



Centre for
Humanitarian
Dialogue


Mediation for peace

THE INSIDE STORY

Paul Dziatkowiec

The impact of insider mediators on
modern peacemaking





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The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) is a private diplomacy organisation founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Its mission is to help prevent, mitigate, and resolve armed conflict through dialogue and mediation.

Our approach

Wars, uprisings, contested election outcomes, violent political transitions – every situation is unique. HD works with the key players to find innovative solutions which are appropriate to each context. The organisation enjoys access to decision-makers, influential actors and conflict parties. Its discretion and low-profile approach allow HD to engage in situations where official actors cannot and to take more calculated risks than larger organisations.

Our track record

For almost two decades, HD has supported peaceful settlements around the world. The organisation is currently involved in more than 40 dialogue and mediation initiatives in over 25 countries, some public, others confidential. Over the past five years, HD has helped to bring about 39 peace and conflict management agreements, including in Tunisia, Nigeria and the Philippines.

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THE **INSIDE** STORY

The impact of insider mediators on
modern peacemaking

Paul Dziatkowicz

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands,
that goes to his head.

If you talk to him in his language,
that goes to his heart.”

—**Nelson Mandela**

In memory of a dear colleague

David Lambo, one of the central characters of *The Inside Story*, passed away on 17 March 2017. David was a HD legend, a peacemaker extraordinaire. Over decades, he worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people in conflicts. He was disarmingly authentic, and passionate about peace. He loved Africa deeply. Many of his colleagues, and countless others he encountered throughout Africa and beyond, considered him a mentor. They saw in David a model of dignity and grace, fair-mindedness, humility and humanitarianism.

When emotions ran dangerously high, David would arrive on the scene to champion the cause of dialogue. Always fiercely determined, he strived to understand the concerns and grievances of all sides, to connect to the key players, and to find common ground between them. His genuine commitment and empathy were infectious, and respected by leaders, peacemakers and war-makers alike. In the difficult roles he assumed, David drew on his vast reservoirs of wisdom, experience and plain goodwill to defuse tensions and shepherd conflict parties towards non-violent solutions. He cared equally about his colleagues and, through his example, inspired them to be better peacemakers.

When first approached to contribute to this volume, David was keen to help out but, typically, hesitant to be thrust into the limelight. Thankfully, after some persuasion from colleagues, he eventually agreed to share publicly his precious insights.

This publication is dedicated to David Lambo, who will be sorely missed by the whole HD family. May he rest in the kind of peace he worked so hard to achieve for others.

David Lambo
1945–2017



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PART I

Introduction:
making the
difference
from within



As armed conflict generates ever more novel and complex challenges, the practice of peacemaking must evolve to keep pace. Today's wars are messy and protracted intra-state affairs and mediation is no longer primarily the business of states. More than ever, both war and peace feature an intricate web of actors, and can happen concurrently at different levels. They therefore call for creative and flexible responses.

One-size-fits-all peacemaking is a risky and ultimately futile business – applying models across conflicts rarely works. Furthermore, short-term international interventions are proving insufficient to address today's conflicts. Ultimately, there is no substitute for local knowledge and strong relationships on the ground. To paraphrase the old saying, trust takes mere seconds to break, and forever to repair – but it is built up over years.

Mediators were once viewed as neutral intermediaries, whose legitimacy 'depends in part on the fact that they are unbiased and that their lives do not intersect with the lives of the disputants'.¹ Neutral 'outsiders' were thus assumed to fit the mould best. In many parts of the world, however, communities in conflict prefer to deal with insiders who know the situation, have established relationships of trust, and stay committed. In addition, outside intervention of any kind is not always possible, nor desired. For these reasons, sustainable peace often depends on the involvement of people who are part of the conflicted society's fabric.

Sadly, insider mediators' contributions often go unrecognised, as international attention is drawn to the more visible, 'glamorous' aspects of high-powered diplomacy. One notable

exception was the awarding of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, which recognised the crucial role played by insider mediators in Tunisia's transition process.² Earlier, the UN's landmark 2012 report on mediation also highlighted the value of local mediators in leading peace efforts or complementing regional or international initiatives.³

“Insider mediators’ contributions often go unrecognised, as international attention is drawn to the more visible, ‘glamorous’ aspects of high-powered diplomacy.”

Through a series of personal interviews with representatives of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) from Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Thailand and Tunisia, this publication profiles and celebrates some of the organisation's insider mediators. Their stories illustrate the key roles they have played in peace initiatives, and reveal how HD's peacemaking approach relies on insiders for its successes.

Hand in glove: HD's insiders and outsiders

A typical peace process nowadays is multi-issue and multi-track, and rarely follows a linear path. Effective peacemaking therefore demands a flexible approach, with different team members connecting in different ways to the conflict parties and to other relevant actors.

HD, a Geneva-based private diplomacy organisation that has facilitated dialogue in armed conflicts since 1999, has evolved in recent years in line with the changing needs. Its typical approach is a 'hybrid' of insider and outsider mediation; one that places a premium on working with the right people, and



mobilising the requisite skills and networks to respond to a given conflict. Mindful that its effectiveness depends on an intimate knowledge of local contexts, HD has strengthened its field presence in countries as diverse as Libya, Senegal and Myanmar. As a result, today's HD is both international and local.

The hybrid approach seeks to make best use of the combined skills and qualities of HD's insiders and outsiders. Most HD projects, the bulk of which are confidential, link well-connected, politically savvy and knowledgeable peacemakers from local contexts with internationals, who in turn bring comparative experiences from around the world, far-reaching networks and thematic expertise. The two work hand in glove, allowing HD to respond to conflicts in a flexible and holistic manner. It is a model that relies on cultivating talented insiders who have a strong connection and commitment to the country in conflict, but typically no affiliation with the major political or military actors of their societies.

Of course, the enormous talent and expertise that typifies HD's pool of insider mediators is generously shared beyond their national contexts. HD's insiders contribute to many of the organisation's activities, from supporting or leading projects in other countries to providing policy and operational advice, exchanging their knowledge across regions and partaking



in peer reviews of other projects. Many of the colleagues interviewed for this volume work in several countries.

Who is an insider mediator?

‘Outsider mediators’ are typically described as mediation actors – individuals, countries or organisations – that come from outside the conflict and ‘are of different identity and nationality than the conflict parties.’⁴ The distinction between insider and outsider mediators was laid out by Wehr and Lederach, who highlighted the benefits to a peace process of a mixed team of outsider-neutrals and insider-partials,⁵ ‘each of which performs different but equally important functions’.⁶

“Insiders can effect positive change in diverse ways, including by building consensus and confidence in a process, bridging differences, advocating, connecting national-level dialogue with the public, ensuring that all societal voices are heard, and acting as early warning mechanisms.”



