



# OSCE support to Insider Mediation

Strengthening mediation capacities,  
networking and complementarity

  
Berghof Foundation

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(Based on case studies in Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine)  
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<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, should be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

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## Disclaimer

The views expressed in the study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE or its participating States.

# Executive Summary

Most conflicts in the OSCE area have been and are being addressed by the OSCE through high-level (international) interventions through Track 1 mediation, diplomacy and political dialogue processes. While much progress has been made to mitigate/manage violent conflicts at this level, the periodic outbreak of violence and recurring heightened tensions in the OSCE area show the limitations of Track 1 interventions in achieving durable solutions. A holistic transformation of complex and protracted conflicts necessitates multiple levels and forms of engagement that connect and integrate the whole of society, and leverage local/national capacities and approaches of transforming conflict. This also requires engagement with *difficult*, yet crucial actors, like hardliners and violent non-state armed actors, without whom sustainable conflict transformation is unlikely. The OSCE has legal restrictions to its engagement in certain contexts and with certain actors. In addition, there is a limit to the OSCE's operational capacity to directly deal with entrenched local issues in protracted conflict contexts which will be elaborated on later.

In cases where the OSCE's operational capacity is limited, insider mediation processes *have the potential* to achieve complementarity with and strengthen Track 1 interventions. The increased recognition of and attention to insider mediation has lately been adding value to an evolving discourse. This is underscored by the first ever large-scale quantitative research conducted, which showed the impact of mediation in 'unarmed' insurrections from 1970–2006, and suggests that insider mediation significantly increases the likelihood of reaching negotiated agreements (Svensson and Lindgren 2013). Insider mediators (hereafter alternatively 'insiders') possess an inherent legitimacy that *often* places them in a more advantageous position than outsiders to mediate peace within and across their constituencies. Depending on the context, and the level and type of conflict, outsiders may involve insiders in their efforts or offer crucial mediation support to insider-driven processes. The principles of engagement however require acute sensitivity and strategizing. The following deliberates on some



conceptual and operational considerations for OSCE support to insider mediation.

### Conceptual considerations

(Insider) mediation can be understood as a strategic and multi-layered process of recognizing, (re)vitalizing and sustaining the *mediation space*, as well as exercising and nurturing *mediative capacity* for transforming tense, violent or broken relationships between or within communities and societal groups. This is done by facilitating the flow of communication, addressing the motivation and attitude behind violent behaviour, and renewing social contracts to enact the mutual interest of sustaining non-violent and constructive relations. Mediative capacity has two dimensions: the capacity of the actors – who mediate – to perform mediation; and the capacity of the actors – whose conflicts are mediated – to be open and ready for mediation.

Insiders are *intrinsic* to the conflict context, i.e. they are part of the social fabric of the conflict and their life is *directly* affected by it. They may have a stake in the conflict, but they prefer non-violent means of addressing it. Their legitimacy to mediate is not necessarily based on impartiality but on their rootedness in the context as well as their influence and authority, which provides them access to conflict actors that is unavailable to others (e.g. radical, hard to reach and armed actors). In contrast to external third-parties who are expected to be fully impartial, an insider is a mediator from within the conflict who is often partial to the outcome. While neutrality has traditionally been emphasized as a critical characteristic of the mediator, current research suggests that partiality can actually increase the likelihood of mediation success. Insiders have *inside knowledge* of subtleties in mood and positions – within or across constituency/ies. In many cases, they are well-connected both horizontally and vertically to non-state, state and international actors, which is required to forge crucial Track 1.5 processes. Insider mediation often involves cultural, traditional and religious underpinnings and specificity. An insider can be a state or non-state individual or entity, e.g. a politician, public servant, ministry, semi-formal court, community leader, artist, educator, celebrity, traditional/ religious/ spiritual leader, elder, entrepreneur, ex-combatant, youth or women's group, or a civil society or community-based (including faith-based and non-governmental) organization, or labour union.

### Operational considerations for insider mediation support

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

- **Support ‘networks’.** While specific insiders may need tailored support, it is worth considering an overarching layer of support that connects the synergies of a collective of insiders and outsiders. Insiders in many contexts mobilize networks in informal ways, by forming teams or sub-networks.
- **Context-specificity and conflict-sensitivity.** The diversity of insiders calls for diverse approaches to support (e.g. the support needs of an aged social worker may be different from that of a young leader). There might also be tensions among insiders, which need to be kept in mind while engaging with one or the other insider. Some insiders prefer to be—and are more effective when—not seen as engaging with outsiders. In certain cases, supporting insiders may actually cause harm to their recognition in society or increase competition among them. The challenge of balancing the transparency of OSCE support with confidentiality can become a political issue.
- **Sustainability and impact.** Support seen in *project* terms may fall short of being sustainable. Given that there can be limits to the political and financial sustainability of OSCE field operation projects, support could be developed as a loose advisory and collaboration mechanism or a stand-by support structure, which could form part of a larger networked support

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structure. As insider mediation can be a slow process with little observable impact over a shorter period of time, it is important to design support mechanisms that understand this and treat it with patience.

– **Strategy and flexibility.** State actors may see insider mediation as irrelevant (e.g. in the absence of manifest violence) or as a threat and block outsider mediation support. While maintaining full compliance with its own norms and principles as well as transparency in all its activities, in some contexts the OSCE may need to use its expertise and creativity to find effective strategic approaches to frame and translate insider mediation support ideas into acceptable programmes. Moreover, insiders – their roles, scope of work, and legitimacy – are very much dependent on the conflict’s dynamics. To the outsider’s eye, insiders may appear to be doing contradictory things. It is important to be flexible about such dynamics when designing support. Finally, even if it is a time-consuming process, it is more beneficial in the long run to first work intensively on intra-group mediation in order to sensitize groups for inter-group mediation (e.g. *intra*-faith mediation as a basis for *inter*-faith mediation).

# Recommendations

## **Operationalizing conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm**

Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm are stated principles in almost all third-party peace-related interventions. Often, it is not clear what conflict sensitivity exactly constitutes and how this can be implemented in projects. In the design of every project, it is important to include indicators for conflict sensitivity and devise context-specific and tailor-made strategies to ensure that conflict-sensitivity is practiced. It should not become a mere add-on, but should be embedded in all project activities. When analyzing conflict contexts, first identify insider mediation processes and the actors therein, understand their cultural specificities and mediative capacities, and draw on their experience in order to design mutual support strategies to engage constructively and create synergy effects.

## **Adopting tailor-made, context-specific strategies and policies**

Every context is unique and needs to be seen as such. While it is important to identify lessons from past processes for reflection, copy-pasting solutions that worked in one situation into another is context-insensitive and will not work. To support insider mediation, local specificities and needs must be taken into consideration.

## **Building on local knowledge and pre-existing insider mediation actors and structures**

There is a tendency in international peacebuilding to create new structures and new leaders as old structures are often seen as corrupt, biased, gender insensitive, etc. Looking through a normative and democratic lens, new structures and new leaders make perfect sense in corrupt, illiberal, authoritarian states. However, structures and leaders that have been created by the international community and which are not rooted in societies have a short life-span; they lack legitimacy in the eyes of the local population and as a result do not impact on the macro-political level. Therefore, it is important for the international community to work with existing structures by responding

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to the *needs expressed* by society and by gradually supporting insiders in transforming policies, practices, and approaches. It is also important to be aware of informal power structures, which play a critical role in influencing policies and decision making in traditional communities. A comprehensive understanding of these structures and networks enhances the effectiveness and impact of peacebuilding interventions.

### **Respecting and leveraging informal processes**

Insider mediation processes are mostly effective when they operate informally, under the radar of official institutions. While many insider mediators often seek legal recognition of their services to gain physical and legal protection, particularly when dealing with proscribed non-state armed actors, they often choose to remain in informal networks and loose associations. Any attempts to formalize these processes have to be carefully assessed in order to avoid negative repercussions, which may render such processes ineffective. Formalization would increase their visibility, limit the space for manoeuvring and may make them vulnerable to becoming instrumentalized and politicized.

### **Providing insider mediation support & including insiders in OSCE-designed mediation processes**

Especially in highly protracted or so-called ‘frozen’ contexts, the inclusion of insiders in OSCE processes could add value. Insiders are well placed to identify formal and informal power holders in society, to enable easier access to them, and could add legitimacy to the process. However, when including insiders in OSCE-designed processes, it is important to provide support around existing insider mediation processes and in accordance with their needs. More gains will be made by building on their activities in a collaborative manner rather than replacing their structures or prescribing solutions. Suggest and offer technical support if and when the context requires it, and tailor support according to the context and the actors involved. International NGOs and donors often tend to shape technical support for similar processes in the form of a ‘project’. This may not be best suited for insider mediation (for example, the fixed time-frame of projects may curtail the sustainability of support).

### **Being patient and flexible**

Insider mediation processes have their own route and speed in navigating different phases of conflict. Outsiders need to be patient with the possible ‘slow pace’ of insider mediation processes and allow that insiders know best when a window of opportunity will open. Trust their judgement and support them in navigating, but do not rush it. Support might also require a flexible operational support structure as the contexts in which the insiders operate are fluid and dynamic.

### **Mobilizing political support and financial resources**

Invest broadly in processes, platforms, and people. For the sake of sustainability, be more flexible in funding, i.e. rather than basing support on log frames, leave space to make adjustments according to the dynamics of the process. Insider mediation is not a job in itself; insiders usually have other jobs. Financing the living costs of insider mediators might easily corrupt them, and impact performance and loyalty. Improve the conditions for their work by providing infrastructure support, i.e. means for transportation and book-keeping, etc. Together with the national government, extend political support to insider mediators who often work in volatile contexts and under enormous political pressure.

### **Providing safe spaces for peer-exchange and networking**

Create co-learning and coaching opportunities by bringing together insider mediators from various regions. Enable peer-to-peer exchange and learning/sharing opportunities. Learning from the lived experiences of peers is more readily accepted than knowledge provided by external experts. Support any ‘network of networks’ for peer-learning and experience-sharing among insiders, as well as with OSCE field missions and other peacebuilding actors. The OSCE’s own mediation efforts could be better linked with insider mediation through this network.

### **Coaching, mentoring, accompaniment and shadowing**

Help to establish links between high-level mediators and insider mediators at the national and regional levels. Insider mediators seldom have exposure to high-level Track 1 Mediation processes and have limited understanding

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of how Track 1 Mediation functions. Insider mediators should be given the opportunity to accompany high-level mediators in their work and learn from their techniques and approaches (i.e. 'shadowing'). High-level international mediators could systematically coach and mentor insider mediators. They could provide concrete feedback and recommendations to improve skills and approaches. In turn, insider mediators can function as sounding boards for external mediators to reflect on their mediation processes and to provide feedback, establish access to certain conflict stakeholders, and provide knowledge of the context.

### **Providing needs-based knowledge and capacity-building**

Many insider mediators are already performing mediation activities in their respective contexts and have often inherited their skills and knowledge from their forefathers. They are well acquainted with the local context, cultural specificities, local needs and limitations. Opportunities for improving their skills and techniques in mediation should be offered that build on their already available resources and skills. Every capacity-building initiative should be based on local needs and tailor-made to the specific context, using culturally sensitive experts who are conversant in the local languages. Capacity building should also be tailored to the target group, which is usually not well versed in theoretical concepts. Universal norms, human rights practices, and international humanitarian law provisions have to be built in the curriculum, not in a prescriptive manner but rather as something they could profit from and leverage. It is important not only to appeal to insider mediators to adapt these principles but to show how these principles (which are universal and not Western) can be integrated into their work.

### **Jointly designing exit strategies and risk-assessment strategies**

When supporting insider mediation, it is important to have a clearly formulated and planned exit strategy, ideally jointly devised with insider mediators. The abrupt ending of projects or projects with no clear ending contribute to insecurity and affect the morale of insider mediators. A sudden withdrawal of support could even put insider mediators in a vulnerable position. When deciding to extend support to insider mediation processes, a joint discussion on possible risks for both sides is essential. As with all

externally supported peacebuilding initiatives, long-term commitment is vital. Long-term commitment does not necessarily have to mean only financial commitment; it could also be political or moral. If political realities on the ground prevent direct support of insider mediation processes, creative ways can be found to build national capacity for conflict prevention, mitigation, and conflict transformation.

### **Being aware of dilemmas and trade-offs in supporting insider mediation processes**

Insider mediators are effective because they are members of their respective societies. They have the same limitations and short-comings as the societies they come from. They are neither saints nor saviours, but they have the potential to become active drivers of change given their social positioning, access to power brokers, and the legitimacy and respect they enjoy. If this potential can be systematically nurtured and supported, it can become a powerful tool for change. It is important, however, to adopt policies and creative practices that do not entrench gender and social inequalities (sometimes mistakenly interpreted as cultural sensitivity) or compromise the position of the OSCE as an impartial mediator. The OSCE has the institutional framework to support insider mediation. The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre is well positioned to support field operations in identifying insider mediation processes and actors, and developing context-specific mediation support based on a proper risk assessment, upon request. Such processes could also be assisted by international experts and practitioners on the topic such as from the Berghof Foundation, if required.

### **Building a collaborative network**

The OSCE is recommended to extend its collaboration with other mediation support actors from the UN, other relevant international and regional organizations, participating States and civil society to include insider mediation support endeavours, particularly through the OSCE's Mediation Support Team. Other mediation support actors can supply diverse experience from various contexts that can be mutually beneficial for joint-learning and joint-action. The activities and experiences of even the smallest civil society actors/organizations can be observed for valuable insights and possible



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collaboration. They may offer highly innovative means of addressing conflict with a strong impact that, even if on a smaller scale, can be multiplied and expanded.

## List of Abbreviations

CPC	OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
HBK	Hlopchatobumazhnyi kombinat
I4P	Infrastructure for Peace
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
NAMU	The National Association of Mediators of Ukraine
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OMiK	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
OMiS	OSCE Mission to Serbia
ORMG	Odessa Regional Mediation Group
PCU	Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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# 1. Introduction

Over the last decade, an ‘insider/local turn’ in the field of peacebuilding has exposed a number of blind spots and shortcomings in international peacebuilding interventions. This has engendered a greater appreciation for local, indigenous and insider methods of dealing with conflict, and made a case for putting the local peacebuilding efforts of non-state actors at the centre of peacebuilding.<sup>2</sup> Such processes favour ‘bottom-up’ over ‘top-down’ approaches to ensure local ownership and inclusivity in peacebuilding processes. There is now a strong interest in the local factors that promote or hinder conflict transformation as well as the contributions and potential of actors ‘intrinsic’ to the conflict system, particularly those of insider mediators. To better understand the role that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) can play in supporting inside actors in mediation processes, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC), funded by the German OSCE Chairmanship, commissioned the Berghof Foundation to develop this study.

This study aims to probe more deeply into the potential opportunities and challenges that exist for the OSCE in supporting insider mediators, and to develop interfaces for mutual support that can maximize complementarity between them. To this end, in-depth case studies were conducted in Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine to gather OSCE experiences, and identify lessons and operational recommendations. In particular, the authors were asked to examine three OSCE-supported projects in Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine to discern if and how these projects could be seen as supporting (or having supported) insider mediation and the OSCE’s overall mandate to strengthen peace and security in Europe.

This study was commissioned to enhance conceptual clarity and provide operational guidance as to how the OSCE could better support insider mediation as well as to reflect on possible challenges and constraints.

2 See for example Mac Ginty (2008); Boege (2011).

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Applying Berghof Foundation's conceptual framework for insider mediation, the authors analyzed processes and actors in the three cases, including but not limited to the three suggested projects. The rest of this chapter contextualises and rationalizes the study, and clarifies its objective, scope, and methodology. Chapter 2 establishes conceptual and operational considerations. Chapter 3 presents the data gathered from the three cases and reflects on perspectives for insider mediation and support. Chapter 4 deliberates on opportunities for OSCE support to insider mediation and Chapter 5 makes some concluding reflections.

