election crisis in 2007.

Recent elections in Lesotho (2012, 2015 and 2017) did not produce a decisive winner due, in part, to 30 political parties involved. This led to a new trend of short-lived coalition governments. An attempted military coup in 2014 and an alleged mutiny in 2015; the assassination of two military commanders in 2015 and 2017; and, the flight into exile of opposition leaders after the 2015 and 2017 elections shed light on the complex mix of fractious politics, unstable coalition governments and general insecurity that contributed to the perceived politicization of the country's security services. As a result, in 2014, SADC: deployed an observer mission (SOMILES); appointed a commission of inquiry into insecurity in 2015; deployed an oversight committee in 2016; and stationed a preventive mission (SAPMIL) from November 2017, amongst other efforts.

Through its Heads of Churches, the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) first became involved in insider mediation in 2009, after the regionally-appointed Eminent Person/Facilitator resigned. CCL's work between 2015 and 2018 falls into three categories:

a. **Facilitating the return of opposition leaders:** The 2015 snap elections led to the defeat of the incumbent prime minister. He, his coalition partners and several soldiers then fled the country, citing fear of the military. With the country deeply divided, CCL engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the exiled leaders and members of the ruling coalition. The SADC also intervened and ultimately, the opposition leaders returned in February 2017 and participated in the June 2017 elections. CCL also paid pastoral visits to the exiled soldiers, creating trust that enabled the Council to play a role in their eventual return. Similarly, the incumbent was defeated in the 2017 snap elections and replaced by the rival he had ousted in 2015. This time, the former Deputy Prime Minister and others, including two former ministers and members of the security services, fled. CCL resumed efforts to ensure that they returned to Lesotho to participate in the dialogue and reforms.

b. **Creating an environment for peaceful elections in 2017:** The collapse of the coalition government and the return of the opposition leaders just months prior to the June elections made for a tense period. The CCL undertook consultations between political parties and secured an agreement for a face-to-face meeting of political party leaders to discuss the conduct of the elections. The SADC Oversight Committee observed this first meeting, hosted at UN House just weeks before the 3 June elections. Skilful facilitation by CCL allowed for venting and dialogue on various issues, while also focusing on fostering a commitment to peaceful campaigning and adherence to the country's Electoral Code of Conduct. At the end of the second meeting at UN House on 17 May, most of the parties' leaders signed the elections pledge. CCL and UNDP then facilitated meetings between the parties and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to air and resolve issues of concern. In the critical period between voting day and announcement of the

results, CCL, together with a group of retired eminent men and women and backed up by a group of technologically savvy UN Volunteers, set up a situation room at UNDP. The group was thus able to monitor both conventional and social media, as well as the country at large, and make the necessary interventions during the tense days using their extensive access to the leaders. Four days after the results were announced, CCL convened a thanksgiving prayer breakfast, at the end of which the parties signed another pledge affirming that they accepted the results.

c. **Building consensus for national dialogue and reforms:** For several years, SADC, the AU, the Commonwealth, Lesotho civil society and other parties have recommended constitutional, institutional and sectoral reforms to help foster long-term stability and sustainable peace in Lesotho. Consensus on the content and processes of such reforms has remained elusive, however, so national dialogue has been identified as a starting point for reforms. Ahead of the 2017 elections, working with the European Union, CSOs and UNDP, CCL facilitated meetings aimed at building commitment for the reforms. They led to the April 2017 Reforms Pledge, which committed all registered political parties to prioritize the reforms post-elections. A government framework and roadmap on the reforms facilitated by the UN established the notion of a national multi-stakeholder dialogue. In early 2018, CCL launched its efforts to facilitate a national political party forum to create space for an all-party dialogue and cooperation ahead of the national dialogue and the reforms.

This experience showed the importance of:

Long-term investment in capacity-building and reputation. The CCL's ability to effectively respond in Lesotho's cyclic crises is the result of a sustained investment and preparation in terms of learning, reputation and track record. Part of this success is linked to capacity-building support and accompaniment by two successive Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) deployed under the UN DPA-UNDP Joint Programme, and by national staff. Despite deep societal divisions, when the CCL acts in unified fashion, all parties consider it a trusted entity, enabling it to exercise its religious and moral authority.

Technical support and accompaniment. Support from the UN has enhanced the CCL's effectiveness. From 2015, for example, the PDAs organized several strategy development retreats and review meetings for the CCL. Using UN House as a venue for the parties' meetings further strengthened CCL as a neutral actor.

Availability and insider knowledge. Given the cyclic and chronic nature of Lesotho's crises, mediators who are continually available and can respond almost daily are at a distinct advantage. The dynamics of the conflict are ever-changing and nuanced. The actors are members of various church congregations, which gives the Heads of Churches close contact with the parties.

Complementarity between insider/outsider and informal/formal configuration. While SADC remained the formal facilitator/mediator, CCL and SADC worked in concert, with each leveraging its comparative advantage. This complementarity has been formalized through memoranda of understanding. At another level, UNDP provided complementary technical support to the IEC for the 2017 elections, including for political analysis and crisis prevention, enhancing the credibility of the elections and reducing the possibility of dispute.

Source: PDA Lesotho

g) **Access:** Facilitating access to potentially complementary processes occurring at more senior levels and helping to bridge the gap between policymakers and practitioners, or the traditional gaps between government and civil society, may all prove constructive. While some IMs may already have relationship at different levels, depending on their position in society, international actors may well have stronger connections within the government, parliament or the judiciary.

h) **Joint learning/peer-to-peer exchange/networking opportunities and communities of practice:** Opportunities to interact with and learn from other IMs and mediation practitioners is an important way to ensure that IMs receive support in their efforts. This may entail providing opportunities for IMs from other countries or regions to come together.

i) **Logistical support:** IMs may benefit from support for travel and meeting costs. As with the injection of any resources into fragile contexts, providing logistical support for IM-led or supported processes must be done in a conflict-sensitive way.

j) **Advisory support/serving as a sounding board:** Since the work of IMs can be an isolating experience, they may benefit from advisory support and/or a sounding board, i.e. an individual or a team of people with whom they can share and reflect upon their ideas in a safe and confidential way, such as during a facilitated retreat.

k) **Accompaniment, coaching, mentoring and shadowing:**[87] Accompaniment ensures that IMs have actors to turn to if and when they are needed. Similarly, shadowing can help build the capacity of IMs by exposing them to new ways of working and new actors. To gain a deeper understanding of Track I processes for example, IMs can shadow senior mediators.

l) **Support inclusive efforts:** If the inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups is to be more than a token act or not to harm efforts, IMs and those they work with must advocate for more inclusive processes. Outsiders can work to sensitize IMs to the benefits of more inclusive processes and to help them foster such processes.

m) **Training:** Training can be helpful in contexts where IMs have expressed a clear need to develop a deeper or different understanding of a particular topic, from mediation to international norms around human rights, conflict analysis, natural resource-related negotiations, gender and masculinity, or other issues. Generally speaking, trainings are most beneficial when there is enough time for IMs to share insights and experiences amongst themselves.

n) **Security support:** In particularly volatile contexts, IMs may require support to ensure personal safety.

o) Media visibility/communications strategy: IMs perform a significant amount of their work behind the scenes. However, in specific situations, a media visibility and/or a communications strategy may be required.

p) **Psychological support:** The work of IMs can be isolating and extremely challenging. Many IMs may feel burdened by the responsibility of their work and isolated at times. Outsiders may be well-placed to recognize that IMs need psychological support.

q) **Designing exit strategies:**[88] Ensuring there is a clear understanding of the scope and duration of support is vital. Co-designing exit strategies helps avoid overdependence.

r) **No engagement:** It is important to be open to the possibility that IMs may not need or want any support for diverse reasons, including: the risks of being affiliated with an international entity; a sensitive time period in the process in which they are engaged; the fear that support may prove counter-productive; or, simply because support is not needed. Alternatively, IMs may wish to receive support for a certain amount of time, but those needs and preferences may evolve.