The interviews that follow generated some debate over definitions. More than one colleague observed that definitions of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ depend on perspective. From the viewpoint of a local community, for example, a mediator from a different tribe, class or village could in some situations be perceived as an ‘outsider’. The definition is also contingent on context – the same person may be an insider in one process but an outsider in another. Several of the interviewees fall into this category. As another example, Kenyan General Lazaro Sumbeiywo was an outsider mediator in the Sudan–South Sudan peace process of the early 2000s, but later played an insider role in his native Kenya, supporting Kofi Annan’s mediation in 2008.⁷ Ultimately the parties decide what role insiders and outsiders can and should play, and in most situations trust, knowledge and capabilities matter more than strict definitions.

Like all paradigms, the insider/outsider dichotomy is an imperfect one. However, it serves a useful purpose here to delineate between HD’s non-‘insiders’, who are neither from nor of any local context where HD works, and those who are. Adopting the above definitions helps to illustrate how the two can join forces to bring conflict parties closer to peace.

Similarly, the term ‘mediator’ is imprecise, as the work of HD colleagues goes far beyond that of mediation *per se*. In the





peacemaking field, ‘insider mediator’ is a broad concept that has come to encompass various third-party roles, which can include facilitation, channelling of messages, capacity-building, technical advice and process design.⁸

Tipping the balance towards peace

Insider mediators have made enormous contributions to both preventing and resolving conflict, often without earning the plaudits they deserved.

Insiders can effect positive change in diverse ways, including by building consensus and confidence in a process, bridging differences, advocating, connecting national-level dialogue with the public, ensuring that all societal voices are heard, and acting as early warning mechanisms.⁹

Famous examples include Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica, who helped to end the Central American wars in the 1980s;¹⁰ Desmond Tutu, then head of the South African Council of Churches, who mediated between the government and opposition in the final years of the apartheid era; and Chilean Archbishop Juan Francisco Fresno, who acted as a go-between for the Pinochet regime and the opposition. In peace efforts in Nepal during the early 2000s, insider mediators helped end the conflict between the Maoists and the Nepalese government.¹¹

Being an insider mediator is no easy vocation. Proximity to a conflict involves serious risks to personal security. Also, in contrast to outsiders, insider mediators cannot easily move on to a different context. Accusations of bias come easily and often, and the insider mediator’s challenge is to walk a tight-rope without leaning too far either way. At the same time, the willingness to take risks, coupled with a proven commitment to the local people, is precisely what earns respect, trust and legitimacy.

Insider mediators therefore are central to HD’s peacemaking enterprise. Other organisations too are increasingly recognising the importance of working with and empowering insiders.¹² This publication aims to make a further contribution.



PART II
Meet the
insiders

The typical profile of a HD insider mediator is a complex one that combines certain core skills and personality traits with ready networks. Relevant work experience and local knowledge are obvious prerequisites, but other, less tangible qualities are equally important – including trustworthiness, respect, dynamism, and influence. Insider mediators come from diverse backgrounds. In some cases, their previous experience and networks led them to HD; while in others, it was their conviction of the value of dialogue and of the usefulness of an impartial third party in bringing protagonists together to talk peace.

HD's insider mediators come from diverse backgrounds – some from politics, civil society or intergovernmental organisations; others from careers in research or human rights. Before joining HD, many worked in fields that also demand a keen sense of impartiality. Nilar Oo, for example, transitioned seamlessly to HD thanks largely to the impartial nature of her previous roles. On assignment with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Rescue Committee in Myanmar, she established relationships of trust with the military and the then-opposition National League for Democracy, which dovetailed neatly with her eventual role in HD supporting the peace process. Many of the others featured here have similar stories, particularly those with humanitarian or development backgrounds.

Prior work experience with an impartial employer is not, however, a prerequisite for insider mediators. Our colleague Theerada ('Jan') Suphaphong worked with parliamentarians, while Omeyya Seddik was a pro-democracy activist during

Tunisia's dictatorship. Obviously, to become mediators they had to transition smoothly into a role that is strongly predicated on impartiality. The ability to take that step is not always a given, but it can often be inferred from a candidate's access to the protagonists and the respect he or she enjoys across lines of conflict. Sometimes impartiality has to be learned, as it inherently contradicts the methods of, for example, a policy advocate. The willingness to adapt to the role, to curb one's instincts to take sides, and to stay in the shadows so that the parties can take credit for their agreements, requires conscious decisions by third parties, especially those working in their own countries. Becoming an insider mediator is more than a change of job – it demands great commitment, and often a change of mindset and approach.

That many of HD's insider mediators came from careers in human rights or humanitarian affairs, helped them to understand the root causes and complexities of conflict, build networks across societal sectors, and develop negotiation skills in their daily work. Prior to joining HD, many of the interviewees relied on dialogue facilitation as a primary tool of their respective trades. Whether or not the dialogue focused on political issues, it invariably sharpened skills that prepared them for the world of peacemaking. David Lambo made a career of negotiating as a humanitarian official with the UN. It was Nilar Oo's intensive dialoguing with the Myanmar authorities that allowed her to function as a humanitarian, while Abdelkader Sidibe was similarly tested in Mali. Meanwhile Alice Nderitu, as a human rights practitioner, drew on her considerable powers of argument and persuasion to advocate for vulnerable groups.

Finally, one of the most precious assets the interviewees bring to HD is an intimate understanding of their countries and regions. This is the backbone of an insider mediator's profile, which no amount of thematic expertise or inherent talent can replace. Local knowledge, combined with the skills and personal attributes described above, has made these insider mediators – and their many contemporaries across the world – a crucial element of HD's successes.



ABDELKADER SIDIBE

Mali

"I make sure never to allow myself to be manipulated. Everyone understands that I work for neither party – I am simply there to facilitate."

Abdelkader Sidibe works on the northern Mali conflict, which involves the state, five armed groups fighting for the independence of Tuareg territories, and a number of jihadist groups. Among other HD assignments, he has provided mediation support to the government and to local communities, assisting them to formulate their grievances, objectives and red lines ahead of negotiations. He also helped broker a ceasefire between the Northern armed groups, and to facilitate reconciliation between them ahead of the Algiers peace talks.





“My background is my main asset. I am from the Peul community, and my grandfather was the regional chief, which has helped me earn the trust of many stakeholders. You can have all the expertise, credentials and financial resources, but without trust between you and the parties involved, there is nothing you can do.”

Abdelkader Sidibe describes his role as that of a bridge between the government, armed groups and communities. He is accepted in this role in part because of his ‘neutral’ identity as a member of the Peul community (which has not been a key actor in the conflict), but primarily thanks to his two decades of service to the cause of peace in his country.