## 1.1. Background

### 1.1.1. Conflicts in the OSCE area and challenges related to high-level diplomacy and political settlements

The OSCE area exhibits a rich and interesting diversity of culture, ethnicity, and socio-political dynamics. Not unrelated, the area unveils, time and again, various facets of the so-called 'new wars'<sup>3</sup> of the post-cold war era: inter-, trans-, and intra-state conflicts over power, territory, self-determination, and (weak) governance/statehood. Some of these conflicts become violent and attempts are made to resolve them, but wounds remain that can then be easily reopened. Many of these conflicts are being and have been addressed through high-level (international) interventions with Track 1 diplomacy<sup>4</sup> and

3 In the field of Peace and Conflict studies, the nature and characteristics of war in the post-cold war era were analyzed by Mary Kaldor (1999), who distinguished between 'old' and 'new' wars, arguing that, due to globalization, the actors, goals, methods and modes of financing wars in the post-cold war era have changed significantly.

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

political dialogue processes by the OSCE – the world’s largest regional security organization – with varying degrees of success.

While these are crucial constituents of a peacebuilding process, there is a limit to what can be achieved and impacted with Track 1 efforts alone, depending on the type and level of conflict in question. Even then, entry points to conflict stakeholders might be missing, particularly of the kind needed to establish solid and trusted relationships. As a result, Track 1 interventions by the OSCE or its participating states might be seen as foreign-driven, despite its consensus-based decision-making process, and remote from realities on the ground. Many of these long-enduring conflicts cannot simply be ‘settled’ through a Track 1 peace process but require multiple levels and forms of engagement that connect and integrate the whole of society. While scholars and practitioners have repeatedly pointed out the need to connect Track 1 processes with Track 2 and 3 peacebuilding efforts by non-state, local actors (or insiders) to increase the effectiveness of interventions, it remains a daunting task. While the OSCE is directly involved in Track 1 peace processes in some cases, it also supports Track 2 and 3 peacebuilding efforts, in particular through its field operations.

### **1.1.2. Recognition or ‘re-discovery’ of insider mediation**

Over the last decade insider mediators have played critical mediation roles.<sup>5</sup> This, however, does not mean that insider mediators did not exist or that insider mediation did not occur prior to that time. There is simply much more knowledge and recognition now about their (potential) impact on peace processes. To put things into perspective: mediation is not a new concept. Since ancient times, wise men and women, elders, and religious figures have settled disputes in their communities based on custom and religious guidance, a practice that continues in many societies. This phenomenon is a part of what is now being conceptualized as *insider mediation*. This re-discovery of insider mediation has had positive implications in terms of support delivery and, more importantly, of the creation of national and regional

- USIP’s ‘Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding’ <http://glossary.usip.org/resource/tracks-diplomacy>.

5 See for example UNDP 2015.

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networks of insider mediators.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the professional and international mediation practice of today, having evolved from ancient mediation practices, has been further conceptually developed to deal with the complexity of contemporary conflicts, which can also be regional and global in scale.

The OSCE has also recognized the need to involve local mediators in mediation processes, recognizing that their involvement “can increase chances for ensuring the engagement of all relevant stakeholders” (OSCE 2012, 29). With this and the realization that “there may have been mediation attempts by other third parties prior to the appointment of the OSCE mediator”, the impetus is there to include “respected local intermediaries with inside knowledge” in a mediation process to help the OSCE mediator “manage impartiality, strengthen the commitment of conflict parties, and increase local ownership and the legitimacy of the process” (OSCE 2014, 65). The necessity has also been stressed of “developing co-operation, co-ordination and partnerships among international, regional, and sub-regional organizations, as well as with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other actors involved in mediation” (*ibid.*, 23). This has expanded to include ‘mediation support’, which, among others, tries to build national and local capacities for mediation, for example, through training existing and potential local mediators.<sup>7</sup>

Although it also experiences some political and legal constraints in mediating or facilitating dialogue in certain contexts, the OSCE’s primary motivation for supporting insider mediation is to achieve synergies across mediation processes toward the peaceful and sustainable resolution of conflicts.<sup>8</sup> Some actors in specific contexts exhibit deep-seated animosity or

6 The African Insider Mediators Platform (AIMP) is an interesting example. See <http://www.asc.org.za/african-insider-mediators-platform-aimp>.

7 There is also growing awareness within the European Union (EU) of the role that insider mediators can and do play, and a willingness to explore if and how these capacities can be nurtured using EU aid instruments. In 2011, the Instrument for Stability (IfS) funded projects in Bolivia, Egypt, Georgia, Côte d’Ivoire, Kosovo and the Kyrgyz Republic with the potential to support insider mediators (Council of the European Union 2009).

8 As per conversations with OSCE officials on several occasions during this study. The OSCE defines mediation as a “structured communication process, in which an impartial third party works with conflict parties to find commonly agreeable solutions to their dispute, in a way that satisfies their interests at stake.”, whereby dialogue facilitation represents a distinct approach to

scepticism towards ‘Western’ interventions, and, thus, offer no or inadequate entry points for engagement. In some contexts, the ability of the OSCE to establish direct links to certain key conflict stakeholders is limited due to status questions and/or restrictions imposed by de-facto authorities. To overcome some of these constraints, the OSCE is increasingly looking for creative ways to stay engaged. One such way is for the OSCE to consider collaboration with insiders already well positioned to respond to specific conflicts. This can help the OSCE in gaining access to relevant actors who have been hard to reach so far.

## 1.2. Objectives and scope

The objective of this study is to explore opportunities for the OSCE to augment its mediation-support structure with a view to developing interfaces of mutual support that can strengthen collaboration and complementarity between the OSCE and actors involved in insider mediation processes. To this end, what is presented is a generic conceptual framework and practical considerations for identifying and supporting insider mediation processes and actors therein (insider mediators).

The scope and limitations of the study are as follows:

- It does not comprise a comprehensive theoretical analysis of insider mediation, but rather highlights some key aspects that may be useful for operational purposes.
- It is not an evaluation of OSCE-supported projects, which did not focus on mediation *per se*. The objective is to obtain a sense of the insider mediation elements surrounding the processes under scrutiny and the actors engaged in them with a view to extrapolating opportunities for the OSCE to support insider mediation processes.

mediation insofar as it is “a more open-ended communication process between conflict parties in order to foster mutual understanding, recognition, empathy and trust. These can be one-off conversations, or go on over a longer period of time. Although dialogues can lead to very concrete decisions and actions, the primary aim is not to reach a specific settlement, but to gain a better understanding of the different perspectives involved in a conflict.” (OSCE 2014, 10).



### 1.3. Methodology

This study consists of a qualitative analysis of:

1. the existing information and knowledge on insider mediation (a desk study that reviews relevant literature and case studies); and
2. original data and knowledge acquired through field studies.

The case studies constituted desk research of conflict analysis and mapping; content analysis of primary and secondary literature and media articles; and semi-structured interviews during field visits (eight days each) to multiple locations in Ukraine, Kosovo, and Kyrgyzstan. The target group included representatives from conflict parties, civil society, and international organizations who are engaged in the respective conflict contexts. In order to obtain a wide-angle view of the subject, a number of secondary sources were also interviewed via skype and telephone; these were mostly individuals with remote or previous affiliations with the OSCE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the European Union (EU). This report is a synthesis of this data.

In each case, a local expert/field researcher was responsible for the above and for drafting case reports. Local researchers were selected so as to include local voices, knowledge, and perspectives. Interviews were conducted in the local languages. This facilitated access to crucial actors and enabled smoother discussions. Berghof researchers accompanied the local researcher in all interviews. The selection of field researchers, interviewees, and the overall conduct of the study adhered to the high academic and ethical standards, and took into consideration the sensitive political nature of the subject. The case studies required significant preparation time, even for the local researchers, as they had to first establish trust with a diverse set of actors.

## 2. Insider mediation: concepts and practice

In this chapter the conceptual and practical considerations for understanding insider mediation are presented. First, the key terms *mediation* and *insider* are clarified; second, the contextual factors of insider mediation processes are identified, as well as the actors involved and engaged therein; finally, the relevance and modalities for outsider support to insider mediation are considered.

### 2.1. Clarification of key terms

#### 2.1.1. Mediation

Mediation is an age-old practice with cultural, traditional and religious underpinnings and specificity. Cultural variations in mediation—who performs it, how, and with what goal—are an interesting field of study.<sup>9</sup> Mediation has been defined as an “intervention in a standard negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision-making power but who assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute” (Moore 1996, 15). The OSCE defines mediation, along the same lines, as a “structured communication process, in which an impartial third party works with conflict parties to find commonly agreeable solutions to their dispute, in a way that satisfies their interests at stake” (OSCE 2014, 10).<sup>10</sup>

9 See Augsburg (1992) for a detailed perspective on cultural diversity and specificities in mediation.

10 It can be argued that these definitions are most befitting in conflict contexts where there are, for example, clear disputants or ‘conflict parties’, who can be convened at a negotiation table. Indeed, in mediation processes, ‘representatives’ of communities that are in conflict are called upon. Whether this representation is consensual of the community deserves nuancing. Additionally, it has to be questioned whether peace agreements reflect the expectations of the respective communities. Finally, the question remains as to whether the transformation of (broken) relationships between communities has been observed.

## Insider mediation

While generally in agreement with the OSCE's definition, considering the relational aspect of conflict and violence and given that socio-political conflicts affect people in different ways, a broader understanding of mediation is needed, as a human and relationship-centric process:

*Mediation can be understood as a strategic and multi-layered process of recognizing, (re)vitalising and sustaining the mediation space<sup>11</sup>, and exercising mediative capacity<sup>12</sup> for transforming tense, violent or broken relationships between or within communities and societal groups, by facilitating the flow of communication, addressing the motivation and attitude behind violent behaviour, and renewing social contracts to enact mutual interests of sustaining non-violent and constructive relations.<sup>13</sup>*

Especially in violence-prone or protracted conflicts where trust and confidence is low, the mediation process needs to be *strategic* in intercepting *multiple layers* in formal and informal spaces of the peacebuilding process. It must also address and involve a diverse set of actors with diverse capacities and roles, including enablers, facilitators and interlocutors who break deadlocks, catalyse change by moving things forward, and keep the process alive. Depending on the type and level of conflict, mediation can become a process in itself, involving multiple mediators, mediation teams, and further peacebuilding actors who engage in “multiple roles and

11 Mediation space is the safe and constructive social space between divided groups where their respective discourses can encounter each other; and interact non-violently and dialogically to negotiate and renew social contracts (cf. Frazer and Ghetta 2013). This space may already exist in some form and, thus, would need to be recognized and stimulated, or it may be so enmeshed with violence that it may need to be revitalized and kept alive by actions that sustain it. This mediation space concept can be seen through a systems theory lens of “social autopoiesis” (Luhmann 1986; Fuchs and Hofkirchner 2009). In social systems, depending on the stage the conflict context is in, a mediation process emerges (or resumes) ‘organically’ as per an inherent need of the context to seek an end to violence and (re)concile human relationships.

12 Mediative (in ‘mediative capacity’) “suggests a quality of relational interaction rather than the specificity of a [mediatory] role” (Lederach 2005, 95; Lederach 2002). This capacity in the mediation space has two dimensions: the capacity of the actors – who mediate – to perform mediation and the capacity of the actors – whose conflicts get mediated – to be open and ready for mediation. See also Bush 2004; Bush and Folger 2014; Bush and Folger 2005; Della Noce, Bush, and Folger 2002 for inspirations for ‘transformative mediation’.

13 Definition adapted from Giessmann (2016, 43).

activities rather than as an activity conducted by a single person” (Lederach (2005, 95) quoting Mitchell (2003). This latter criterion is crucial for understanding insider mediation.

### 2.1.2. ‘Insider’ mediation (and peacebuilding)

The above-delineated broader concept of mediation is crucial for conceptualizing and understanding insider mediation and insider mediators. Peacebuilding and peacemaking processes, depending on the conflict context, may be guided by insider/local actors and outsider/international actors in different capacities and levels. Simply put, insiders – in contrast to outsiders – are actors intrinsic to the conflict context in question, i.e. they are part of the social fabric of the conflict; their lives are directly affected by the conflict; and they may have a stake in the conflict. Given today’s globalized world and the often inevitable internationalization of local conflicts, regional and international actors are almost always involved in one way or another. Insider peacebuilding and insider mediation can be seen as processes in which insiders create, own, and lead the process, with or without the engagement of outsiders. These processes constitute diverse roles and activities of insiders (and outsiders), congruent to their capacities, skills, and resources.<sup>14</sup>

An insider’s role is less defined. This role can theoretically be performed by an insider who is not necessarily a mediator by profession but possesses mediative capacity and who would be listened to. This distinguishes insider peacebuilding and insider mediation in that the latter is more focused on performing mediation services and bridging people. Gourlay and Ropers (2012, 95) suggest that it would be unwise to “expand the category of insider mediators to subsume all kinds of peace engagement, e.g. peace advocacy, the monitoring of conflict and peace, protection, peace education, trauma work, etc. It makes the most sense to interpret the insider mediators as a sub-group within the wider group of insider peacebuilders.

14 The terms mediator and peacebuilder, although quite widely used, actually describe roles performed by an actor, rather than being an honorific (same with change-maker, bridge-builder, interlocutor, etc.). The same goes for insider mediator and insider peacebuilder. This actor can be an individual with a primary social function, such as a school teacher in a village or a social worker, who contributes to (insider) mediation or peacebuilding with his/her own capacity, skills and resources.

## Insider mediation

The unique feature of insider mediators in this context is that they are involved in mediation and engage directly in communication with representatives from the disputing parties.” This does not, however, mean that insider mediators cannot perform other non-mediatory peacebuilding roles. Many, in fact, do. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the concept of insider mediator (hereafter alternatively ‘insiders’) is not a normative one driven by a certain set of values, but rather a descriptive one underscoring their main function in the conflict landscape.

The definition of insider mediation does not differ from that of mediation, but the art and science of insider mediation is fundamentally different from the initiation of a mediation process by an outsider mediator, in the following ways:

- The term *insider* accentuates the centrality of ownership and the initiative of insider actors in shaping the mediation space.
- In many cultures, insiders do perform a mediatory role without being aware of conceptual discussions on mediation.
- In most cases, insiders possess natural and intuitive mediatory skills. They are not mediators by profession, although some might have learned the skills in a professional setting.
- This mediative capacity, in contrast to an outsider mediator, may be rooted in resources from the local culture and also from religion, faith, and spirituality, in addition to being guided by an inner need to restore broken relationships in their communities, social groups or constituencies. The relational interaction of an insider thereby is understandably of a different dimension than that of an outsider.
- Insiders’ legitimacy and effectiveness to mediate is not necessarily based on impartiality but on partiality and closeness to the context.
- A crucial advantage is also insiders’ closeness and/or access to some of the conflict parties that no one else can reach out to, especially radical, hard to reach and armed actors.

## Evolution of the insider mediation discourse

All studies on insider mediation/mediator credit Wehr and Lederach (1991) as the authors of the concept.<sup>15</sup> They drew attention to the difference between insider-partial mediators, on the one hand, who may be aligned to one of the conflict parties but *trusted* across divides as being fair in mediating, while on the other hand, outsider-impartial mediators are valued for their impartial position and personal disassociation with the conflict context. This corresponds to Moore's (1996) description of 'social network mediators', who are usually invited to intervene in a conflict because of their close relationship with the disputants, or largely because they are part of the social network with the disputants. Moore's 'authoritative mediators' — who may be neutral to the outcome but may have vested interests in or inclination towards a specific outcome — may also be considered as insider-partial mediators in some contexts where authoritatively enforced agreements are not unwelcome or even desired.

Research has followed that conceptually deconstructs the different aspects of insider-partial and social network mediators, with some establishing insider mediator as terminology.<sup>16</sup> The terminology has also found a place in the rhetoric of intergovernmental and regional organizations<sup>17</sup>, largely attributable to external experts' recommendations for supporting insider mediators.<sup>18</sup>

Given the religiosity of societies and the traditions they live by, scholars have observed that religious and traditional leaders can be seen as insider

15 Alternatively, Wehr and Lederach (1996) is often cited, which is a book chapter containing the same material.

16 See for example: Olson and Pearson 2002; Elgström, Bercovitch, and Skau 2003; Mason 2009; Svensson 2013; Svensson and Lindgren 2013; Ropers 2014; Roepstorff and Bernhard 2013; Anderson and Olson 2003.

