



with funding and support from the European Union



Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

# Supporting Insider Mediation:

## STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO CONFLICT AND TURBULENCE



GUIDANCE NOTE

United Nations Development Programme

## GUIDANCE NOTE



### **United Nations Development Programme**

Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)  
304 East 45th Street  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

### **European Commission**

Service for Foreign Policy Instruments  
1049 Brussels, Belgium  
<http://ec.europa.eu/>

Copyright: © 2014 United Nations Development Programme

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the United Nations Development Programme.

Design and layout: Phoenix Design Aid  
Cover image: ©UNDP Yemen

# Foreword

Turbulent political transitions, recurrent tensions and instability, and conflicts over land and natural resources are some of the complex challenges to peace faced today by numerous countries. This has had disastrous impact on human life, weakened social cohesion and trust, and put a severe toll on progress towards sustainable development. Building resilient societies and preventing the breakout of tensions into violent manifestations requires garnering national capacities and skills to resolve conflict peacefully.

The concept of insider mediation emerged from this recognition that key actors in countries at risk of conflict must be equipped with the appropriate skills for mediation and dialogue. All the more as experience has shown that external mediation is not always possible or desired by countries.

Insider mediation draws upon the abilities of institutions or individuals that are seen as “insiders” within a given context. These civic, political and governmental leaders have the invaluable advantages of being trusted and respected individuals, and bring with them a higher legitimacy, cultural closeness with the parties, and an ability to convene all relevant stakeholders and also those impacted by the conflict. In recent years insider mediators have proved successful in ensuring peaceful elections; facilitating dialogue, breaking political deadlocks and establishing the groundwork for formal peace negotiations in a number of countries.

Recognizing the power and the vast potential of empowering insider mediators, UNDP and the European Union (EU) have partnered—through a new two-year programme that spanned 2012-2013 and was funded by the EU’s Instrument for Stability —to invest in equipping national and local actors in internal conflict management processes with skills for dialogue and constructive negotiation. Drawing upon this initiative, and on a decade of experience in supporting national counterparts in preventing and resolving violent tensions, as well as recent efforts established through the partnership, this Guidance Note is the first attempt at documenting and distilling best practices on insider mediation.

Primarily written for practitioners seeking to understand and support insider mediators, in particular staff from the UN, the EU, and other international organizations, the Guidance Note should also be of benefit to insider mediators. “Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening resilience to conflict and turbulence” aims to further open the discussion on the challenges and opportunities in building national capacities for conflict prevention. With it, we hope to bring greater awareness and encourage more international investment in empowering these key individuals- including women leaders- with the appropriate skills to broker peace.



**INSIDER MEDIATORS  
HAVE PROVED  
SUCCESSFUL IN  
ENSURING PEACEFUL  
ELECTIONS; FACILITATING  
DIALOGUE, BREAKING  
POLITICAL DEADLOCKS  
AND ESTABLISHING  
THE GROUNDWORK  
FOR FORMAL PEACE  
NEGOTIATIONS**

**Patrick Keuleers**  
Director  
Governance and Peacebuilding  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support  
United Nations Development Programme

**Tung-Lai Margue**  
Director  
Foreign Policy Instruments  
European Commission

**Joelle Jenny**  
Director  
Security Policy and Conflict Prevention  
European External Action Service



## *Acknowledgment*

The Guidance Note was developed under the overall guidance of a Jordan Ryan, former UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (till 2014). The Guidance Note was drafted and edited by a team led by Chetan Kumar from UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS). Significant contributions were made by Ozonnia Ojielo, Jos de la Haye, Nika Saeedi and Vesna Markovic Dasovic of BPPS. Additional inputs were provided by Daniele Senzanonna from the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), Tomas Henning from the European External Action Service (EEAS), and Roxaneh Bazergan, Ellen Alradi, and Matloes Lagerweij from the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA). We are also grateful to Brian McQuinn, Fatima Swartz, and Josie Lianna Kaye for their contributions. The Guidance Note builds on the experiences and endeavors of the Peace and Development Advisors, jointly deployed by DPA and UNDP in approximately thirty countries around the world.

# Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
<b>1. Part One: Understanding Insider Mediation and Insider Mediators</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 What is insider mediation?	8
1.2 Why is insider mediation increasingly used?	12
1.3 What are the key characteristics of insider mediators?	16
1.4 How do insider mediators undertake their work?	19
<b>2. Part Two: Designing Effective Support for Insider Mediators</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Why, when and how can external parties support insider mediators?	21
2.2 Step-by-step guide to designing effective support for insider mediators and insider mediation processes	24
2.2.1 Step One: Undertake a conflict and situation analysis	24
2.2.2 Step Two: Identify and analyse potential “levels” of engagement	25
2.2.3 Step Three: Identifying insider mediators	27
2.2.4 Step Four: Develop an engagement and capacity-building strategy	28
2.2.5 Step Five: Co-Building infrastructures for peace	32
<b>3. Part Three: Part Three: Learning from Experience— Critical Issues and Challenges in Supporting Insider Mediation</b>	<b>34</b>
3.1 Guidance and tips for designing effective insider mediation processes	34
3.2 Issues and challenges in enabling and strengthening the participation of women in insider mediation processes	37
3.3 Looking ahead: Good practices for supporting insider mediation processes	37
3.4 Building the capacities of external partners to support the work of insider mediators	40
References	41
Endnotes	44

## List of Text boxes

- Page 11: Examples of different types of insider mediation processes
- Page 15: Examples of the changing context and its impact on insider mediation
- Page 16: The key characteristics of insider mediators
- Page 18: Examples of different types of insider mediators
- Page 20: Examples of techniques used by insider mediators
- Page 23: Examples of types of support provided to insider mediators by external entities
- Page 31: Overview of learning strategies for insider mediators
- Page 33: Examples of Infrastructures for peace (I4P)
- Page 36: Examples of strategies and approaches used for creating political space for insider mediation

# Executive Summary

Peace is not an elusive goal, but certainly one that requires sustained effort, well before and long after the signing of an “official” peace agreement. Disagreements over reforms, tensions around natural resources, and conflicts that emerge as a result of political transitions all require constant negotiation, dialogue, and compromise. As new alliances emerge and old ones falter, the risks of disagreements igniting conflict – at both local and national levels – become increasingly real. Political transitions, after all, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries, do not occur along a smooth or simple trajectory; the peacebuilding path is fraught with tensions, creating turbulence that impacts the political and social fabric in profound and, sometimes, unexpected ways.

Unlike a United Nations (UN) appointed Special Envoy, or the representative of an interested third party, insider mediators work from within a given context, leveraging their knowledge, relationships and reputations to prevent and resolve these on-going conflicts that emerge as a result of turbulent transitions. Unlike the interventions of external actors, there is no pre-defined start-date or “deadline” for the work of insider mediators; more often than not, these individuals, groups or entities work through their networks in a sustained manner, keeping peacebuilding processes on track, diffusing conflicts constructively and promoting dialogue exactly when and where it is needed most. The increase in decentralized and recurring violence, combined with waves of popular protests, election-related conflicts, and tensions around natural resources has meant that there is an increasing demand and scope for the work of insider mediators. Indeed, there is an ever-pressing realisation that short-term, international interventions alone are insufficient to address the complex and inter-dependent dynamics of the conflicts we witness today.

In collaboration with bilateral and multi-lateral development partners, especially the UN Department for Political Affairs (DPA) and the European Union (EU), and the Governments of Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, the UK, Luxembourg, Canada, and Denmark among others, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played a leading role in providing capacity development and accompaniment to insider mediators, and insider mediation processes. In countries as diverse as Bolivia, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Nepal, Timor-Leste, and Uganda - to mention only a few - UNDP has actively designed and implemented engagements to support insider mediators and insider mediation processes, whether in the context of elections, local conflicts, power transfers or mediation processes. Funded by the EU's Instrument for Stability, this Guidance Note represents the first effort to synthesise the insights garnered from these experiences into operational guidance for practitioners from the UN, the EU and other international organizations; it is hoped that this Guidance Note can also be of use to insider mediators themselves.