Since the 1990s, Abdelkader Sidibe has worked on conflict-related issues in his native Mali, as well as in Niger and Burkina Faso. Before arriving at HD, he spent several years engaged in a project to prevent and manage natural resource conflicts between Malian communities. Other roles focused on addressing post-electoral conflicts, and researching the relationships between northern Malian communities. Building on his diverse experiences in humanitarian and development work, Abdelkader Sidibe saw the move to HD as an opportunity to contribute to resolving the political issues at the core of the Mali conflict, which were preventing his country from realising its full potential.



ALICE NDERITU

Kenya

“I avoid showing emotions, regardless of what is said. In certain situations it’s important not to laugh or smile – it may be misinterpreted. I even avoid clothing that may be associated with any of the sides. In some ways, mediating is like acting.”

Alice has mediated inter-communal dialogue processes in Kaduna State and in Southern Plateau, Nigeria, which aimed to resolve grazer–farmer disputes, resettle IDPs from communities affected by violence, and provide a forum for addressing grievances. The Kaduna process built on the success of a previous HD-facilitated inter-communal dialogue in Plateau State (2013–2014), where Alice had served as the Inclusion Advisor. Alice facilitated dialogue between representatives of 29 ethnic communities, ensured the inclusion of local women leaders, and conducted back-channel negotiations to keep the process on track.

In Plateau State, Alice played a key role in the establishment of a women’s network that linked Muslim and Christian women. These women helped prevent much of the violence that was expected around Nigeria’s 2015 elections.

Prior to the 2013 elections in Kenya, Alice and a group of elders shuttled between the two leading presidential candidates and other key power brokers in an effort to avert the type of conflict that had erupted in 2008. When violence flared in South Sudan in late 2013, Alice and a team of mediators shuttled messages between the leaders of the conflicting parties.

Before joining HD, Alice was an accomplished human rights advocate. During the Kenyan post-election violence (2007–8), she documented abuses for the Kenya National Commission





“Women mediators can be powerful. When women mediate, there’s less chance of a conflict of egos. The trick is to be authoritative and knowledgeable, because a woman has to work harder at being accepted.”

on Human Rights. In other capacities, she engaged on human rights in Ethiopia, Somaliland, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. These experiences deepened her understanding of the root causes of conflict, and helped her develop an extensive network throughout the region. At Kenya’s National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), to which she was appointed in 2009, Alice worked more specifically on dialogue-based processes and conflict prevention. Later, Alice helped establish the Uwiano platform for peace, an early-warning mechanism that allows Kenyans to play a direct role in preventing violence.

Fearing a repeat of the 2008 crisis, in 2011 Alice initiated a process with the NCIC that engaged a core group of elders in Kenya’s Rift Valley to devise a strategy for conflict prevention. Similar to her later Nigerian experiences, Alice was accepted as a woman mediator, a rare feat in these contexts. Through this process, Alice joined forces with HD. After 16 months, that process produced an agreement on preventing violence, which helped ensure that the Rift Valley remained relatively calm during the subsequent elections. The agreement continues to be a basis of dialogue among the elders in this volatile region.



DAVID LAMBO*

Nigeria

“I always emphasise that I’m genuinely concerned about the problem. I try to set the right example, by constantly working with the parties to find solutions. The parties need to think: ‘he’s really trying his hardest’.”

David was one of HD’s most experienced mediators, and a co-founder of its Africa programme. Among his many contributions around Africa was the development of HD’s inter-communal dialogue processes in Nigeria’s ‘Middle Belt’, and his leading role in HD’s efforts to prevent and resolve armed conflict in Liberia, Kenya and Somalia.

David considered that one of the causes of Nigeria’s inter-communal conflicts was migration and its impact on the attitudes of host populations, which have sometimes been exploited by politicians who allowed the issue to take on ethnic and religious overtones. These were some of the issues that David addressed through HD’s inter-communal dialogues. He believed that the methods used by HD in Plateau State could be transferable to other contexts where ethnic and religious differences motivate communal conflicts.

Before joining HD, David was a senior official with the United Nations, where he served for more than three decades. He started his UN career in 1971 and held various positions in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, as well as in Geneva where he was Director of the Africa Bureau of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 2002 to 2005. David was a coordinator for the special operation for Mozambique where 1.7 million refugees were repatriated after the end of the civil war. He finally served as Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees,



* See the tribute to David Lambo (“David Thomas Lambo: A Tireless Humanitarian”) on the HD website: <https://www.hdcentre.org/updates/david-thomas-lambo-a-tireless-humanitarian/>



“It’s always satisfying to try to help communities come to some consensus on the way forward, often after years of tension and violence. In Plateau State in Nigeria, for example, HD identified a way to deal with tension and violence through a broad-based inter-communal dialogue process.”

a.i, until he retired in 2006. Given his experience in numerous negotiations and dialogue processes as a humanitarian actor, David moved seamlessly into HD’s activities.

David considered mediation an art more than a science; while some skills can be learnt or may come with experience, he believed that natural ability and a suitable personality are critical to an effective mediator.





THEERADA 'JAN' SUPHAPHONG

Thailand

"I prefer to operate quietly, encouraging people to step back from the brink, by identifying an acceptable alternative."

Theerada, better known as 'Jan', has worked for HD on two distinct issues in the Thai context. One is the Southern Thailand conflict, which stems from ethnic divisions and has been exacerbated by political disenfranchisement, as perceived by the Malay Muslim people of the region. The other is the national political scene, dominated in recent years by two competing forces: royalist conservative elites and liberals who ostensibly promote socioeconomic equality and popular involvement in decision-making. The incessant rivalry between the two power blocs over two decades has culminated in periodic violence, with the military repeatedly stepping in to take power.

In 2010, following clashes between the military and protesters in Bangkok, HD initiated an effort to help avert further violence. In the political turmoil that followed, Jan facilitated discreet meetings with key political actors, encouraged dialogue-based approaches to addressing societal differences, and conducted shuttle diplomacy between rival stakeholders. Leveraging her knowledge of the political system, Jan has worked with political actors to forge space for dialogue on reconciliation. By highlighting the need to address the plight of the victims of political violence, she shaped a middle ground force that could rise above the polarised politics and that, in turn, has helped generate ideas on reconciliation.





“I have to be modest and non-intrusive, yet constructive. We always present our ideas as options for consideration, never directives. The choices belong to the parties, and we help them shape these choices.”



Jan describes her role as ‘laying the groundwork’ for higher-level talks to take place. The protagonists see her as a trusted go-between among political actors, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. Meanwhile, on the Southern Thailand track, Jan has liaised with the Thai government negotiating team, policymakers, civil society groups and others to promote dialogue with the armed groups.