17 See for example: EU 2012; OSCE 2014; UN 2012; UN 2015; UNDP 2015.

18 See for example: Dudouet and Dressler 2016; EPLO 2013; Frazer and Ghetas 2013; Giessmann 2016; Gourlay and Ropers 2012; Lehmann-Larsen 2014; Mason and Sguaitamatti 2011b; mediatEUr 2015; Rocha 2016; Ropers 2012; Ropers 2014; Ropers and Anuvatudom 2013; Strachan 2013; EPLO 2009; Cristescu, Nicolescou, and Wandt 2012.

mediators who draw on values and practices of religion, faith, spirituality, culture, and tradition as a source of inspiration (Mason 2009; Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana 2009). Research on traditional and religious leaders/authorities and their faith-based and traditional approaches to insider mediation have since become prominent.<sup>19</sup> It has also been underscored that the mediation approach of faith-based actors is not exclusively religious (Mir and Vimalarajah 2016). On the other hand, it is argued that, to understand the constructive role of tradition and religion in conflict, a wider array of actors need to be considered. These are actors, who—on principle and/or strategically—draw on (multiple) faiths, cultures and traditions, and on non-religious (secular) and non-traditional concepts/values (ibid.).

## 2.2. Identifying insider mediation: contexts, processes and actors

The following is a set of observations from Berghof Foundation's current, previous and ongoing research and praxis experience (notwithstanding this current research), as well as that of others, regarding the identification of the processes and actors of insider mediation.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.1. Premises: The mediation space – In which contexts does insider mediation occur?

In socio-political conflicts, insider mediation can be observed in some specific contexts and when some basic premises are met. Insider mediation is usually observed in traditional, collectivist, and high-context societies or social groups. Religion and tradition are important in such contexts, and religious/traditional actors are respected and called upon to mediate conflict. Also, in contexts where the state and governance structures are too weak to deal effectively with conflict, the need for mediation increases and is taken up by insiders. The same happens in contexts of asymmetric armed

19 See, for example: Johnstone and Svensson 2013; Myers and Shinn 2010; ACCORD 2012; Mutisi 2011; Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana 2009; Mason and Sguaitamatti 2011a.

20 For simplicity, external sources have not been cited.

conflicts, where both state and non-state armed actors may see an insider as the most trustable mediator.

A general trait in such contexts is that people communicate indirectly and non-confrontationally in conflict, with face-saving (the need to maintain a good self-image by not admitting mistakes) being important. In seeking a mediator in such conflicts, the mediator's social status plays an important role: the virtue of interpersonal trust and relationships is more highly regarded than neutrality or impartiality. An outsider (an international) may be regarded with scepticism or expected to play only a supportive role. Insiders become involved before the international community comes in and continue to live in the affected society after the former departs. They are the direct benefactors of peace, fostering long-term commitment and personal dedication to the process.

### **2.2.2. Insiders and their mediative capacity: Who are they?**

#### **What are their characteristics? What approaches do they take?**

Insiders are *intrinsic* to the conflict context, being an integral part of the conflict-affected community and social fabric. They have a stake in the conflict because their lives are directly affected by it. Their relationship to other conflict stakeholders may be one of cultural, ethnical, religious, geographical, or linguistic proximities. More broadly, this may also be normative, political or even just sympathetic proximity. Insiders may also—officially or unofficially—be a member of a party with a stake in the conflict.

Insiders are most valued for their in-depth knowledge of the conflict context: its history, the conflict's actors, and the conflict's dynamics. As a mediator, they have a grip on the internal resources that exist for peace, e.g. from tradition, culture, and religion. They have cultural awareness and empathy, and are able to draw on tradition, culture, religion, spirituality and other inspirations.

Even when insiders are seen as being member of a conflict party, they prefer non-violent means of addressing conflict, and have a high level of commitment to promote constructive relationships. They usually place community or national interests over personal or party interests. They are self-motivated to mediate (and are expected to be so) and, despite their partiality, they tend to be *fair* in mediating.



## Insider mediation

Insiders usually are leaders in their community; often figures with charisma. They are patient and equanimous types who can actively listen and take different perspectives. They may also need to be persistent in engaging with difficult actors and prepared to take personal risks even in volatile conditions. Insiders may have the intuition and skill to mediate with or without formal mediation training. They have the personal and intellectual capacity to consider the political, economic, social, and cultural complexities of the conflict, and are able to identify entry and re-entry points to engage parties in continuous dialogue.

Their insider nature allows them credibility, respect, morally legitimacy, and influence within or across constituencies. It also keeps them informed about the *inside knowledge* of the subtleties in mood, positions, and internal politics of the groups. They nurture shared connections, relationships, and influence horizontally and vertically with non-state, state and international actors across levels and Tracks 1 to 3. This multi-level access enables them to mobilize their (own and other) constituencies and, thus, helps put political pressure on decision makers. Last but not least, insiders are part of a collective, often forming a ‘network of networks’. To ensure a fair representation of interests for the different conflict parties, they need to remain in close touch with co-mediators and keep a finger on the pulse of shifting conflict dynamics.

21 Representing traditional, indigenous or customary systems of authority or authoritative institutions, or presiding over village-level or tribal associations and indigenous civil society networks.

22 Professionally, local mediators are usually involved in alternative dispute resolution at the community-level, e.g. property or family cases. There are usually no professional trainings for them to take on broader socio-political conflicts.

**Table 1: Diversity of insiders**

<p><b>Individuals</b> (from civil society, communities, and social groups)</p>	<p><b>Entities</b> (social groups, institutions, organizations)</p>
<p><b>State actors</b></p>	
<p>Politician (in power, but not inclined to the status quo and vocal about equality, justice, and rights)</p> <p>Public servant at a state institution, e.g. district commissioner, high-court judge</p> <p>Member of security apparatuses, e.g. police superintendent, military personnel</p>	<p>Specific ministry or governance instrument</p> <p>Peace council</p> <p>Semi-formal court</p>
<p><b>Non-state actors</b></p>	
<p>Community leader, Social worker, Lawyer, Educator</p> <p>Artist, Activist, TV/radio personality or celebrity</p> <p>Politician (not in power), Ex-member of a political party</p> <p>Spiritual leader</p> <p>Religious authority and elite representing a religious institution (bishop, sheikh, mufti, abbot, monk, rabbi)</p> <p>Traditional authority and elite (village chief, tribal judge, senior headman, elder)<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Mid-level religious actor (abbot and monk attached to Buddhist monasteries, bishop, priest and pastor from the Christian Church, imam, cadí, monk, nun)</p> <p>Entrepreneur, Business person</p> <p>Ex-combatant, Ex-child-soldier</p> <p>Professional local mediator or facilitator<sup>22</sup></p>	<p>Youth group</p> <p>Women's group</p> <p>Cultural group</p> <p>Advocacy group</p> <p>Civil Society Organization (CSO)</p> <p>Community-Based Organization (CBO)</p> <p>Faith-Based Organization (FBO)</p> <p>Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)</p> <p>Traditional/customary institution or court</p> <p>Humanitarian organization</p> <p>Labour/trade union</p>

## Insider mediation

Two forms of outsiders are particularly close to the insider. Some are ‘regional insiders,’ who may share the same set of proximity factors that insiders have: cultural, ethnical, religious, geographical, linguistic proximities, normative, political, and sympathetic. Such examples include elders in African contexts; influential political or social figures in Latin American and the Middle East; and monks in Asian Buddhist contexts. They may, thus, become legitimate mediators in a context other than their own. The others may seem more remote, but on account of their assimilation into the local/national context, are accepted by the local community as their own. Other examples could be a Norwegian Médecins sans frontières doctor in Syria or an American Quaker activist in Northeast India. It is possible that they have lived there for decades, speak the language, and practice local customs. These outsiders are not intrinsic to the conflict system per se, but may still be affected by it and, thereby, have a personal stake in it. The insider/outsider nature of diaspora actors is a peculiar question, and is also subject to different perspectives.<sup>23</sup>

## The Wajir story: Exemplifying mediation space and mediative capacity

The intensely politicized and volatile national divide in early 1990s Kenya prompted a remarkable transformation in the way such conflicts were mediated. The seeds of this transformation were planted in the Wajir district in northeast of Kenya in 1993 by a group of women – led by the late Dekha Ibrahim Abdi – who were tired of clan wars and the state’s failure to address them. They worked diligently to establish processes and structures conducive to a much more sustainable process of mediation. They established the Wajir Women for Peace initiative through which they helped to curb violence by playing a unique mediating role — despite strong initial resistance from an otherwise patriarchal society — between elders, warlords, and religious and traditional leaders. The constructive, persistent approach taken by the women gradually changed perceptions among many conservative authorities,

<sup>23</sup> Some diaspora actors may be more active remotely from outside the context than an insider living in the context. They are sometimes able to generate international pressure due to activism in the context they inhabit.

leading them to respect and celebrate the role of women in keeping society together. It succeeded in transforming the patriarchal model so that women could be seen as leaders (and co-leaders) in mediation processes. These women, deeply religious themselves, were motivated to undertake peace work partly because of their faith, and their mediation efforts skilfully combined traditional, religious, and secular approaches. They mediated across religious and ethnic divides using elements from the same religions and traditions that were being used to fuel the conflicts.

### **2.2.3. Insiders: What roles do they play in conflict transformation?**

As discussed earlier, the role of insiders is not strictly defined. Insiders take on multiple roles according to need: mediator, negotiator, facilitator, messenger, interlocutor, go-between, mentor, and ceasefire monitor, among others. One can observe two scopes of this role, depending on the actor's 'insiderness' and acceptance within and between constituencies. One chooses to (or has to) focus on intra-group mediation, i.e. mending internal fault-lines within their own constituency, building internal consensus on issues, and preparing it for inter-group encounter and dialogue. The other mediates across constituencies and along multiple levels/tracks. Some insiders may have high visibility, while others are very low-profile: behind the scenes or under the radar. Insiders are mostly dialogic, social network mediators, but in some cases may (need to) be authoritative. Generally, insiders operate through informal channels at the sub-national level, however, there are cases where insiders have partaken in national-level processes.<sup>24</sup> There are four basic scopes of efforts in insider mediation:

#### **Violence prevention, early warning, early action**

Insiders are better informed about the conflict dynamics and can therefore play early-warning and early-action roles to prevent violence. If violence is happening, they are active in taking risks to reach out to the perpetrators.

<sup>24</sup> For example, insiders played a crucial role in the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nepal.

## Insider mediation

After initial calm, they make intermittent efforts to bring belligerents to the table to talk, and to ensure that retaliation is avoided.

### **Facilitation of peace processes in protracted armed conflict**

When there are favourable relations between state and non-state armed actors, insiders are able to negotiate the conflict issues individually and separately with the actors. They take the initiative, help set the tone, and offer a starting point for conversations towards formal dialogue. They try to build consensus and break deadlocks by introducing win-win solutions. Sometimes they are called upon to participate in the implementation of agreements and for ceasefire monitoring. As part of the community affected by the conflict, insiders also negotiate with armed actors over the needs of the community, for example, access to security, food and other basic means of subsistence, as well as preventing the recruitment of minors.

### **Engendering peaceful co-existence**

Insiders serve as interlocutors in communities by creating space in which perceptions about ‘the other’ are challenged through constructive dialogue. By sensitizing multi-ethnic/multi-religious communities about the *need for peace*, insiders are able to better engender peaceful co-existence than any other kind of peacebuilding actor. This may include *intra* and *inter*-faith dialogue.

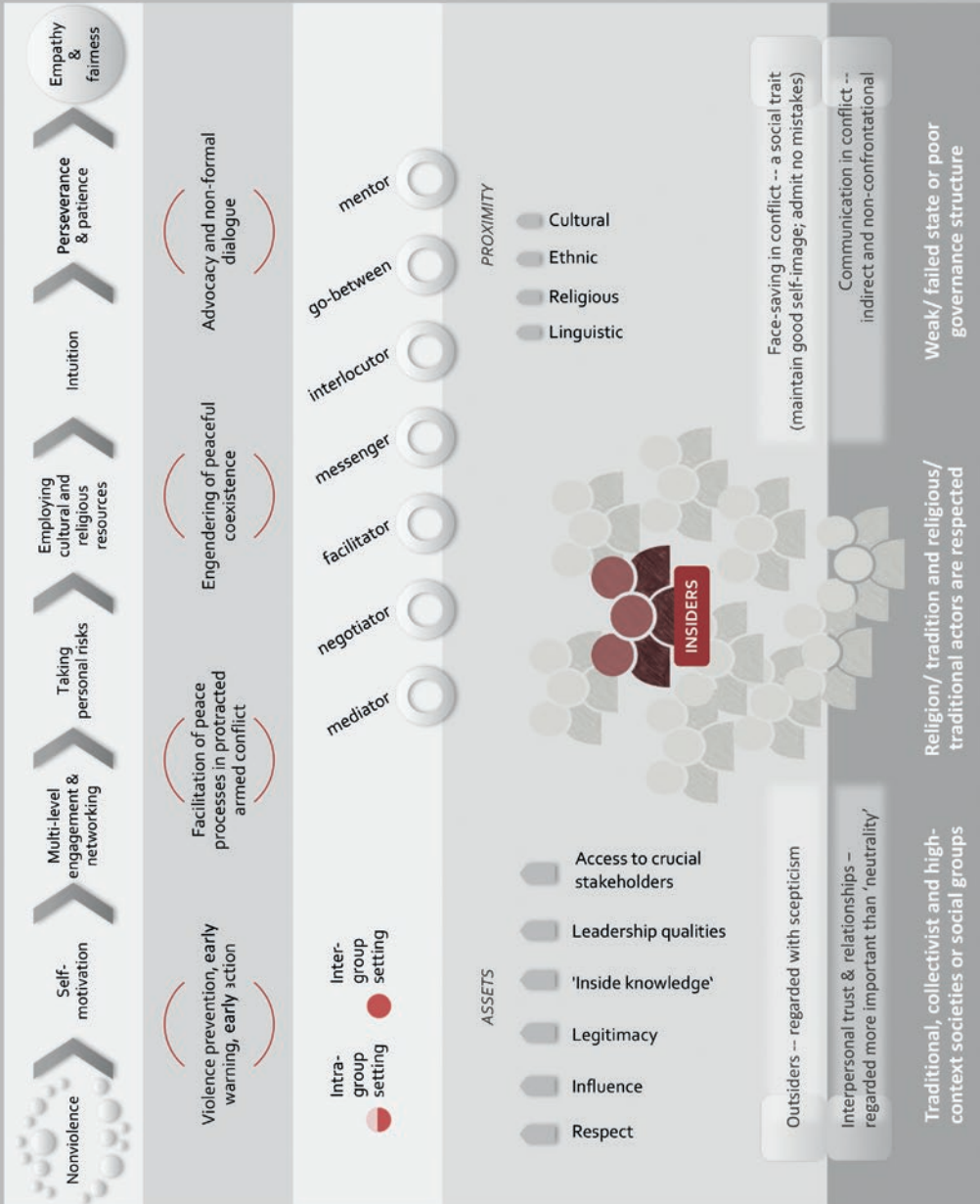
### **Advocacy and non-formal dialogue**

Insiders often ‘take it to the stage’ in order to generate public support for shifting public opinion towards peace. They may engage in mass public forums and cultural spaces (broadcast media talk shows, social media, films, theatre) to raise awareness of key conflict issues, and propose non-violent approaches to addressing them. Insiders also initiate and consolidate local non-formal dialogues conducive to and, as necessary, as preconditions for National Dialogues.