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[87] Mubashir, Mir, Engiellushe Morina and Luxshi Vimalarajah (2016), p. 13.
[88] Ibid, p. 14.

As you begin elaborating the joint engagement strategy, be sure to go back to the context analysis (Step one) to understand the extent to which changes in the context may influence the programme. Now that you are likely to have a more extensive understanding of the scope and elements of the programme, you should also revisit (in joint, participatory fashion) the risk assessment (Step two).

3.7 Step seven: Evaluate the impact of the joint engagement strategy

As with many engagements in the mediation support space, evaluating impact can be challenging. Therefore, the most important aspect of this step is to maintain an open, fluid and honest feedback and debriefing mechanism with the IMs. You should make a sustained effort to understand their needs and whether the joint engagement strategy meets those needs or should be adjusted or whether the needs have changed. A feedback mechanism provides an opportunity for sustained dialogue and offers you the ability to monitor the impact of the engagement strategy. It is important to recognize that you are evaluating the impact of the joint engagement strategy rather than the IM's own work, although this distinction at times may become unavoidably fuzzy.

There is an increasing recognition that traditional monitoring and evaluation frameworks may not be well-suited to the field of mediation because they impose a linear cause-and-effect model on complex situations where multiple variables must be taken into account. Furthermore, traditional methods tend to rely heavily on external evaluation consultants. Even in the best of cases, they "may interfere with the mediation process and impose a heavy time burden on the project team."[89] In a 2017 report, HD therefore proposed what it refers to as an Adaptive Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Model. It has been tailored here to elaborate key questions that can guide the measurement of results or effects in this space:[90]

1. What change will we create with this engagement?

2. Why/how do we think the engagement will produce this change?

3. How will we know if we are succeeding?

4. How will we demonstrate or measure the engagement's success?

5. What are the potential unintended consequences of the engagement?

6. Why is our professional judgement reliable?

At critical milestones during the project's lifespan, which can be agreed upon in consultation with IMs, the IMs can lead the peer review of the engagement. Where possible, this review should not be left until the end of the engagement so that vital changes can be incorporated into the engagement strategy in a timely manner. A discussion with donors is necessary to ascertain the extent to which this collaborative and dynamic approach to evaluating impact could meet their requirements. In other instances, more traditional results-based management (RBM) processes will apply and efforts will need to be made to ensure measurements are outcome-oriented (effects) rather than output-oriented (number of trainings, retreats, etc.).

Other ways to monitor and document the engagement include[91]: providing resources for IMs to document their stories in the form of practice note series or similar endeavours; keeping a log of "aha" moments and

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[89] Wadley, Dr. Ian, 'Valuing peace: Delivering and demonstrating mediation results, Dilemmas and options for mediators', Mediation practice series, November 2017, p. 6 (available at https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/HDC_MPS7_EN-REV2-WEB.pdf).

[90] Ibid, p. 24.

[91] Workshop participants, UNDP-EU, Workshop on Insider Mediation in Africa, Marrakech, Morocco, February 2018.

Insider mediators in Infrastructures for Peace (I4P): Experiences from Africa

Insider mediators are the core of I4P. Their success has prompted government and civil society to collaborate to establish a formal national peace architecture in several African countries. Regional efforts have also strengthened I4P. In 2013, the ECOWAS member states endorsed the Accra Declaration, which states that "stakeholders in Member States shall establish national infrastructures for peace within three years with national plans of action to be developed that seek to transform structural dynamics, based on conflict risk assessments, and taking advantage of the existing capacities and opportunities available within civil society, government, security services, the private sector, etc.". Similarly, around the same time, the SADC countries signed the Maseru Declaration on a Framework for Peaceful Development in Southern Africa.

Ghana integrated the I4P into its national policy by adopting the National Peace Council (NPC) Act in 2011. The NPC is widely considered as the best practice of an I4P, whose formation was greatly influenced by support from international and regional organizations (UN, AU and ECOWAS). The NPC provides a platform for consultation and cooperation among the main stakeholders. Its mandate is to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The NPC is based on the successes of the Northern Regional Peace Advisory Committee (NORPAC), which was formed during the 2002 Dagbon chieftaincy crisis. NORPAC was composed of civil society, community- and faith-based organizations and influential individuals. Following its success in mediating the crisis, it was replicated at the national, regional and district levels. The national Governing Board and the Regional Council members lead the mediation efforts and are composed largely of eminent religious and traditional leaders. The NPC enjoys high levels of trust among the citizenry, as shown by the Governance and Peace Poll (GaP Poll) and the Afrobarometer Survey, both conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). For example, prior to the 2016 general elections, only the NPC was able to convince all presidential candidates to jointly agree to use legitimate means if they chose to challenge the election results, demonstrating the extent of the NPC's influence. The Council also acted proactively to douse tensions simmering between Christians and Muslims following reports that some Muslim students were prevented from wearing veils in certain public and private schools. In response, the Council organized a stakeholders' engagement and dialogue at the national and regional levels. One challenge the NPC faces is the low level of representation of women and youth on its governing board, which further marginalises them in the mediation process. However, with the support of the UNDP-EU Insider Mediators Project, the NPC has identified and trained over 120 women and youth in nine conflict-affected communities. Similarly, because traditional authorities are called on first during conflicts, the NPC has strengthened the capacity of over 90 chiefs and queen mothers, providing them with modern mediation skills. The NPC continues to face challenges, particularly limited resources from the government for its activities. However, it remains a strong and resilient conflict prevention and mediation institution in Ghana.

Uganda's national peace architecture is a body composed of the Interreligious Council of Uganda (IRCU), the National Consultative Forum (a constitutionally- mandated body for political dialogue), the Elders Forum of Uganda (TEFU) and recent entrants, the WSR and cultural institutions (currently, five traditional kingdoms). The economic downturn following the 2011 general elections led the main opposition figure, Dr. Kizza Besigye, to organize 'walk to work' protests. Several individuals, who now form the insider mediator component of the I4P, mediated the violence that followed. The president launched TEFU, whose members include a retired judge, presidents of religious denominations, retired ambassadors and eminent women of the WSR, in July 2015. Thanks to its gravitas and the broad respect it enjoys, the Forum was instrumental in

mediating the stalemate during the 2016 elections. The Regional Stability Forums and District Peace Committees have helped mitigate local conflicts. The I4P is coordinated through the National Peacebuilding Platform (NBP) in the Prime Minister's Office. UNDP and UNICEF have supported Uganda to develop a draft National Peacebuilding Policy, which envisions shifting from the NBP to a national commission.

