



# 10 Years Civil Peace Service in Ethiopia Lessons Learned

Addis Ababa, 2017



Implemented by:





# 10 YEARS CIVIL PEACE SERVICE IN ETHIOPIA LESSONS LEARNED

ADDIS ABABA, 2017

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

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# Abbreviations

CDR	Customary Dispute/Conflict Resolution
CON	Council of Nationalities
CPS	Civil Peace Service
DNH	Do No Harm
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
HOF	House of Federation
IPA	International Peace Advisor
LPC	Local Peace Committee
MoFPDA	Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs
NCT	Non-violent Communication
NPE	National Peace Expert
NVT	Non-violent Conflict Transformation
OBAS	Oromia Bureau of Administration and Security
OPA	Oromia Pastoralist Association
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
RCCSGA	Resource Center for Civil Society Groups Association
SAB	Security and Administration Bureau of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State
SNNPRS	Resource Center for Civil Society Groups Association
SOP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State
WCM	Wise Counsel Mediation

# Foreword

Dear Readers,

The GIZ Civil Peace Service (CPS) conflict transformation programme has now been active for ten years (2007–2017). Its aim is to strengthen the capacities of national, regional and local actors for the development of national peace mechanisms and conflict transformation strategies in order to systematically and sustainably address existing and arising conflicts in Ethiopia. With a focus on the regional states of Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS), the CPS currently works with the:

- House of Federation and the Ministry of Federal Affairs now renamed as the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs at the federal level
- Council of Nationalities of the SNNPRS, the Oromia Bureau of Administration and Security, and the SNNPRS Security and Administration Bureau at the regional level
- Oromia Pastoralist Association and the Resource Center for Civil Society Groups Association at the local level

CPS has engaged in capacity building, mainly by seconding both national and international experts to the partner organizations.

Over the past ten years of its implementation, the programme gained a lot of experience in different focus areas of peacebuilding, of which the most prominent areas are: capacity building, mediation, the facilitation of peace dialogues, the support of local peace committees and the development of a conflict resolution strategy for the SNNP Regional State.

We warmly invite you to share in this interesting experience. That is why we have decided to produce this lessons learned publication, presenting what our partners and CPS consider to be the most important and interesting lessons learned in our programme. We are convinced that they are not only important for the next CPS Programme in Ethiopia but also for other peacebuilding projects in other contexts and for peace practitioners in general.

I wish you a pleasant and inspiring reading.

Dagmar Blickwede  
GIZ CPS Programme Coordinator

# Acknowledgements

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Abdela Kedir, Benjamin Bräuer, Bizuneh Assefa, Doris Pfeiffer-Götze, Erik Burtchen, Gemechu Berhanu, Dr. Jamie Walker, Kussia Bekele, Nega Gerbaba, Nicole Tejiwe, Sisay Gobessa, Yirgalem Belay, Yitbarek Tsige.

The extensive knowledge and experience showcased in this lessons learned publication is based on the input and advice of our CPS colleagues as it mainly relies on the capacities and the expertise gained over the last 10 years of the GIZ CPS Programme in Ethiopia by these CPS partner organisations.

We would also like to extend our warm appreciation to our former CPS colleagues who—for sure—also contributed a lot to the knowledge of the programme.

Our appreciation also goes to those colleagues who took care of the many administrative and financial arrangements that made this publication possible.

We would also like to thank the CPS Coordinator, Dagmar Blickwede, who supervised the whole process of this publication and supported the CPS and partner organisations team with her professional experience.

Without the commitment of all these skilful people, this publication would not have been possible.



# Introduction

## The Civil Peace Service (CPS) Worldwide

The Civil Peace Service (CPS) is a programme aimed at preventing violence and promoting peace in crisis zones and conflict regions. It aims to build a world in which conflicts are resolved without resorting to violence. Nine German peace and development organisations run the CPS, together with local partners. CPS is funded by the German Government. CPS experts support people on the ground in their commitment to dialogue, human rights and peace on a long-term basis. Currently, more than 300 international CPS experts are active in 44 countries.

## The Civil Peace Service (CPS) Programme in Ethiopia

The Civil Peace Service (CPS) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) started its activities in Ethiopia in 2007. As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and is one of the organisations running CPS.

Ethiopia is the second most populated country in Africa with close to 100 million people and more than 80 ethnic groups. Similarly to other countries in the region, Ethiopia is facing challenges such as climate change, scarce resources, border demarcation issues and, in some cases, weak local governance structures. In the context of the great diversity of ethnic groups, these challenges can cause inter-group conflicts that sometimes escalate into violence.

The overall goal of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) Programme Ethiopia is, therefore, to contribute to the systematic and sustainable transformation of conflicts and thereby reduce the overall occurrence of violence in Ethiopia together with its partner organisations.

The programme engages in capacity building activities in conflict transformation and prevention, in close cooperation with its state and non-state partners at the federal, regional and local levels. In this endeavour, CPS seconds international personnel (International Peace Advisors, IPA) and national personnel (National Peace Experts, NPE) to its partner organisations. In addition to this, a pool of national and international peace experts, covering different topics, provide on-demand advice to the partner organisations in the CPS office in Addis Ababa.

The following are examples of the capacity building activities which the GIZ CPS Programme has implemented:

- Training of partner organisations and stakeholders in non-violent conflict transformation, e.g., conflict analysis, mediation, non-violent communication (NVC), conflict-sensitive planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) as well as conflict sensitive project management/Do No Harm.
- Supporting the partner organisations in the development and implementation of conflict prevention and transformation strategies.
- Facilitating peace radio broadcasts to foster a culture of peace and conflict prevention.
- Combining 'Western' and traditional approaches of mediation and conflict transformation.
- Fostering networks among stakeholders and key actors to co-ordinate peacebuilding.
- Strengthening local capacities for peace and establishing structures for Early Warning and Early Response (EWER)<sup>1</sup>.
- Facilitating further activities in the field of peacebuilding.

<sup>1</sup> Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) is: 'the systematic collection and analysis of information, coming from areas of crisis or potential crisis, for the purpose of anticipating the escalation of violent conflict, developing strategic responses to these crises in a timely manner and presenting preventive or mitigating options to critical actors for the purpose of decision making'; in: IGAD/Inwent (2008): 'Cewarn Training Manual. Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (CPMR); on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). page 101.

## The CPS Partner Organisations<sup>2</sup>

### The Federal Level



House of Federation (HoF)<sup>3</sup>



Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs (MoFPDA)

### The Regional Level



Council of Nationalities (CoN), SNNPRS



Oromia Bureau for Administration and Security (OBAS)



SNNPRS Security and Administration Bureau (SAB)

### The Local Level



Oromia Pastoralist Association (OPA)

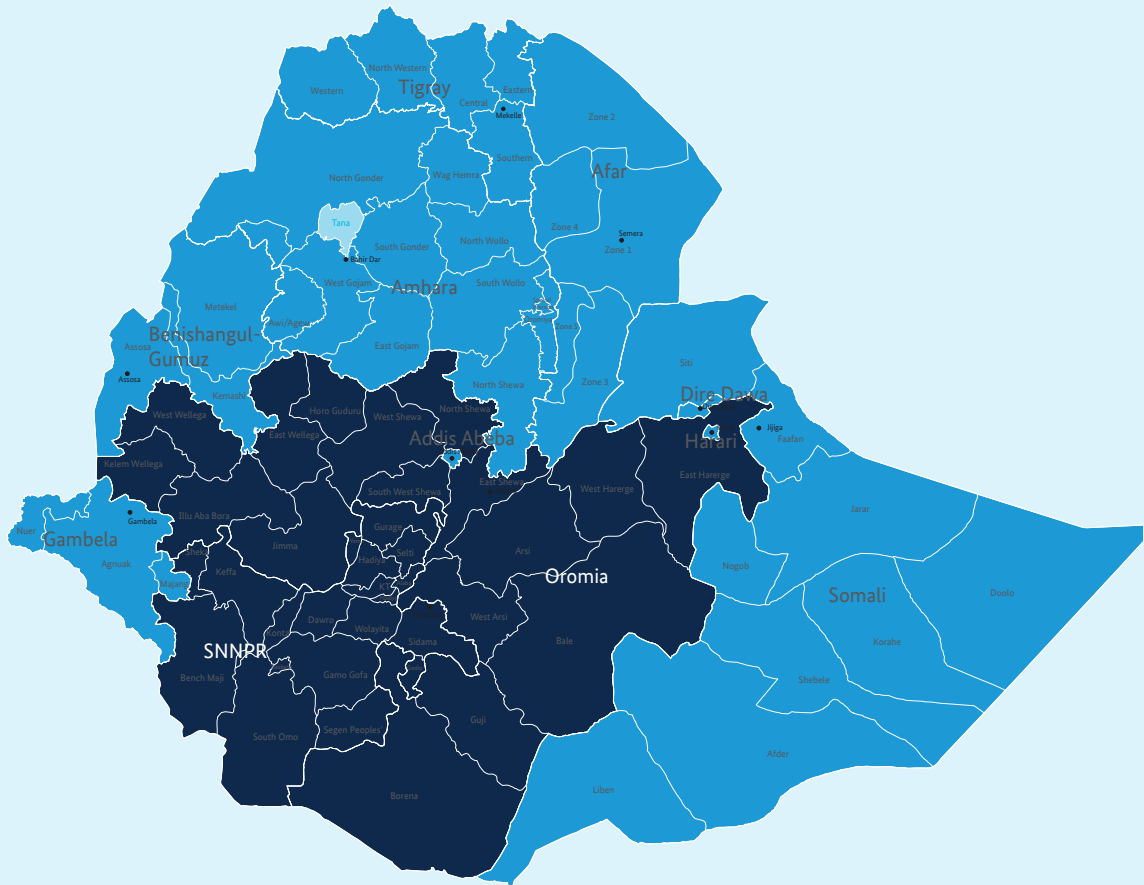


Resource Centre for Civil Society Groups Association (RCCSGA)

<sup>2</sup> Partner organisations of the 3rd phase of the programme (2014–2017).

<sup>3</sup> The main political partner

The programme mainly operates in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS).



(© GIZ CPS ET)

## THE ELABORATION PROCESS of LESSONS LEARNED

This publication is a compilation of the most important lessons learned in the focus areas of the CPS Programme in Ethiopia over the last 10 years of its implementation with a focus on the final 4 years (3rd Programme Phase: 2014-2017).

### Definition Lessons Learned

Lessons learned are experiences distilled from a project or programme. These experiences are relevant for future projects/programmes and should be actively taken into account for the planning of new activities. The reflection on and dissemination of lessons learned is a very important learning process and should be an integral part of every project/programme management cycle.

Since its start in 2007 and throughout its implementation, the Civil Peace Service Programme in Ethiopia has collected and reflected on lessons learned. The programme's monitoring and reporting system regularly asked the CPS team and the CPS partner organisations for input regarding challenges faced on different levels, concerning different topics and how they were able to tackle them in a successful way—or not. In addition to this, the national and international CPS experts in the partner organisations and the advisors from the expert pool, regularly discussed and documented lessons learned in the quarterly Professional Groups Meetings. Challenges and recommendations were also discussed openly in annual planning workshops with the partner organisations. Under the supervision of the CPS coordinator, the GIZ CPS Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Team collected all lessons learned and structured them according to different topics.