## **Figure 1: The facets of insider mediation**

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APPROACHES      FUNCTIONS      ROLES      INSIDERNESS      PREMISE      CONTEXT



INSIDER MEDIATION

## 2.3. Support to insider mediation

### 2.3.1. Why and when to support insider mediation?

Insider mediation can function without the support of outsiders. This can be because the insiders do not want such support, the outsiders fail to identify its existence, or there is no outsider presence in the given local context. So, why should outsiders care to support insider mediation? For the OSCE, mediation support is about providing a range of services to assist the efforts of high-level OSCE mediators, such as Special Representatives of the Chairmanship and their teams, for example, by strengthening their operational capacity to assist dialogue facilitation and mediation activities. It also includes assisting OSCE field operation staff in dialogue efforts. The OSCE has come a long way in this regard. Since the adoption of Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11 (2011) on Elements of the Conflict Cycle, the OSCE CPC has managed to build up and bolster operational capabilities for mediation support. This includes training and capacity building; knowledge management and operational guidance; outreach, networking, co-operation and co-ordination; and operational support, such as process design (OSCE 2014, 10–11). For a regional organization like the OSCE, supporting insider mediators may be of particular relevance. Especially when it comes to narrowing the gap between early warning and early action, the OSCE has been actively trying to find and promote new ways/strategies to deal with the growing need for information that facilitates the translation of early warning into political action, including mediative efforts related to situations of emerging tensions/conflict. Due to their strong ties to the respective conflict areas, local mediators can act as knowledgeable insiders for timely action (against the background of the above mentioned general limits of international organizations).

Insiders may indeed be included in the OSCE's mediation processes, but this is different from supporting an insider mediation process. Support provided by outsiders to insider mediation and the collaboration between insider and outsider mediators are two different but equally important endeavours. What is required depends on the context. In certain situations, building support around an insider mediation process is more beneficial

than bringing in an outsider/official mediation process.<sup>25</sup> It is important to identify the key prerequisites as to when support to insider mediation might be preferred. Insider mediation is not a panacea but, with the right kind of support, it may achieve more results. Outsider support to insider mediation processes, if not responsive to the needs of insider mediators, may end up doing more harm than good.

The following outlines a rationale for why and when it is important to support insider mediation:

- An outsider mediation process is susceptible to collapsing when violence erupts, resulting in loss of momentum. In an insider mediation process, insiders would know better than others how to navigate the different phases of conflict, de-escalate violence, and when the time is ripe again for resuming the process.
- Since impartiality is expected from an outsider mediator, any intentional or unintentional breach, e.g. because of a shift in political dynamics, may be seen as unforgivable and thus jeopardize peace talks. Insiders' partiality is a given and, therefore, usually accepted.
- There is a risk that an agreement with state actors stemming from an outsider mediation process may not be accepted by non-state actors. An agreement developed through an insider mediation process is usually a more bottom-up process built on legitimacy from the populace.
- Outsiders would be bound to moral, safety, legal or political limitations regarding engagement with certain actors, such as armed non-state actors, proscribed terrorist organizations, or perpetrators of genocide. For the OSCE and its participating states, this might be particularly difficult since engagement with non-state (armed) actors could be construed as bestowing legitimacy or official recognition on them. An insider, even with

25 There are indeed cases of extreme polarization and mistrust where outsiders are preferred over insiders. Even in such cases, care needs to be taken in the modus of engagement of outsiders with and in support of insiders.



## Insider mediation

great personal risk, would try to reach out to such actors, often via (informal) channels to which outsiders do not have access (e.g. family networks, religious linkages).

### 2.3.2. How to support insider mediation?

International actors involved in insider mediation support tend to use or instrumentalize insider mediators for their very own processes — often with the best of intentions. However, if the objective of the international actor is not congruent with insiders' objectives, this is bound to upset the originality, creativity, and local and national ownership of existing and potential insider mediation processes. Therefore, international mediators and mediation support actors increasingly put emphasis on local and national ownership but it must be made clear that this refers to ownership in decision making *within an outsider mediation process*, e.g. ensuring that “the parties are the decision-makers in the process” (OSCE 2014, 54–55). Local ownership of a process, it can be argued, means that it is conceived and led by local actors because of their innate need and efforts.<sup>26</sup> Mediation support should put insider mediation at the centre and build around it and not pull insiders into an outsider process.

Support to insider mediation processes thereby must be fundamentally different from mediation support to processes initiated and led by high-level, outsider mediators. Essentially, such support would first acknowledge the existence of insider mediation processes: the mediation space, the actors, and actor-networks. Then it would listen to their challenges and needs, point out (conflict-sensitively) any limitations that may be embedded in the process, investigate support gaps, keep an eye out for opportunities, and offer organizational, procedural, logistical, and advisory support — all as per the needs stated. The best kind of support for insider mediation is dialogic mutual support, i.e. support based on conversation and interaction between the insider and outsider, which nurtures joint-learning, knowledge-building, and problem-solving. There is an immense potential for methodological exchange between the impartial outsider and the partial insider. Peer-to-peer support from actors in other conflict contexts is something insiders

26 Also see Reich (2006) for a critical take on local ownership.

are open to. An ideal scenario would be when an outsider with a briefcase of mediation support instruments is also open to the same level of peer-to-peer support. If that is not in the mandate, outsiders can simply act as a *sounding board* for insiders to discuss ideas and mediation strategies to see if they are feasible and make sense (UNDP 2015). “Empowering local mediators” can be an effective means for building national ownership of a peace process (UN 2012, 6), but these buzzwords and their manifestations are often non-appreciative or dismissive of local capacities.

In general, insider mediation could use careful and “gentle initial support and accompaniment by outsiders” for playing constructive roles and catalysing changes where “credible national capacities may be absent or eroded because of high levels of polarization” (UNDP 2015, 12), as well as where safe spaces are absent, momentum around the peace process is low, or conflicts are protracted. This support however needs to be tailored in consultation with insiders to ensure that national and local capacities for insider mediation remain self-sustained and autonomous. The trick is not to become trapped in a dependency loop (ibid.; UN 2012, 114). Implementation of a peace agreement and the post-agreement phase should be nationally led, at which point outsider support needs to be “discreet, behind the scenes and, whenever possible, ... go through national (insider) mediators” (UN 2012, 117).

The Guatemalan peace process exemplifies mutual mediation support between an insider mediator with a conciliator role (the Catholic Church) and an outsider mediator with a facilitator role (the UN). The credibility and legitimacy of the Catholic Church allowed the cardinal Monsignor Quezada to nurture insider relationships with the disputants and, under his auspices, there was significant headway in the signing of a range of successive agreements. The UN was, however, entrusted with the role of guaranteeing the implementation process. It provided the necessary support and assistance, while strictly adhering to the principles of neutrality and impartiality. (Rocha 2016)

Insiders recognize that they also bring their own personal views and biases with them. For example, personal experiences of war can make it im-

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possible for an insider to play a neutral role between conflict parties. However, this should not be a reason to avoid engaging with an insider. There are other considerations to be made in this regard. When there is high-level tension between state and society, where the state perceives insiders as a threat to its authority, or when insiders impose patriarchal and exclusive values on societies, it is important to carefully design the engagement strategy with the respective insiders. Moreover, a clear redline has to be drawn if the insider gets involved in violence, propagates hate speech, incites violence, or mobilizes masses towards violence.

### **2.3.3. How is outsider engagement beneficial?**

As mentioned earlier, an international presence is inevitable in many conflict contexts. If the co-existence of insiders and outsiders is to be meaningful and if there are to be complementary efforts, it is best that outsiders engage with insiders in a collaborative way. Outsider efforts, no matter how sophisticated, are not sustainable if not connected with insiders or if devoid of insiders' buy-in. On the other hand, it might be that insiders' skills and resources are not able to cater to the needs of insider mediation. Outsiders should not impose resources or skills on the insiders but be ready to respond to stated needs and requests. Outsiders bring power, resources, and influence at certain levels as well as various modalities of partnership. They add value in partnerships when they lobby, advocate, and raise awareness internationally about the causes of the conflict and the efforts of the insiders. They can use their onsite presence to ensure security provisions for insiders, and can host safe space for dialogue, training, conferences, and joint learning.

## 3. OSCE projects in Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, and the role of insiders

In this chapter, the main findings from the country case studies on Kosovo, and Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are elaborated. The OSCE CPC proposed that the authors examine three OSCE-supported projects: Inter-faith Dialogue (Kosovo), Reconstruction through Dialogue (Ukraine), and Peace Messengers (Kyrgyzstan). During the Kosovo field study, the authors additionally looked into the Follow Us Initiative. In all three cases, the OSCE attempted to build the capacities of a group of potential change-makers who should function as multipliers to enable ethnic harmony and reconciliation (Kosovo), conflict prevention and conflict mitigation (Kyrgyzstan), and crisis management (Ukraine). Each case begins with a brief analysis of the respective conflict context, the rationale and objective of the OSCE project, the activities and roles of insiders, and the contribution of the OSCE. Furthermore, the challenges and limitations encountered in the cases are discussed, followed by a comparative analysis of the cases.

### 3.1. Kosovo: Creating space for engagement

#### 3.1.1. Conflict context

Following the 1998-1999 Kosovo conflict, efforts were made to normalize relationships between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs and to address territorial claims and interests, including the decentralization of public services and policymaking. Despite this, poor inter-ethnic relations continue. Kosovo institutions, in close co-ordination with the international community, have tried to accommodate the concerns of the Serb community by way of local self-governance and respect for human rights, such as language rights, and participation in political and public life.<sup>27</sup> Kosovo continues to

<sup>27</sup> See Assembly of Kosovo (2007).

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lack economic and sustainable development; the current unemployment rate is above 40 percent and is highest among youth, which accounts for more than half of the population.<sup>28</sup> Services such as health and education, as well as rule of law, are ranked low in public opinions. Corruption and organized crime continue to plague society. Since 2013, so-called ‘violent extremism’, in particular among youth, has been on the rise. Approximately 300 people have joined ISIS fighters, making Kosovo one of the areas in Europe with the highest number of mercenaries per capita.<sup>29</sup> Lack of opportunities for visa-free travel to the EU<sup>30</sup> and the disconnect between elites and ordinary people are seen as further impediments to economic development and democracy.

### **3.1.2. OSCE Projects: Inter-faith Dialogue and Follow Us Initiative**

Since 2013, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) has been facilitating structured inter-faith dialogues at the regional and local levels among religious leaders from the Islamic Community, Serbian Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Jewish Community, Protestant Church and smaller communities, such as the Tarikate/Tariqats Community in Kosovo. At the central and local level, participants discuss issues relevant to their region, such as graveyard maintenance, and jointly address the institutions to improve the situation of religious communities. They write joint letters to officials asking for legal acts that would regulate the status and benefits of religious communities.<sup>31</sup> A good example of local-level activities that arose out of the inter-faith dialogue process is the cleaning of the Serb Orthodox graveyard in Shtime/Štimlje, for which municipality representatives of the Islamic Community work together with representatives of the Orthodox Church.

One of the key objectives of these inter-faith dialogues is to communicate an ethos of religious tolerance and understanding, values that are strongly emphasized and embodied by the leaders of these dialogic processes.

28 See World Bank Group in Kosovo (2014).

29 See KCSS (2015).

30 Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkan that does not have visa liberalization for its citizens.

31 The Law on Freedom of Religion has not yet been passed in the parliament.

Inter-faith dialogues are foreseen to have a dual effect: i) to encourage dialogue between different religious communities, and ii) through these dialogues to promote tolerance and reconciliation among the Albanian and Serb population. For this reason, it was hoped that many of the individuals involved could serve to address existing problems in their communities. In particular, the assumption was that dialogue between the receiving Kosovo Albanian community and the returning Kosovo Serb community could benefit from this work. The project centres on the events and activities that promote positive interactions among religious leaders. Through these, the Mission has been active in addressing common needs of both communities with the authorities but also in sending messages of inter-faith and inter-ethnic tolerance and reconciliation.

The inter-faith project kicked off with an assessment, which identified the support needs of the dialogue process. Based on this, leaders of the Muslim, Serbian Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant Evangelical, and Jewish communities were contacted. Jointly, they agreed that dialogue is needed and that they together should actively participate in inter-faith forum discussions. In line with this conclusion, a project was developed and the multi-year implementation is ongoing to this day.<sup>32</sup>

Another project is the “Follow Us” Initiative that was launched in 2012 as an undertaking between prominent women from Kosovo and Serbia, and supported jointly by the OMiK and the OSCE Mission to Serbia (OMiS). The aim of the project is to promote confidence building between prominent women from different spheres and professions – such as parliamentarians, civil society representatives, academics, and journalists – through dialogue forums on the topics of confidence-building promotion and reconciliation. Members of the initiative meet regularly in Prishtinë/Priština, Belgrade, and Podgorica. Presently, and as a result of these meetings, a Girls Academy has been established to promote exchanges among young women from Kosovo and Serbia.

The participants of the inter-faith forum were chosen by OMiK based on their social positions, while the Kosovo participants of Follow Us were chosen based on the OMiK’s experience with certain individuals.

<sup>32</sup> Email communication with representatives of the OMiK, October 2016.

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Regarding Follow Us, there is no clear set of criteria with which they were chosen. Instead, they were approached by the respective OSCE Mission based on their professional credentials as influential actors of the community (religious leaders, parliamentarians, academia, and media).<sup>33</sup> They were known for their sensitivity to inter-ethnic/religious and intra-community issues, and acceptable across ethnic and religious lines/sectors. Primarily for these reasons, many of these individuals possess a great potential to address contentious issues in their communities. Religious leaders are influential, trusted, and seen in both societies as legitimate and less corrupt. They form a fabric – a type of glue – in societies that are in flux due to lack of good governance. Recognition of this was a key aspect underpinning OSCE support for inter-faith dialogue.

### 3.1.3. Insiders' activities and roles

The objective and purpose of the inter-faith project is mainly to mitigate tensions that exist along religious and ethno-political lines. In Prishtinë/Priština, Pejë/Peć and Prizren, the leaders of religious communities meet regularly and often with institutional officials to discuss joint concerns. For instance, in Pejë/Peć religious leaders met with the local administration to discuss illegal construction and its consequences. Religious leaders then explained the problem to their congregations and, in this way, reduced resistance to addressing the issue, which is widespread throughout Kosovo. Another joint initiative was the open public condemnation by religious communities of the graffiti on the walls of the Orthodox Monastery in Pejë/Peć. Similarly in Prizren, religious communities meet regularly even if just for a joint walk in the city centre or to jointly celebrate a religious holiday, with the aim of openly promoting religious tolerance.<sup>34</sup>

The Follow Us group activities are of a different nature. While, the element of inter-ethnicity is present in the composition of the initiative, the scope and approach are divergent. With the aim of contributing to confidence building, participants also discuss the role of women in politics

33 Interview with the Follow Us participants. June, 2016, Mitrovicë/Mitrovaica.

34 Interviews with religious leaders of Islamic, Protestant and Catholic community in Prizren. April, 2016.

and the issue of economic empowerment. A set of recommendations was included in an action plan for joint activities that was produced and disseminated. On 26 and 27 March 2015, OMiK and OMiS facilitated the fifth meeting of women from Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade within the framework of the Follow Us Initiative. During this meeting held in Prishtinë/Priština, further steps in the implementation of the joint action plan were discussed. The participants agreed to launch a Follow Us documentary, to establish a joint blogging platform on gender issues, and to organize a Summer Dialogue Academy for 30 young women from both societies. The prominent women participating stressed the importance of expanding this dialogue process.<sup>35</sup> The Follow Us Initiative, just like Inter-faith Dialogue, creates a platform to pursue debate in a society with a non-consolidated democracy where elites are detached from the people. It also creates an inter-ethnic bridge between women, and paves the way for further dialogue.

Besides the two OSCE-supported initiatives, there are other projects funded by foreign donors to support mediation and peacebuilding efforts, capacity-development for civil society actors, inter-ethnic reconciliation, countering radicalization and empowerment of youth.<sup>36</sup> Apart from such international initiatives, society is also open to traditional ways of mediation, although not as much as it used to be. In rural areas, one can still find places where a religious leader or all-male meetings of elders draw on the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini, a collection of ancient Albanian customs. They act as mediators, especially in family disputes. Although it is an important element of society, a more thorough examination is outside the scope of this study.