Malawi's national peace architecture is developing gradually, following the 29 November 2017 approval of the National Peace Policy. The process is led by the Government of Malawi and CSOs, with support from UNDP. Consultations and processes are ongoing to establish the parameters of a national peace architecture as the national pillar for peacebuilding, conflict prevention and transformation in the long term. The I4P will be represented at national and district levels. Initial assistance has been provided to implement pilot structures in three districts (Kasungu, Mangochi and Karonga) with a total of 27 members. Six more districts are expected to be added by the end of June 2017. Further, plans are underway to formulate a National Peace Architecture bill, which will require an act of Parliament to establish the National Peace Commission. In addition, given the possibility of political deadlock and tensions, especially around the May 2019 tripartite elections, UNDP has assisted the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) to strengthen the capacities of high-level mediators and dialogue facilitators to serve as intermediaries ('insider mediators') among national leaders and as advocates for peace and good governance. The mediators will undertake shuttle diplomacy to engage the leaders. PAC has over 3,000 youth volunteers across the country who are providing conflict early warning for quick responses to prevent conflict.

Zimbabwe's peace architecture is multi-layered and multi-stakeholder. The country has taken an important and bold step towards sustaining peace by addressing the long-term societal impacts and legacies of lengthy conflict, as well as by laying a foundation for prevention as a pillar of development. With the 5 January 2018 signing of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Act, the country constituted the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). Its overall objective is to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and stability; support the country in addressing its past by initiating inclusive healing and reconciliation processes; and enhancing national and sub-national capacities for the peaceful prevention of future conflicts as pathways to sustain peace and deepen social cohesion. Towards this goal, the NPRC conducted provincial-level consultations from 16 February -2 March 2018 with support from the government and complementary financial and technical assistance from the UN. The goal was to promote a bottom-up approach to obtaining citizens' input on the key sources of conflict and the causes undermining peace-building efforts, while also identifying existing capacities for peace and reconciliation. Stakeholders also identified residual and unresolved conflict periods in the country's history that need sustained engagement through inclusive healing and reconciliation. On 9 May 2018, a national peace and reconciliation conference validated the outcomes of these consultations. This has created space for sustained and strategic conversations and dialogue on sensitive peacebuilding needs in the country, most of which will form the basis of the country's long-term peacebuilding and reconciliation strategy. The Chapter 12 Platform, which brings together the five independent commissions mandated to promote peace, protect rights and support democracy in the country, complements these efforts. It is a critical safe space to promote dialogue with citizens on constitutional values. Efforts are now underway to establish a Leadership Platform for Multi-Party Youth Wings. Terms of reference have been established and will be endorsed soon by the main wings as a prevention architecture during the elections. This is linked to a possible peace pledge by the presidential candidates to be convened by the NPRC shortly after the nominations are complete. With UN support and in collaboration with faith-based organizations, more than 292 local peace committees have been established in areas across the country that have been affected historically by conflicts. These structures continue to play a critical role in diffusing tensions within communities, serving as mechanisms for early warning and linking local peacebuilding needs to the national level. Religious leaders within the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations continue to play a central role as intermediaries, supporting insider mediation efforts and providing high-level informal advocacy and consensus-building.

The Government of **Togo's** commitment to peace-building and reconciliation was reflected in the Prime Minister's 18 September 2013 General Policy Statement. As a signatory of the Accra Declaration, Togo opted for the bottom-up approach in developing an I4P and is creating local peace councils (LPCs). Thirty-seven such councils have been created, with a total of 255 members covering the 37 prefectures of the country. Of the 255 elected members, 44 are women (17 percent) and 211 are men (82 percent). Members come from a variety of local structures: women's groups; regional and local authorities; civil society; and local associations and include teachers, retirees and religious leaders. The LPCs are understood as modern peace-building institutions, made up of volunteers from all walks of life and united around common values. Thus, among the plethora of dedicated institutions, peace committees have been accorded high priority because of their capacity to identify and substantially reduce the root causes of conflicts. Further, the LPCs' tasks and jurisdictions have been defined clearly. In performing their missions to observe, monitor, inform, raise awareness, interpose themselves, mediate, negotiate and conciliate, LPCs are required to work effectively with local institutions and authorities. Their role is not to replace chiefs of cantons or judicial, administrative and military authorities.

Source: UNDP Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Togo and PDA Uganda

critical learnings; providing safe spaces for experience-sharing and reflection; generating possibilities for regional exchanges; promoting vertical and horizontal experience-sharing between outsider and insider mediators; and, a broad orientation towards reflective practice.

3.8 Step eight: Exploring options for sustainability

The sustainability of efforts is increased when initiatives are locally-owned and -led. Nonetheless, engagements by international actors, no matter how large or small in scope, *will* impact the system in which the engagement takes place. Consequently, sustainability-related issues must be built into the very fabric of the project. Even if international actors are only advising or consulting, care and foresight are required to ensure that IMs do not become over-reliant on those actors' logistical, technical, financial, and/or political support.

There is a tendency to view institutionalization as *the* preferred option to ensure sustainability. However, it is not without problems. First, while IMs may seek some level of recognition for their efforts to either gain protection or strengthen their efforts in some way, "they often choose to remain in informal networks and loose associations."[92] Formalization may actually lessen the effectiveness of such efforts since it may "increase their visibility, limit the space for manoeuvring and may make them vulnerable to becoming instrumentalized and politicized."[93] Second, as Lederach has highlighted, while institutionalization may promote commitment, it may rigidify the role of IMs. He argued his point unambiguously, stating, "[B]ureaucratisation and professionalization: in and of themselves they do not assure a higher quality of response in peacebuilding."[94]

It is important, therefore, to consider how an informal group of IMs can sustain itself without jeopardizing its members and/or the critical roles they play. This is a critical question as many IMs depend on their autonomy for their effectiveness. One approach to sustainability may involve the concept of public/private spaces, which is a more dynamic and fluid approach to fostering sustainability (see text box 11).

Text box 11 Sustaining the work of an informal group of IMs: Examples from the Philippines and Kenya

The formal task of conflict prevention at the local level in the Philippines falls to formal "peace and order councils," which every level of government is required to convene. In practice, many of these councils are ineffective due to conflicts among political or institutional actors who are their members. In many such instances, local authorities call on religious or traditional leaders who can play insider mediator roles and provide them with logistical and financial support from local government budgets. The more formal councils then recognize their mediation activities or other similar initiatives. IMs thus operate here in a joint public/private space. Kenya follows a similar approach, in which the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, which falls under the Office of the President, as well as its affiliated architecture of local peace committees, both include civic and traditional leaders and actors that can play crucial intermediary roles.

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[92] Mubashir, Mir, Engiellushe Morina and Luxshi Vimalarajah (2016), p. 12.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Lederach, John Paul, (2013), "The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace', p. 12.

In many cases, the preferred method to promote sustainability is to link IMs with infrastructures for peace (I4Ps), which are characterized by varying levels of formality or institutionalisation. An I4P is defined as "a dynamic networking of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that help build constructive social and political relationships and enhance sustainable resilience of societies against relapse into violence".[95] I4Ps can take many different forms and apply to a wide range of long-term and multi-level mechanisms and institutional structures for collaboration among relevant stakeholders. The work of IMs provides an opportunity to form, expand or consolidate I4Ps either as the core of their work, facilitators among different aspects of I4Ps, 'accompanying' actors for I4Ps or, simply, as part of a civic space.[96]

TIP: It is important to recognize that IMs can become part of the conflict, which would jeopardize the sustainability of the initiative. This point underscores again the importance of continually updating your analysis and baseline studies to ensure that the best-placed, most suitable IMs receive consistent support.

