

Merging Customary and Facilitative Mediation

The Wise Counsel Mediation Approach in Ethiopia

Background

Ethiopia is characterized by a high diversity of ethnic groups with different lifestyles, traditions and languages. Their struggles over scarce material and natural resources, borders within and between regions and communities as well as the quest for political participation often spark violent conflicts. Other factors that contribute to conflicts are population growth, lack of good governance and lack of public service delivery. There are many regional hot-spots where disputes over land use rights and over access to water and grazing land are common.

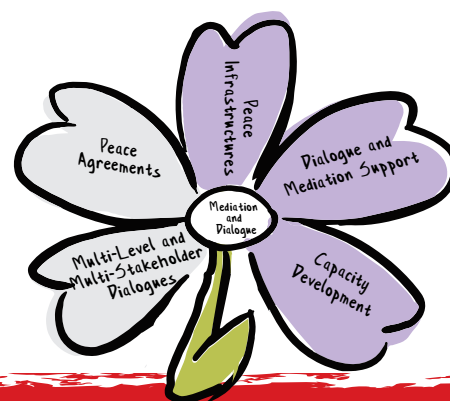
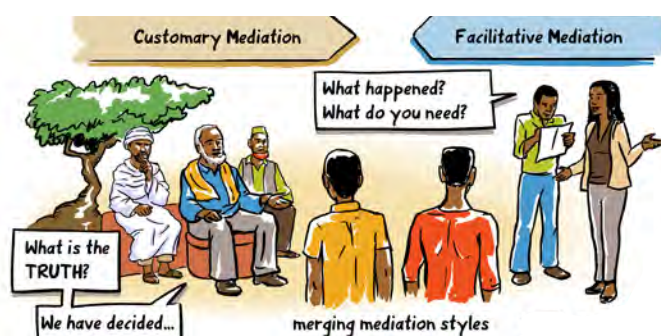
Programme

Since 2008, the Civil Peace Service (CPS) Ethiopia supports the development of conflict transformation and prevention capacities at the national, regional and local levels. National partners are the House of Federation and the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs. In the Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP)

Programme	Civil Peace Service Ethiopia
Country	Ethiopia
Donor	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partner organisations	House of Federation, Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs, Oromia Bureau for Administration and Security, Oromia Pastoralist Association, SNNPRS Security and Administration Bureau, Resource Center for Civil Society Associations.
Duration	2008 – 2017 2018: Start of a new dialogue programme

regional states CPS cooperates with three state and two civil society organisations to

- facilitate networking to build trust between government institutions and NGOs and promote peaceful dialogue
- strengthen capacities by merging customary conflict resolution mechanisms with the facilitative mediation approach.



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boundary issues



acce.

Customary Mediation

Facilitative Mediation



What happened?
What do you need?



merging mediation styles

peace

Active listening



Empowerment



Win / Win







Approach

In rural Ethiopia customary forms of mediation involving elders (men) are often more commonplace and effective than the judicial system. The goal of mediation is to reconcile the conflict parties with each other and to restore broken relationships. Elders listen to both sides and then suggest solutions which are almost always accepted by the parties. Between 2009 and 2013 CPS in cooperation with its partner organisation, the House of Federation (HoF-upper house of Ethiopian parliament), engaged German trainers from Inmedio to conduct a series of mediation workshops. The training provided the participants from state and non-state partner organisations as well as elders the opportunity to exchange experiences and build relationships. It became a breeding ground for merging customary and facilitative models into Wise Counsel Mediation. Instead of imposing solutions on the parties participants came to see the value of delving deeper into understanding conflicts by actively listening to the needs, interests and feelings of all parties, as well as empowering them to find their own solutions as is the practice in facilitative media-

tion. The Shingelina Manual – published by CPS and HoF in English in 2013, in Amharic in 2014 and in Afan Oromo in 2017 – set a benchmark in that it values and builds on customary wisdom and practice while at the same time showing how parties can play a more active role in the conflict resolution process. The narrow restrictions to NGOs in the field of peacebuilding set down in the Charities and Societies Proclamation 621 prevented the foundation of a formal network, but the Wise Counsel Mediators continue to meet informally in order to exchange experiences conducting mediation and training.

Success factors

- high-quality training and follow-up
- local ownership of the process by state and non-state actors
- application of the approach to the policy level.

In order to replicate the approach, there is a need to learn more about customary mediation mechanisms and to further develop local knowledge and skills via training, application, ToTs, networking and publications.

Video link

Professional Integrated Mediation



www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfX0507fu04

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