As part of the exit of the 3rd Phase of the CPS programme (2014–2017), the programme decided to produce this lessons learned publication with the aim of presenting the most important and interesting learning experiences and lessons learned from the ten years of the programme in a structured and attractive way, with a special focus on the III. Programme Phase. This publication should serve as a pool of ideas for the new CPS programme starting in 2018, but also as a guide for peacebuilding projects and programmes in other contexts.

For this purpose, the CPS PME team conducted interviews with middle and high-level officials from all seven partner organisations of the 3rd Phase in 2017, in order to identify challenges, recommendations and lessons learned.

In addition, lessons learned and evaluation workshops were conducted with the peace expert teams (including IPAs and NPEs) of every partner organisation. Based on these reflection processes, the CPS team, together with its partner organisations, decided to choose five main topics which they considered as most important for the programme and also relevant for future programme phases.

## The main topics chosen for the lessons learned reflection:

- Capacity Building
- Mediation and Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM)
- Inter-group Peace Dialogues
- Local Peace Committees (LPCs)
- The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy of SNNPRS

In the following document, the CPS PME team elaborates the most important lessons learned for the five different topics which were commented on by the CPS team and the IPAs and NPEs in the partner organisations.

As a result, this publication is organized in the following way: each chapter starts with a short introduction about the main activities and achievements of the CPS Programme and its partner organisation in the specific field. The context of the activities will be presented in brief. After that, the most important lessons learned will be presented, accompanied by general recommendations. Additionally, practical questions and answers help identify possible solutions to specific challenges faced in the field.



Lessons Learnt Workshop with CON (@ GIZ CPS ET)



Lessons Learnt Workshop with OPA (@ GIZ CPS ET)





# Capacity Building

## Lessons Learned

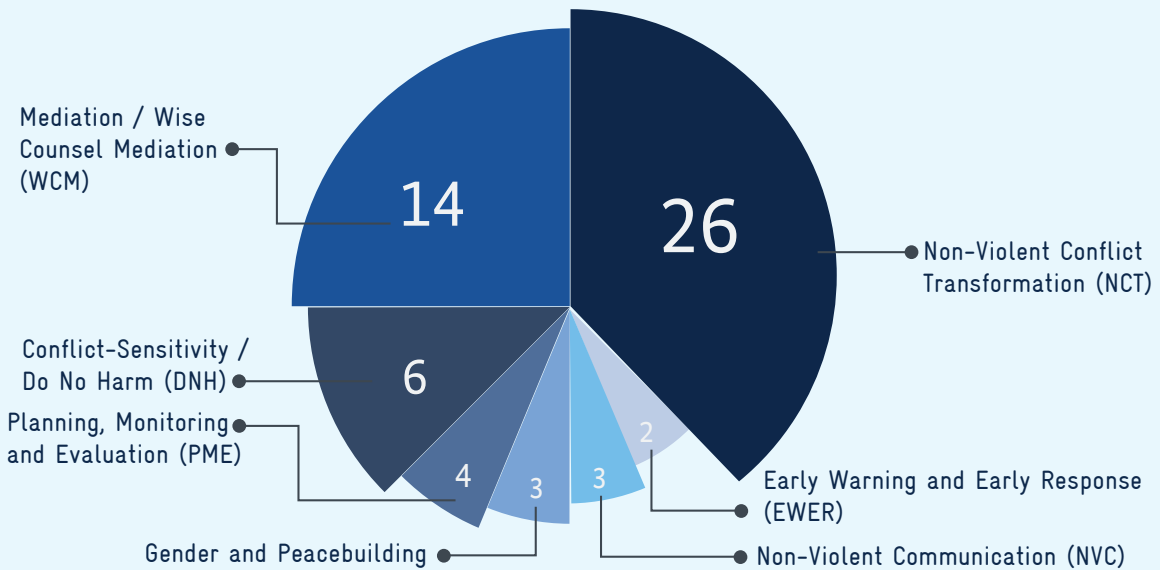
*During a training exercise © GIZ CPS ET*

## Capacity Building of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) Programme in Ethiopia

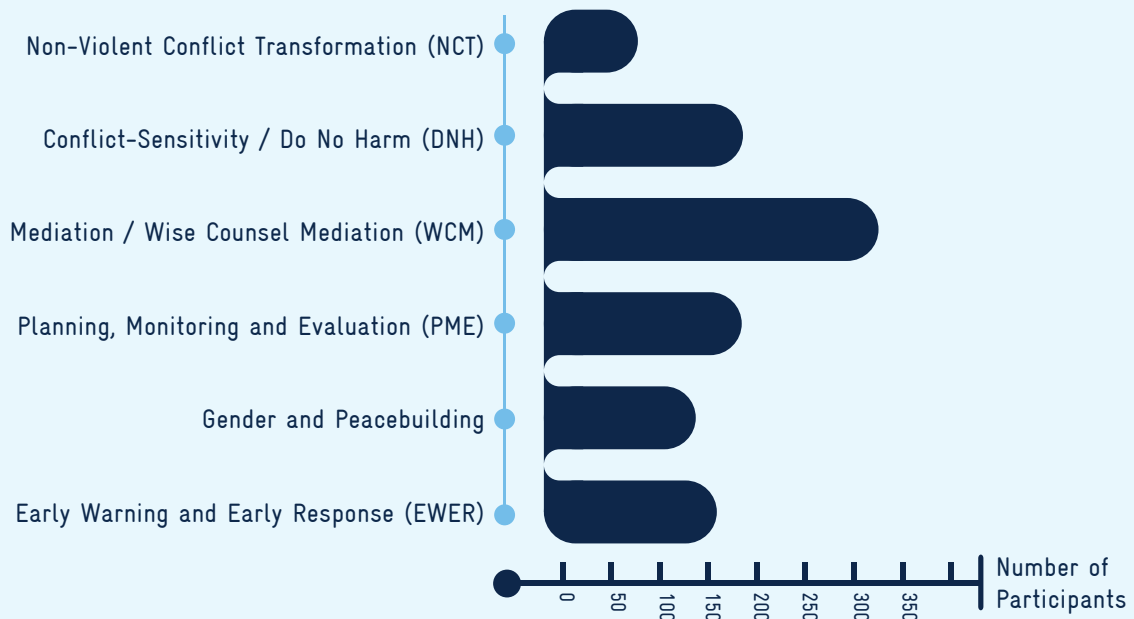
One of the main approaches of the GIZ Civil Peace Service (CPS) programme in Ethiopia is the development of the capacities of its seven partner organisations (HoF, MoFPDA, OPA, OBAS, SAB, CoN, RCCSGA) in different topics of peacebuilding and non-violent conflict transformation.

Since its inception in Ethiopia in 2007, the CPS programme has reached from 4000 to 4500 trainees. In the 3rd Programme Phase (2014–2017) alone, CPS Ethiopia trained more than 1500 men and women in a variety of topics, ranging from conflict analysis to non-violent communication, and covering mediation, PME (planning, monitoring and evaluation), Early Warning and Early Response (EWER), gender and peacebuilding, conflict-sensitivity/Do No Harm (DNH) as well as non-violent conflict transformation (NCT) in general.

### Topics of capacity building trainings (3rd Programme Phase 2014-2017)



### Number of trainees in the different topics (3rd Programme Phase 2014-2017)





## General recommendations regarding trainings and workshops

- One should allocate at least two days for a broad topic such as non-violent conflict transformation (NCT), mediation, conflict sensitivity/Do No Harm (DNH) or Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) in order to have the time necessary for in-depth discussions and practical exercises.
  - It is important to consider the national or local context and to provide examples from the respective context. This will help the participants understand their own cases and challenges better.
  - Very often, it is also useful to reflect on comparable examples from international contexts (preferably but not necessarily from similar cultural and political settings). Such examples can inspire participants to be creative and to use new ideas and also show them that solutions that have been implemented elsewhere before can be found.
  - One should not forget thematic and normative aspects of peacebuilding/conflict transformation while reflecting on more technical topics such as PME (Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation) or project management. For example, it is not only about how one can plan, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding projects/policies, but also about how one can design and adjust peacebuilding activities, outcomes and impact goals, so that they serve the needs and interests of the target groups (and how discrimination and exclusion can be avoided).
  - International advisors can help to motivate participants and can introduce new and different approaches and tools ('international benchmarks'). They can also act as an impartial third party as they have a more 'neutral' view of these conflicts.
  - Sometimes, it is necessary to introduce or to reflect on the concept of constructive feedback before starting sensitive group discussions.
  - Enacting and dramatizing conflict situations in role plays can be helpful to create more realistic conflict situations and can help to understand and express feelings. This cannot be achieved only by providing theoretical input.
  - Creating positive feelings and emotions during the training helps the participants to recall the contents and lessons learned during the training and workshop.
  - In peacebuilding trainings, it proved useful for participants to reflect on the 'benefits'/destruction of violent conflict versus the benefits of peace ('peace dividend'). Cultural diversity should also be addressed (e.g., in the form of inputs and exercises regarding intercultural communication).
-



CPS IPA Doris Pfeiffer-Götze presents a training exercise (@ GIZ CPS ET)



CPS NPE Nega Gerbaba is presenting an exercise (@ GIZ CPS ET)



Discussion during a capacity building workshop (@ GIZ CPS ET)



Experience sharing with CPS NPE Yitbarek Tsige (@ GIZ CPS ET)

## Capacity Building and Gender

In its 3rd Phase, the programme reached an average of 30 percent female participation in its trainings and workshops. In this phase, there were also trainings reserved to female participants, on the topics of ‘women in peacebuilding’ or mediation. In the local context and in comparison to other development programmes, this is a good result.

### How can one get women on board for trainings and workshops? How can one increase women participation?

Challenge: attention should be given to the issue of how women participants can be more involved in trainings and workshops, both in terms of numbers and in terms of ensuring their active participation when they are in the minority (empowerment).

#### Recommendations:

- One can involve women associations, women federations and women leagues but also gender officers in ministries, departments and organisations, in order to have their support on this issue.
- One can include women who are influential in trainings and workshops but also in peacebuilding in general.
- One can create awareness about gender as well as women’s role and participation in peacebuilding among decision-makers and key agents for change.
- In Ethiopia, there are child and women affairs offices from the regional down to the Woreda<sup>4</sup> and Zonal<sup>5</sup> levels. They can provide support and advice in regard to gender issues.
- Working with an opposite-sex trainer team demonstrates gender equality. Participants can also express gender-specific issues with his/her gender counterpart.

## Practical questions and recommendations

### Preparation and organisation of trainings and workshops

#### How can one achieve the greatest impact from a capacity building workshop for partner organisations (PO)?

- The workshop should include key persons of the partner organisations (POs) in terms of expertise and in terms of management (experts and decision-makers). Otherwise, the output of the workshop might not be accepted by the POs as a whole in a systematic way. The ‘backing’ of the decision-makers and key agents for change is needed.

<sup>4</sup>A ‘Woreda’ (district) is the second smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia and is composed of several municipalities or ‘Kebeles’.

<sup>5</sup>A ‘Zone’ is the administrative unit in Ethiopia between the Regional State and the ‘Woreda’ level.

### Who and how many participants should be invited for trainings and workshops?

- One should always try to include local participants in trainings and workshops. They are important in order to understand the local and cultural context and the dynamics at the grassroots level. They are also needed to create local ownership.
- In the case that the training/workshop is reflecting on complex and ambitious topics, a maximum number of around 20 participants should attend this sort of training or workshop (e.g., mediation trainings).
- In order to 'spread knowledge', one should invite people with different backgrounds. In order to 'deepen knowledge', one should invite people who have the relevant topical backgrounds.