The topic of I4Ps has been covered extensively elsewhere. The focus here is how to ensure that IMs' efforts as part of I4Ps can be made sustainable. Again, it is important to underscore that I4Ps do not *necessarily* refer to formal institutions, although formal institutions such as National Peace Committees, for example, may often form part of I4Ps. For any I4P to succeed, according to Lederach, it must: "have a long-term vision and assured support that invests in resources emergent in, close to and responsive to local contexts"; commit to "continuous learning that tests both practice and theory in order to innovate and adapt"; and, "have a vision and commitment to systemic change that requires cooperative and engaged relationships beyond their immediate offices, projects or mandates."[97] This combination of flexibility and humility that comes with a commitment to learning helps ensure that I4Ps, and IMs' engagement with them, remains adaptive to the context. Whether as part of I4Ps or independent of them, other initiatives that can enhance sustainability include:[98]

- Encouraging peace budgeting or the mainstreaming of peace issues within budgeting across functional siloes vis-a-vis national counterparts.

- Building on and/or aligning with existing platforms and efforts.

- Ensuring support is as long-term as possible and/or only engaging when long-term support is an option/partnering with other regional or international institutions to help ensure longevity.

- Ensuring funding remains flexible.

- Providing organizational support to IMs (as above), including means for transportation and bookkeeping skills.[99]

- Encouraging continued learning and reflection on the issue of sustainability prior to and during engagements with IMs.

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[95] Giessmann, (2016), p. 10.0

[96] UNDP, 'Supporting Insider Mediation', 2014.

[97] Lederach, John Paul, 'The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace, p. 13.

[98] Workshop participants, UNDP-EU, Workshop on Insider Mediation in Africa, Marrakech, Morocco, February 2018.

[99] Mubashir, Mir; Engiellushe Morina and Luxshi Vimalarajah (2016), p. 13.

Text box 12 Understanding the concept of infrastructures for peace (I4P)

"Jean Paul Lederach first introduced the concept of "Infrastructures for Peace" in the 1980s. It was based on his assumption that sustainable peace can only be the result of a deep and structural conflict transformation, including a transformation of the socio-economic root causes and political drivers of the conflict (Lederach 2005, 47). This concept entered the political arena, bringing with it a new scholarly discourse about how to carve out and harness I4P in practice, when the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan referred to the term in several statements between 2001 and 2009.

In terms of policy guidance, I4P gained wider attention and intellectual interest only following post-election violence in Kenya (2007) and Ghana (2008), when national governments and civil society organizations began pioneering official implementation of a concept for national I4P in both countries. At the same time the international discourse on the challenges of peacebuilding increasingly focused on the needs for structural transformation to mitigate the risks of crises and State collapse in postwar societies. […]

A wide range of practitioners and academics have conceptualized I4P and related concepts in diverse ways. Chetan Kumar, Senior Conflict Prevention Advisor at UNDP, proposed I4P as a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills co-owned by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation, prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society (Kumar 2011, UNDP 2013). His definition emphasized targeted dialogue and consultation as indispensable tools to prevent violent conflict and enable peaceful mediation. According to this definition, practically everything that could prove useful for establishing the required capabilities for developing and implementing these particular tools (systems, resources, values, skills) could be considered as elements of an I4P. Other definitions, on the other hand, placed different issues centre-stage.

Paul van Tongeren, former Secretary-General of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), defined I4P as "cooperative, problem-solving approaches to conflict" within societies, based on dialogue and non-violence, and he called for the development of "institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture, which promote and manage this approach at local, district, and national levels" (van Tongeren 45-55). While, according to van Tongeren, I4P would comprise more tools than just dialogue and consultations, his definition implies that they consist of institutionalized mechanisms. Notwithstanding these differences, it is useful to remind to the reader of Jean Paul Lederach's reference to the need for "cooperative and engaged relationships beyond immediate offices, projects and mandates" (Lederach 2012, 13). There is good reason to assume that I4P is more than institutions alone, let alone a determined set of institutions.

Most interviewees for this research confirmed what the desk research had revealed: variants of I4P can exist at any stage of peacebuilding, even if they are not explicitly branded as Infrastructures for Peace. But in order to match the crucial needs of sustainability, peace infrastructures must be able to flexibly respond to dynamic and systemic challenges in the society in transition. In that, infrastructures for peace interlink efforts on – or within – different tracks and units, as well as areas of peacebuilding and statebuilding. To conclude, I4P can be defined as a dynamic networking of skills, capacities, resources, tools and institutions that help build constructive social and political relationships and enhance sustainable resilience of societies against relapse into violence."

From: Hans J. Giessmann, 'Embedded Peace, Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned', Berghof Foundation, United Nations Development Programme, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, 2016, pp. 9-10.

The role of insider mediation in cattle migration conflicts: Sudan and South Sudan

Internal cattle migration within South Sudan has repeatedly been associated with violence, yet the traditional cross-border/international migration has withstood countless political disputes between Sudan and South Sudan. Despite attempts to find solutions, migration has harmed relations between pastoralists and farmers for decades. Farming communities and politicians from these communities do not want to receive animals from other states because cattle keepers are armed and intimidate the local population when their animals destroy crops and property.

The Civil Affairs Division (CAD) leadership sent delegates to the Northern Bahr el Ghazal Pastoral Pre-migration Conference in Nyamlel and Wanyjok to assess the practice. The objective was for influential traditional and government leaders to learn and, eventually, duplicate the best practices in their states.

After South Sudan gained independence, pastoral migration was regulated by the Joint Border Peace Committee/Court with financial and technical support from both the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and Viable Support to Transition and Stability (VISTAS). However, success is due to the political will of traditional and local government level leaders and conferences/dialogue initiatives between the host communities and the nomads. Several agreements have been entered into and although they have been violated occasionally, these violations have all been managed without further incident. Conference resolutions are disseminated to the local community and to the nomads with support from UNMISS/CAD.

Host and pastoral communities have launched Joint Border Peace Committee/Court to address any violations. At these conferences, issues that arise during migration are reported and solutions are developed. Leaders from both communities agreed to review some items from past agreements.

Based on the experience of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, CAD was able to replicate the practice successfully in five states where relationships were volatile - Amadi, Terekeka, Eastern Lakes, Western Lakes and Gok. After the Mvolo and Rumbek meetings, those states selected members for the joint Committee/Courts (three from each). In October 2017, CAD and VISTAS provided joint training to the newly-constituted body in Yirol, Eastern Lakes state. However, in late February 2018, CAD held the first pre-migration conference in Tali, Terekeka state for the five states. The process was led successfully by the newly formed joint Committee/Court.

CAD and its partners have provided support for annual pastoral migration conferences from Sudan to Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Northern Upper Nile. However, Northern Bahr el Ghazal's extensive experience has helped to develop similar mechanisms in Warrap/Western Bahr el Ghazal, as well as in the five states (Amadi, Terekeka, Eastern Lakes, Western Lakes and Gok). Dissemination is critical for any agreement to hold. CAD has been in the lead, supporting the local institution created to disseminate the content of the agreement(s) at the end of each conference. The implementation of various agreements between the state and traditional authorities has resulted in relatively peaceful migration in the five states, as confirmed by the governors and members of the Joint Border Peace Committees/Courts. This mechanism has proven to be an effective tool for early warning and dispute settlement in the event of conflict.