Previously, Jan worked in the Thai political arena, including in senate committees on foreign affairs, Myanmar, Southern Thailand and other issues. After joining HD, one of Jan’s first assignments was to help convince Thai national leaders to re-engage in a peace process in the South. Jan was an ideal fit for this role, having previously worked with parliamentarians who had attempted similar dialogues in the past.





NILAR OO

Myanmar

“In Myanmar, arrogance is very badly received – especially in official circles. I try to be humble in my approach. I talk to people with a smile, and what I say is firm but soft.”

Nilar is HD's Deputy Country Representative in Myanmar. With her extensive network of contacts and calm but persuasive manner, she is key to HD's efforts to support the peace process between the government and Myanmar's ethnic armed groups. Nilar is also involved in HD's dialogue project in Rakhine State, where inter-communal tensions and fierce political rivalries continue to trigger violent confrontation.

HD supports the ethnic peace process by providing technical advice to the government, ethnic armed groups, political parties and the military. It advises and helps build the capacity of the parties, including by helping them learn from other peace processes. Nilar is a tireless advocate of dialogue and reconciliation. She engages with senior stakeholders on all sides, continuously evaluates the needs of the peace process, and explores how the tools available to HD might assist parties in their search for peace. Nilar's credibility, commitment to peace, and role as an impartial third party allows her to be frank with the stakeholders, who appreciate her advice.

Nilar believes that HD's capacity and readiness to offer the conflict parties impartial support and advice have been the keys to fostering trust in HD. Both the government and the armed groups have regularly requested such assistance, and consider HD a credible partner.





“Myanmar was isolated for so many years, and now we have an opportunity to rejoin the rest of the world. To help my country achieve that, I want to share my experiences and knowledge.”

Previously, Nilar worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Rescue Committee. In those roles, she negotiated with the Myanmar government to access remote areas, which demanded delicate handling, particularly on issues such as visiting prisons. This work gave Nilar a strong understanding of the country’s political realities and the authorities’ openness to dialogue.

Nilar joined HD primarily because she had admired its efforts years before to facilitate dialogue between the government, the National League for Democracy and the UN. In her view, HD has been known and appreciated for its impartiality in Myanmar since the early 2000s.

Nilar has never been affiliated with any political movement – something she attributes to her grandfather, who taught her to choose ‘the middle way’ rather than take sides. She considers this principle the epitome of fairness and neutrality.





NAOUFEL OMEYYA SEDDIK

Tunisia

“Insiders have a keener ability to understand a situation, the issues at stake, and the stakeholders’ motivations. To me an insider is someone who shares the concerns of the local people. This isn’t solely determined by nationality – it goes beyond the colour of one’s passport.”

Omeyya’s work covers a wide range of sensitive and often interlinked issues, including aspects of national dialogue, democratic transition, security, radicalism and sectarian conflict. In recent years he has focused his attention on Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, as well as cross-cutting issues in the Middle East and North Africa region. Much of his work has a regional character.

According to Omeyya, an insider mediator can be called upon to perform multiple roles: analyst, strategic planner, adviser, mediator, confidante, referee, diplomat, psychologist and even café owner. ‘We must be polymorphous,’ he adds, ‘while maintaining a backbone, ethical principles and a sceptical distance.’

Omeyya arrived at HD with significant experience in mediation and dialogue, as well as politics. Since the 1990s, he had been part of a group of people from several countries in the region who built broad pro-democratic coalitions. With others, Omeyya launched consensus-building dialogue between disparate political forces on overcoming authoritarianism through the development of alternative political models. He worked, for example, as one of the leaders of the “18th October” movement in Tunisia on dialogue between Islamist and secular opposition actors to resolve differences and develop a shared vision for a democratic Tunisia. He has engaged in





“I believe that in some situations it’s acceptable to lean towards one particular option, but you must be explicit about it, and know how to argue for it. The work that we did in Tunisia wasn’t just mediation. At times we defended one position over another, and explicitly explained why, while stressing that the parties had to ultimately decide.”

similar initiatives in Lebanon and among diaspora communities in Europe.

Through these activities, Omeyya gained experience in negotiation and consensus-building. Over several years, he developed rich networks of political actors in the MENA region, representing an array of ideologies. These contacts became more relevant following the so-called Arab Spring, which brought to power some of Omeyya’s longstanding contacts.

Although he had been politically active prior to the Tunisian Revolution, he later became ‘quasi-neutral’, withdrawing from what he saw as an increasingly polarised political arena. Omeyya’s proven commitment to democracy, rejection of exclusion and pursuit of reconciliation facilitated his acceptance, including among those associated with the former regime of Ben Ali. His impartiality allowed him to play a key role in facilitating dialogue between different political forces in Tunisia around the 2014 elections, which produced the so-called Charter of Honour. Omeyya has also been able to develop relationships of trust with the Tunisian security forces, with whom he was in conflict during his years as an opposition activist.



SHIENNY ANGELITA

Indonesia

“As a woman, I’m often seen as relatively ‘harmless’ – especially in the eyes of armed groups. They tend to be more open with women. I believe that I’m trusted more than if I were a man, and I’m seen as less of a threat. I use this to my advantage.”

Shienny’s main focus of work has been Papua, a province that has endured violence since it sought independence in the 1960s. At the invitation of a senior Indonesian government official, HD became involved in Papua in 2008, in partnership with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). In the early years of the project, the idea of ‘dialogue’ with the secessionists was taboo, and important areas of the Indonesian government were uneasy about international involvement. By working with a local partner and maintaining close contact with the government, HD was able to ensure that the government was comfortable with HD’s engagement as a ‘silent partner’ of what was seen as a local initiative. Over time, the government became more accepting of the concept of dialogue, albeit without directly acknowledging the root causes of the Papua problem.

Shienny facilitates dialogue, in partnership with LIPI and the Papua Peace Network. She channels messages between the government and Papuan groups, advises the parties on key issues, identifies capacity-building opportunities, and organises exploratory meetings between the government and the Papuan community. Shienny’s dynamic personality and her family roots in Eastern Indonesia have enabled her to forge wide-ranging relationships of trust across Papua.

Since 2011 there have been six ‘exploratory meetings’ covering issues including humanitarian access, the history of





“If you want to gain people’s trust, you need to get to know them and their problems. It’s essential to understand the local culture – in particular, what is considered taboo. It’s best to put yourself in the shoes of the local people – that’s when they open up.”

Papua, political prisoners and media freedom. While intimately involved in the organisation of these meetings, HD maintains a low profile in the dialogues, which are essentially between the government and the Papuans. The process does not involve the Papuan diaspora, with whom HD meets separately.