35 See <http://www.osce.org/serbia/159091>.

36 *The Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation (CSSP)* has been active for years in the divided city of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. It coaches local leaders on inclusive policy-making that builds trust among communities and interest-based negotiation in order to find solutions that benefit all stakeholders. See <http://www.cssp-mediation.org> and <http://acdc-kosovo.org/eng>. *Care International's 2009-11* EU-funded project tried to promote greater civil society leadership and political participation among Kosovo youth. *Partners Kosovo – Center for Conflict Management* also runs a project on public engagement of youth with peace and reconciliation to counter intolerance and radicalization.



## Insider profile

**Valdete Idrizi**, a peace activist and a member of Follow Us Initiative, has almost 20 years of experience working in the divided city of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in Kosovo. Initially Idrizi was involved with alternative theatre and, after the conflict in 1999, she became engaged in dialogue and peace initiatives. Idrizi is one of the founders of the local grassroots multi-ethnic organization Community Building Mitrovica (CBM), a well-known organization for its persistency and commitment in bridging the divide between the different communities. It implements various projects and activities to empower communities, younger generations and women, in particular. Mitrovica Rock School, Mitrovica Women Association for Human rights and Mitrovica Forum arose from the dialogue initiatives that were led by Idrizi and CBM. Aside from her day job as the Executive Director of CIVIKOS, Idrizi is actively engaged in initiatives that contribute to peace and stability in the region, such as peace and reconciliation networks and initiatives in the Balkans. This particularly includes the RECOM Initiative (regional commission for the establishment of facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia from January 1, 1991 until December 31, 2001). As a peace practitioner, she is actively engaged in giving lectures and trainings as well as being a mentor to young people on peace activism and feminism, and encouraging them to initiate and develop joint initiatives. For her dedication to peacebuilding, Idrizi has received several international awards; most notably she was the European winner of the International Women of Courage Award from the United States State Department in 2008, delivered to her by the then Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

### 3.1.4. OSCE contribution

The OSCE's contribution to the projects has been considerable. By bringing groups together through meetings, seminars, and roundtables, the OSCE facilitated communication and networking among community leaders, authorities, and other community actors. This helped not only nurture these groups of influential women and religious leaders by motivating them to

communicate and work on different levels, but also built capacity in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. The OSCE provided a safe and neutral space without which these initiatives could not have taken place. By capitalizing on its mandate and its political leverage, the OSCE has managed to nurture a group of influential figures; to build up a group of potential insider mediators, who are present and part of everyday life. They have personal stakes in the resolution of the conflict, share a common destiny and, at the same time, are sensitive to inter-ethnic/religious and intra-community issues. Acceptable across ethnic and religious lines, these groups have the potential to be change-makers in Kosovo.

## 3.2. Kyrgyzstan: Supporting Insiders?

### 3.2.1. Conflict context

Since 2005, the Central Asian Republic of Kyrgyzstan<sup>37</sup> has attracted international attention due to political turmoil and ethnic rioting. In June 2010, political conflicts erupted in a series of clashes primarily in and around the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan, an important centre of economic and political life in the Ferghana Valley. Massive clashes between the ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities ended in riots, looting and a considerable death toll. In the aftermath, relations between the communities were strained and distrust towards state authorities in Southern Kyrgyzstan has risen. The causes of the conflict are multi-layered and complex given the diverse factors that contributed in different ways.<sup>38</sup>

The roots of the conflict are embedded in the country's history as part of the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, questions related to the control of natural resources and political power surfaced. Unresolved demarcation issues between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are one major source of tension, despite the fact that most borders in

37 Kyrgyzstan is a small country with a population of five million people. Twenty five years have passed since Kyrgyzstan declared its independence on 31 August 1991.

38 Many actors at different levels were involved in the conflict (businessmen, politicians, drug dealers and criminal networks) in order to protect their own interests; contributing factors were i) a long-term deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the country; ii) unemployment of young people; and iii) high levels of corruption and the lack of an effective system of public policy on inter-ethnic relations (Asankanov 2011).

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Central Asia, in general, and the Ferghana Valley, in particular, are still not demarcated (Reeves 2014). The disputes are mainly over access to and from enclaves and the main land, and managing joint use of natural resources which traverse the borders. This is especially so in the large, densely populated parts of southern Kyrgyzstan located in the Ferghana Valley, which is divided between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Nowadays, it is a sensitive border region with a high degree of militarization that is legitimized by a security discourse that portrays the region as a breeding ground for fundamentalist Islamic groups such as the (al Qaida-linked) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

### **3.2.2. OSCE Project: Peace Messengers (*Yntymakzharchylary* or *Vestniki Mira*)<sup>39</sup>**

After the Osh and other events in the south of Kyrgyzstan in 2010, there was the need to support local mediators or informal leaders who could disseminate valid information, and prevent potential conflicts at the local level. The OSCE Centre in Bishkek, together with local executive partners in different regions of the country (such as IRET based in Osh city and Osh province, AIMIRA based in Jalal-Abad province, and later Alga (Rural Women's Association) based in Chui) and state authorities (district administrations and office of mayor of Osh and Jalal-Abad) signed a three-way memorandum of co-operation supporting the Peace Messenger teams. The project (2010-2014) started in Osh city, and then spread out to Osh province, Jalal-Abad rayon, and Chui rayon. In total, there were 748 Peace Messengers in 34 teams (each team consists of approximately 22 people).

The project made an important decision to include local decision-makers and existing institutional structures, such as courts of elders (*ak-sakal*), women's committees, religious leaders, informal neighbourhood leaders (*mahalla*), head teachers, house committees, and sub-district committees (*domkom*). The team members included not only informal leaders, but also young people, NGO workers/activists, law enforcement agencies, teachers, representatives of media, law enforcement bodies, and local

39 In southern Kyrgyzstan, people refer to the Kyrgyz term *Yntymakzharchylary* and in northern Kyrgyzstan the Russian term *Vestniki Mira*.

authorities. Being an integral and respected part of their respective communities, they had been involved in conflict mitigation in their daily practices.

The selection process for Peace Messengers was clearly spelled out in the OSCE selection criteria. It stipulated that a joint selection committee should consist of local authorities and civil society partners, in co-ordination with law enforcement agencies and with the support of the OSCE.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.2.3. Insiders' activities and roles

Local and traditional leaders have long played a vital role in southern Kyrgyzstan. Their traditional practices of mediation are locally valued because they help people cope with social insecurity and maintain order in their communities. They have contributed immensely to fostering the peaceful existence of different groups by implementing local notions of harmony (*yn-tymak*), arbitration (*sot*), reconciliation (*dostoshuu*), forgiveness and resolution (*kechirimduu*). Peace Messengers actively practiced these rituals in the post-conflict situations in Osh and Jalal-Abad.

The Peace Messengers were responsible for a variety of tasks, such as carrying out educational work together with local authorities, identifying underlying reasons for conflict, conducting preventive activities, responding to emergency situations together with state and law enforcement bodies, mediating to decrease tensions, and providing information to decrease provocative rumours. They actively prevented the escalation of conflict by interacting across ethnic lines and remained ready to mediate in crises. In addition, Peace Messengers not only mediated existing conflicts and disputes among local people, but also assisted in the prevention of conflict at an early stage and mitigated tensions in specific localities. Peace Messengers mediated different kinds of disputes, ranging from family disputes, to border disputes, water-management disputes in the border villages, and disputes between state and society.

The Peace Messengers brought assets that were unique in many ways. They were in close contact with the people but, at the same time, were also able to deal with state authorities. As such, they served as a bridge between communities and the state by facilitating dialogue and establishing order

40 Source: OSCE Document: Polozhenie o deyatelnosti komand vestnikov mira, p. 6-7. 2010.

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in their communities. All selected individuals had a clear geographical, cultural, and normative proximity to conflict parties. In addition, they were trusted, respected, charismatic, well-reputed, and seen as fair. They cared and had personal conviction and devotion as their main motivation, underpinned by religious values. “We have to be good and appear spotless in the eyes of god,”<sup>41</sup> one Peace Messenger opined. Their main resources were their pre-existing authority in local settings, their knowledge of local context, and conflict sensitivity.

Peace Messengers were actively engaged in creating different kinds of platforms for dialogue between different groups of society and government structures. There were cases when local authorities approached Peace Messengers requiring their assistance to resolve local disputes. Local people tended to trust them more than the state because they were closer to their own people and everyday concerns.<sup>42</sup> In Kara-Suu, local people approached Peace Messengers first when they had problems because they did not trust state authorities as they were seen as corrupt and politicized.<sup>43</sup> Peace Messengers were sometimes undermining, sometimes supporting, and sometimes challenging state structures.<sup>44</sup>

Gender played a role in contributing to inter-ethnic reconciliation and conflict prevention, especially given the ways in which different types of disputes were dealt with along gender lines in the local context. In both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, everyday life and economic patterns are gendered. Conflicts around property rights, access to irrigation water, and land disputes are usually dealt with by men, while family-related disputes, like misunderstanding between wives and husbands, mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws, are dealt with exclusively by women. This is because men are perceived to understand technicalities better and tend to use the more authoritative language that is needed in such matters. In contrast, in family

41 Interviews with Kyrgyz and Uzbek Peace Messengers. June, 2016, Kara-Suu.

42 Interview with civil society activists and academics. June, 2016, Bishkek and Osh.

43 Interview with Peace Messengers. June, 2016, Kara-Suu.

44 One example is about a family dispute that was taken to the court and a decision was made in favour of one of the parties. One Peace Messenger became aware that bribery was involved in the court, and challenged the decision on behalf of the other party. The higher level court eventually overruled the initial decision. Source: Aksana Ismailbekova's research on Kyrgyzstan for this study.

disputes, women are said to see the importance of using *soft* language and tend to be knowledgeable of local traditions. The notions of house and the private domain are dominated by women; the public and outside domains are dictated by men in Kyrgyzstan, which helps explain the different discourses and approaches of men and women. However, in some disputes, the presence of both men and women are needed in talking to conflicting actors, especially in the case of divorce. Depending on the nature of the conflict, men and women act separately if this type of strategy would help them to resolve the conflict. Thus, the division of labour between men and women appears to be of strategic nature and based on realpolitik considerations. As one interviewee put it: “Muslim women don’t play a dominant role in public affairs and, hence, women Peace Messengers would not be effective when they serve in that sphere”. The close interaction of Peace Messengers with one another ensured the availability of significant support in crisis situations and provided them the means to work together.<sup>45</sup>

## Example: A dispute with foreign investors

Foreign mining companies began to invest and construct facilities in several villages of the Chui province, Kyrgyzstan, in 2012. People started engaging in mining activities, auxiliary and technical dispatching services, and supply of agricultural products for the quarry workers. Conflict started over a road that was the only one connecting the village to the main road leading to the district and regional centre, which was regularly visited by locals.<sup>46</sup> Heavy vehicles and trucks were regularly on the road delivering mining and crushing equipment and exporting gravel and crushed stone. This began to stir discontent among the locals,<sup>47</sup> who eventually blocked the road to the quarry leading through the village by forming a human chain. There were verbal altercations between the truck drivers and the locals.<sup>48</sup>

45 Source: Aksana Ismailbekova’s research on Kyrgyzstan for this study.

46 Interview with leaders of Peace Messengers. June, 2016, Kant; Vestniki Mira, (2013: 84-86).

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

The Peace Messengers reacted to the news of the conflict quickly and efficiently. They immediately drove to the village, developed a plan along the way, and proposed actions to resolve the conflict. They also stopped in neighbouring villages to acquire more information about the quarry and mining companies. Peace Messengers listened carefully to the conflicting sides and saw the need to sit and discuss the issues together. After that they nominated a group of local deputies to negotiate with the companies' managers and to express local people's concerns and demands. Peace Messengers facilitated the discussions and enabled both villagers and managers to speak in turn. Delegates from both sides expressed their concerns, and discussed claims and demands. Some of the claims and demands could not be met, but around half met with consensus. For example, the companies agreed to pay a certain percentage of their profits to the village in order to improve the water intake of the village. In addition, the company undertook to repair the road on a regular basis. Both sides were satisfied with the discussion and understood the necessity of co-operation in order to move forward.<sup>49</sup>

### Example: A hostage situation

Kara-Suu and Osh city are not far apart, approximately ten minutes by car. Kara-Suu, the population of which is predominantly Uzbek, hosts the largest bazaar in the Ferghana Valley. The Kyrgyz-dominated neighbourhood *Hlopchatobumazhnyi kombinat* (HBK) of Osh city is the closest to Kara-Suu. Many young Kyrgyz men and women from Osh city used to work in Kara-Suu's cafes. At the same time, many young Uzbek men from Kara-Suu worked in the HBK neighbourhood as construction workers and traders. The Osh events in 2010 put local people in dangerous situations. In both Kara-Suu and HBK, people blocked the roads with stones out of fear. This meant that people from both sides could not return to their own communities and were held as captives until the return of the young people from both sides. Parents of the young people from both HBK and Kara-Suu became

49 Ibid.

worried about their safety. In 2010, elders of the communities of Kara-Suu were engaged in rescuing hostages from both the Kyrgyz and Uzbek sides.

Ten Uzbek elders of Kara-Suu reached the blockade and asked the Kyrgyz to negotiate and start discussion on exchanging hostages. Elders requested to talk to the elders of the Kyrgyz communities. An informal meeting of elders was organized on the territory of HBK. The elders entered HBK and started their negotiation processes. The elders requested their counterparts to co-operate and control the situation. They also raised the issue of exchanging hostages, which the Kyrgyz elders agreed to. This negotiation meeting was constructive in terms of listening to one another and understanding the gravity of the issue at hand. In the end, Kyrgyz young people from Kara-Suu joined their parents in HBK, and Uzbek young people from Osh could enter Kara-Suu. Without the intervention of elders from the two communities, the hostages would probably have been used for different purposes.<sup>50</sup>

## Insider profiles

**Zhumagul Bolponova**, born in Issyk Kul, started her professional life as a teacher of Russian language and literature. At some point, she was even involved in the Communist party's activities in her district. Living in a village located on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Bolponova has long been involved in community activities and helping local people. She even served as the deputy of the local district council of Aravan rayon for 15 years. In her retirement age, Bolponova was instrumental in preventing violence during the unrest in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. She became very active in working with the OSCE project in Osh as a Peace Messenger. Bolponova's legitimacy stems from her former state official status and her social status in the community. Since she lives on the border, she is often asked to help local people obtain marriage or birth certificates for Uzbek citizens (woman) who marry Kyrgyz citizens (men). It is hard for young women who live in

50 Interview with elders of Kara-Suu. June, 2016, Kara-Suu.



Kyrgyzstan but hold an Uzbek passport, when it comes to bringing their children to school. As a Peace Messenger, Bolponova uses her official contacts to expedite the cases related to trans-border marriage. She also helps Uzbekistani Uzbek women to obtain Kyrgyzstani citizenship. Bolponova is also actively involved in the marriage of young people, especially among Uzbek population. After the 2010 conflict, many Uzbeks started marrying off their daughters as early as possible to save them from alleged rape by enemy groups. Bolponova would try to convince parents that their daughters were too young to get married, and even invited doctors to explain to the parents about their daughters' physiological conditions and growth. Finally, she would assure them as an ex-state official and Peace Messenger that the raping of young women was a rumour, and not a reality.