The delegates from various field offices who attended the Aweil conferences in 2017 appreciated the interaction between different cultural communities and, particularly, different countries as a way to regulate resources and create mutual benefits for the host and the nomads.

Many delegates expressed their appreciation and have been willing to try to replicate the process in their areas. Subsequently, the role of traditional authority in resolving cattle migration related issues between and among communities is presently being increased At a 23-26 February 2018 meeting of the five states in Tali, Terekeka state, governors pledged financial support for the local committees. Each state committed to pay 30,000 SSP monthly and to provide seven police officers.

Source: DPKO

Insider Mediation training. Photo: UNDP Guatemala.

Learning from practice

This last and final section brings together the key insights garnered from developing this GN in order to: provide key principles for engagements with IMs; offer advice from some of the leading policymakers and practitioners in this space; and, share testimonies from IMs themselves concerning their role and the support they have received. The objective of this section of the GN, therefore, is to both underscore some of the critical elements to consider when engaging with IMs and provide fresh perspectives on this work from those who have been directly engaged with IMs, or, indeed, as IMs, for many years. It is hoped that these insights will help shape current and future engagements in support of IMs' important work.

Key principles for engagement with IMs

Part three of the GN provided a comprehensive, step-by-step guide to engaging with IMs. Many of those steps reflect the guiding principles that should be adhered to when engaging with IMs. This section is meant to clarify and underscore twelve key principles that should guide the co-design and co-implementation of engagements with IMs. Engagement with IMs is a unique, innovative approach to working in complex and fragile contexts. IMs have a unique way to look for entry points that requires a unique approach. These key principles help ensure that engagement with IMs is respectful and protective of their critical role in society, while also contributing to learning and sustainability.

1. Anchored in context analysis

IM engagements must be anchored in an analysis of the context. This enables actors to understand the interaction effects among peace engines, conflict drivers and the diverse stakeholders that exist in a given fragile and/or conflict-affected landscape. The failure to conduct context analysis may lead to engagements that are dislocated from the context and which, therefore are more likely to do more harm than good. The need for context-specificity has been covered extensively elsewhere. Consequently, the main message here is that context-driven programming is essential for engagements with IMs.

IMs are not without limitations. Whether in the context of peace negotiations or political disputes, election-related processes, humanitarian crises, or natural resources-related conflicts these limitations are best overcome – and the quality of the process and the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes enhanced – by greater collaboration between international actors and IMs.

2. Conflict-sensitive

Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organization to understand the context in which it is operating and the interactions between its interventions and the context. It then requires an ability to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts.[100] In essence, "conflict sensitivity refers to the practice of understanding how aid interacts with conflict in a particular context, to mitigate unintended negative effects, and to influence conflict positively wherever possible, through humanitarian, development and/or peacebuilding interventions."[101] A conflict-sensitive lens allows a programme to continue its intervention, confident that it is not having adverse effects on the context and that any adverse effects will be mitigated properly if and when they arise. Furthermore, using a conflict-sensitive lens leads to better development results and increased effectiveness.

Conflict sensitivity is considered particularly essential in fragile or conflict-affected environments. This is because any intervention involves the transfer of resources (including food, training, expertise and health care) into an environment where resources are often scarce.[102] These resources represent power, or in some instances survival, and can easily become a source of conflict when people seek to control or manipulate the distribution of such resources for their own benefit or for a particular cause. The way in which such resources are distributed - when, by whom and to what end – distinguishes a programme that strengthens local capacities for peace and the ability to prevent violent extremism from one which, conversely, exacerbates the problem. This is relevant for engagements with IMs as both the selection of IMs and the type of support – whether technical, logistical, financial, or political – also constitute a resource and a source of power that may be contested.

3. 'Do no harm'

Conflict sensitivity is closely related to the concept of 'do no harm'. Initially advanced by Mary Anderson,[103] the do-no-harm framework that emerged in the early 1990s was the result of a collaboration with civil society organizations, amongst others. The framework called for a redesign of assistance programmes to ensure that good intentions do not inadvertently translate into bad outcomes. The framework, which is highly relevant for IM engagements, has seven key steps: understand the context; analyse dividers and tensions; analyse connectors and local capacities for peace; analyse the programme; analyse the programme's impact on dividers and connectors; consider and generate programming options; test programming options and redesign the project. Do no harm is a well-accepted concept in international development and the challenge is to operationalize it: the definition of what is considered 'no harm' will vary from context to context, depending on cultural norms and specificities. The best way to ensure that endeavours do no harm is to ensure that engagements are locally-led and -owned.

[100] United Nations Development Group, 'Conducting a conflict and development analysis', UNDG, February 2016.

[101] http://cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/conflict-sensitivity/

[102] http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/do-no-harm-local-capacities-for-peace-project/

[103] Anderson, Mary B., '*Do no harm: How aid can support peace – or war,*' Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colorado, 1999.

Learning about SDG 16. Photo: UNDP Honduras.

Insider mediators and sustainable development: Honduras

La Moskitia is a multi-ethnic territory located between Honduras and Nicaragua and is home to four indigenous peoples: the Miskitos, Pech, Tawahkas and Garífunas. Historically, the region has been marginalized, politically and economically, from the rest of the country. It is home to the largest wilderness area in Central America and is rich in natural resources, such as wood, oil and marine resources. Despite this natural wealth, the population faces substantial socio-economic challenges, including high levels of poverty and low levels of education. One of the most prominent conflict dynamics relates to land. Since 2012, land titles have been gradually transferred from state authorities to local indigenous governance structures (the so-called 'Territorial Councils'). In many cases, third parties (*terceros*) now hold title to property and use the land in way that contradict the worldviews of the indigenous population. This is occurring in a context where both state-led and indigenous governance bodies are extremely weak. Further, responsibilities and competencies have not been standardized. Taken together, this has created a context characterized by uncertainty and high levels of conflict.

In 2016, in recognition of the fundamental challenges facing La Moskitia, the Honduran Government launched the Alliance for the Development of the Honduran Moskitia, together with both indigenous and Afro-Honduran organizations and development cooperation agencies. This alliance established the Territorial Governance Platform, an inter-institutional dialogue mechanism. Three dialogue spaces (*mesas de trabajo*) were created to develop concrete proposals in the areas of: justice and governance; economic development and use of natural resources; and, social development and basic infrastructure. Support has been provided to build *and consolidate national capacities for conflict prevention*, focused on training the staff of government institutions and leaders of indigenous institutions in the concepts, tools and processes required for dialogue,

mediation and negotiation. The aim is to strengthen and provide technical support for them to engage in the dialogue spaces, which are mandated to develop proposals to resolve the most critical prominent structural problems in La Moskitia.

Support is multi-layered. At the **national level**, government representatives who participated in the trainings lead and coordinate the Platform's dialogue spaces. The National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH) has included the issue of conflict prevention in its internal training plan, and recently created a conflict prevention team as a first step to institutionalize its conflict prevention and mitigation efforts. **Regionally**, a network of mediators has been established to prepare joint analyses, recommendations and early warnings. These mediators are already leading several mediation processes in their territories. **At the community level**, several communities have formed conflict resolution committees as a result of training and support offered through the project. They address conflicts at the family and community levels. Capacity-building workshops on dialogue, mediation and negotiation also provide training for participants in core concepts of mediation and dialogue and prepare them to use these tools to prevent and resolve violent conflict in their communities.