Before embarking on her HD career, Shienny was a financial consultant. She joined HD in Aceh initially as an administrative assistant. Gradually her responsibilities broadened, as she became involved in convening meetings between armed groups and officials. Shienny later went to Iraq in a non-HD role but returned to Indonesia after the UN office in Baghdad was bombed in 2003. Over the subsequent few years, she played a key role in HD’s dialogue efforts in Aceh, Papua and East Timor.



PART III

The interview

1 What motivates you to do this work?

David: I've spent my whole working life dealing with other people's problems, since my first mission for the UN in 1973, when I urged Denmark to take more Kurdish refugees. As such, it has been nice to finally come 'home' (to Nigeria) and try to do something worthwhile in the country. From the perspective of a private peacemaking organisation like HD, Nigeria is a country with increasingly complex problems, and HD is well suited to help address some of them.

Abdelkader: The conflict affects me directly, as I come from the north of Mali. I'm living through it personally. Through my work, I have the chance to put to good use my knowledge of the conflict actors and other stakeholders, as well as their relationships.

Nilar: I would like to help my country become more stable. Myanmar was isolated for so many years, and now we have an opportunity to rejoin the rest of the world. To help achieve that, I want to share my experiences and knowledge, and convince people that we're heading in a positive direction. I try to do that by taking advantage of my access to decision-makers in government, the military, and the ethnic groups, and feeding them my ideas.

Alice: I care very much about Africa. It has so much potential, but so many unnecessary wars. Many of these conflicts are driven by egos and identity clashes. Power blinds the elites, particularly when resources are at stake, and they lose sight of the struggles of the average person. It is sad: Africa's best

resource is its people, yet conflicts have stolen their opportunities and their future.

Jan: While I understand that, to some extent, conflict is inevitable, it frustrates me when breakdowns in communication cause unnecessary violence. I would rather see people outsmart each other through negotiations. HD and I share similar values – we both want to engage with and understand people with different views, in order to find common ground.

“Africa's best resource is its people,
yet conflicts have stolen their
opportunities and their future.”

Ultimately, I would like Thailand to be a fairer place. I became more exposed to social issues when I worked in politics, which offered me opportunities to meet diverse people – for example minorities – and to understand their grievances and hopes. My country needs to figure out how its increasingly complex society will co-exist.

Omeyya: Although I'm not instinctively a 'disciple' of dialogue, I see that this work is increasingly necessary. At another time I preferred different methods of combating abuses of power. Nowadays, dialogue and mediation are often the right instruments for promoting peace in the region. The second reason is more personal: I find the work interesting, I know how to do it, and I consider HD a good framework in which to operate.

Shienny: Initially I was interested in Aceh because of my personal ties there. That experience opened my eyes to peacemaking, which inspired me. I enjoy meeting people and high-level personalities, and understanding the complexities of conflict. In 13 years at HD, I've enjoyed many interesting experiences, from the jungle to the jail!

2 What are your greatest achievements in peacemaking?

Alice: Firstly, the agreement in Kenya's Rift Valley to prevent inter-communal violence.¹ Several years on, the inter-ethnic elders from that region continue to issue joint statements, thanks in part to the work we did to bring them together. We can still call on them now to intervene in tense situations.

“HD was among very few players maintaining channels between actors who were working to prevent a derailing of the democratic transition.”

Secondly, I co-founded the Uwiano Platform for Peace, which was Kenya's first effort to link early warning and early response using text messaging. Uwiano enabled ordinary citizens to participate directly in conflict prevention. HD's team working in Nigeria's Plateau State has since set up a similar mechanism, the Tension Management Network.

Nilar: HD has won the trust of the key stakeholders in the conflict, even members of the conservative military. This would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Also, in the lead up to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (signed in October 2015), we assisted the conflict parties on all sides to think through the issues and develop their positions. We helped them to clarify what 'ceasefire' and 'political dialogue' meant for them, which allowed them to approach these issues with a well-considered view.

Omeyya: The most well-known success was the Charter of Honour, a set of rules of conduct for the electoral process, which was signed by 23 Tunisian political parties in July 2014.² However, I derived greater satisfaction from activities that didn't

receive as much recognition. For example, I have found HD's work in Libya very satisfying: constructing and maintaining a dialogue with stakeholders who were at times uncooperative was a success.³

Another example, dating from 2013, is the shuttle diplomacy we conducted at a time when Tunisia could still have moved towards open civil conflict, or Egyptian-style 'restoration'. During this time, HD was among very few players maintaining channels between actors who were working to prevent a derailing of the democratic transition. It was difficult work, though it was possibly more decisive than the work that led to the Charter.

Shienny: In Papua, I'm proud that I helped to convince sceptics of the utility of dialogue. We even persuaded relevant ministers and senior officials to sit with us and talk about the process. In time, it became publicly acceptable to talk about 'dialogue'. Separately, in East Timor I was privileged to receive a medal for my work towards peace.

David: It's always satisfying to help communities come to some consensus on the way forward, often after years of tension and violence. In Plateau State in Nigeria, for example, HD identified a way to deal with tension and violence through a broad-based inter-communal dialogue process.⁴

We are also striving to ensure that these dialogue mechanisms are sustainable. Part of the problem for mediators is that these types of crises are often cyclical in nature, and need constant attention; rarely does an agreement hold forever. Many grievances are rooted in complex problems, some of which are generational and therefore require a long-term peace-building approach.

Accordingly, after HD's dialogue process in Jos was completed, we developed a long-term implementation programme. This included the establishment of a local NGO which would give the communities a vehicle for the implementation of agreements. The programme also includes the joint rebuilding of schools and religious places destroyed during the violence.

Jan: HD has supported dialogue in the south of Thailand for many years. We have shown the parties and civil society the



type of discreet dialogue that could help create mutually acceptable policies and structures.

In the Friends of Thailand process, the stakeholders (including political parties and the military) have, with our help, forged a culture of respectful and meaningful dialogue, and they appreciate the channels we built. We have enabled a safe environment for sharing ideas and identifying common ground.

Abdelkader: In 2014 we facilitated workshops with the Malian government's negotiating team, and separately with armed groups and dissidents. This helped build trust in HD, and secured for us a mandate for supporting the dialogue process. As a result, we provided technical expertise to the conflict parties, which helped them engage constructively in the negotiations that led to the Algiers Agreement in June 2015.⁵ In parallel, we ensured that civil society also had a voice in the process.

3 How would you describe your engagement with the parties?

David: HD's response to the continuing conflict in Jos and Plateau State (Nigeria) was to begin with a preparatory process before starting intercommunal dialogue. The preparatory process included lengthy discussions with each community, to identify their concerns. The many problems raised by the communities were integrated into one agenda, to be followed in the dialogue process.