As outlined in part one of this Guidance Note on “Understanding Insider Mediators,” insider mediation is a cost-effective means of building national capacity for conflict prevention. Insider mediators - working overtly or behind the scenes - use their *influence* and *legitimacy* to constructively alter the behaviour, relationships and trajectory of parties in conflict. Using facilitation, dialogue and mediation, they work horizontally and vertically, formally and informally, at local, regional and national levels. There are five key ways in which insider mediators affect change: first, they help identify or create entry-points, often paving the way for official negotiations to begin; two, they build consensus between stakeholders, bridging differences around key stumbling blocks in peacebuilding processes; three, they play direct mediation roles, thereby actively preventing and/or managing a particular conflict; four, they play important advocacy roles, connecting national-level processes with wider public opinion; and, lastly, they act as early warning “beacons,” ensuring that action is taken on an issue before tensions can escalate into violence. Beyond these more defined roles, insider mediators also help initiate and deepen dialogue across the board, planting ideas and shifting discourse towards peace in the context of debates across society.

Not every insider mediator or every insider mediation process requires the support of external actors; many play important roles – both under the radar and directly in the limelight – independently of bilateral or multi-lateral actors. However, when there is limited political will, low capacity, the absence of trusted intermediaries and/or safe spaces, or when there is low momentum around a particular process, external actors can carefully support insider mediators to play constructive roles or catalyse necessary changes. It is important to note, however, that interventions

of this nature can be risky – for external actors and insider mediators alike; those situations most likely to require external support are often those where the risks are greatest and, therefore, where the most caution is needed.

Consequently, as Part Two of this Guidance Note on “Supporting Insider Mediators,” outlines, there are five steps that external actors can take to mitigate these risks: step one requires undertaking a conflict and situation analysis, which reveals the formal and informal systems, traditions, entities and individuals that could support insider mediation processes. Step two necessitates identifying and analysing potential levels of engagement, including whether to focus on community-based leaders, middle-level influencers, or high-level leaders – or a combination of two or all three. Step three entails identifying insider mediators, which requires “out of the box” thinking and looking in unconventional places, leveraging training programmes, analysis processes and networks to identify potential change-makers. Step four requires the development of an engagement and capacity-building strategy, which should ideally combine skills-building with mentoring, shadowing, exchange visits, accompaniment, and other experiences which foster deep learning. And, lastly, step five focuses on co-building “infrastructures for peace” (I4P) – or “platforms for conflict transformation” – which can ensure the sustainability of these endeavours.

These steps are key to ensuring capacity-building programmes for supporting insider mediators are robust, conflict-sensitive and tailored to the context, actors and objectives of the engagement. As Part Three of this Guidance Note on “Strategies and approaches for supporting insider mediators” explains, experience has shown that engagements to support insider mediators are strengthened by careful attention to details such as reframing issues, emphasizing positive developments, building trust over time, and conducting separate engagements or “caucuses” with parties when tensions are still high. Gender issues are also a vital consideration: women have often been marginalized and their decision-making power minimised in the context of State-centric peace processes and political transitions. In line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, engagements should seek to increase the number of women insider mediators by thinking creatively, creating safe spaces and ensuring times and locations of engagement-related activities take into account cultural norms around women’s participation.

Best practices from this field are still emerging, and it is hoped that this Guidance Note will stimulate greater dialogue amongst practitioners working to support insider mediators, and amongst insider mediators themselves. However, UNDP’s experience has shown that certain strategies, approaches and principles are more likely to lead to positive outcomes than others; for example, flexibility is fundamental for insider mediation as such processes cannot be rushed and yet, simultaneously, insider mediators and those supporting them must be prepared to seize opportunities that may arise unexpectedly. Similarly, institutionalization can be key to such endeavours, but there is a balance to be found between the flexibility of informal processes, and the legitimacy that often comes with formalized entities. Good practice indicates, furthermore, that the sustainability of endeavours should not be dependent on external support and, where possible, should build upon pre-existing communities of practice, even if such entities are likely to come with burdens of perceptions and certain biases which may need to be addressed. These good practices, and those outlined in Part Three of this Guidance Note highlight the complex trade-offs involved in insider mediation processes and endeavours to support insider mediators; to succeed, engagements must be anchored in the principles of inclusivity, national participation and local ownership.