Conflict analysis is essential to understand the reality in each intervention context to identify entry points and offer the support that insider mediators may need. This is particularly important when working with indigenous peoples who have their own conflict resolution practices and traditions. Creativity and adaptation are key. In addition, other initiatives or advocacy efforts are needed to solve structural problems. Insider mediators from different organizations and institutions at different levels (local, regional and national) must thus be engaged. In the case of Honduras, capacity-building efforts involved multiple parties. This helped to build trust and provided a good basis for successful dialogue.

Source: UNDP Honduras

4. Risk-informed and resilience-based

No programme is without risk. Rather, given the evolving context and the fact that risk is based on uncertainty, the number of risks associated with any given programme is actually infinite. At the same time, it is also important to keep in mind that risk assessments are not intended to stop you from undertaking a programme. Indeed, risk management is an enabling process which helps improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes by identifying the most relevant risks and opportunities and preparing you for them. Given the sensitive, often behind-the-scenes, highly political and sometimes dangerous work that IMs undertake, any engagement should be informed by a risk assessment, conducted in a participatory manner that is mindful and tailored to cultural specificities. Many risks can be mitigated by taking a resilience-based approach to engagements. As outlined in the UN-sponsored Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security, the "resilience of youth has the potential to manifest in either positive or negative ways."[104] By understanding the positive contributions that youth and, indeed, all stakeholders can make in a given context, engagements can be guided by the transformative peace engines that are endogenous to every society.

5. Responsive, not directive

Rather than inventing new processes or structures, IM engagements are based on the knowledge that IMs exist and are already undertaking work in their communities. The work outlined in this GN consists of identifying them and seeking to understand if there are ways in which collaboration with and/or support from international actors could be beneficial. Any efforts to impose ways to lead or implement such initiatives will undermine local ownership and potentially derail the process. The role of international actors must be limited to supporting IMs in their work in the manner and at the time that they wish to be supported - within the realm of possibilities and resource constraints, of course.

6. Underpinned by a human rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach to programming outlines a framework to enhance human development that is based on international human rights standards and designed to promote and protect human rights.[105] This approach, much like the principle of conflict sensitivity, seeks to analyse inequalities that often lie at the heart of development challenges and to "redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impeded development progress."[106] This approach views and promotes the capacities of stakeholders as both rights-holders and duty-bearers.[107] Consequently, while the outsider role must be limited to providing support, this does not mean that international actors should abandon the objectives of helping to foster more equal and fair societies. On the contrary, this would clash with UN values and create additional risks. However, normative considerations should not undermine local ownership. This dilemma can only be resolved by helping IMs to understand the benefits of processes that are, for example, more inclusive of women, youth, minorities and people with disabilities. Support for these processes is likely to help achieve these objectives, slowly but surely, with patience, significant effort and the leadership of local advocates.

7. Gender-sensitive

Gender sensitivity involves ensuring that gender is front and centre in terms of the context analysis and is always considered in the co-development of the engagement strategy. Most importantly, advice should be sought from IMs – particularly where the IMs identified do not yet include women - on how best to advance

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[104] United Nations General Assembly document A-72-761/S-2018-86, Simpson, Graeme, 'Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security,' March 2018, p. 8 (available at https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf).

[105] http://hrbaportal.org/faq/what-is-a-human-rights-based-approach

[106] Ibid.

[107] UNDG, 'Statement on a Common understanding of a human rights based approach to development cooperation,' endorsed by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Programme Group, 2003.

this issue in the most sensitive, constructive and inclusive manner. This will allow international actors to help ensure that gender becomes a frame of reference for engagements, assuring that the different needs of women and men are reflected in outreach and engagement strategies.

8. Sensitive to unintended consequences

It is vital to recognize that engagements with IMs take place in complex systems. In such systems, a single intervention may have an unintended effect and, simultaneously, you cannot expect a single intervention alone to transform the system. By being aware of unintended consequences and the need for a holistic approach, you can understand your own engagements as part of a greater whole, thereby seeking to ensure that your intervention intersects with and supports others in a mutually supportive manner. We must recognize that we can never fully understand a context, we can never really know what may work in a given setting and our actions – even the best-intended ones – may have both positive and negative unintended consequences.[108]

9. Politically aware

Politics is at the heart of the role and the work of IMs. Consequently, engagements with IMs are also inherently political, regardless of whether they are referred to as involving financial, logistical, or technical support. Being politically aware means being sensitive to the power dynamics at the heart of complex contexts and, therefore, at the heart of engagements in complex contexts. It is vital to understand how your engagement influences power, how people use that power and how the balance of forces shifts.

10. Creative and flexible

Engagement with IMs requires a high level of creativity in order to engage in a sensitive manner and overcome the inevitable dilemmas and trade-offs. Flexibility is also a requirement since no engagement ever goes as planned. Most importantly, initiatives are always likely to take significantly longer than expected, even when you have already taken the likelihood of such delays into account.

11. Willingness to learn and engage in reflective practice

Engagements should be based on an openness to learn from local actors, an understanding that we may get it wrong and a desire to continue learning and creating opportunities for IMs to learn from one another. When engaging with IMs, international actors have an opportunity to learn from the IMs' methods and approaches, many of which these actors may not have been exposed to before. Consequently, this means both learning how the engagement does or does not works in order to adapt, but also learning from the IMs themselves. Reflective practitioners seek to understand the connections between learning and effective peacebuilding practice.

12. Guided by humility

Humility, or the quality of being *humble*, means respecting the inherent dignity of those you work with and not assuming to know or seeking to impose what you believe is best for them. Humility assumes awareness of your own limits in terms of your knowledge, abilities and influence as an external actor. By fostering humility as part of your practice, you also encourage greater local ownership and avoid taking credit for successes or achievements. As Antti Pentikäinen from the Network of Religious and Traditional Leaders states, "What you learn very quickly with IMs is that you are not the expert. They know why conflicts have started and how they could be stopped. Humility is much more important than skill in winning their trust, but without their trust and ownership, peace is likely not going to become sustainable."[109]

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[108] Cedric de Coning, Phone interview, March 2018.
[109] Antti Pentikäinen, former Director, Network of Religious and Traditional Leaders, March 2018.

Consultations with indigenous people in the Ixil region. Photo: UNDP Guatemala.

Insider mediators, indigenous peoples and industrial projects: Guatemala

As part of the 2015-2018 insider mediator project, UNDP, UNDPA and EU have supported insider mediation in the Ixil region of Guatemala. Historically, this region was one of those most affected by the armed conflict (1960-1996) and is characterized today by high levels of poverty and inequality, social exclusion, and increased social conflicts, mostly related to land disputes and the exploitation of natural resources. In 2015, the Constitutional Court ordered the implementation of two consultation processes with indigenous peoples in relation to hydropower plant projects in Santa María Nebaj and electric power transmission in San Juan Cotzal. The project conducted a context analysis to understand the needs and appropriate conditions for providing its support.