This is a process with a fairly 'light' footprint on our side. It is owned by the local communities. We have tried to generate options, do much of the preparatory work, gauge the mood through pre-negotiations, and in general bring ideas and share experiences from other conflict theatres. We have tried to build on work done previously – for example, the five or more

commissions of inquiry – rather than reinvent the wheel. It is important to learn from others who have gone before you, and build on their experience.

The dialogue was to be followed by a robust programme that would implement the conclusions, so as to keep up momentum and ensure that a longer-term peacebuilding process would be put in place.

“As representatives of an international peacemaking organisation, we must show that we’re trustworthy and credible. I have to demonstrate that HD can help the protagonists in practical ways to solve their problems.”

The major challenge is to ensure that agreements stick beyond their signing – for example, that any remaining tensions continue to be managed even when the parties leave the negotiating table. In our project in Plateau State, we ensured that the local partner NGO and outside donors share this philosophy. We created a ‘Tension Management Group’, which meets once a month to work through any emerging issues that may create tensions between the communities. The work of ensuring that there is no relapse is as important as the initial mediation and dialogue process itself.

Jan: My role requires discreet, behind-the-scenes networking and consensus-building. My style is not confrontational. In the Thai setting, people do not like to lose face; therefore, pointing fingers is counter-productive.

When I deal with bureaucrats in Thailand, I have to be modest and non-intrusive, yet constructive. As representatives of an international peacemaking organisation, we must show

that we’re trustworthy and credible. I have to demonstrate that HD can help the protagonists in practical ways to solve their problems. This includes showing empathy for their concerns. We always present our ideas as options for consideration, never directives or recommendations. The choices belong to the parties – we merely help them shape these choices.

Abdelkader: Because of my background, I had existing links to many of the relevant stakeholders. We have a protocol of agreement with the government and a mandate from all the armed groups to support this process. This was built on the trust that these groups have in HD, and the neutrality that I’ve maintained in my relationships with the parties.



Alice: I prepare well for meetings, to demonstrate knowledge and credibility. This is particularly important because I'm a woman, and peacemaking in Africa is usually seen as a man's business. I want to be the best-prepared person in the room.

It's important to be a good chair, which means knowing the sensitivities around the room. I often use storytelling and analogy to get tough messages across gently, firmly, and in many cases humorously.

Omeyya: It's important to be closely engaged, but remain impartial. Mediators can maintain impartiality if they're transparent from the start about their position. For example, in Tunisia one's ambition may be to prevent the breakdown of

the democratic process, or in Libya to bring stability and justice. This is effectively taking a position, because there are stakeholders who oppose it. If you don't define your position, no one will trust you. In other words, it's impossible to work on highly politicised situations – like conflicts – without a clear position. Those who claim to be neutral are not being honest.

4 How did you win the trust of the conflict parties?

Alice: Primarily by listening, being sincere, and making eye contact. In many African cultures, women are not supposed to make eye contact, but in mediation it signals confidence. I also repeat what people say, so they know that I have listened – after all, they want someone to hear their story. It's important to make the conversation about them as much as possible. A mediator must have big ears and a small mouth.

“A mediator must have big ears
and a small mouth.”

Jan: It helped that I had previously worked with civil society and with political actors, so I had existing relationships and could quickly establish new ones. For example, I was able to access members of parliament, who already knew me and therefore didn't see me as a threat; and I could link politicians and civil society together. Finally, we had the benefit of HD's reputation in the region as an objective and impartial actor.

David: As a peacemaker, you need to respond to the parties' concerns. They need to feel your energy, and your interest in finding a solution. When you show your commitment, they tend to respond, to put their own best foot forward.



Sometimes it's worth giving your interlocutors an 'electric shock', by challenging them. But you must do this at the right time. Be independent-minded, but also careful with your words.

Avoid being perceived as friendlier with some parties than others. For example, even sitting with one person and not another at lunchtime can be perceived poorly. If the preceding session has been very 'hot', don't sit with any of them. It's a fine balance, a constant theatre.

Omeyya: Trust was built up over several years of meeting and working with many of the stakeholders. We have shared common experiences.

It's also important to acquire the best possible understanding of the data, the human concerns, as well as the more abstract values that are held dear by the stakeholders.

Nilar: By being humble, tolerant, patient, and offering what I could to help the parties. For example, if they need a paper to outline options on a particular issue, we try to find ways to get it done. Or we invite relevant stakeholders to the Oslo Forum, to learn from and exchange experiences with peacemakers from around the world.

5 How do you maintain your impartiality?

David: As a peacemaker, your only 'preferred' outcome is an end to violence – your objective is to help build a sustainable agreement to end the conflict. If your instinct is that one approach is more likely to achieve this than another, then you are within your rights to say so – you can tell the parties: 'if you go on like this, the situation will get worse'.

Having said that, beyond offering advice, it is the parties who will ultimately identify their preferred approach.

Shienny: This is very difficult. If you spend more time with one side than the other, there are always questions raised. You must try to be professional, share your time equally, and give the same quality of advice to all sides. But there is a thin

line, and despite your best efforts you might still be perceived as partial.

“You must try to be professional, share your time equally, and give the same quality of advice to all sides. But there is a thin line, and despite your best efforts you might still be perceived as partial.”

In East Timor, rebel leader Alfredo Reinado once threatened to kill us, as he thought we were siding with the government. And on the other side, senior East Timorese also accused us of being close to the rebels. We responded by passing the same messages, whoever we were dealing with. If either party was being intransigent, we would also pass difficult messages. Sometimes we put our own safety at risk – for example, by travelling without security to show that we trusted the conflict parties. We put ourselves in their hands, and as a result we were perceived as genuine.

Alice: Deep down, you know who has the better case. The bottom line for me is: what is in the best interests of the people? I write this question in my notebook, and keep on reminding myself of its importance.

If a representative of one of the parties wants to see me, I do it in a team with other mediators, so that there's a witness. Conversations can easily be misconstrued, and the African 'bush telephone' is a powerful thing!

Jan: Sometimes our impartiality is challenged. One side might ask why we don't condemn the other's poor behaviour. We explain that our role is not to point fingers; our work aims to prevent violence, so that there will be no further need for finger-pointing. However, we do encourage the parties to

deal with the past and avoid violations in order to reduce the prospect for further conflict.

When we suggest options, we don't openly favour any. I try to suggest a framework that sets out a range of options. We have to be seen as trying to help the parties find the solution that's best for them.

6 What comparative advantages do insider mediators bring?

Jan: I have a good understanding with people working at the technical level – they trust me as an 'insider' because I understand their context and function. They see that I'm

committed to this process for the long term,⁶ that I understand the system and its constraints, and they know I've seen the successes and failures of previous peacemaking attempts.

Omeyya: I have privileged access to the Tunisian and Arab space, but that's not because I'm Tunisian. It's because I was intimately involved in regional activities for several years, the political stakeholders know me, and I have a deep knowledge of the context and history. These things make me an 'insider'.