### How can the needs and expectations of training/workshop participants be identified the best?

- In order to identify the needs and expectations of the participants, the trainer can contact the participants before the training/workshop by email or by phone. However, one should keep in mind that this can be very time-consuming.
- Short evaluations at the end of each training day can help to plan the topics of the next training day based on an identification of the needs and expectations of the participants.

### How can one avoid participants not showing up for the training or workshop?

- Trainers can make phone calls or organize meetings before the training or workshop in order to confirm participation (however, this can be time-consuming).
- Trainings which involve government officials and staff should be conducted outside of their areas of residence in order to avoid them being called back to their workplace for urgent tasks. However, one should be aware that this increases the costs for the trainings/workshop.
- One can set-up a waiting list for participants. If participants cancel their participation or do not show up, waiting list candidates can be called upon. This can ensure that a minimum number of participants join the training or workshop.

### How can one avoid trainings/activities not being carried out or being disturbed due to outbreaks of conflicts, or violence and insecurity?

- One should consider sensible periods and contexts where conflicts may happen or might re-escalate (e.g., election periods) while planning trainings and activities.
- One should also consider sowing, planting and harvesting times during which local farming participants may not have time to join trainings or workshops.



Experience sharing during a training with CPS IPA Nicole Tejiwe (@ GIZ CPS ET)

## Contents and design of workshops

What are important capacity building topics for peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Ethiopia?

### Topics

- Conflict analysis
- Non-violent conflict transformation (NCT)
- Mediation and Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM)
- Early Warning and Early Response (EWER)
- Culture of Peace/Harmful traditional practices
- Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm (DNH)
- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)
- Gender/Youth and peacebuilding
- Federalism (when working at the regional level)
- Sustainable Development (Conflict and Development)

Which language(s) should be used in trainings or workshop?

- Trainings and workshops should be given in the local language or mother tongue (depending on the target group).
- If input from an international trainer is needed, the input should be translated into the local language or mother tongue. It is especially important that discussions, written or oral feedback questions and answers should be in the local language or mother tongue.
- It is useful to let participants discuss issues in working groups in their own languages.

How can one make the trainings or workshops interesting for the participants?

- Trainers should deploy a 'good mix' of professional input, exercises and participative/interactive training methods.
  - Trainers should listen to the participants and should give them the time they need to understand the contents, the methods and exercises and should let participants share their experiences.
  - Trainers should appreciate the input of participants and give them recognition and acknowledgement. They should not be reluctant to ask the participants questions in order to understand their needs and expectations, and in order to benefit from their professional experience.
  - A trainer should include example cases in a training or workshop. This will enable participants to understand the topics/tools better and adapt them to their context. It will also make the training more attractive.
  - A trainer should also aim to use a mixture of visualization methods. PowerPoint presentations, flipcharts and pin boards, can be used alternately.
-

### How can one foster ownership? How can one motivate participants to join the training and to be active in the training?

- It is always important to include local experts as facilitators in the training—when possible—in order to create ownership and to transfer the knowledge and skills in a sustainable way. It may be also better for the understanding of the participants (e.g., ‘language barrier’).
- One should give the trainees the feeling that they ‘have a stake’ in the training. Trainees should feel a part of the training. In order to achieve this, the trainer can ask trainees to share their own experiences or even to provide their own input on specific topics. For this purpose, participants can be asked about possible contributions for the training by email or phone before the training starts.

### Which cases and examples should be chosen for the trainings and workshops?

- Feedback of participants clearly shows that they prefer working and reflecting on their own cases and examples. However, they are also very eager to hear from comparable cases from other contexts and countries.

### What are good ways to deal with heterogeneity within groups in trainings or workshops?

- This kind of diversity can be viewed as a risk, but it can also be seen as an opportunity. The following points should be considered in order to manage this type of challenge in a constructive manner:
  - In the best case scenario, the participants will have the opportunity to participate in their local language or, when possible, may agree on a common language. This avoids the perception that participants are discriminated against on the basis of their language/group affiliation. This may also prevent misunderstandings that can lead to friction between the participants.
  - Another approach is to have ethnically mixed (exercise) groups in the training. This can foster mutual understanding, but may also sometimes result in animosity between the participants.
  - It might be also useful to provide space for each (identity-based) group to raise their issues and concerns during the training. However, discussions about current conflicts between the groups may lead to discord and should be approached very carefully. One could also use comparable case studies so that the real conflict is not addressed directly.

### How can one deal with emotional and heated discussions or arguments between participants from different ethnic groups in trainings/workshops?

- A trainer or facilitator should have a basic knowledge of the participants’ political contexts and cultures in order to pre-empt emotional discussions centred on political issues.

### How can one consolidate the knowledge and skills of training participants?

- The handing over of training materials is very important. Participants can adapt the material to their local context (especially when they are trainers themselves).
  - If resources are available, a trainer (team) could conduct training follow-ups in order to coach participants in the application of competencies and tools.
  - One can also foster cooperation among the participants themselves and encourage them to form peer learning groups. This is a good solution when resources are limited.
-

### How can one link theory and practical work in trainings/workshops?

- Exercises in trainings and workshops should use examples and cases from the participants in order to link theoretical knowledge and the use of tools to the reality and context on the ground. In the best case scenario, participants will be able to reflect upon and plan interventions they plan to implement in the future.

### How much input and how much discussion should take place in a training or workshop?

- In most cases, it is better to keep the topical and professional input small in order to have more time to discuss and reflect on the input.

### How can one deal with the challenge of the 'language barrier' in trainings or workshops?

- One has to differentiate between target groups. In trainings or workshops for high officials or department experts, English can be used as a working language. In trainings or workshops for local experts at the Zonal, Woreda and Kebele<sup>6</sup> levels, inputs in English should be translated. In the best case scenario, the training or workshop will be conducted in the local language and the international experts limit themselves to advising the trainers and facilitators.
- If trainers do not have local language skills, they can let participants elaborate and discuss topics in small groups in their own language. The presentation of results can then be in the local language or in English.
- To the extent possible, presentations and PowerPoints should be presented in the local language. If this is not possible, interpretation from English into the local language should be available.

### How can one best translate training materials?

- A native speaker should translate the text. When this is not possible, a native speaker should edit the translated text.
- It is also important that the translator be knowledgeable about the materials (e.g., peacebuilding) or that a native speaker aware of the specific topics be editing the translated text.

## Follow-up and dissemination of knowledge

### What is the best way to follow-up trainings or workshops?

- After each training or workshop, a serious and in-depth review should be conducted, first by the trainers themselves, then by the process owner(s) and other stakeholders.
- One should interview participants (after 3–12 months) by email, phone or face to face, asking if tools and approaches from the training or workshop have been used and implemented.
- One can also follow-up on planned trainings, project and activities of participants in order to evaluate the impact of the training or workshop on the work of the participants.

<sup>6</sup>A 'Kebele' is the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia. It is comparable to a municipality.



### How can one cascade down skills and knowledge from the federal to the regional and local levels (Zonal, Woreda and Kebele)?

- One should use the existing structures of the relevant partner institutions and stakeholders. It is also important to invite people that are able and have the mandate (from their organisation) to cascade the knowledge to other levels. For example, the federal level can work with the regional presidential offices, the regional councils and the Security and Administration Bureaus (SABs) of the regions by inviting participants from these three institutions (e.g., senior experts in peacebuilding and line managers).
- Based on experience, one should train at least two resource persons/experts from each region.
- Trainings and workshops with these participants should have the function of a training of trainers (TOT) so that the trainees can train actors at the local level after the training.
- The trainees can contextualize the topics of the training and the training manual to their respective local contexts.
- The trainees and the regional institutions are then responsible for cascading the skills and knowledge down to the local (Zonal, Woreda and Kebele) levels.

### How can one be certain that the local partners are fully capacitated and that they will be able to cascade down the knowledge they have gained?

- One should use existing structures and existing links to the Security and Administration Bureau (SAB) branches at Zonal and Woreda levels (and to the Kebele managers).
  - One should consider the following potential participants in these trainings: line managers, peace experts, Elders from customary institutions, the actors of the Local Peace Committees (LPCs), line departments for women and youth, and active peace activists.
- In order to make actors responsible for cascading down their knowledge, and in order to carry-out a follow-up, one can ask the trainees or their institutions for reports about their 'cascading activities'.

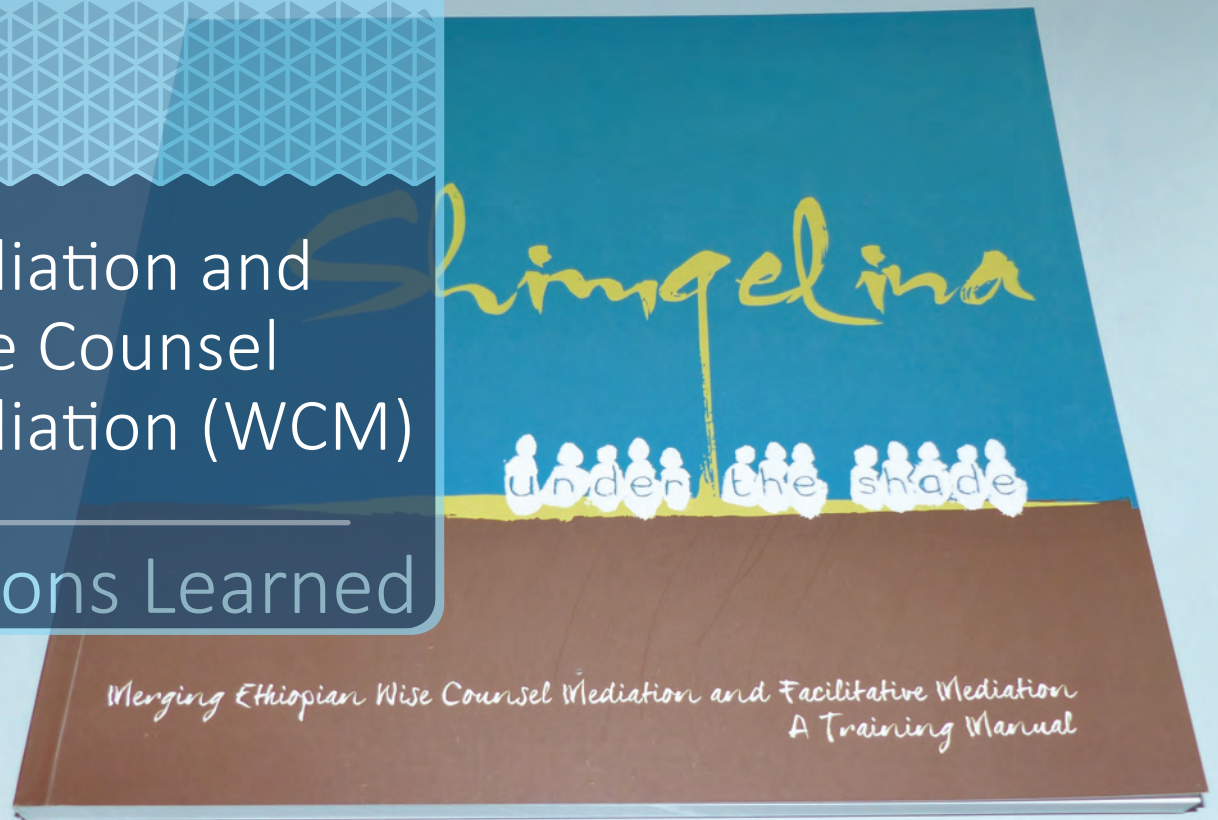
### How can one foster experience sharing networks that will sustain cooperation after the training and workshop?