The context and stakeholders' analysis revealed that formal and semi-formal platforms for mediation and conflict resolution exist. The insider mediators included both State institutions, represented by their local officials, and indigenous authorities (Alcaldía Indígena), who exercise strong leadership. The population views them as highly legitimate and trustworthy, so they can influence community-based disputes and represent indigenous peoples in consultation processes. The Constitutional Court's ruling found that government officials and traditional authorities need to build their abilities to conduct dialogue and learn from experiences on prior consultation.

The project identified three strategies to support insider mediation in the Ixil region:

1. **Peer exchanges and south-south cooperation:** To build trust while approaching a very sensitive topic (prior consultation), the project designed and implemented separate peer exchanges for both ancestral authorities and government officials, sharing experiences from Panama and Peru and showcasing lessons from consultations and inter-cultural dialogue processes in the LAC region.

2. **Capacity-building and training:** To continue building their knowledge, skills and abilities in dialogue and mediation, the project designed and implemented a 10-day training course targeting over 100 indigenous authorities, government officials, and community leaders. The training included specific content related to international human rights instruments, the role of women in peacebuilding, and conflict management, dialogue, and mediation.

3. **Accompaniment in dialogue consultation processes:** Upon request of both parties (government and ancestral authorities), UNDP accompanied the consultation processes as a third-party observer and provided indigenous authorities with the necessary resources for to prepare and organize their positions prior to formal meetings with the government.

Although the entire group of beneficiaries trained under the program play different mediation roles (include direct mediation, consensus-building, early warning and peace advocacy), ancestral authorities see insider mediation as a traditional practice carried out only by recognized authorities. Consequently, one remarkable result of this program is that 17 trained ancestral authorities are actively participating in prior consultation processes, facilitating, building consensus and representing indigenous peoples. Consultations in the Ixil region are the first of their kind in Guatemala. The lessons learned will have an impact on future consultations processes in the country.

- At the community level, dialogue and mediation processes and capacity building initiatives such as those undertaken by the IM project often generate expectations about fulfilling unmet social demands. Institutional leadership is essential to channel these demands and jointly identify effective and sustainable solutions.

- As mentioned in the guide and confirmed by experience, a robust conflict and context analysis is required before engaging in any dialogue/mediation process or programme initiative. This way, interventions can be tailored, approaches and strategies redesigned and the intervention can even be withdrawn, ensuring that a 'do no harm' principle guides all programmes.

- Working in regions with predominantly indigenous population, as in Guatemala, any initiative must recognize the key role played by indigenous authorities (IM) and strategize to involve them and provide for their active participation at all stages.

- In our context, conflict prevention, mediation and dialogue initiatives generate the expectation that UNDP will be involved and be part of the solutions. Analyses of the root causes of conflicts show that social conflicts relate primarily to historical and structural development issues. As such, addressing social conflicts means addressing development issues and taking a more coherent and linked approach to incorporate a development perspective into conflict prevention/transformation.

Source: UNDP Guatemala

Advice from practitioners and policymakers

The below quotes represent a selection of advice and guidance provided by those who were consulted for the purposes of developing this revised GN. Many of these policymakers and practitioners have been engaged in processes for years, if not decades. Some of these individuals have also served as IMs themselves. Their advice is offered in the hope that it will prompt reflection on emerging or ongoing engagements with IMs.

> The special role played by **indigenous authorities** also needs to be factored in when designing engagement or dialogue processes, and these authorities need to be leveraged to identify women, for example. It is important to avoid strengthening pre-existing power dynamics, including those around 'women elite', for example. It is, furthermore, vital to use the disruptive power of conflict to foster opportunities for the inclusion of women, especially in sectors where they are traditionally excluded, including security and justice sectors, for example.
>
> Workshop participants, UNDP-EU, Workshop on Insider Mediation in Africa, Marrakech, February 2018.

> We are living in a time of historical transition which will cause a lot of suffering and pain. A time will come, however, when communities will need to reconcile with their enemies and, if we then fail to provide them the support they need, these communities will likely fall back into violence. At present, these **support structures** either don't exist or, if they do, they are inadequate. Instead, we need to create them now so that communities that have been in conflict can find healing.
>
> Antti Pentikäinen, Executive Director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

> First: Ensure whoever you identify as IMs are identified through **inclusive and participatory processes**. Second, whoever is an IM should lead in developing a strategy, including the needs assessment for identifying capacity gaps. Third, you cannot impose your suggestions as they will always backfire, even if it relates to important issues such as gender, or youth; you need to work with IMs and other stakeholders so that they understand the value of inputs of women and youth. If you go with carrots and sticks, you will undermine both ownership and quality.
>
> Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, Peace and Development Advisor, UNDP-DPA Joint Programme, 2018.

> The **network approach** is really important: this highlights the need to build on existing mechanisms and structures. The building blocks are already there, it is a question of seeing whether they can be put together in a different manner in order to ensure greater inclusion.
>
> Mir Mubashir, Project Manager, Mediation and Dialogue Support Programme, Berghof Foundation, 2018.

> First: Know that you are not starting with a blank sheet of paper. There is a huge level of capacity out there and there will always be people in the local and national communities who have been doing this work on a daily basis in their communities and societies. Respect that, try to understand it and try to ensure you do not view what you bring as being something inherently new. Try to ask: **What kind of resilience is here already?** Who are the key figures that people can turn to for mediation and conflict resolution? What capacities do they have? Then engage with them and try to understand what they are doing. Second: In any process that we design, our role should be absolutely limited to supporting some kind of process that is run by locals – in terms of the decisions being made, and who is driving and managing the process. We may not like or understand the priorities or the way they go about achieving them, but for it to be sustainable this is how the process has to be.
>
> Cedric de Coning, Senior Research Fellow, ACCORD and NUPI, 2018

First: Join processes led by ombudsman, churches, academia, etc. - before trying to launch any effort of our own; second, translate all materials that are required into local languages and dialects; third, be prepared for the fact that **all conflicts are highly political** – especially when we are talking about conflict around land and natural resources. You need to be familiar with the dynamics, the main actors, the triggers, the regulatory framework, relevant legislation and the international framework – then you will be at ease with the work ahead.

Gaston Ain, Former Conflict prevention advisor, UNDP Panama, 2018.

The issue of timing is critical; at the beginning of a process for developing an I4P for example, cultural or religious sensitivities may make it challenging to include all marginalized groups, but with time – as such institutions grow and increase in legitimacy and accountability, greater efforts can be made **to influence social norms.**

Workshop participants, UNDP-EU, Workshop on Insider Mediation in Africa, Marrakech, February 2018.

First, peace processes are not one-off events; politicians often do not make good mediators as they tend to work on the assumption that once the deal is done, societal healing will automatically follow. In reality it doesn't. You need to work on the social peace process alongside the political process; you need both state and non-state actors to be able to buy into the ultimate solution. Second, on the issue of religion: there is the saying that "religion is power and whatever is power can use misused and abused"; it's a question of how you use religion that matters. Even if a person is atheist or agnostic or of a completely different religion to the parties negotiating, it is about using a human moral framework rather than 'my' specific interpretation of faith. Third, processes always take longer than you anticipate. And, lastly, IMs and **the parties to the conflict need hope most of all**; sometimes it's so hard to have hope when all that you are breathing is the toxic oxygen of your own conflict. Do your best to give them hope.

Reverend Dr. Gary Mason, Director and Founder, Rethinking Conflict, 2018.