But being an insider has more to do with experience than identity. We speak the same language, have the same reference points, and remember the historical context as a shared experience. That said, it can also be a disadvantage: someone who is culturally close can be perceived as easily manipulated.



It's important to maintain a distance, and be careful that interlocutors don't instrumentalise you for their political games.

“Perhaps one comes to be defined as an ‘insider’ through one’s empathy and impartiality, rather than one’s cultural or ethnic identity?”

Nilar: I grew up here, and understand the country – thus I find it much easier to build trust with local interlocutors. Insiders know the context, the culture, and how to approach issues and people. That knowledge can't be replaced. Although Myanmar is gradually opening up, the government is still somewhat mistrustful of foreigners. Outsiders often come with the wrong attitude and approach; above all, many lack the humility that is expected here.

Abdelkader: As an ‘insider’, my major advantages are that I know the stakeholders, alliances, and conflicts, and I am wise to some of the secrets. For a foreigner, it would take a lot of time to understand all of these dynamics. I'm also more aware of what can and cannot be said – some things are nuanced, and are not easy to explain without contextual experience.

David: You need both insiders and outsiders. Mediators aren't just lonely individuals – their success requires a team effort, a well-balanced team of suitable people. It's important that, within a team, there is a nuanced understanding of the language, culture, and religion of the parties.

In a multicultural country like Nigeria, an insider can be pigeonholed and considered partial, before even opening his mouth. In the local context, Nigerians from other parts of the country can be viewed as either insiders or outsiders depending on their disposition. Perhaps one comes to be defined as an ‘insider’ through one’s empathy and impartiality, rather than



one's cultural or ethnic identity? For example, during a crisis in Haiti the head of the Latin American bureau of UNHCR was a Ghanaian – but the local people loved him because he spoke Spanish, and because he was empathetic. Was he an outsider or an insider?

Shienny: In Papua, insiders have many advantages – they don't need permission to travel, and therefore don't raise concerns for military and intelligence officials. Outsiders are often considered suspicious. Also, it is a huge advantage to speak the local dialect and understand the local culture.



7 What could outsider mediators do that you cannot?

Alice: Outsiders can ask the hard questions. For example, in South Sudan, an outsider could ask the leaders of the warring parties: ‘what is this conflict really about – personalities, or ethnicity?’ An insider would have problems asking questions that are sensitive or that can be interpreted as criticism.⁷

Outsiders are particularly credible if they come from a country that has experienced conflict. When Kenya lived through

its post-election violence I felt a deep sense of shame that my country had resorted to violence to solve its issues. My interlocutors appreciate it when I share that experience of shame, and can explain how it led Kenyans to the peace table.

Omeyya: There are no absolute rules. Certain characteristics can be an advantage in some cases but not in others. In the MENA region, there’s a certain sense of defiance towards those perceived as ‘outsiders’. Many assume that an outsider is incapable of understanding certain concerns or situations. There is also a tendency to see spies everywhere.

“Armed groups often prefer dealing with outsiders, whom they perceive as being more legitimate internationally, and who can thus lend the process more credibility.”

There are nevertheless many things that an ‘outsider’ can do that I can’t. For example, an outsider can, in some cases, influence the parties more easily. Sometimes the stakeholders need to hear the opinion of the international community, or they seek international approval or respect.⁸

Shienny: Armed groups often prefer dealing with outsiders, whom they perceive as being more legitimate internationally, and who can thus lend the process more credibility.

David: You can play it both ways: for example, you can be an insider culturally, but not necessarily when it comes to religion. At times it helps to not be as much of an insider as others – then you’re seen as unaffiliated. If you’re too much of an insider, your impartiality can be questioned – you can be seen as being too close to the problem.

In some ways you can be an insider because you genuinely understand the problem, and not because you’re from the

place in question. You will never be considered an insider if you don't have empathy with the issue, if you're too detached. You need to be perceived as someone who wants to be there, someone with a genuine interest in helping solve problems.

Jan: International experts often bring a certain gravitas, when they have relevant experiences to share – provided that they do it in a humble rather than a bullying way. Outsiders are not taken seriously if they adopt a preaching tone.

Some Thais are wary of outsiders and resist foreign 'intervention', which is driven by a sense of pride. Having said that, some outsiders, for example diplomats, have good access to senior figures, and can therefore exert influence or quietly convey good advice.

Nilar: Outsiders are a valuable source of expertise. As our country continues its transition, some people presume that we need outside expertise. This doesn't necessarily mean they're impressed by outsiders, just that they want to learn from them.

8 Do you benefit from HD's international personality, or does it cause difficulties?

Alice: It helps me and my projects, and opens a lot of doors in South Sudan and Nigeria. You have to be backed by a clear mandate that shows you're not speaking for yourself as an individual – that is, that you don't have a personal agenda. In the Rift Valley process in Kenya, I often heard people remark that HD came 'without baggage', and that HD could be trusted. This was critical in the drafting of the Rift Valley peace agreement.

It also helps to be able to speak about your organisation's accomplishments in other countries. This earns you respect. When you outline your organisation's international experiences you stop being as much of an insider; or rather, you're an insider but with valuable perspectives to share from other conflicts, e.g. from Mali, Tunisia, Myanmar or the Philippines. That makes your message very powerful.

Jan: The fact that we have in-house experts with comparative expertise from around the world gives us credibility. Our interlocutors are impressed by our expertise and ability to bring in world-renowned experts on issues like ceasefires or transitional justice. HD's co-hosting of the yearly Oslo Forum also adds to our credibility as a serious international player. In 2013, a Thai delegation attended the Forum and gained a whole new view of HD – as an organisation with global reach and influence, and substantive depth.

“The fact that we have in-house experts with comparative expertise from around the world gives us credibility. Our interlocutors are impressed by our expertise and ability to bring in world-renowned experts on issues like ceasefires or transitional justice.”

On the other hand, sometimes Thais resist outside 'intervention', particularly when Western embassies criticise the Thai military regime. In that context, being associated with 'the West' can create challenges. When that happens, we have to keep demonstrating that we're providing a useful, unbiased and expert contribution to Thailand's reform efforts.

The Swiss element of HD's identity can be useful, as it reminds people of neutrality.

Omeyya: Being affiliated with a Western organisation can help, or it can cause problems. Before the revolution, HD was not well known in Tunisia, except by some regional political actors. Now, HD is valued for different reasons, including its low profile and its good judgement. Being seen as an 'honest broker' has helped us enormously in our work.



Having said that, there have been times when we've needed to decide to withdraw HD from an activity, or to hand it over to a local partner, because it was deemed unacceptable by some stakeholders that certain sensitive debates were led by, or held in the presence of, a Western entity.