Looking ahead, it is evident that the demand for insider mediators is likely to rise. To further improve our engagements in support of insider mediators, UNDP is finalising a training manual for UN, EU and staff of other regional and international entities. It is hoped that enhanced training in this domain will further increase the cadre of international staff with the required mix of technical and non-technical expertise to support insider mediators in their efforts to foster peace and peacebuilding processes. A follow-on initiative to provide wider support for insider mediation will soon be launched by UNDP, the DPA and the EU.



**THERE IS AN  
EVER-PRESSING  
REALISATION THAT  
SHORT-TERM,  
INTERNATIONAL  
INTERVENTIONS  
ALONE ARE  
INSUFFICIENT TO  
ADDRESS THE  
COMPLEX AND  
INTER-DEPENDENT  
DYNAMICS OF THE  
CONFLICTS WE WITNESS  
TODAY**

# Introduction

A steady state of perfect peace or everlasting development is an impossible goal. Comprehensive peace agreements such as the ones in South Africa in 1994, Guatemala in 1996, Sudan in 2005 and Nepal in 2006 have already been put to the test by significant new challenges to peace and stability. This is not to say that they did not mark important and, indeed, essential milestones in the histories of these countries: they were moments of transformational change. Yet, at both national and community levels, peace needs to be sustained on an almost daily basis. Recurring conflicts need to be resolved, new tensions managed, and consensus built around contested priorities before tensions lead to violence.

The same turbulence, which arises from rapid technological advances, developments in the global economy and the effects of climate change - catalysing new conflicts in countries and communities - leads to forms of development which demand constant renegotiation. Actors who may be opposed to, or in conflict with, one another have to form new coalitions and alliances to agree upon common priorities as their circumstances undergo rapid change; recurring conflicts over land and natural resources have to be repeatedly resolved before they precipitate violence; political transitions have to be peacefully managed; and, the consequences of resource and food insecurity must be rapidly addressed before they provoke social breakdown, and potentially loss of life.

Unlike external mediation by an actor such as the United Nations (UN) or a regional organization, insider mediation draws upon the abilities of institutions or individuals that are seen as “insiders” within a given context to broker differences, build consensus, and resolve conflict. Locally contextualised mediation processes led by insider mediators can be key to managing these challenges in a peaceful and constructive manner. In recent years, insider mediators have helped ensure peaceful elections in countries as diverse as Ghana, Nepal and, Uganda; they have helped resolve recurring local conflicts in Chad, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, and Timor-Leste; brought about a multi-party coalition Government in Lesotho, following the country's first peaceful transfer of power in 2012; ensured that Tunisia has moved forward despite facing significant political and security challenges; developed entry-points for Kofi Annan's mediation process following post-election violence in Kenya in 2008; built consensus around national priorities in Bolivia, Fiji, and Mauritania; and, provided substantive support for the peace agreements in Colombia and the Philippines.

In most instances, initial capacity development and accompaniment for these mediators has been discreetly provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), often working in close partnership with the UN Department for Political Affairs (DPA), and more recently the European Union (EU). Best practices from these experiences are yet to be synthesized into operational guidance for future practitioners and their international supporters. One consequence has been that, unlike the large-scale investments made in the peacekeeping capacities of international and regional organizations to intervene and stabilize conflicts, only very limited organized support has been provided for insider mediation. This Guidance Note is an initial attempt to provide this synthesis in the form of what will hopefully be a “living document” that can be updated as more insights become available.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/云报告?reportId=5\\_12448](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/云报告?reportId=5_12448)