Testimonials/examples from IMs

The below testimonials and examples were provided by IMs who have been or are still engaged in work in their own communities. These testimonials shed light on the unique practices and approaches of IMs and the way in which they bring their relationships of influence, and socio-cultural attributes to bear on the contexts in which they work. These testimonials can be used to reflect in greater depth on the ways IMs in your own settings are carrying out their work.

In the Bosnian city of Jajce, known for ethnic segregation in primary schools, a group of high school students started an uprising after a local city council decided to segregate an ethnically mixed school. As someone who has gone through segregated education in the same city, I was active in a local NGO dealing with human right violations and youth issues, so I decided to act as a bridge between the students, politicians, religious communities and the media. It is interesting that due relatively negative war connotations of the word "mediator", **I didn't use the term "insider mediator", but I used the techniques and methods of insider mediators.** If I had presented myself as an "(insider) mediator" to the mayor of the city, I would have been excluded from the process. Local, but also state media (when the case reached national attention) have given strong support to the students and put pressure on the politicians. Just like media, Islamic Religious Community as well as Catholic Youth Organization have strongly opposed planned segregation, leaving politicians alone on the opposite side of the public discourse. That kind of support played into my insider mediation role.

Testimony from an Insider Mediator in Jajce, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the indigenous community of Raya, members of the Wampusirpi Conflict Resolution Committee were able to resolve a land conflict through dialogue: "We moved to the disputed site where the parties to the conflict arrived, some with weapons. The first condition we established to initiate the dialogue was that they lowered and left the rifles in another place. After having overcome this impasse, **we began the dialogue emphasizing that each of the parties were Miskitus**, besides being members of a single family. Little by little the conditions were created that allowed us to know the needs of each party and proceed to distribute the plot of land according to the established agreements. At dusk we returned in peace to our community."

One stakeholder maintained that while there have been divisions resulting from the current crises, which have strained the social fabric, the community dialogue approach was successful in stopping further divisions among local communities. He stressed that "IMs played key role in mapping out local conflicts and leading the dialogue processes. This could have never been achieved if IMs were not properly trained and coached by Search trainers". He further added "The advantages of the community dialogue approach are that it encompasses all, excludes none, engages local stakeholders and local authorities in a peaceful constructive discussion around local issues of need to all. The main role that we should all be proud of is **that dialogue is no longer an abstract concept** but rather a means that we in the local authority as well as local communities feel is effective to resolve issues and conflicts". Referring to women insider mediators, the stakeholder said, "Women IMs have played an important role in promoting awareness among women to be part of the process, engage in dialogue and exercise pressure on men to reach agreements."

The ancestral authorities of Cotzal, (*Alcaldía Indígena de Cotzal*), were supported through training and dialogue accompaniment, and is one of the main stakeholders in the consultation processes. Ancestral authorities shared their views and comment on this support: "This initiative is important because it strengthens our capacities as representatives of indigenous peoples …it gives us the opportunity to better undertake, comply and **exercise our role towards the communities**…This initiative promotes dialogue as a mean to prevent conflict escalation and violence".

Political peace processes are complex and demand dedicated time and patience. They require a deep knowledge and appreciation of the local situation and political dynamics. It is important for the insider mediator to manage information with sensitivity and confidentiality in order to protect the peace process and gain the trust and confidence of the parties. With the escalating tensions around elections in African countries, there is an increased need for mediation at all levels of society to resolve potential triggers of conflict. This calls for **demystifying mediation** so that it can take place at community level among ordinary people as well as at the highest level of political leadership.

As a member of the Women in Faith (WIF), I have learnt a lot from the Public Affairs Committee about insider mediation. Before joining this group, I thought my role as a woman in the church was just to sit down and listen to men, be a member of the women's association where our most active place is a funeral or a wedding and not any other active role. My life changed when I was selected to be a member of the Women in Faith, that was when I realized that I have a big role to play in the church and the nation. I used to think that peace building was an issue for men to handle. After becoming a member of the WIF and insider mediation, I have realized that I have a duty and a role to play in peace building. PAC has been very helpful and supportive. Since our trainings, we have been followed up, sometimes with phone calls and we are also involved in different dialogues and advocacies. We get training materials to use in our respective areas. We are also tasked with training our friends in our respective areas. In my community, I have women that I am working with and they also give me support. We have been able to intervene in land issue and **speak out when fellow women are denied their rights**.

Testimony from a member of Women in Faith, Malawi, provided by UNDP.

EU and UN partnership on conflict prevention

2011 – 2014
Equipping National and Local Actors in Internal Conflict Management Processes with Skills for Dialogue and Constructive Negotiation

Phase 2 2015-2018
Building national capacities for conflict prevention 2015-2018 (second phase)

MAURITANIA
Insider mediation successfully utilized to draw the country's first national strategy for enhancing social cohesion through a process of national dialogue.

HONDURAS
A multi-stakeholder mechanism for comprehensive dialogue established to help identify and address disputes in the context of, and build consensus on, development priorities and actions in La Moskitia, the country's most under-developed region.

GUATEMALA
Insider mediators support resolution of environmental conflicts involving indigenous people and communities, focusing on land, natural resources, and socio-economic issues, and with the participation of state and private sector entities in the Ixil region.

BOLIVIA
Systematic capabilities developed for the Ministry of Mining to address—through a pool of insider mediators—potentially violent conflicts between miners, private interests, and the government. Insider mediators also utilized to convene a National Peace Congress in 2014.

GUYANA
Guyanese for Peace, a group of senior insider mediators, successfully assisted to defuse tensions and ensure a peaceful transfer of power following the 2015 national election; insider mediation capabilities—systematically developed with UN support—have also been deployed to ensure that the 2006 and 2011 polls have been peaceful.

GHANA
The National Peace Council, an independent statutory body that serves as the institutional fulcrum for "insider mediation" supported to develop a five- year strategy, financial plan, and a resource mobilization strategy drawing on the national budget as well as development partners.

TOGO
Designed National peace architecture centered on the roles of insider mediators drawn from the civic and faith-based sectors; 37 local peace committees are now functional, and the relevant institutional capabilities at the national level are being put in place.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Network of youth successfully established to use insider mediation and social media tools to promote inter-cultural understanding and practical problem solving in an arena where more conventional institutions are currently deadlocked.

YEMEN
A network of insider mediators composed of 120 members successfully developed and deployed in four targeted districts - to resolve conflicts around access to basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health facilities and community infrastructure.

NEPAL
Women leaders effectively capacitated to play concrete and prominent roles as intermediaries in the settlement of potentially violent local conflicts, as well as in addressing disputes at the national level in the course of the negotiation and implementation of the new constitution mandated by the 2006 peace agreement.

CHAD
Mobile networks of insider mediators--"Caravane de la paix"— successfully deployed to assist local peace committees with the resolution of local disputes.

THE MALDIVES
A national network of youth as mobilizers and defenders of human rights, and serving as "insider mediators" between their communities and the national political and religious leadership on disputes pertaining to human rights, faith-based concerns and policies, and political participation.

TIMOR LESTE
insider mediation capabilities have been consolidated into a national network for local level early-warning-and-response.

MALAWI
The Public Affairs Committee successfully assisted to ensure a peaceful poll and a transition during national elections in 2014 ; thereafter, a policy was developed for a national peace architecture and is being implemented, and a peacebuilding network has been established for women in faith-based organizations.

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