**Khalikov Ashirbek** was born in the village Kara Suu in southern Kyrgyzstan. Ethnically, Ashirbek and his wife are Kyrgyz, but they live in the village Kara Suu where the majority of the population is Uzbek. All of his children married people of different ethnicity. One of his daughters is married to a Kazak, another to an Uzbek. One of his sons married a Russian woman, another married a Tatar. He said that he is linked to many ethnic groups through the marriages of his children, which makes him a relative of these different ethnic groups. Kinship and marriage matter in the lives of people in Kara-Suu – they are the main provider of security and protection. Ashirbek is a key figure in inter-ethnic linkages and can provide crucial channels for communication between rival ethnic groups. He has the two-fold advantage of calling for peace by stressing kinship linkages and also as a friend of different ethnic groups. He embodies ethnic diversity and peaceful coexistence in Kara-Suu. Ashirbek can smooth-out conflicts between rival groups and strengthen friendships. After the Osh events, he became head of his own community at the behest of the Uzbek population. They selected him to be head of the community, an elder of the community, and a Peace Messenger because he represented the peaceful coexistence of his community. During the conflict, he hid Uzbek people in his home. He could protect Uzbeks from state persecution by personally negotiating with the state authorities. Moreover, he was personally engaged in releasing Uzbek hostages by going to the Kyrgyz neighbourhoods together with Uzbek leaders.

#### 3.2.4. OSCE contribution

The strength of the project clearly lies in its rootedness in local contexts. The project is built on existing informal and local structures, such as courts of elders, women's committees, informal neighbourhood leaders, house committees, local authorities, and police and law enforcement personnel. Thereby, it recognizes local culture and practices and informal decision-makers in the respective local contexts. Building on these structures, the OSCE contributed to empowering Peace Messengers to further act on pressing and sensitive issues until the project ended in 2014. Peace Messengers facilitated communication and networking between community leaders, state authorities, and other community members. Moreover, the OSCE offered space for communication, interaction, networking, peer-coaching and peer-exchange through trainings. The OSCE assisted Peace Messengers in building their capacity for violence prevention and resolution in different ways: (i) trainings for skills development on mediation and communication, (ii) simulation exercises to prepare for handling crisis situations, (iii) raising awareness of the existence and activity of peace messengers and (iv) technical infrastructure for transportation and communication. Mobile phones were provided to strengthen communication and co-operation between teams based in different territories and to act immediately in crisis situations.

Peace Messengers in various locations have pointed out the benefits of the above support. They reported that, before the trainings, they were unaware of the importance of accurate information gathering (conflict analysis) before going into mediation settings and the importance of active listening. The trainings also underlined the importance of mediating in an impartial manner, which they have not practiced in all cases. The OSCE trainings were of great relevance for conflict mitigation and prevention, for compromise, for proper information gathering, and for determining who to involve in crisis situations and how to involve them. In addition, the OSCE facilitated communication and networking among community leaders, state authorities, and NGO representatives within and across different provinces, which greatly contributed to increased mutual understanding and combating rumours.

## 3.3. Ukraine: Strengthening support to insiders

### 3.3.1. Conflict context

The crisis that has been ongoing in and around Ukraine since late 2013 has been one of the most serious faced in Europe in recent times, and has significantly strained relations between Russia and Western countries. Narratives of the crisis' origins are highly disputed.<sup>51</sup> Ukraine declared independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, however, its political, economic and social ties to Russia have remained to varying degrees depending on the policies of successive governments. The post-Soviet generation has had a greater exposure to life in the West/Europe, and has been critical of the cronyism, corruption and oligarchic control they see characterizing Ukrainian (and Russian) politics. Ukraine's vibrant civil society and pluralistic elite have been expressing their desire for change. The 2004-5 'Orange Revolution' spoke up against a perceived fraudulent election. The 2013-14 'Euromaidan' was triggered by the then president Viktor Yanukovych's decision to abandon the signing of the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement. Included in the Euromaidan aspirations was also a great wish for change from the Yanukovych presidency, which had become associated with ever-intensified cronyism, abuse of power, corruption, human rights violations and economic decline.<sup>52</sup> The protests, which started in Kyiv and later spread to other cities in Ukraine, escalated and turned into violent clashes with security forces in the capital city. On 21 February 2014, an agreement was reached between the Government and the opposition but Yanukovych fled later the same day. On 22 February, the Rada voted to remove him from office citing an inability to fulfil his duties.

The resonance of the population with Euromaidan can largely be construed by whether one lives in the west/centre (closer to Western Europe)

51 See for example reports from the OSCE Panel of Eminent Persons (PEP)'s research visit to Kyiv. The Interim Report (PEP 2015b) sets out practical lessons for the OSCE from the crisis in and around Ukraine, and the Final Report (PEP 2015a) further comprehensively addresses the crisis of European security.

52 Transparency International named President Yanukovych as the top example of corruption in the world; see <http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/transparency-international-names-yanukovych-worlds-most-corrupt-407875.html>.

or the east and south/south-east (closer to Russia or largely Russophone).<sup>53</sup> This also partly explains the consequent developments in the latter.

After 22 February, unrest began in the largely Russophone regions from which Yanukovich had drawn most of his support; ‘pro-Russian’ and ‘anti-Euromaidan’ activists began protesting in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in cities across the east and south, including Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, and Odessa. The establishment of *de facto* control over Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014 – following a referendum that was not in compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine and an agreement in which the so-called “Republic of Crimea” pledged adherence to the Russian Federation – aggravated the unrest, especially in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Separatist-minded armed groups in this eastern part of Ukraine—supported and assisted by foreign paramilitaries—began to take control of governmental buildings and strategic sites. Petro Poroshenko, the new President, ordered military action on the self-declared “Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics” (“DPR” and “LPR” respectively), which were quick in building up their own significant armed forces. Diplomatic efforts by the Trilateral Contact Group (representatives from Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the OSCE) resulted in a number of ceasefires, but these continue to be broken and have kept eastern Ukraine in a volatile situation to date. The armed crisis has seen more than 2.2 million people displaced, either internally or to neighbouring countries.<sup>54</sup> It has disrupted civilian life in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas, and on and along either side of the 500km line of contact between the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the rest of Ukraine. It has also further entrenched polarization in society, which, parallel to diplomatic mediation efforts, has made constructive dialogue on a granular societal level essential but difficult.

53 According to a December 2013 study (<http://rb.com.ua/eng/projects/omnibus/8840>):

- 49% of Ukrainians supported Euromaidan: 84% west, 66% central, 33% south and 13% east;
- 45% did not: 81% east, 60% south, 27% central, 11% west.

The most recent census conducted in 2001 showed that 76.8% of the population were Ukrainian-speakers, residing in the central and western parts of the country, while 16.9% were Russian-speakers, residing predominantly in the eastern and south-eastern parts, in particular the then Ukrainian autonomous region of Crimea. See <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng>.

54 See [http://unhcr.org.ua/attachments/article/1244/ukr\\_IDPs\\_A4L\\_14.08.2015.pdf](http://unhcr.org.ua/attachments/article/1244/ukr_IDPs_A4L_14.08.2015.pdf).

### 3.3.2. OSCE project: Reconstruction through Dialogue

Since May 2014, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) has been assisting the Ukrainian Government in facilitating the ‘Reconstruction through Dialogue’ initiative, an exchange between decision makers in Kyiv and representatives of communities affected by the crisis in eastern Ukraine. While the initiative has involved internally displaced persons, no attempts have been made so far to establish dialogue across the line of contact. Even so, the forums held under this initiative work toward promoting consolidation of the mediator and facilitator communities, establishing conditions for the mutual exchange of experiences, and introducing participants to new techniques and tools for conducting multi-level comprehensive dialogues, including political dialogues.<sup>55</sup> The initiative has gathered more than 200 participants, including representatives of the central government, officials from the regions, Members of Parliament and local council deputies, representatives of diplomatic missions, NGOs, and lead experts on dialogue, mediation and facilitation.<sup>56</sup> The PCU continues to plan and support the initiative. So far, three rounds of dialogue have taken place in Odessa (2014), Kyiv (2015) and Mariupol (2016). At the time of writing, the next round was being organized.

At a crucial time of the crisis, in March 2014, the OSCE sent 15 international experts to identify future areas for OSCE engagement in the sphere of confidence building. Different groups of experts worked in five regions of the country: Lviv, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Donetsk. The experts met with local authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders to gather information on pressing issues, such as political, humanitarian, and national minority issues. The group presented to the OSCE participating States, including Ukraine, its recommendations on how the OSCE could continue to maintain dialogue and societal unity in the country.<sup>57</sup> As a first step in implementing the recommendations, the PCU organized a conference at the request of the Odessa Oblast State Administration and the Odessa Regional Mediation Group (ORMG) on ‘Dialogue as means of

55 See OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (2014).

56 Ibid.

57 See [www.osce.org/ukraine/118166](http://www.osce.org/ukraine/118166).

overcoming the crisis: international experience and prospects for its application in Ukraine,' which was held in Odessa from December 10 to 12, 2014.<sup>58</sup> The conference was designed to strengthen skills and facilitate exchanges of experiences between professional mediators working to resolve the crisis and overcome differences.<sup>59</sup> The conference gathered a number of international experts involved in training the participants and providing support and advice, who shared their experiences in dealing with different crisis and post-conflict situations. In this way, the conference played a strong contributing role in supporting future efforts in the field of mediation and dialogue facilitation in Ukraine.<sup>60</sup>

Although the OSCE PCU has been supporting the dialogue initiative, the process itself is clearly owned and led by national actors – in this case the Ukrainian Government. This is clearly reflected in the selection of facilitators, participants, and topics for discussion, as well as by choosing facilitators who are familiar with the languages and local specificities. The participating facilitators and moderators are usually members of different associations or the leaders of NGOs that deal with dialogue projects. The OSCE maintains a supporting role.

### 3.3.3. Insiders' activities and roles

Mediation is not new in Ukraine. It has been present since the 1990s and usually revolved around rule of law and justice reform, such as co-operation with courts, police, and prosecutorial services. During the 2014 crisis, the need for structures that could address it at different levels became apparent. Dialogue initiatives were introduced and – in addition to professional mediators – leaders of NGOs, journalists, politicians, representatives of FBOs, businessmen, and state officials began to show an interest in mediation.<sup>61</sup> Apart from donor-sponsored mediation initiatives, grassroots

58 See OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (2014).

59 Ibid. p.5.

60 Ibid.

61 In the 1990s, organizations mostly from the U.S. and Canada introduced the idea of modern mediation. These organizations were the main partners of Ukrainian mediation NGOs in terms of financial support, expertise transfer and mediation styles. Among the most active donors at the time were the United States Agency for International Development and the Eurasia Foundation. The George Soros Foundation also supported a number of start-up mediation projects in

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organizations are also promoting mediation. These include the Ukrainian Mediation Center at the Kyiv-Mohyla Business School, the School of Mediation at the Academy of Advocacy in Kyiv, the Ukrainian Academy of Mediators<sup>62</sup>, ORMG, and mediation initiatives supported by the Lviv Polytechnic University.<sup>63</sup> In addition, there are also established associations of mediators such as: The National Association of Mediators of Ukraine (NAMU)<sup>64</sup>; the Ukrainian Center for Accord<sup>65</sup>; the Ukrainian Mediation Center<sup>66</sup>; and ICA-Ukraine, which is part of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) network<sup>67</sup>; as well as NGOs and privately owned firms that are influential members of the mediator community. Most notable is the Kharkiv-based NGO Foundation for Local Democracy that organized a series of dialogue sessions between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian political figures.<sup>68</sup> Victoria Sklyarova, a well-known journalist and local historian, played a particular role in these dialogues.<sup>69</sup> Lastly, Anna Gorina, the owner of a Kharkiv-based audit firm, is in high demand as a NAMU mediator.<sup>70</sup>

Socially-oriented FBOs also play a role as mediators working on professional social programmes, and have a more structured approach to social problems. For example, the Archpriest Sergey Dmitriev, deputy head of Social Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, has been working since 2014 to provide social support and rehabilitation aid to ex-military personnel involved in the recent crisis.<sup>71</sup> As a result, Dmitriev is a well-known figure in the field and works with international institutions as well.

Ukraine. See Kyselova (2016).

62 Founded by ORMG together with Prioris, a law firm based in Odessa.

63 See Kyselova (2016).

64 See <http://namu.com.ua>.

65 See [http://www.commonground.org.ua/uccg\\_main.shtml](http://www.commonground.org.ua/uccg_main.shtml).

66 See [http://ukrmediation.com.ua/en/about\\_center](http://ukrmediation.com.ua/en/about_center).

67 ICA is an association of facilitators linked to the Quaker movement in the U.S., they lead discussions differently, mainly based on the Technology of Participation method.

68 Interview with the head of Foundation for Local Democracy. Kharkiv, May 2016.

69 Interview with Civil Society representative. May 2016, Kharkiv.

70 Ibid.

71 Interview with Orthodox clergy. May 2016, Kyiv.

As noted above, under the PCU initiative Reconstruction through Dialogue, the forums promoted consolidation of the mediators' and facilitators' community and established conditions for the exchange of experiences. The forums brought together more than 200 participants, including representatives of the central government, officials from the regions, members of parliament and local council deputies, representatives of diplomatic missions, NGOs, and lead experts on dialogue mediation and facilitation.<sup>72</sup> Different sessions were facilitated and moderated by locals with whom the PCU works closely. The forums proved to be a crucial instrument to renew and strengthen dialogue in eastern Ukraine. In the western Donbas region, for example, the PCU initiative helped to support the opening of new spaces for dialogue among representatives of different groups in the affected areas so that they could constructively address some of the most burning issues in the region, such as economic development and ways to improve livelihoods.

The individuals involved brought with them professional expertise gathered from years of field work. They mostly belong to one of the associations or NGOs listed above and are skilled at working with and facilitating dialogue among groups. However, they seem to lack the power to independently bring groups together. This could be due to the fact that, until the crisis erupted in 2014, Ukrainian society saw no need to engage in conflict mediation as mediation practices until then were mostly commercial in nature.<sup>73</sup>

## Insider profiles

**Inna Tereschenko**, based in Odessa, Ukraine, is the founder and head of ORMG. Since 1994, Tereschenko and ORMG have been conducting activities related to mediation, facilitation and nonviolent conflict resolution in different spheres. In addition, she has been involved in the facilitation of inter-community dialogues related to value-based intergroup conflicts not only in Ukraine, but also in the northern Caucasus, Kyrgyzstan,

72 See OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (2014).

73 Interviews with civil society representatives and international organization representatives. August/September 2016.



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Moldova, and Transdnistria. Prior to and following the confrontation on May 2 in Odessa, Tereschenko and ORMG played a key role in facilitating dialogue between pro-Maidan and anti-Maidan activists. One of the outcomes of this work with different social groups was the development of the Odessa Dialogue Model. These second-level social initiatives made a significant contribution to calming Odessan citizens. On account of her work in building relationships in Odessa after May 2, the OSCE, UNDP, and other organizations have invited Tereschenko to serve as an expert in other regions of Ukraine.

**Olena Kopina**, based in Kharkiv, is behind the initiative Dialogues for Peace launched and implemented by Laboratory Peaceful Solutions (at the Foundation for Local Democracy) in October 2014. The dialogue sessions brought together a group of people to discuss the toppling of the Lenin monument. This concluded in a joint declaration on the social cohesion in Kharkiv. The participants included social activists, teachers, journalists, and students. Highly emotionally charged events took place, but this did not hinder participants from sharing their opinions and concerns. Kopina was crucial in organizing and facilitating these sessions through which the participants realized together that they share a common understanding and desire “to live in a peaceful and comfortable town”, as one participant put it. From October to May 2015, the group gathered with new participants to discuss Kharkiv’s identity, prospects, and limitations in reconciliation processes. They reviewed and analyzed the reasons for the conflict and jointly considered ways to prevent future conflict. They drew up a Declaration of Public Consent on how to prevent further conflict in Kharkiv, which was a spontaneous act of a social agreement arising from the dialogue platform. It also served as a basis that could be referred to in the context of the city’s social problems. As consensus agreement among all participants, the declaration called for the peaceful coexistence of people of different nationalities, religions, political views, social and professional statuses. Kopina told the research team: “When we faced conflicts, we were not ready to solve them. The experience of other countries is not always suitable here. During the meetings, we worked out the specific problems of the region and when society will be prompted to resolve conflicts, the participants of these

dialogues will be ready to answer it. A relatively small group won't be able to solve a big problem, but a great journey begins with small steps".