Shienny: In Papua, the opposition movement appreciated our international profile, as it wanted an outside party to be involved. The Indonesian government was less enthusiastic. A global profile can be good or bad, and at times it's better not to focus on it. Bringing in a renowned mediator can make an impact in some situations, but in others emphasising local ties is preferable. It's important to remember that while we're an international organisation, we work with local partners.

Whatever we do, we need to be careful how we behave, as there are always those who question any outside organisation's 'character' or intentions.

Nilar: It's extremely helpful, particularly when it comes to the expertise and advice we can draw on. Discussing comparative examples from HD's other operations is useful for our work. Myanmar was a closed country for so long, so materials that explain different peacemaking methods are welcomed.

We're able to draw on people with unrivalled expertise in many areas, from ceasefires to elections. Also, we're responsive – we're quick to offer ideas or experts, which is useful in a fast-changing environment.

On the other hand, our international profile can occasionally cause problems with hardliners. Although they're aware that their country is transitioning towards democracy, people don't change their attitudes easily. Some don't fully trust the intentions of international actors. But things are much better than they were – 10-15 years ago, I might have been seen as a spy!

Endnotes

Part I

- ¹ Maiese (2005).
- ² See the Nobel Committee's press release, at https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2015/press.html
- ³ UN (2012) 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes', A/66/811: 6 (25 June).
- ⁴ See Svensson and Lindgren (2013): 701 and 707. According to them, more than 80% of insider mediators are 'of religious character' (Ibid: 710).
- ⁵ See also Ropers who makes a similar point (Ropers, 2012: 200).
- ⁶ Wehr and Lederach (1991): 97. Separately, Alexander argues that where outsiders' impartiality – or distance from every side – is one of their comparative advantages, insiders can position themselves as being on everyone's side, or 'omnipartial' (Alexander, 2012).
- ⁷ Mason (2009): 17.
- ⁸ According to UNDP, '[t]he roles played by insider mediators can also be categorised as: "mediation", "dialogue", and "facilitation".' (UNDP, 2014: 10) Mason suggests that the insider mediator can also play the role of messenger, human rights advocate, conflict analyst, healer, trainer, coach and coordinator. (Mason, 2009: 5–6)
- ⁹ UNDP (2014): 9–12.
- ¹⁰ As described in Wehr and Lederach (1991) and Maiese (2005).
- ¹¹ See more on the Nepal example and others in Ropers (2012): 199.
- ¹² In 2008 a workshop was held in Switzerland under the title 'Informal Peace Processes: Learning from the experiences of "Insider" Mediators' (Mason, 2009). Later, UNDP and the European Union (EU) partnered on a programme in 2012–13 'to invest in equipping national and local actors in internal conflict management processes with skills for dialogue and constructive negotiation' (UNDP, 2014).

Meanwhile, the project 'Insider Mediators in Africa: Understanding and enhancing the contribution of insider mediators to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa' compiled select practices of insider mediators working on conflicts in various African countries (including Burundi, Ghana, DRC, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda) with a view to assessing the roles and contributions of insider mediators (see more in PeaceNexus Foundation, 2011).

Part III

- ¹ For further details on HD's engagement in the Rift Valley, see: <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/kenya-rift-valley/>
- ² More details on HD's work in Tunisia are available at: <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/tunisia/>
- ³ HD's Libya work is described in more detail at <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/libya/>
- ⁴ For further information about HD's work in Plateau State, Nigeria, see <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/jos-plateau-state-nigeria/>
- ⁵ For further information on HD's Mali engagement, see: <https://www.hdcentre.org/activities/mali/>
- ⁶ Svensson and Lindgren argue that insiders 'have a reputational incentive to stay honest, since in contrast to many external actors, they will continue to live side by side with the parties' (Svensson and Lindgren, 2013: 699). Similarly, Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana note that 'where mediators do not leave the place after the termination of the conflict and have to live through its difficulties, the parties to the conflict consider them trustworthy actors' (Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana 2009:187).
- ⁷ Mason goes further: 'One advantage of outsider mediators is that they have a home to go back to and a government that looks out for them if they get kidnapped or threatened. For this reason outsider mediators can do some risky tasks that insiders cannot do, because it would simply be too dangerous for them' (Mason, 2009: 17).
- ⁸ In addition, 'Mediators also sometimes use "fuse breakers", experts that come in to tell unpleasant facts to the negotiating parties, i.e. about international law, lack of international support for an agreement etc. This is also typically a good role for outsiders, as they will be hated for what they say (even if it is important that it is said), and so it is good that they can leave on the next plane' (Ibid: 17).

Further reading

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Page 1: Kosovar refugees fleeing their homeland. Blace area, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 March 1999. © UN Photo/UNHCR/R LeMoyne

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Pages 16–17: (top) The unveiling of a community apology billboard in Zangon, Kaduna State, Nigeria, November 2016. The billboard was set up as part of the inter-communal dialogue process led by HD. © HD; (bottom) Conflict resolution meetings led by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Marial-bek, South Sudan, 21 April 2015. © UN Photo/JC Mcllwaine

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Page 23: Nilar Oo presenting during a workshop involving representatives of the Myanmar Armed Forces. © HD

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Pages 24–25: Republican Party Secretary-General Maya Jribi signs the Charter of Honour on the fair conduct of elections in Tunisia, July 2014. The Charter, signed by the main parties from across the political spectrum, contributed to peaceful elections in the country in 2014. © HD

Page 26: The launching of three booklets: the Roadmap to Reconciliation, the Mediation Toolkit and the Conflict Monitoring Mechanism. Ambon, Maluku province, Indonesia. November 2016. © HD

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Pages 32–33: David Lambo was part of the HD delegation that met with Nigerian President Buhari in January 2016. © HD

Page 35: Workshop organised by HD entitled 'Hopes and Fears for Libya', Tripoli, September 2011. © HD

Pages 36–37: Displaced Iraqis flee their homes as Iraqi forces battle with Islamic State militants in western Mosul, Iraq, March 24 2017. © Reuters/Suhaib Salem

Page 39: Humanitarian workshop in north Darfur, 2012. © UNAMID/Albert Gonzalez Farran

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About the author




Paul Dziatkowiec joined HD as a Project Manager in 2012. He managed the Oslo Forum until 2016 and has deployed to field operations in Asia (Myanmar and Thailand) and Africa (Nigeria). Paul has managed HD's Ukraine project since 2015.

Paul was previously Australia's Deputy High Commissioner in Nairobi and, as Deputy and Acting Ambassador, covered several countries including Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. Concurrently he served as Australia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Nairobi. Prior to that he was a diplomat at the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv, and acted periodically as Australia's Representative to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. He has also represented the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva and worked as a peace monitor in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

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