- One can form (random) groups of practice that share experience and work together on an exercise or project. This can bridge gaps in trust and cooperation and may increase the cohesion of formal and informal networks which can be sustained after the training or workshop ends.
-



# Mediation and Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM)

## Lessons Learned



The cover of the 'Shimgelina Manual'<sup>9</sup> (© GIZ CPS ET).

## The CPS Programme Activities and Outcomes in the Field of Mediation

In rural Ethiopia, customary forms of dispute/conflict resolution and mediation involving Elders are often more commonplace and even more effective than the judicial system. The goal of mediation is to reconcile the conflicting parties with each other and to restore broken relationships. Elders listen to both sides before suggesting solutions which are in most cases accepted by the parties. Between 2009 and 2013, CPS, in cooperation with its partner organisation, the House of Federation (HoF)<sup>7</sup>, recruited German trainers from inmedio Berlin<sup>8</sup> to conduct a series of mediation workshops and trainings. These activities 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 fertile platform for merging customary and facilitative models into what became the Wise Counsel Mediation approach. Instead of imposing solutions on the parties, participants came to see the value of acquiring a deeper understanding of 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 mediation). As a result of the workshops, the Shimgelina Manual—published by CPS and the CPS partner, the HoF, in English, in 2013, and in Amharic, in 2014—set a benchmark that is recognised by stakeholders, as it builds on customary wisdom and practice, while also demonstrating how the parties can play a more active role in the conflict resolution process.

<sup>7</sup>The second chamber of the Ethiopian parliament representing the 'nations' and 'nationalities' of the Ethiopian regions.

<sup>8</sup>Inmedio Berlin, Germany (<https://www.inmedio.de/en>, accessed on 01.10.2017)

<sup>9</sup>GIZ - Ziviler Friedensdienst (2013): 'Shimgelina. Under the Shade', published by House of Federation, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

# Customary Dispute/Conflict Resolution and Mediation in Ethiopia

In most African countries, mechanisms of customary dispute/conflict resolution (CDR) are the dominant type of conflict management. Most of these forms of CDR tend to be some form of arbitration<sup>10</sup> and, less often, some kind of facilitative mediation.<sup>11</sup> Generally, decision-making by notable representatives from the community and compensation to the wronged party constitute the basis of the process.

There are also many different forms of customary conflict resolution which include mediation approaches in Ethiopia. They reflect the diversity and wide variety of cultural and ethnic groups in the country. There are many similarities among Ethiopian forms of CDR, especially those used in the same, or adjacent, areas. However, sometimes there can also be minor, but very crucial differences. Usually, traditional leaders decide which process is to be applied on a case by case basis.

Mediation has different names among different ethnic groups and regions: for example, 'Jarsumma' in Oromia, 'Mada' in Afar and 'Shimgelina', in the Amhara Region. CDR and mediation have contributed a lot to the peaceful resolution of (violent) conflicts.

Also, in Ethiopia, forms of CDR are usually very close to what 'Westerners'<sup>12</sup> refer to as arbitration, in which the Elders make the decisions for the conflicting parties. However, in many cases, Elders generate options only after carefully listening to the motivations of all the conflicting parties. Facilitative mediation elements can also be found in some Ethiopian forms of CDR. An interesting aspect of some forms of CDR in Ethiopia is that suggestions on how the perpetrated 'wrongdoing' will be redressed are made by the perpetrator. The level of compensation as an output of the CDR or mediation process can also depend on the gender of the victim in some areas. One person from a specific area explained that 'when a man's tooth is broken, the punishment is 3.000 birr, whereas when it is a woman's tooth that is broken, it is 300 birr!'

Who will be appointed to facilitate forms of CDR and mediation depends very much on the case and its context (family, neighbourhood, communities, etc.). In the case of community conflicts, one approach is that the two conflicting parties together select Elders who are respected in both communities. These 'ambassadors' will assume the role of cross-cultural 'mediators', who approach both communities and are involved in the decision-making process form.

A major challenge for facilitators during a mediation process are the expectations of the communities. The facilitators, who are generally Elders or well-respected persons, have to uphold moral standards and communal values—even if this means taking sides. They have to explain social sanctions to the perpetrators, and they make a final and binding decision if one or both of the parties cannot agree together on a solution.

The Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) approach that was developed in the CPS Ethiopia programme, merging customary and facilitative methods, is often perceived as very useful by practitioners. It has also been found that new aspects can be adjusted to customary and local methods of conflict resolution. However, a completely new approach is often not readily accepted.

Based on the experience of practitioners, the facilitating mechanisms of CDR or the Wise Counsel Mediation approach can reduce the level of conflict escalation significantly, even if a conflict is not fully 'solved' in the end!

<sup>10</sup> Definition arbitration: 'the process by which the parties to a dispute submit their differences to the judgment of an impartial person or group appointed by mutual consent or statutory provision'. (source: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/arbitration>, accessed on 03.06.2016 03.06.2016)

<sup>11</sup> Definition: 'in facilitative mediation, the mediator structures a process to assist the parties in reaching a mutually agreeable resolution. The mediator asks questions; validates and normalizes parties' points of view; searches for interests underneath the positions taken by parties; and assists the parties in finding and analyzing options for resolution. The facilitative mediator does not make recommendations to the parties, give his or her own advice or opinion as to the outcome of the case, or predict what a court would do in the case. The mediator is in charge of the process, while the parties are in charge of the outcome'. (source: <http://www.mediate.com/articles/zumeta.cfm>, accessed on 03.06.2016)

# Challenges and recommendations in regard to mediation in general and the Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM)<sup>13</sup> in particular

## Who should be included in a mediation process?

- The basic rule should be ‘Inclusion instead of exclusion’. One should not only include the concerned conflicting individuals/groups but in the best case scenario all relevant stakeholders in the conflict environment as well (e.g., the whole community in the case of a community conflict). It is also good to include potential spoilers in the process.
- According to WCM mediators’ experience, it is very important to include religious leaders, as well as women and youth, in community mediation processes:
  - **Youth:** according to empirical evidence, young people—especially the (well) educated youth—very often disagree with the decisions and arguments of traditional Elders, traditional institutions and religious leaders. The youth, sometimes even openly, challenge traditional family structures and traditional authorities. This leads to debates and arguments about traditional vs. modern ways of life. Additionally—according to observation—Elders sometimes tend to favour parents over children in family-based conflicts. This shows that the youth have to be included in mediation processes in a fair way, granting them the opportunity to raise their voices and express their needs. Otherwise, the gap between youth and traditional authorities will grow larger.
  - **Women:** women must not—and can not—be ignored. First of all, they represent ‘half of the population’, and as such, have the constitutional right ‘to participate in every decision’. Although they may not have the same power and rights as men in practice, they very often remain important decision-makers in their communities (e.g., resource management) and should be empowered to actively participate in conflict resolution processes.
  - **Religious leaders:** most of the time, religious leaders play a very important role in their local communities. They are generally well respected and are considered to be trustworthy and legitimate representatives. To include these leaders in a mediation process can help to ensure support for the mediation’s process and outcome..
- In order to make actors responsible for cascading down their knowledge, and in order to carry-out a follow-up, one can ask the trainees or their institutions for reports about their ‘cascading activities’.

## Should facilitative approaches or arbitration be preferred?

- Most people agree that mediation should either try to support the conflicting parties in finding their own solutions (facilitative approach) or that mediators should at the very least—as a minimum standard—take the interests, needs and feelings of the conflicting parties into account.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Westerners’ here are considered to be people from Europe and the United States.

<sup>13</sup> The Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) approach, that was developed in the GIZ CPS Programme in Ethiopia, merges customary Ethiopian styles of mediation with the facilitative approach widely used in the West (Europe/US).

### How can one ensure that all conflicting parties perceive the mediator/facilitator as impartial in order to increase the probability of success?

Challenge: a crucial success factor for every mediation process is the selection of the mediator/facilitator. If the mediator/facilitator is not accepted and/or not perceived as impartial<sup>14</sup> the mediation process will most probably fail.

- In the Ethiopian context, the conflicting parties are often asked for their agreement on who should mediate. However, this is not possible in every case.
- One option, that is sometimes practised in Ethiopia, is the selection of well-respected Elders that are known and trusted by both/all conflicting parties. These Elders are then ‘ambassadors’ and will assume a role as cross-cultural ‘mediators’ who approach both conflicting parties and are involved in the decision-making process.
- One interesting example of a culturally specific approach is practised in Tigray and Afar: each conflicting party selects mediators from the other group. This cross-group selection creates trust between the conflicting parties in the mediation process and among the communities.

## Challenges and recommendations in regard to mediation/WCM trainings and workshops

### How can one involve (more) women in trainings and workshops?

- One can always ask for gender equity during the selection of the participants for trainings and workshops. However, this is a very high and perhaps unrealistic goal in the Ethiopian context. But although gender equity may not be reached, this clear set goal creates an awareness of the gender topic and will motivate the organisations to actively encourage more female participation. Another challenge is the fact that nearly all of the trainers are men. One very effective and alternative method is to offer trainings exclusively aimed at women, preferably with women facilitators as role models.

### How can one foster the acceptance and use of the WCM approach in the Ethiopian context?

- It is important to include ‘key people’—such as leading figures and government officials—in the trainings and workshops, in order to gain support. If it is not possible or useful to include key people in the trainings and workshops, one should include them in other activities (e.g., awareness raising) or carry-out extra activities with them in order to lobby for the WCM approach.

### How can people be empowered to find solutions by themselves in the facilitative mediation approach, rather than expecting a decision from the mediator, within customary ways of conflict resolution?

Challenge: usually, training participants on the topic of mediation have a hard time understanding that in the facilitative mediation approach—and in contrast to some customary ways of conflict resolution—the decisions are not made by the mediators, but by the conflicting parties themselves. Most of the time, it is the mediator who, it is expected, will make a decision at the end of the process.

- The differences—especially in regard to the decision-making process—of different mediation approaches, should be clearly shown and reflected in trainings and workshops. One can use role plays in order to make the approaches more understandable.
- The participants should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches—from their point of view—afterwards.

<sup>14</sup>Impartiality is perceived differently in Ethiopia and ‘Western’ cultures.

- In the end, it should be up to the participants to decide which approach or which aspects of a specific approach they prefer and will put into practice in their own mediation work.
- In the case of mediation processes, the different mediation approaches should be clearly explained to the conflicting parties in the pre-mediation stages.

Mediator Nura Dida in action (© OPA)



### General recommendations for mediation processes

- Try to understand the contexts and the positions, needs and interests but also the feelings of the conflicting parties.
- Give the conflicting parties time and space to express their perspectives on the case.
- The change of perspective is very often perceived as a very important step in the mediation process.
- Encourage direct communication between the parties as soon as they are ready for this
- Observe and work with the conflict dynamics.
- Brainstorm possible solutions before discussing the pros and cons of particular options.
- Based on experience, identifying possible 'win-win solutions' can be a crucial aspect in mediation/WCM.
- Use co-mediation if possible and make sure that the mediators complement each other (e.g., in regard to gender, professional/cultural background, age, experience, language abilities). The co-mediators should reflect the make-up of the parties (they should reflect their characteristics, such as gender, age, experience, language abilities, etc.).



Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) Training in 2010 (© GIZ CPS ET)



Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) Training in 2010 (© GIZ CPS ET)





Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) Training in 2010 (© GIZ CPS ET)



Wise Counsel Mediation (WCM) Training in 2010 (© GIZ CPS ET)

# The WISE COUNSEL MEDIATION APPROACH in Ethiopia



boundary issues



What happened?  
What do you need?



merging mediation styles



peace

Active listening



Empowerment



Win / Win





agriculturalists  
and  
pastoralists

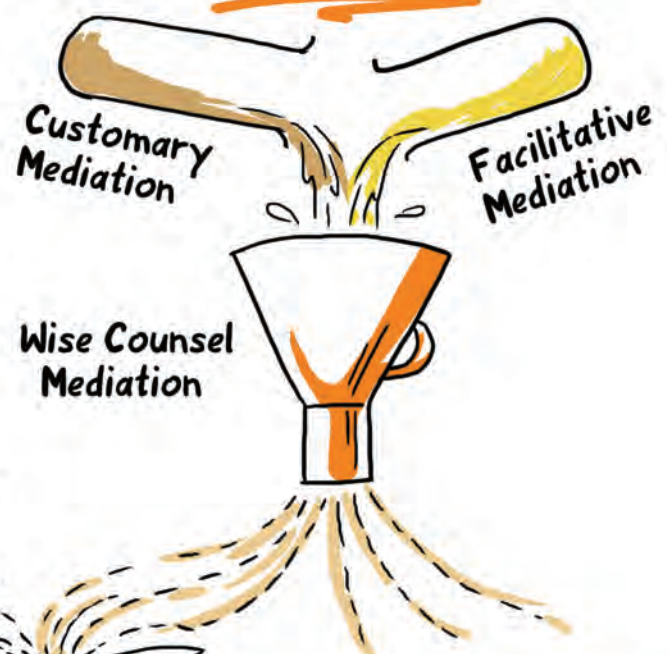


access to resources



Civil Peace Service (CPS) Ethiopia  
has been supporting nonviolent  
conflict transformation since 2008

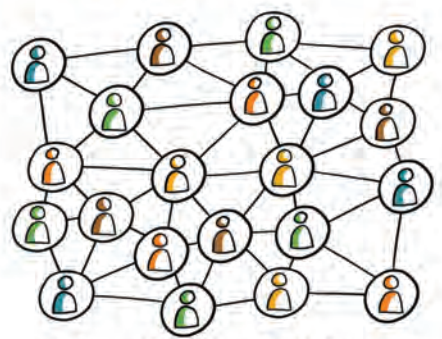
### Mediation Experiment



So how would  
you solve this?



Training Manual



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Nin



High quality training, local ownership, applicable on policy level





# Inter-group Peace Dialogues

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## Lessons Learned

*Peace dialogue workshop by CoN (© GIZ CPS ET)*

Scarce resources, drought, and climate change and in some cases weak local structures and a 'lack of good governance', as well as unclear border demarcations in some parts of Ethiopia, lead to conflicts that can at times escalate into violence.

The GIZ CPS Programme supported its partner organisations—CoN, OPA and OBAS—in facilitating peace dialogues between conflicting ethnic groups, clans and communities in order to de-escalate occurring conflicts and in order to strengthen their relationships and cooperation in a sustainable way.

The Council of Nationalities (CoN) implemented, together with SAB, capacity building activities in conflict transformation with local conflict actors which included a peace dialogue component. In workshops, skills and knowledge in participatory conflict analysis, mediation and the concepts of peace dialogues were transferred to the participants such as Elders, traditional and religious leaders, women, young people and government officials from conflict areas. In addition to this, CoN created and facilities 'open spaces' for these participants from the conflicting groups in order that they discuss their issues with each other in a conflict-sensitive way. As a result of this kind of dialogue process, the participants improved the trust they had in each other and strengthened their relationships; they even developed possible non-violent solutions for their conflicts.

CoN and SAB conducted such combinations of peace dialogue and capacity building activities, for example, in 2017, for participants of the conflict-prone Segen Zone as well as for the Gedeo Zone. Although the long-term impact cannot be evaluated yet, the activities improved the understanding and relationships between the participants from the conflicting sides.

CPS partner OPA, a non-state organisation representing pastoralists in Oromia, facilitated inter-group peace dialogues from 2009 to 2017, bringing representatives of conflicting clans and communities together.

One example is the peace dialogue between the Borena and Gabra communities in the south of Ethiopia, along the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. As a result of a series of peace dialogues between the two communities, the Maikona-Dukana Peace Declaration was adopted by the former conflicting groups and was implemented with the support of government institutions in 2008–2009. OPA also conducted a peace dialogue between pastoral and agro-pastoral groups in the Guji Zone of Oromia, known as the Guji-Borena peace dialogue. All peace dialogue processes are officially recognized and supported by the responsible state institution and CPS partner—the regional governmental institution for security, the Oromia Bureau of Administration and Security (OBAS).

OPA often also supports traditional (boards of Elders, for example) and local government institutions with capacity building trainings. These trainings include the following topics: EWER (Early Warning and Early Response), facilitation and mediation, peace culture and peace-building methods in general.

According to the observations of key informants and an impact assessment,<sup>15</sup> the Maikona-Dukana Peace Declaration and the Guji-Borena peace process have significantly contributed in strengthening group relationships and peace in the Ethiopian-Kenyan border area. There were less violent incidents, such as lone killings and looting of livestock than before. Individual killings did not escalate into group conflicts and did not trigger revenge acts as they did previously.

The GIZ CPS Programme Ethiopia trained OPA and OBAS personal in mediation, non-violent conflict transformation, EWER and conflict-sensitivity/Do No Harm and supported the peace dialogues and its follow-up activities financially during its three programme phases.



Peace dialog workshop by CON (@GIZ CPS ET)

<sup>15</sup> OPA (2016): 'Assessment Report: Exploring Pastoral Customary Conflict Resolution Arrangements in Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya—The Case of the Maikona-Dukana Peace Declaration'; funded by EU Civil Society Fund II, June 2016, Addis Ababa.

## Outcomes of the Peace Dialogues

- Peace agreements as well as customary and written rules and regulations.
- Payment of 'compensations' (e.g., the return of stolen livestock, livestock for compensations, etc.).
- Institutionalisation of local peace committees (LPCs), that follow-up on agreements and the peace process and that manage new conflict issues.
- Joint management of resources such as grazing land or water points.
- 'Wrongdoers' and criminals are convicted so that they cannot spoil the peace process.

## Impact of the Peace Dialogues

- Significant reduction of (group) violence and lootings.
- Reduction of inter-group tensions and more cooperation and trust.



A peace dialogue meeting in Dillo. (© OPA)

## Typical Phases of a Peace Dialogue Process

1. Pre-Negotiations and Pre-Assessment
2. Preparation phase
3. Main Peace dialogue process
4. Optional: traditional ceremony for reconciliation
5. Implementation of peace agreement
6. Regular follow-up on the peace agreement
7. Optional: institutionalization of peacebuilding structures (i.e. setting-up of a local peace committee)

## 1.) Pre-Negotiations and Pre-assessment Phase

- OBAS, as the regional state institution for security issues and OPA, a non-state organisation representing pastoralists in Oromia, coordinate their response to the conflict case.
- There may be a pre-assessment of a joint team of OPA and OBAS personnel. Additional personnel from different government agencies at the national, regional and local levels may be involved as well.
- In order to build basic trust between the conflicting parties, (informal) consultations and pre-negotiations with key actors such as (community) leaders and representatives from all the relevant conflicting parties, but also with government officials, will be held. Experience shows, that when life is lost during a conflict, it can take a long time to resume communications between conflicting parties. In the case of high mistrust between the conflicting parties, ‘shuttle-mediation’, facilitated by third parties perceived as impartial, may be necessary during these pre-negotiations.
- In order to mobilize the communities and all the relevant actors for peace, sensitisation and stressing of the benefits of peace (‘peace dividends’!) may be necessary for this phase of the peace dialogue process.

## 2.) Preparation Phase

- In the preparation phase, the facilitators (OPA and OBAS) plan the specific activities, choose an appropriate venue and define roles and responsibilities (e.g., who to invite, who is mediating, who is facilitating, etc.).
- As a next step, the participants will be invited to the peace dialogue (e.g., by invitation letters or orally).
- In this phase of the peace dialogue, conflicting parties and communities might meet on their own in order to discuss their interests and the need for peace. They prepare themselves for the peace dialogue process.

## 3.) Main Peace Dialogue Process

- In most cases, the following participants, representing all stakeholders and conflict parties in the conflict, will be invited for the peace dialogue: Elders, traditional leaders such as Abba Gadaas<sup>19</sup>, community representatives, religious leaders, women and youth, other civil society representatives, peace committee members, Woreda and local government officials, etc.
- Important: the peace dialogue meeting, as well as the peace dialogue process in general, should include all relevant conflict parties and stakeholders. Without representatives of all relevant groups, peace processes will most probably fail!

<sup>16</sup>In the case of a peace dialogue in Benishangul-Gumuz, MoFPDA, OBAS, OPA and the Benishangul-Gumuz Bureau of Administrative and Security formed this joint team. The duration of this pre-assessment can be up to two months.

<sup>17</sup>E.g., at the Zonal and Woreda levels.

<sup>18</sup>In a ‘Shuttle mediation’, a third, ‘impartial’ party is shuttling between representatives of the conflicting parties, in order to facilitate indirect communications that aims to build up trust between the parties, who do not feel ready to meet face-to-face at this stage.

<sup>19</sup>Abba Gadaas are Oromo traditional leaders.



## Typical Agenda and Processes of a Peace Dialogue Meeting

### (a.) Welcoming and opening remarks

At the beginning of the peace dialogue, there are opening remarks by the mediators/facilitators (e.g., OPA and OBAS) and a 'blessing' by the Elders.

**Typical topics of the opening and 'blessing' are:**

- How conflict is affecting development and livelihood of (pastoralist and agro-pastoralist) communities.
- The need to change attitudes in order to achieve sustainable peace.
- The necessity of the larger community denouncing any acts of violence in order to discourage those who want to create hostilities and mistrust.

In addition to this, government officials (e.g., the Zonal administrator) also welcome the participants and will give opening remarks.

**Typical topics of the opening remarks are:**

- The relevance of a culture of tolerance (in the peace dialogue process, but also in general).
- The importance of bringing to justice those who committed violent acts.
- The significance of enhancing community participation in order to promote good governance.

### b.) Discussion about conflict events, causes, issues and impact

The first and most important step of a dialogue process is discussing how to stop violence if it is on-going. After that, participants discuss the events, causes, issues and the impacts of the conflict. It is generally very important to identify and recognise the loss of lives and property, that has occurred during the conflict on both sides. This very sensitive process, that can often become quite heated, requires carefully calibrated guidance on the part of the facilitator(s)/mediator(s). The conflicting parties most probably come up with different views and perceptions of events, destruction, causes and dynamics of the conflict (i.e. who started the conflict). At the end of the discussion, participants might not agree with the others on these points, but they should at least accept the different views and perceptions of the other side. If possible, all participants should agree on the relevant conflict issues and the level of destruction that resulted from the conflict. As a next step, the interests and needs of the different conflicting parties should be identified and presented. The different conflicting parties/groups should mutually accept the interests and needs of the other conflicting party/group.

Important: during the dialogue meeting, participants should not be blamed but respected. Every voice should be heard and appreciated. This is a precondition for a constructive dialogue process and one that may improve the relationships and result in possible solutions.