#### 3.3.4. OSCE contribution

The OSCE facilitates communication and networking between community leaders, state authorities and other community actors through the Reconstruction through Dialogue initiative. This helped jumpstart direct discussions on both the problems and prospects for development of local communities, as well as frequent and productive interaction between them and decision-makers in Kyiv. In addition, these processes have begun shaping dialogue as a conflict resolution mechanism, which helps to ensure that conflict-affected communities are connected to the nation-wide discourse and that they have a say in the direction of reform processes. These dialogues were generally perceived as a useful method to keep communication channels open and to enable communication and exchange between the various parts of society. With an eye on the Minsk process,<sup>74</sup> initiatives like these are important to bolster support among civil society for a sustainable peace process in Ukraine.

### 3.4. Challenges and limitations pertaining to the projects

In the three cases, the following broad areas of challenges and limitations have been identified: Lack of support from state actors, limitations of sustainability and impact, lack of transformative efforts, and insufficient considerations of the local context. These pertain to the challenges and limitations of/ from the context itself, the insiders and the outsiders, and their capacity and action (or non-action) that serve as obstacles to insider mediation processes.

#### 3.4.1. Lack of support from state actors

In **Kosovo**, there is a lack of political will to raise the issues of protection of Serb religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo from the level of inter-faith

<sup>74</sup> The OSCE is facilitating a political process working toward a peaceful solution to the crisis in and around Ukraine.

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to the level of Track 1 dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade. This creates an additional hurdle to inter-ethnic reconciliation.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the issue of the unregulated legal status of religious communities in Kosovo is left unaddressed because of the political parties' insufficient backing.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, Peace Messengers in certain regions had a difficult relationship with the state, characterized by mistrust and threats on the side of the state. Through their formalized and empowered roles, Peace Messengers often challenged state structures on governance issues, e.g. in the Kara-Suu village of Osh province, Peace Messengers took on the task to monitor the work of the judiciary and the police. In Osh city, the local administration called Peace Messengers as 'foreign agents'.<sup>76</sup>

The projects in **Ukraine** and **Kyrgyzstan** were seen to be impacted by a lack of institutional and financial support, as well as unregulated status and an insufficient mandate for their work. Lack of systematic training opportunities and insufficient focus on public affairs due to financial constraints were a worry mainly echoed in Ukraine among the facilitators and mediators, who conceded that it was not the most profitable employment opportunity. At the dialogue session in Kramatorsk, some facilitators were not given sufficient space by the participants to fulfil their roles, which was at times reduced to being a note taker.

### 3.4.2. Limitations in sustainability and impact

In **Kosovo**, it was perceived to be unlikely that the Follow Us Initiative would continue without the backing of the OSCE. It was not so much an issue of the loss of financial support, but rather the loss of political support. Additionally, even though the Kosovo projects have been active for many years, they have a narrow geographical or target groups focus. The Follow Us Initiative focuses on the capitals of Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade. The Inter-faith Forums mainly tackle issues related to religion.<sup>77</sup> Questions

75 Interview with Orthodox clergy, April 2016. Deçan/Dečani Monastery.

76 Interviews with Peace Messengers. June 2016, Osh city and Jalal-Abad.

77 With the exception of the Catholic Church in Prizren that organizes summer school for youth with a particular focus on attracting youth of other religious orientations to talk about a variety of issues of youth concern that pertain not only to religion (interview with Catholic clergy of Prizren Cathedral, April 2016).

have also been raised about the impact of the activities of the Inter-faith Dialogue project, although measuring impact is a common problem for all dialogue activities. The peacebuilding field has yet to develop adequate measurement tools.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Peace Messenger project ended in 2014 even though it had been seen as successful by all. The local organizations involved were unaware of the reasons for its termination and there was apparently no clear communication or exit strategy in place.<sup>78</sup> The public associations designated to continue the process find it hard to raise funds for transportation<sup>79</sup> and infrastructure. The prospects of re-launching support for the Peace Messenger project seems to be compromised by current political developments and a growing tendency on the part of the Kyrgyz government to oppose the OSCE's presence and project activities. These developments are unfortunate as the OSCE field presence in Kyrgyzstan played a crucial role in strengthening the capacities of insider mediators.

In **Ukraine**, the professional facilitators and mediators involved in the Reconstruction through Dialogue process, although well trained and capable, seem not to have had the leadership and leverage required to attract relevant insiders to the dialogue sessions. They also seem not to have had the contextual experience of mediating in large-scale socio-political conflicts. This is, however, largely attributable to the context itself, in that the fault lines in society had been forged by the unprecedented security crisis in and around Ukraine, which deeply polarized people and overwhelmed the mediators. A framework for the mediators and facilitators to fully exercise their learned skills is not fully developed, and this impacted on the efficacy of the process. Lastly, although there are many dialogue initiatives being conducted by NGOs, these are not (yet) linked to the Track 1 dialogues taking place in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. This raises questions about their long-term effectiveness.

78 A common public perception is that the state became suspicious of the project, thinking that the OSCE was establishing an NGO with hundreds of influential leaders to foment public opinion towards 'regime change', and therefore forced the OSCE to end the project. Rumors, speculations and competing narratives around this subject indicate the need for a transparent communication policy.

79 Often, Peace Messengers have to travel long distances to reach the villages.

### 3.4.3. Lack of transformative efforts

In **Kosovo**, a limitation is observed in that most influential insiders from the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities would not want to lose their patriotic credentials by being seen to be reaching out to the other community. This perception and the possible consequences thereof affect the work of insiders to operate in cross-ethnic/cultural contexts. Efforts to transform such reservations (or fears) are in the hands of no one but the insiders themselves.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the work of Peace Messengers has been criticized for its focus on short-term crisis response or shallow reconciliatory efforts (through dependence on ‘forgive and forget’) over long-term conflict transformation (that may address the deep grievances of minority groups). A conservative vision of authority is also seen in the Peace Messenger selection criteria: for instance, that no one with ‘criminal sons’ can become a Peace Messenger or obtain official status as a mediator. Furthermore, many Peace Messengers do not have enough knowledge of specific issues, such as property and civil law, to be able to address deficiencies that may be in them. Also, in Kyrgyzstan, the use of mediation to resolve family disputes often focused on preserving families and protecting family values rather than on protecting the rights of women. The rate of domestic violence and violence against women in Kyrgyzstan is one of the highest in Central Asia. In addition, the mediation style has also been criticized as prescriptive and authoritative, mainly pushing a certain result (arbitration) than letting the parties work out a solution. Finally, the issue of minority rights and representation in political life of the Uzbek community is a sensitive topic that habitually results in violence, which Peace Messengers have yet to address.<sup>80</sup>

In **Ukraine**, the dialogues have yet to see an inclusion of participants from government-controlled and non-government controlled territory, which impedes the transformation of relationships.

80 One small example of this is what happened around the issue of translating the constitution into the Uzbek language as proposed by the Uzbeks; there was strong protest against this by, among others, the elders, who refused to see state money used for this purpose. Some of these elders have found their place in the Peace Messenger project and refuse to deal with the topic.

#### 3.4.4. Insufficient consideration of the local context

Although the OSCE focuses on designing tailor-made projects according to the context, some of the projects were criticized for pursuing approaches that were not sufficiently locally tailored.

In **Kosovo**, international interventions are overly focused on building a multi-ethnic society (i.e. Inter-faith Dialogue), which is important, but pays insufficient attention to the current pressing need for intra-faith and intra-community dialogues.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, Peace Messengers in Osh and Jalal-Abad found it challenging to document their activities in the form of written reports, since most of them are not accustomed to writing. Written reports also made local institutions and state authorities suspicious. ‘Reporting of local activities to a foreign organization’ led to trust issues, particularly within the Uzbek communities (breach of confidence). Regional differences were not adequately reflected in the project strategy: training materials were mostly composed in Russian, which the Peace Messengers in the south did not know. The content of training was also deemed by the Peace Messengers, especially in the south and elders from remote rural areas, as too abstract and theoretical. An insufficient knowledge of local informal structures, a lack of understanding of how to deal with state officials and official channels, and a lack of awareness of how to use informal channels, were also limitations attributed to the OSCE. The training of Peace Messengers in remote venues outside the city also led to a perception among state institutions of ‘secrecy and of pursuing a hidden agenda’, which might have been avoided if a proactive communication strategy had been in place by the OSCE.

In **Ukraine**, in the three dialogue sessions in Odessa, Kramatorsk, and Mariupol, state actors showed a lack of interest in travelling to the distant east, and expressed a preference to remain more central. Another observation was about the gender imbalance of the facilitators, which are mostly women. In a male-dominated society, this possibly raises concern about how seriously the facilitators are taken by the participants. However, these considerations reflect the personal views of the interviewees only.

### 3.5. Comparative analysis

In Kosovo, the insiders involved are influential, well-reputed, and well-rooted in the respective societies. They do not perform mediation as a service. The mediators in Ukraine have been providing mediation services as part of their professions as trained mediators (albeit predominantly trained in fields such as family, business, law, etc.), and for which they get paid. The Peace Messengers in Kyrgyzstan are community leaders, enjoy societal respect (legitimacy), and possess the required authority to enforce agreements. They perform different types of mediation services, which are voluntary and based on the need to do common good. This puts them in a unique position that can characterize them as insider mediators. All the other insiders in Kosovo and Ukraine bring in qualities that can make peacebuilding initiatives effective and sustainable. While not yet insider mediators, they can definitely be portrayed as insider peacebuilders, potential change-makers, and multipliers.

Generally, the different roles of insiders in the three cases had not been specifically cast as mediation roles as is usually the case in insider mediation. It is important, however, to reflect on how the characteristics of insiders and the roles played by insiders and the OSCE contribute to mediation. The following table draws on this.

**Table 2: Comparative analysis of the three cases in light of insider mediation**

<b>Kosovo</b> Inter-faith Dialogue leaders; Follow Us Initiative's women	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b> Peace Messengers	<b>Ukraine</b> Professional mediators and Civil society actors
<b>Access, influence, legitimacy</b>		
<p><i>Inter-faith Dialogue leaders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– can influence institutional officials and facilitate dialogue on issues of social concern</li> <li>– have an image as less corrupt and more legitimate in both societies</li> <li>– are accepted across ethnic and religious lines</li> <li>– are accepted across ethnic and religious lines</li> </ul> <p><i>Follow Us women:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– are acceptable across ethnic and religious lines and across different sectors</li> </ul>	<p>Are locally-rooted, which gains them trust and legitimacy</p> <p>Are approached by local people to solve their problems because locals cannot rely on state support</p> <p>Have the power and courage to challenge the status quo of authorities</p>	<p>Civil society actors tend to earn respect through social engagement</p>
<p>The OSCE is regarded as a crucial regional actor</p>	<p>The OSCE's legitimacy to the state was seen as becoming tarnished over time</p>	<p>The OSCE has the legitimacy and power to convene groups for dialogue</p>



<b>Kosovo</b> Inter-faith Dialogue leaders; Follow Us Initiative's women	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b> Peace Messengers	<b>Ukraine</b> Professional mediators and Civil society actors
<b>Mediation space &amp; Mediative capacity</b>		
<p><i>Inter-faith Dialogue leaders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– religion forms a fabric in society which can help compensate for a lack of good governance</li> <li>– the image of religious freedom in a transitioning society is very strong</li> <li>– religious values and practices are resourceful</li> <li>– interfaith harmony has historically prevailed</li> </ul>	<p>Traditional practice of mediation is locally valued</p> <p>Local and traditional leaders have historically played a vital role in society</p> <p>An interesting mélange occurs with the diverse capacities of teachers, the elderly, religious organizations, representatives of media, law enforcement bodies and journalists</p>	<p>Society is generally dialogic/ receptive to dialogue</p> <p>Civil society is vibrant, but shrinking in Donbas areas not controlled by the government</p> <p>Professional mediators have skills to mediate civil cases (but no experience with socio-political conflict)</p> <p>Civil society actors are active, passionate and committed to building bridges across divides</p>
–	–	–

<b>Kosovo</b> Inter-faith Dialogue leaders; Follow Us Initiative's women	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b> Peace Messengers	<b>Ukraine</b> Professional mediators and Civil society actors
<b>(Re)vitalising mediation space &amp; Exercising and nurturing mediative capacity</b>		
<p>Communication and networking among community leaders and state authority is strengthened</p> <p><i>Inter-faith Dialogue leaders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– events and activities promote positive interactions among religious leaders, and strengthens co-operation with municipal officials</li> </ul> <p><i>Follow Us women:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– leverages the role of women in politics, economic empowerment and social issues</li> <li>– promotes confidence building between women from Serbia and Kosovo</li> </ul>	<p>Help to cope with social insecurity and achieve order in the community</p> <p>Prevent conflict escalation and respond to emergency situations</p> <p>Attempt to quash provocative rumours</p> <p>Promote local harmony, arbitration, reconciliation, forgiveness and resolution</p> <p>Carry out educational work together with local authorities</p> <p>Facilitate communication and networking among community leaders</p>	<p>Civil society is creating numerous formats and platform for dialogue</p> <p>Dialogue formats serve as exchange between decision makers in Kyiv and representatives of the communities affected by the crisis</p>
<p>The OSCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– nurtured a group of influential figures by motivating them to communicate</li> <li>– brought together prominent women and religious leaders to build their capacity</li> <li>– helped turn informal initiatives into structured dialogue formats</li> </ul>	<p>The OSCE built the project on existing and informal and local structures</p>	<p>The OSCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– gives rigorous training to insiders in dialogue facilitation</li> <li>– provides safe and neutral space for dialogues to take place</li> </ul>



## 4. Sustainable (insider) mediation support: Opportunities for the OSCE

Building on the conceptual insights from Chapter 2 and the cases, what follows are considerations and operational recommendations for the OSCE to take into account when supporting insider mediation.

### 4.1. Support ‘networks’

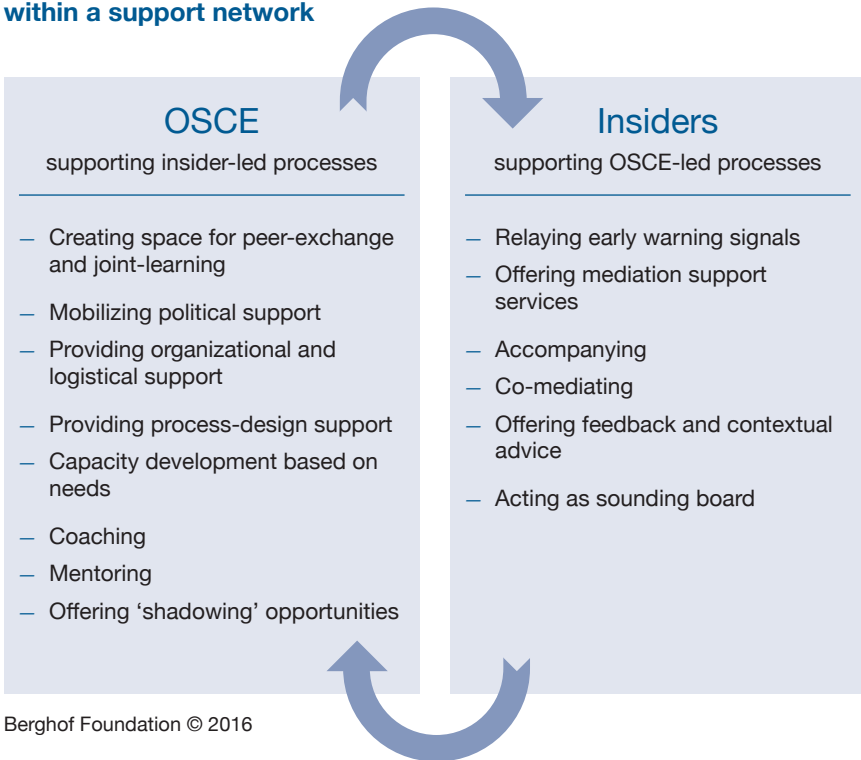
While certain insiders may need specific, one-to-one, and tailored support, it is worth considering an *overarching layer* of support that *connects* and achieves synergies among a collective of insiders and outsiders, while also catering to their individual needs. In many contexts, insiders mobilize such support networks in informal ways, by forming teams or sub-networks that are appropriate for particular situations. Outsiders can help sustain and strengthen such support networks by providing the financial, organizational and/or logistical support. Civil society actors have proven to be very active, for example, in Ukraine’s Odessa Dialogue process. As indicated by Falsini (2016), civic diplomacy may indeed be the “key to finding an informal and local forum for mediation in Ukraine”. When insiders are unable to bring together relevant actors, especially across the breadth of society, the support of an outsider can particularly complement insider efforts. The OSCE’s impartiality in such processes enables it to safely play the convenor role without being frowned upon. However, this role can be further strengthened and its scope widened. This could be operationalized by co-designing outreach programmes with insiders who know the relevant actors and the kinds of strategies that might be needed to keep them active in the process long enough to generate sufficient impetus for mediation processes to be successful.