A peace dialogue participant listening to the discussion (© OPA)



A peace dialogue participant discussing an issue (© OPA)



### (c.) Elaboration of possible solutions to the conflict

After having agreed on the conflict issues (including loss of lives and property) and the different interests and needs of the parties, the conflicting groups develop possible solutions for the ongoing conflict issues and ways to promote peaceful relationships for the future. The most important issue for the groups is often reaching an agreement on the amount and form of the compensation to be paid on the basis of customary law, as well as on how to formally prosecute perpetrators.

As the first step of this phase, each group consults on their own, in order to develop possible solutions. This process, which is supported by the facilitator(s)/mediator(s), can last from a few hours to a day, or longer. After each group has agreed internally on possible solutions concerning topics such as the compensations for killings of individuals as well as for the looting of livestock and properties, and on how to deal with criminal acts and how to address conflict issues in the future, each group presents its proposals to all participants in a plenary meeting. Clarification questions can then be asked. After that, the participants will discuss the proposals with each other in the plenary. The ideal goal of this process is to reach a consensus among the conflicting groups in regard to possible solutions. This means that each conflicting group has a de facto 'veto right'.

This might not always be possible—additional dialogue meetings may have to take place in order to reach this consensus. At times, the participants may 'only' agree on the compensations and how to bring perpetrators to justice and can resolve to discuss the other issues and general solutions only after the compensations and the convictions of perpetrators have been implemented.

## Theories of Change (ToCs) behind the Peace Dialogue Processes

- Once all the conflicting parties have reached the stage of acknowledging the other sides' grievances, a path is opened to work together towards peaceful resolutions of the underlying causes of the conflict. This process may take a long time but is a precondition for moving on.
- The peace process and its credibility also strongly depends on the commitment of local government actors who may have their own interests and play an important role in the implementation of the peace agreement. Local government actors, therefore, have to be convinced to play a constructive and supportive role in the peace process. Their needs and interests have to be considered as well. Most of the times, they are part of the facilitation team of the peace dialogue.

## What is the Role of a Facilitator/Mediator of a Peace Dialogue?

- He/she invites the participants (if responsible for this task)
- He/she provides logistics and organises the venue (if responsible for these tasks)
- Most important: he/she 'guides' the dialogue process wisely
- He/she facilitates communications between and among the conflict parties as an 'impartial' actor
- He/she shares information with participants in a balanced and transparent way
- Very important: he/she consults with the parties and stakeholders to the conflict
- He/she provides support such as capacity building training to key participants and stakeholders



Peace dialogue facilitators in action (© OPA)

### (d.) Agreeing on a peace agreement

After having reached an agreement on the basis of consensus, the agreement is put down in writing and is signed by all the conflicting parties and stakeholders. Government officials endorse the peace agreement.

#### Topics that are usually included in the peace agreement

- Agreeing to a ceasefire or truce
- Trust building and reconciliation measures (e.g., returning all looted animals, compensations for atrocities and looting)
- Cooperation with local government institutions and law enforcement bodies to bring to justice those who committed crimes and atrocities during the conflict (and in the future)
- Laws, rules and regulations in order to deal with the current and future conflict issues
- Traditional ceremonies/blessings for a better future and to leave the past behind
- Agreement on the implementation mechanisms and its follow-up mechanisms (e.g., supervision and follow-ups on agreements by selected Elders)

### (e.) Optional: traditional ceremony for the reconciliation

In some cases, a traditional ceremony for reconciliation is organised after the signing of the peace agreement. Participants from both sides meet for prayers by the Elders, a cultural coffee ceremony or the slaughter and eating of a bull. These traditional ceremonies can be very important to create a new feeling of friendship and to foster reconciliation.



Reconciliation ceremony - slaughtering of a sheep (© RCCSGA)

### (f.) Implementation of the peace agreement and follow-up

After the conflicting parties have signed and adopted the peace agreement, the stakeholders (Elders, government officials and community members) of the conflict begin its implementation. Usually, the implementation begins with the payment of compensations and the formal prosecution of those who have committed crimes and atrocities during the conflict. Following this, the laws and regulations of the peace agreement are applied and enforced by all stakeholders.

Regular follow-ups on the implementation of the peace agreement and the peace process by quarterly, monthly, and/or weekly meetings, have proven to be crucial. These meetings of Elders and state authorities at the Zonal, Woreda and Kebele levels are very important to monitor the peace process and to act if needed.

### **(g.) Optional: institutionalisation of peacebuilding structures at the local levels**

Local peacebuilding structures—such as local peace committees (LPCs),<sup>20</sup> at the Zonal, Woreda or Kebele level—are established or strengthened, in order to enable stakeholders to prevent or manage new conflict issues. These structures can also be used to follow-up on the peace agreement. The institutionalisation of peacebuilding structures has proven crucial for a peacebuilding.

### **General challenges in the context of peace dialogues between traditional and pastoralist groups**

- Lack of proper recognition of indigenous and customary institutions and laws by local government, law enforcement bodies and the security apparatus.
- Lack of government support for peace processes and follow-ups on their implementation in general.
- Lack of resources and capacities for the organisation and facilitation of peace dialogues as well as on the follow-ups on the implementation of peace processes in general.
- Perpetrators in conflict contexts who are not brought to justice.
- Fines agreed on in a peace agreement may not be able to 'deter' people from committing atrocities such as killings of individuals, looting of properties and hiding of individuals who committed crimes.

### **Strategies to cope with these challenges**

- In-depth and comprehensive conflict analyses should be conducted to identify local capacities for peace.
- Strengthening links between Local Peace Committees (LPCs), government structures (e.g., Woreda as well as Zonal governmental offices) and local law-enforcement bodies, is important in order to have all the relevant actors for the process 'on board'. State institutions are crucial actors, in order to enforce the law and the peace agreements, thereby bringing perpetrators to justice.
- Peace agreements should include appropriate penalties and fines in order to 'deter' individuals from conducting violent acts such as killings of people and in order to motivate people to bring criminals to justice (i.e. sending them to court).
- It is also important to document and share the good practice of peace-building in order to provide examples and to motivate people.
- Regular follow-up meetings on peace agreements are essential in order to monitor and enable its implementation.
- Awareness-raising and capacity building for key actors of the conflicting parties and local government personnel can be very useful or even necessary.

<sup>20</sup> see chapter: *Lessons Learned: Local Peace Committees (LPCs)*

## practical questions regarding peace dialogues

### When to initiate a peace dialogue?

- Intervening in a conflict when it is still ‘hot’ or ‘bloody’ may cause harm. It is not, therefore, always appropriate to begin a peace dialogue in a conflict when it is still at a very high and violent stage.
- However, even in this case, ‘shuttle mediation’<sup>21</sup> between ‘willing’ actors from both sides can foster trust between the conflict actors and can lay the ground for a dialogue process.

### Who is taking the initiative in order to start the peace dialogue process?

- Generally, both traditional and government actors come together when a conflict is escalating. OPA is then asked by local and governmental actors to facilitate and support the dialogue process.

### Which and how many participants should be invited to the peace dialogue?

- Decision-makers and powerful people, as well as chosen representatives from all conflict parties, should be involved in the dialogue. They are the ones who can take decisions and are key actors of change.
- However, in order to reach the necessary ‘mass’ of people and in order to include all relevant groups and stakeholders, additional representatives from different groups and sections of the local population and civil society (e.g., women and youth) should be invited as well.
- The number of the participants depends on the conflict and its importance. Normally, between 50 and 200 persons attend a dialogue event in the case of the dialogues facilitated by OPA and OBAS.
- The larger the dialogue participants’ number, the greater the impact of the result of the dialogue can be in the communities. The large numbers of participants help to spread the messages and agreements of the dialogue inside the communities.
- However, one should be always aware of the fact that too many participants can also hinder the dialogue process and can make reaching a consensus more difficult.

### How can one build trust between the conflicting parties in the pre-negotiations?

- Bringing representatives from both conflicting groups together for dialogue, especially providing them with a safe space to listen to each other’s interests and needs, can calm the situation, reduce the level of tensions and can also create a willingness to cooperate.
- If there is a high level of mistrust between the conflicting parties, one can use the ‘shuttle mediation approach’ in order to calm the situation down and prepare the conflicting parties for a dialogue.
- One can agree on solutions for local and limited conflicts or specific and isolated conflict issues in the pre-negotiation phase, in order to improve trust between conflicting parties.

### Which political and administrative levels should be involved?

- This depends on the nature of a conflict. If it is ‘only’ a local conflict, the involvement of the Zonal and Woreda levels may be sufficient, perhaps also adding the regional level. It will not be necessary to involve the federal level, except if it is a regional cross-border conflict. Bigger conflicts, in and between regions, should address all three levels: federal, regional and local.

<sup>21</sup>see description above

### How can one include women in peacebuilding in male-dominated contexts?

**Challenge:** as elsewhere, half of the population in Ethiopia are women. They have the same constitutional rights as men and they also have their own needs and interests. In some cultural contexts in Ethiopia, women do not engage in male-dominated meetings. Including women in meetings may therefore not be enough. However, women play an important role in peacebuilding. They are affected by conflicts, and they are the victims of conflicts. The other reason is women's influence of on their husbands and sons' decision to take part in a conflict or not.



Women in a peace dialogue meeting (© OPA)

#### Recommendations:

- One can form women groups that can come up with ideas and formulate their own interests. Representatives—strong personalities—of these women groups can then speak up for these interests in the male-dominated meetings.
- It can be useful to negotiate an obligatory proportion of women and youth in peace dialogues. However, this is not always appropriate. It may be more appropriate to include powerful and committed women ('key women') and young people in the dialogue process rather than having equal numbers.
- Addressing the gender and youth gap indirectly has also proven effective. In discussions with Elders and traditional authorities, one can address the importance of women and youth in the dynamics of conflicts. In most cases, they will acknowledge the relevance of including women and youth in the dialogue.

### Which place and venue should be chosen for a peace dialogue?

- In southern Ethiopia, dialogues and customary talks normally take place under a tree, which is considered to be a multi-partial place as the tree belongs to no one. Under a tree, everyone has an equal status and there is no hierarchy.

### How can one select the facilitators and mediators?

- The conflicting parties and the government officials should agree on the dialogue facilitators/mediators together. The facilitators/mediators should be considered competent and perceived as impartial.

### How can security and safety be ensured during the peace dialogue?

- Peace dialogues should only be scheduled if participants feel safe to conduct such meetings.
- Local government institutions and traditional leaders should closely follow-up on the peace dialogue meeting and should ensure the safety and security of its participants.

### Which connectors can be used to bring people together (for a peace dialogue) in the Ethiopian context?

- In the Ethiopian context, apart from traditional leaders and Elders, religious actors usually have the capacity to bring conflicting parties to a dialogue process, when they motivate people to join the dialogue process in a constructive way. Sports activities and festivals can also help to bring people together and can lay a constructive ground for dialogue.

### What is the role of state institutions in peace dialogues?

- The role of government authorities largely depends on the political situation and on the interests of the political actors. It makes a big difference whether the government itself is a party to the conflict or not.
- State institutions in Ethiopia can play an important role in peace dialogues if they have the political will to play a constructive role (i.e. by providing enough space for local decision-makers and local communities):
  - Opening remarks from government authorities can send a message to the conflicting parties that the government wants to support communities to live in peace and harmony.
  - They can also recognize the efforts of the communities to resolve conflicts and legitimize dialogue processes formally. This legitimization supports the implementation of the peace agreement.
  - Government officials should share their interests and ideas in the dialogue. This means that mediating between these interests and the interests and needs of the other actors it is also part of the dialogue process.
  - In the best case scenario, they support the facilitation of the peace dialogue and later the implementation of a peace agreement.

### How to agree on the agenda of the peace dialogue?

- All relevant conflicting parties and key stakeholders have to agree on the agenda. It is up to them to select the topics.

### How can actors be motivated to act during the peace dialogue meeting in a constructive manner?

- In Ethiopia, 'blessings' from Elders can motivate participants to engage in the dialogue process in a constructive way.

### How can one deal with emotions, anger and difficult participants during the peace dialogue?

- One should handle difficult participants wisely and use methods of non-violent communication.
-



- Customary laws and traditional systems can help to ‘control’ difficult participants. Customary laws can serve as a code of conduct for the dialogue meeting and process.
- Pre or side consultations, taking place outside the dialogue meeting, can help to deal with emotions and emotional actors.
- The participants can be also regularly reminded of the agendas and objectives of the dialogue in order to facilitate/cool down emotions.

### What roles do customary and traditional approaches play in a peace dialogue and the implementation of an agreement? How do they interact with formal and modern approaches and procedures?<sup>22</sup>

- Tension can arise around the legitimacy and acceptance of customary versus formal modern approaches. However, it proved to be essential to consider customary institutions in rural, and especially pastoralist, contexts. They are accepted and applied by local communities. Some local actors have higher trust and confidence in customary law than in formal law. Some local communities have the perception that formal law does not address the underlying causes of conflict and has no follow-up as well as reconciliation mechanisms. Customary institutions, on the other hand, with their compensation payments, can restore trust and cooperative behaviour and can also reconcile conflicting parties (tradition of forgiveness and respect). The use of traditional practices proved helpful in preparing the ground for dialogue and also provided support to the implementation of agreements. Therefore, both customary institutions and government structures should be engaged in the preparation and implementation of a dialogue. In this manner, both approaches can be used together.
- State institutions and authorities should legitimize and support the customary laws agreed upon in the dialogue, which form the basis of the reached agreement.
- In the case of the Oromia regional state, peace dialogues should also consider the traditional Gadaa system, which plays an important role in conflict prevention and transformation as part of customary institutions and laws.



A peace dialogue participant in an emotional discussion (@ OPA)

<sup>22</sup> According to an assessment of the Dillo-Dukana-Maikona Peace Accord (OPA (2016): ‘Assessment Report: Exploring Pastoral Customary Conflict Resolution Arrangements in Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya—The Case of the Maikona-Dukana Peace Declaration’, funded by EU Civil Society Fund II, June 2016, Addis Ababa), 94% of the respondents from local communities, government staff, and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) representatives appreciate the customary approach of resolving disputes rather than the sole use of the local courts and formal justice institutions.

## What are the success factors of peace dialogues?

### inclusiveness and participation:

- Dialogue must be inclusive. All relevant actors (state actors, communities and traditional leaders) should participate in the dialogue. Their voices should be heard. Community participation is crucial: all affected communities, groups and stakeholders should always be included.
- Especially crucial is the participation of key political actors, also known as agents for change.
- The backing of state authorities in regard to the peace agreement, compensations and follow-ups of the peace process is generally essential. Therefore, government structures and officials should be an integral part of the peace dialogue (at least the ones who are committed to the peace process).
- One should also include women and youth and other marginalized groups.
- Religious leaders and churches also very often play an important role in local communities. They should be included as well. However, one should be aware that religion can serve both as a divider and a connector.

### creating 'safe spaces'

- The peace dialogue has to create 'safe spaces' which serve to bring conflicting parties together.
- Apart from reconciliation rituals, cultural and sports events have proven to be an important connector for strengthening peace processes. They can bring different people together and can foster understanding and reconciliation.

### sharing experiences on similar cases

- Sharing experiences around similar cases, in Ethiopia or abroad, can inspire and motivate actors. First of all, stakeholders can observe that similar cases have been solved in a constructive way in the past and, secondly, such cases can provide some ideas on how to deal with their specific conflict/issues.

How can one deal with the high fluctuation of government officials at the federal, regional and local level during peace processes?

- One can lobby for a policy that supports the constancy of government positions.
- In the case of reshufflings, the new government officials should be briefed in detail about their local context, ongoing activities, challenges and solutions. They should also put in contact with all relevant partners and stakeholders as soon as possible.

### How can the sustainability of change and peace be supported?

- Customary institutions can play a key role in the local communities in order to create awareness on the need for peace and the agreed peace solutions.
- A large number of participants in the peace dialogue can be also an important factor for transmitting messages about peace and future cooperation to the communities.
- After an agreement is made, peace committees (known as Local Peace Committees) should be established permanently in order to support, follow-up and monitor the implementation of the peace agreement and in order to manage newly occurring conflicts and prevent the escalation of violence.

### How can state authorities and international donors support peace dialogues?

- State authorities and international donors should support dialogue processes with the material (e.g., providing a venue, transport, food and shelter, etc.) and technical resources (e.g., capacity building in mediation, approaches of conflict transformation, EWER, etc.).



Discussion during a peace dialogue meeting (@ OPA)

‘It was both interesting and stunning to see that there are so many ethnic groups and that they don’t know each other. Therefore, the support they get to know each other cannot be underestimated.’

Mr. Gemechu Birhanu, Executive Director of Oromia Pastoralist Association (OPA) in 2016

# Summary of a typical customary conflict resolution process between local and traditional leaders, with its challenges

Note: the CPS partner organisations resort to the customary laws and processes mentioned below, during the facilitation of their peace dialogue processes.

1. A violent conflict between at least two groups is happening.
  2. Community leaders and Elders will (informally) communicate with each other and with Elders from the other group in order to discuss how to stop the violence.
  3. Important: there may be Elders and stakeholders that have a stake in the conflict and are not interested in peace negotiations. The meeting will, therefore, concentrate on a 'coalition of the willing', composed out of 'peace lovers'. Opponents of the peace meeting—so-called 'spoilers'—can be ignored at the start, to some extent, as long as they are not more powerful than the 'peace lovers'. In this way, only a few peace willing representatives from both groups will meet at a safe place, most of the time far away from the conflict area, in order to discuss the challenge. In a later stage, the 'spoilers' should be also included in the overall peace dialogue meetings in order to give them a voice and to convince them of the value of the peace process.
  4. Elders will try to influence their people to stop violence (calling for a 'truce').
  5. When the violence stops and the conflict cools down a little, Elders from all conflicting groups meet face to face in order to manage and transform the conflict. In order to make 'the situation better in the future'. Elders might select impartial facilitators for this committee.
  6. Elders will conduct a fact-finding investigation to assess the destruction and loss of property (e.g., stealing or raiding of livestock) in the context of the conflict. Elders will discuss and agree on compensations regarding the destruction and the raiding. There will be a follow-up meeting on the implementation of the agreements.
  7. As a next step, Elders will conduct a fact-finding mission that investigates human losses. Elders will discuss and agree on compensations and will have follow-up meetings to monitor the implementation of the agreements. The implementation usually takes some time.
  8. Challenge: perpetrators might not accept the agreements of the Elders regarding their contribution to the compensation or communities may even protect them from prosecution.
  9. Recommendation: Elders can ask the local government and the formal legal system for support (i.e. they can send perpetrators to court) in the case of human killings, especially to prevent further losses.
  10. Challenge: there may be issues that cannot be solved or that are very difficult to solve (e.g., no conviction of perpetrators due to their escape).
  11. Recommendation: one can postpone but not cancel these issues. One should handle these issues again when possible.
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12. In other meetings, Elders address whole communities to deal with the consequences of displacement and losses by mobilising the community to share resources with those affected by the conflict. They ask people to go back home to share resources with their own group and with the other group. Some of those affected by conflict might be displaced and not easily reachable.
13. There will be a follow-up on the implementation of the agreements.
14. If compensation from the other side is not possible, then the communities will focus on the most affected families and people to support them with their own group.
15. Challenge: in some cases, Elders cannot solve conflicts, because the causes are beyond their control and lie outside the community's capacities and conflict may be fuelled by political actors.
16. Recommendation: it is most of the time very useful to include governmental actors in the process and to respect their legitimate needs and interests. In the case of political actors who fuel conflict, one might involve other political levels in order to influence these actors in a constructive manner.
17. The Elders committee tries to make sure that the (local) government will accept the decisions and agreements of the committee and follows-up on them as well. If the political level is not willing to accept the results of the peace process, then the probability is high that the peace process will fail.



The Guli-Borena peace dialogue meeting (© OPA)





# Local Peace Committees (LPCs)

## Lessons Learned

*Local Peace Committee meeting in Dillo, Oromia (© OPA)*

## Local Peace committees in Ethiopia

Peace committees at the local levels (Zonal, Woreda and Kebele levels) have a variety of important functions in peacebuilding processes. They fulfil the function of an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanism and are essential to resolve and transform existing conflicts.

With the overall objective of reinforcing local capacities and structures for peace, CPS partners (MoFPDA, OPA, OBAS, CoN) supported the establishment of new joint cross-border peace committees as well as the strengthening of existing institutions in different regions of Ethiopia.

### The Role of Local Peace Committees (LPCs)

- A LPC meets regularly. Representatives of different communities and government officials share and discuss information and issues.
- LPC members initiate negotiations and mediation processes if required. They might also involve state authorities or other LPCs if they consider it necessary.
- LPCs have an early warning and early response (EWER) function. They collect and share information among each other and report incidents to the government structures (Kebele, Woreda and Zonal administrations).
- The LPC, its members or state authorities can give an 'early response' (negotiations, dialogues, police interventions) to emerging or escalating conflicts.
- In the case of an existing peace agreement, the LPC monitors and follows-up on the implementation of the agreement.

## General Recommendations for Peace Committees

- LPCs should incorporate representatives of different and rival groups, local administration officers as well as women and youth and representatives of other relevant sections of the local community. Only if all parties are part of the peace process, can conflicts be de-escalated and violence be stopped.
- Women and youth have a pivotal role in solving conflicts in a sustainable way. Women make up half of the population, may have their own needs and interests. They can either discourage or motivate men to escalate conflicts. Youth also have their own needs and interests. Young men can be very emotional and are often at the forefront of a conflict. Hence their inclusion in peace processes and peace committees is crucial.
- Regular interaction about the interest and needs of the LPC members and their respective groups/followers can foster trust, collaboration and peaceful resolutions of conflicts.
- Regular communication and dialogues between LPCs, their members and their communities has been proven to prevent violence and the escalation of conflicts.
- Joint local peace committees, composed of members from (two) different areas, regions or even countries,<sup>23</sup> can build trust and can contribute to the transformation of (inter-border) conflicts. Especially in border areas, these joint local peace committees can connect groups and communities across borders.
- Capacity building and technical support for the LPC members and other stakeholders should be provided (e.g., through trainings, workshops, review meetings, the development of Standards of Practice (SoP).
- The capacity building should include the following topics: Early Warning and Early Response, conflict sensibility/Do No Harm, non-violent communication and non-violent conflict transformation. Skills and capacities in these topics are essential for effective and efficient peacebuilding.