Moreover, often within a conflict context, one observes competition and lack of integrative approaches, co-ordination, and co-operation in

## Sustainable (insider) mediation support

mediation support among the many international actors. The ‘community of practice’ concept of improving and institutionalizing co-ordination and communication between mediators and mediation support organizations (MSN 2013) is a model that can be extended to outsider mediators who wish support insider mediation. This model may additionally be helpful “in support[ing] [insiders] to identify synergies through co-operation” (UN 2012, 113).<sup>81</sup> Considering their strong ties to the respective conflict areas,

**Figure 2: Potential for collaboration among insiders and the OSCE within a support network**



81 The UN manages a roster that includes around 150 national and local experts on facilitation and dialogue, conflict analysis and training, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming. It identifies strong national and regional women’s organizations with experience in peace processes; a database collects information and assesses their quality and the type of expertise they can provide (UN 2012).

their in-depth local knowledge, and their ability to take timely mediative action toward reducing tensions, insiders can make an important contribution with regard to OSCE efforts to close the early warning – early action gap in the field.

With the advent of the concept of Infrastructure for Peace (I4P)<sup>82</sup>, the institutionalization of insider mediation, i.e. giving them a formalized institutional structure with a formal mandate and role, is currently being discussed in the literature. While I4P can embody support networks, there have been cases where institutionalization has led to insider mediation structures becoming ineffective and bureaucratic over time.<sup>83</sup> Careful consideration with regard to institutionalization must be made to avoid such a scenario. Instead of institutionalizing them (or funding them directly), the organizational and logistical support for creating and sustaining support networks can be provided.

## 4.2. Context-specificity, conflict-sensitivity, and Do No Harm

The diversity of actors in insider mediation calls for diverse approaches to support: for example, the support needs of an aged social worker might be different from that of a young leader – the former may be seeking logistical support for setting up a new initiative, while the latter may be looking for peer-exchange opportunities. There might also be tensions among insiders, which need to be carefully dealt with while engaging with them. Some insiders prefer to be—and are more effective when—not seen as engaging with outsiders. In certain cases, engaging with or supporting insiders may actually cause harm to their recognition in society, especially if outsiders are already seen with suspicion. In other cases, this may contribute to increasing competition among them, given that not all insiders may be supported at one time. Moreover, the challenge of balancing transparency of OSCE

82 I4P is an approach in peacebuilding that has been gaining much attention due to increasing evidence that locally-led and participatory peacebuilding practices tend to yield effective results in some countries beset by conflicts.

83 One case in point is the Kenyan local peace committees which, although admirable at their inception, became largely ineffective and corrupt mechanisms (Odendaal 2010).

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support and confidentiality can become a political issue. As a go-between, insiders must balance their relationship with disputants and with official and outsider mediators that they might be collaborating/exchanging information with. In the case that a harsh or uncomfortable message needs to be relayed, sometimes they may fear compromising their relationship with one or the other.

There are, however, ways of preventing potential bias or questions about the legitimacy of an insider, while retaining the benefits of the unique role that insiders can play. Some contexts may require and allow for the design of mediation support to assemble teams of mediators that fairly represent the interests of conflict parties. This team may then perform ‘culturally balanced co-mediation’ with co-ordinated, mixed mediation strategies, adopting a “range of mediation styles and strategies, ranging from low-intrusive to high-powered mediation, in order to foster consensus, concessions and confidence in a gradual effort to come to a successful outcome” (Rocha 2016, 22).

Financial, organizational, and logistical resources are common support needs in insider mediation. In fact, in many contexts, insiders work pro bono for the greater good. Financial support, although beneficial for the insider mediation process, has to be strategized well, since there might be a risk that insiders are perceived as foreign-driven or spies. Volatile political situations and highly polarized contexts are equally risky for outsider and insider mediators; support delivery requires great precaution to avoid doing harm.

Finally, insider mediation that does not question local norms (e.g. gender imbalance in patriarchal systems) could nevertheless benefit from support. Support in this case could constitute sensitively bringing forward lessons from other contexts where, for example, women played crucial roles in mediation processes. Creative ways of presenting this may stimulate opportunities for change from within.

### 4.3. Sustainability and impact

Like all organizations, there is a limit to the OSCE’s planning and implementing capacities. Projects conducted by OSCE field operations can experience limits in their financial sustainability in terms of political will, annual budget

cycles and/or the availability of extra-budgetary donor funding.<sup>84</sup> This can constrain the ability to invest in long-term approaches. One way to enhance the sustainability of insider mediation support could be to design a loose advisory and collaboration mechanism or a stand-by support structure, which could be part of the kind of the larger support network mentioned above. Insider mediation can be a slow process with little observable impact over a shorter period of time. It is important to find a mechanism of support that understands this and treats it with patience.

#### 4.4. Strategy and flexibility

Often, state actors do not see insider mediation as relevant, for example, in the absence of manifest violence and, therefore, block outsider mediation support. States may also block external support to insider processes out of fear that these activities might lead to the toppling of the government in place, or attempts at destabilization and regime change. While maintaining full compliance with its own norms and principles as well as transparency in all its activities, in some contexts the OSCE may need to use its expertise and creativity to find effective strategic approaches to frame and translate insider mediation support ideas into acceptable programmes. Then even when a support plan (essentially designed along with insiders) looks great on paper, in reality there may be limited space for concrete action, creating logistical and security hurdles for both insiders and outsiders. Therefore, there must also be room to adapt support strategies. Insiders, their roles, scope of work, and legitimacy are very much dependent on the conflict's dynamics. It is often quite easy to lose ground and trust, which is hard to regain. Proximity to the conflict contexts and certain conflict actors exposes insiders not only to personal risks but also to suspicion and perceptions of bias. To the outsider eye as well, insiders may appear to be doing contradictory things. It is important to be flexible about these dynamics of the insider when designing support. Last but not least, even if time-consuming, it is more beneficial in the long run to first work intensively on intra-group

84 OSCE projects are funded either from its Unified Budget or from extra-budgetary contributions.



## **Sustainable (insider) mediation support**

mediation in order to sensitize groups for inter-group mediation (e.g. intra-faith mediation as a basis for inter-faith mediation).

## 5. Concluding reflections

The OSCE is an organization that clearly embodies the principles of dialogue and consensus across its area, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The outcome of dialogue and consensus was clearly demonstrated in response to the crisis in and around Ukraine, resulting in the adoption of a multi-lateral approach and the deployment of two crisis-response missions: the Special Monitoring Mission and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Frank Walter Steinmeier, underscored that “we must not underestimate the strength of the consensus-based approach used by the OSCE, which is focused on dialogue, even if putting this into practice may not always be easy”.<sup>85</sup> However, consensus also contains within it a vulnerability in that it might *not* be reached. Despite the political and sometimes legal challenges that can impede OSCE engagement, it has proven crucial in de-escalating extremely contentious situations. Even within its consensus-based framework, the OSCE has demonstrated creativity and ingenuity in generating ideas and transferring them into concrete actions.

The idea to invest in thinking about and operationalizing insider mediation support fits well into the OSCE framework. Acknowledging that local, indigenous and insider methods of dealing with conflict enhance peace and stability over the long term, this study is a small attempt to provide food for thought for further dialogue on the subject. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather keeps in mind the fact that there can be no blueprint for the OSCE, or any other international or regional actors, to support insider mediation. This is primarily due to the contextual and cultural specificity of insider mediation, the dynamics among the actors involved, as well as conflict dynamics. Therefore, this study avoids prescribing generalized operational guidance but intends, rather, to be a stepping stone in the direction of formulating ideas and strategies on how *context-specific*

85 From a speech delivered at the OSCE Chairmanship high-level event on the margins of the 71st United Nations General Assembly, New York, 22 September 2016. ([www.osce.org/cio/266786](http://www.osce.org/cio/266786))

## Concluding reflections

insider mediation support could be operationalized in the OSCE area. Given the right conditions and political will, OSCE support to insider mediation could create dividends in reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security across the OSCE area.

The three cases studied – although very different in nature – demonstrated the kinds of potential that exists to further revitalize mediation spaces and support the mediative capacity of insiders. In traditional societies, like Kyrgyzstan – where people resort to elders, community leaders and religious figures to settle disputes – supporting insider mediation can help to de-escalate conflicts at the earliest stage. However, it is important to ensure that state structures are properly informed about mediation support endeavours to avoid any misperceptions. In post-conflict environments, like Kosovo, where local structures have been systematically replaced and overshadowed by international structures for more than a decade, leveraging insiders' mediative capacity to deal with issues of concern to everyday people is essential for post-conflict rehabilitation. Many local structures were destroyed during the war and must be systematically rebuilt. This requires time and effort to identify and systematically nurture an insider group that possesses sufficient trust and leverage in Kosovo. In societies experiencing open conflict, like Ukraine, a fundamental way to help restore broken relations is to vigorously support insider-facilitated dialogue. However, there are various challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. A constructive and positive perspective, however, can help see such challenges and limitations as opportunities – an issue noted by insiders in all three cases. What is clear is that well-informed, well-strategized, and sustained insider mediation support has a great potential to contribute to (re)building constructive relationships in socio-political conflicts. Finally, insider mediation – no matter how good or how well supported – cannot be seen as a cure for all ills. Instead, it must be recognized as an integral part of the larger peacemaking and peacebuilding architecture, in which insiders and outsiders play a complementary and co-ordinated role to create synergies for the holistic transformation of conflict.

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# Annex I: Terms of Reference for Case Studies

## **Role of the researcher**

Three researchers will produce one case study each (on Ukraine, Kosovo, and Kyrgyzstan) under the supervision of Berghof Foundation staff and on the basis of the detailed framework with guiding questions elaborated by the Berghof Foundation and incorporated below.

## **Case study production**

The case studies will gather lessons-learned from recent or emerging experiences of insider mediators in mediation and dialogue processes. Each case study should give an in-depth picture of the case under scrutiny and its peculiarities/specificities. This includes a description and analysis of the OSCE executive structures in supporting and working with insider mediators in the respective context. The case study will also look at the general situation of insider mediators in these countries, including their potentials, challenges and needs. Moreover, the case studies should include and reflect on lessons-learned or best practices on how to best support insider mediators and promote the use of insider mediators as a resource in mediation and dialogue engagements, including recognizing possible risks and challenges related to supporting and/or co-operating with insider mediators in peace processes in the OSCE area.

The findings gathered from the selected case studies will inform, support and complement the study on insider mediators in the OSCE area. The Berghof Foundation will provide conceptual guidance and provide close supervision of the researchers during the time of writing.

## **Key responsibilities**

The researchers are responsible for the production of the case study, which should include:

- *Development of a research proposal* demonstrating how the research will be conducted, including specifying how the range of views likely

## Annex I

to exist around insider mediators will be reflected upon and incorporated into the production of the paper.

- *Collection and analysis of key data:* Conduct desk and in-country research including expert and stakeholder interviews. The research will be conducted in close co-ordination with the Berghof Foundation staff responsible to ensure participation by the Berghof Foundation.
- *Production of a case study* reflecting on the insider mediators in mediation and dialogue processes, according to the framework questions provided and according to academic standards (citation, bibliography). Each case study will be around 10-15 pages (including footnotes and references) and must be written in English. Language check is the responsibility of the author/s.
- *Maintaining communication and collaborate closely with Berghof staff* supervising the research, including providing progress reports and collaborating throughout the editorial process.

### Rough outline

To make the work comparable and provide a holistic approach, the research should be structured largely around the following points.

#### **I. Introduction [10%]**

- Setting the country context: map conflict and conflict actors
- Briefly elaborate on the role of the inside mediators in the dialogue process under scrutiny
- What is particular/special about the role the insider mediators play in this context? Why is it different to other cases? Why is it functioning/not functioning? Put this case in the context of other dialogue processes which strongly benefitted from insider mediators.
- In what way has the OSCE co-operated with insider mediators in this case?

#### **II. Insider Mediators – role, work, strength, challenges [30-40%]**

- Timing/Ripeness (Why did the current process involve insider mediators? How did they get involved? How long were they involved? What legitimized them to work as an Insider Mediator?)

- Process (How was the work of the Insider Mediators organized? How strongly did they co-operate/communicate with other participants of the process?)
- Outcomes (What did the insider mediators achieve? What is seen as their major contribution by conflict parties? What is seen as their major short coming?)
- Challenges and opportunities (What do the insider mediators describe as hindering or conducive factors for their work? What do other participants see as challenges or opportunities for the work of insider mediators?)

### **III. Effective roles for external support by the OSCE or by other third-parties in co-operation with the OSCE [30-40%]**

1. How was the OSCE involved in the process? At what stage has it been involved in the process? How did it identify the insider mediators?
2. What kind of support did they provide to the insider mediators? How did they support the process? What concepts/ideas did they bring to the process? How is their support perceived by the insider mediators?
3. Opportunities, pitfalls, leverage? What are the lessons-learned from the support of the insider mediators in this process? What represented a challenge for the OSCE in supporting the Insider Mediators? What represented a challenge for the insider mediators in being supported by the OSCE?
4. What support needs still exist or could be needed in the future?

### **IV. Concluding Remarks [10%]**

- Lessons Learned and best practice recommendations
- Open questions

### **V. Bibliography and interview sources**



# Annex II: Research Questions

The following guiding questions form the basis of the case studies and may be adapted according to the need and the context. They also inform the analysis of the cases in the synthesis report to be presented to the OSCE.

## **Premises and modalities**

- What particularities of the conflict context lend themselves to insider mediator’s engagement and legitimacy?
- What other resources and peculiarities of insider mediators can be recognized?
- What techniques do insider mediators use in their mediation work?
- What, according to insider mediators, works really well? Under what conditions?
- How inclusive of women and youth are insider mediator’s processes?
- How was the insider mediators work organized? Which output and outcomes were achieved? What noticeable transformations came out of their engagement?
- How was the role of insider mediators assessed by the parties to the conflict and other stakeholders?
- Is there perceived or actual resistance to the work of the insider mediators in general, from specific community groups or from other levels of mediation work? If this leads to the insider mediators struggle and failure, are they being constructive, dynamic and remaining true to their cause?

## **Needs**

- What do insider mediators articulate as their needs to perform better? What specific tools, training programs and resources can the OSCE offer to insiders?
- In what ways can the OSCE strengthen the capacity of insider mediators?
- How do certain stakeholders or support networks see these needs? Are

## Annex II

there other needs that they perceive?

- How do insider mediators prepare to deal with unexpected developments?
- (How well) do the insider mediators connect and complement other mediation efforts in other Tracks?
- What are the options and risks for external support to insider mediators?
- Are there needs within the conflict context for a potential insider mediator role but, for whatever reason, this need is not met?
- How can the OSCE enhance channels of support between formal and informal processes?
- Are there ways in which association with external mediators may damage the insiders' credibility and impede their ability to function as required?

### **Synthesis**

- (How) can the lessons learned from the different cases be framed in more generic terms?
- Are there patterns of interactions and initiatives in the stature and approach of insider mediators in different cases?
- Are there patterns of characteristics that are common to all insider mediators?
- Are there patterns of needs among the different insider mediators?