### The typical composition of Local Peace Committees (LPCs)

- A typical LPC has between 15 and 20 members.
- LPCs are dominated by local traditional leaders (Elders and religious leaders), representing different groups of the local society. Most of the time, the local community decides who to send to the LPC.
- LPCs are headed by officials from the government administration. This means that LPCs at the Kebele level are most of the time headed and facilitated by the Kebele administrator, who is an important figure in the local government. At the Woreda level, the LPC is headed by the Woreda official. In some cases, the management of the LPCs is delegated to Elders when the government administrations are busy with other tasks. Apart from the Kebele or Woreda administrator, other governmental and security officials (SAB staff) might be also members of the LPCs.
- Women and youth are also represented in LPCs. Their representation varies. In most of the cases, 3–4 women and 3–4 youth are presented in the LPC.
- Traditional and customary institutions are an effective (and maybe the best) approach to ensure peace and security in ‘traditional’ and pastoralist contexts.
- Strengthening of traditional and customary conflict resolution mechanisms and linking them with formal police, court and government institutions is, therefore, an effective approach in the context of LPCs.

<sup>23</sup> OPA and OBAS supported joint local peace committees, composed of members from the Kenyan and Ethiopian side of the border areas between the Oromia Region in Ethiopia and Kenya.



- However, some practices can be 'harmful' in regard to human and women rights (e.g., cattle raiding, early marriage, etc.).
- In the case of the Oromia Region, LPCs should also consider the traditional Gadaa system, which plays an important role in conflict prevention and transformation as part of customary institutions and laws.
- Volunteerism can save costs and facilitates the implementation of interventions. However, volunteers should be motivated by non-financial incentives (e.g., certificates, recognition in front of the public, etc.).
- There should be a mechanism so that telephone calls and text messages used by peace committee members (for sharing information among each other and with other relevant stakeholders) are free or are reimbursed. Otherwise, peace committee members are not able to make calls or may feel discouraged to do so (due to the need to invest not only their time but also their personal resources).
- There should be always a documentation of good practices in order to learn from the current activities as well as for up-scaling.



The Joint Oromo-Somali Peace Committee in Moyale Woreda (@OPF)

'If sustainable peace and prosperity are what we aim to achieve in the zone, supporting and strengthening of Local Peace Committees should not be considered as a matter of choice but as a must.'

Mr. Abera Ayele, Borena Zone Administrator in 2016

### General Challenges regarding Local Peace Committees

- Lack of recognition and support by the local government.
- Lack of support from local law-enforcement bodies (particularly judges and prosecutors) to properly handle the cases local peace committees present them.
- Lack of resources and capacities of LPCs.
- Lack of good governance and corruption in LPCs.

### Strategies to face these Challenges

- One should strengthen the working relationships among LPCs and local law-enforcement bodies as well as the local government (e.g. through the distribution of contact lists and regular meetings).
- One should provide the necessary technical and financial support to the peace committees.
- One should conduct regular follow-up sessions in LPCs (follow-up on peace processes, discussion of successes and challenges).
- One should conduct awareness raising and capacity building for committee members and local government personnel. Important capacity building topics are:
- Early Warning and Early Response, conflict sensibility/Do No Harm, non-violent communication and non-violent conflict transformation.

## Additional Recommendations for Peace Committees

- The establishment of a livelihood component for peace committee members that creates additional income can be a very an important incentive for active participation (this especially applies to women peace committees).
  - In order to counterbalance the underrepresentation of women and youth in peace processes, one can form women and youth peace committees, composed solely of women or youth. These special peace committees should be connected to 'regular' LPCs and local peace structures as well as to government institutions. In this manner, representatives of these peace committees are members of LPCs and should, therefore, be consulted by government officials.
  - The creation of socio-economic benefits ('peace dividends') and interdependence between (former conflicting) groups can strengthen the relationships between them through constructive interaction (e.g., joint management of livestock markets, community roads, schools and health facilities).
  - The establishment of 'inclusive' (in which all relevant stakeholders have a say) resource management committees that can (re)distribute resources in a fair and sustainable way can prevent conflicts and can foster 'good governance'.
  - Communities and stakeholders can be sensitized through media (e.g., peace radio) on the role of LPCs, peace in general and peace agreements.
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- The provision of motorcycles to peace committee officers in conflict-prone areas can foster their capacity to report on time and to monitor his/her area effectively (if enough resources are available).
- Peace committee members should control each other's performance and contribution to peacebuilding in a constructive manner in order to create more responsibility.
- The distribution of a contact list of peace committee members from different peace committees can be very important in order to enable the sharing of information between peace committees for prevention and early response.



Contact list of Local Peace Committee members (@ GIZ CPS ET)



# The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy of the SNNPRS

## Lessons Learned



*The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy of SNNPRS and implementation guideline in English and Amharic (© GIZ CPS ET)*

Like other regions in Ethiopia and other countries worldwide, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) faces numerous challenges: resource conflicts about access to land or water, boundary demarcations, lack of good governance as well as a lack of political and economic participation. These potential conflict issues may sometimes escalate to a violent stage.

The Regional Council of Nationalities (CoN), the second chamber of the parliament of the SNNPR, developed, together with other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, a strategy to prevent escalation and to manage these kinds of conflicts. According to the strategy, the objective is to help 'to resolve the incompatible interests and ideas between communities on the basis of strengthening relationships and tolerances by giving emphasis to the age-old ties in place. It also helps that various governmental institutions and others [...] understand their role in and participate in peacebuilding process[es]'.<sup>24</sup>

GIZ CPS Ethiopia supported the development process of the strategy, its documentation as well as the elaboration of an implementation guideline for the strategy, in Amharic and in English. CPS also funded the distribution of the strategy and its guidelines to the different levels of the government (Zonal, Woreda and Kebele levels) as well as to community actors. With the technical and financial support of CPS, capacity building trainings about the use of the strategy were conducted with different target groups (e.g., government officials, community Elders and leaders, women and youth), as well as follow-up activities in different areas of SNNPRS.

<sup>24</sup>Council of Nationalities (CoN) (2014): 'Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional State. Strategy for Conflict Resolution and its Implementation Manual.'; December 2014, Hawassa (Ethiopia), page 4 and 5.

As a general framework that is guiding the processes and the cooperation of different state and non-state actors between the different political levels (Regional, Zonal, Woreda, and Kebele) in order to deal with conflict issues, the strategy came into effect in 2011. Relevant state actors are the CoN and the Security and the Administration Bureau of SNNPRS (SAB), which is predominantly responsible at the Zonal, Woreda, and Kebele levels.

The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy thereby highly recommends conflict transformation approaches such as the facilitation of peace dialogues and mediation instead of security approaches (i.e. deployment of police) only. The goal is to prevent the escalation before violence has already broken out. The strategy also resorts to and

strengthens existing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and promotes the inclusion of women and youth into these processes.<sup>25</sup>



The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy of SNNPRS and implementation guideline in English and Amharic (© GIZ CPS ET)

<sup>25</sup>CoN (2014): paragraph 10.5, 10.6. and 10.7.

## Achievements so far

Stakeholders of the strategy, government officials and community actors,<sup>26</sup> consider the strategy as very important for the mitigation and the transformation of conflicts. They appreciate the fact that the strategy fosters cooperation between the stakeholders and that the strategy includes communities, women and youth into the conflict resolution processes. According to their assessment, the Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy has already contributed to violence prevention and the transformation of local conflicts in SNNPRS. This is especially the case in semi-pastoralist and pastoralist areas where there is greater potential for conflicts than in agricultural areas.

In 2017, the House of Federation (HoF) organized a forum in Hawassa, in order to present the experience of the implementation of the strategy. Besides local speakers from different regional states, researchers and representatives of MOFPDA also participated in the meeting which was considered a 'milestone' for introducing similar conflict resolution strategies in other regions as well as at the federal level.

## General recommendations regarding Conflict Resolution Strategies

- The main goal of a conflict resolution strategy is to guide relevant stakeholders in a process that manages to transform conflicts in a non-violent and sustainable way. It should also guide Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) processes in order to prevent the escalation of violence.
- It is therefore important that a regional conflict transformation strategy provide clear guidance as to which activities the different actors and institutions are responsible for and at which administrative level (Regional, Woreda, Zone, Kebele). It should also indicate how cooperation and coordination should be organized between the different governance levels and between the different state and non-state actors. The strategy should enable and foster this cooperation and coordination.
- In order to solve or transform a conflict, it proved crucial to include all conflict parties in the processes. Actors that have to be included in the Ethiopian context are:
  - Government officials from different levels (and cross-border if needed)
  - Representatives of different ethnic groups and local communities
  - Local, traditional and religious leaders and Elders
  - Women and youth
- The strategy should also include women and youth and should give them 'a voice.' They are affected by the conflict and they are also actors of the conflict. Therefore, their inclusion is essential to transform a conflict in a sustainable way.
- To most efficient way to transform conflicts in a non-violent and sustainable manner is to facilitate peace dialogues and to mediate between conflicting parties. These approaches and other methods of non-violent conflict transformation should be the main approaches to a conflict resolution strategy.

<sup>26</sup>CoN (2014): page 4 and 5.

- A strategy should also include Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) measures in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts.
- A strategy should also strengthen existing peace-building structures on the ground. A conflict resolution strategy should include traditional practices of conflict resolution and customary law where possible, as long as these practices do not harm basic human rights. Local peace committees should be strengthened and should be included in the processes. One should also capacitate and empower local communities and local actors such as Elders, women and youth to deal with their conflicts in a constructive and non-violent way on their own.
- The implementation of a new strategy takes time. All actors and stakeholders have to be capacitated in the essentials and processes of the strategy. In addition to that, the application of the strategy has to be practised. In order to enable this necessary learning process, the strategy and an implementation guide of the strategy should be distributed to all relevant stakeholders, including civil society actors and communities. However, this is not enough. The capacities of relevant stakeholders in non-violent conflict resolution techniques have to be built on the basis of the strategy. Communities and local actors as well need to know about the strategy and its application. Follow-ups on the capacity building measures are important in order to monitor and strengthen the capacities.
- In order to enable its successful implementation, the strategy should be backed by all relevant political actors and institutions. Political actors should not 'bypass' the processes and approaches defined in the strategy. The strategy should also provide incentives for stakeholders for compliance where possible.
- There should be measures to monitor the proper implementation of the strategy. Therefore, regular review meetings with all relevant stakeholders should take place in order to adjust the strategy or its implementation if necessary.





# Challenges and possible solutions

## How can cooperation and collaboration be supported?

- The coordination of different stakeholders and actors is in most cases a challenge. It is important that state institutions, in collaboration with non-state actors, commit themselves to the implementation of the strategy and foster cooperation among the different stakeholders. Roles and responsibilities should be clear. The leading actors of the strategy should also sensitise the stakeholders about the advantages of the strategy.

## How can one deal with a high staff turnover in institutions?

- Employees, who are trained in non-violent conflict resolution and in the use of the strategy, should have the duty to share and transfer their knowledge to a successor. It is the institution's task to ensure that this happens and that this knowledge is not constantly lost.

## What is the best way to raise awareness in communities and with local actors?

- One can use the so-called 'snowball effect' in order to spread information and raise awareness about the strategy, its procedures and advantages. Training participants are encouraged to spread their knowledge to other people and their communities. These people share their knowledge as well to other people...

## How to ensure that the capacities of the strategy are strengthened?

- In order to strengthen the capacities of the stakeholders of a strategy, experience sharing is essential. Experience sharing activities among state and non-state stakeholders should be seen as an integral part of a capacity building process and should, therefore, be organized on a regular basis.
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