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BASELINE STUDY – SYNOPSIS

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The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

Tradition- & Faith-Oriented Insider Mediators (TFIMs) in Conflict Transformation

Potential, Constraints, & Opportunities for Collaborative Support

Contents

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Availability

This synopsis and the full version of this baseline study, together with annexed case studies, are available at www.peacemakersnetwork.org.

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ABOUT: on the basis of empirical knowledge acquired through case studies in Myanmar (Burma), Southern Thailand, Lebanon, Colombia, Kenya and Mali, this study conceptualises and contextualises a specific set of religious and traditional peacemakers as tradition- & faith-oriented insider mediators (TFIMs). In considering their peace mediation roles, potential and the constraints under which they work, it also reflects on the opportunities for collaborative support linking various actors within conflict contexts.

Key Insights

TFIMs are not only traditional and religious leaders/authorities, but also include a diverse array of actors who, one way or another, incorporate traditional and religious elements in their conflict transformation efforts.

A TFIM may draw tools and inspiration from multiple faiths, cultures and traditions, as well as from non-religious (secular) and non-traditional concepts/values.

In many contexts, the fact that religious institutions are deeply embedded within communities makes them more legitimate mediators than traditional or political actors, an example being the Catholic Church in Colombia.

'Moderate' TFIMs sometimes manage to constructively challenge and transform traditional and religious establishments. One example of this is the monastic education system in Myanmar, which is becoming more 'socially engaged'.

The approach to mediation adopted by religious peacemakers is not necessarily 'religious', i.e. it is often indiscernible from the 'secular' approaches used by other kinds of peacemakers. Examples include the 'coffee club' dialogue forums run by a pastor in Nairobi, Kenya, and the interfaith diapraxis approaches used by a group of monks in Mandalay, Myanmar.

Young TFIMs in traditional and religious establishments are increasingly facing a 'generational conflict' with their older colleagues with respect to leadership styles, motivation, creativity and approach.

TFIMs may serve as 'indirect connectors', facilitating the involvement of neutral outsider mediators in cases where they themselves lack sufficient trust and credibility among the conflicting parties, as was the case with some imams in Southern Thailand.

Civil society actors working in conjunction with religious leaders can have subtle but far-reaching influence on policy. Examples include the ratification of a national policy on healing and compensation for victims in Southern Thailand and the adoption of policies in Lebanon, which embeds the concepts of inclusive citizenship and religious diversity into the national curriculum.

Serendipitous encounters often create the atmosphere that constructively challenges human perceptions. In Myanmar, for example, cooperative humanitarian work undertaken in the wake of cyclone Nargis brought about a paradigm shift among some prejudiced monks. Such encounters can also be strategically 'created', as some TFIMs in Myanmar demonstrate.

TFIMs can also help to engender new TFIMs, for example in Myanmar, where some TFIMs are facilitating dialogue among, and the empowerment of, (intolerant) religious leaders, who then gradually emerge as TFIMs.

Most of the challenges that TFIMs face are not unique to TFIMs but are shared with other peacemakers. One such challenge is a lack of coordination between different kinds of peacemakers. The support needs of TFIMs thus largely revolve around a need to explore complementary and collaborative conflict transformation practices.

Introduction

This study stems from an observation made by The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers that in certain conflict contexts religious and traditional peacemakers exhibit remarkable potential as mediators, and that they may have specific mediation support needs that, if met, could further enhance their contribution to peacemaking. In order to verify this observation, we carried out both theoretical and empirical enquiries. It is on the basis of these that, in the following, we: (1) propose a framework for conceptualising and contextualising tradition- & faith-oriented insider mediators (TFIMs) as a specific subset of insider mediators and religious and traditional peacemakers; (2) highlight their mediation roles, their uniqueness and the added value they bring; (3) underscore the challenges they face and their own limitations; (4) consider the forms of support that, in their view, would help them overcome these challenges; and (5) reflect on the broader forms of support that might also contribute to addressing these challenges and limitations. Our case studies were carried out in Myanmar (Burma), Southern Thailand, Lebanon, Colombia, Kenya and Mali.

Premises

The observation noted above accords with an interesting 'local/insider turn' in the fields of peacebuilding and development co-operation in the last decade. This turn has served to challenge the nature, efficacy and legitimacy of the prevalent 'liberal' model of peacebuilding and development. Among other things, there is now a greater appreciation of local, indigenous and insider methods of dealing with conflict – methods that are owned and driven by actors 'intrinsic' to the conflict system. In the area of peace mediation in particular, 'insider-partial' mediators are being acknowledged for playing a *complementary* role alongside 'outsider-impartial' (international) mediators, or playing a *central* role by themselves – primarily on account of their inside knowledge of the conflict, their own desire for peace, and their close relationship with, and legitimacy among, conflict stakeholders.

In recent years, emphasis has been placed on a specific set of insiders, namely traditional, indigenous, religious and faith-based actors, who are able to act as influential mediators on account of their strong inherent legitimacy (i.e. the support they enjoy from the communities concerned) and their methods. The increased attention given to such actors is partly due to the rather extreme dynamics within discourses on tradition and religion in the last decade, which have led to such figures being regarded either as promoting 'terrorism/violent extremism' or as promoting peace – or even as being themselves either terrorists or peacemakers. It is nevertheless essential to go beyond this simplistic dichotomy, which we consider neither helpful nor transformative. Conflict contexts rather need to be comprehensively analysed in all their complexity, by treating tradition and religion as two conflict dimensions among many, and examining how different actors relate to these dimensions in different ways – without either demonising or romanticising them.

This is especially important insofar as international actors are increasingly engaging with such mediators and supporting their efforts. This engagement is gradually evolving beyond ad-hoc support, with attempts being made to reveal blind spots and to remain conflict-sensitive. Nevertheless, there remains a need to further nuance the premises and pretexts of engagement and to contextualise these mediators' support needs (also with respect to other actors), in order to render engagement more holistic and sustainable. One relevant insight that we draw from 'systemic thinking' here is that the various actors transforming conflict contexts at various levels need to be essentially 'collaborative' in their efforts.

This study is by no means comprehensive, but is rather intended to advance the discourse on peace mediation through the informed inclusion of TFIMs. Further knowledge from new cases studies would help to provide new insights into conceptual and methodological developments, to confirm or challenge the general and specific assessments presented in this study, and to contribute to the elaboration of a framework for collaborative support.

Who are TFIMs?

We made the following observations in attempting to nuance the concept and context of TFIMs:

- Tradition and religion are complex phenomena that shape each other and are often inseparable, as is indicated by formulations such as 'religious tradition' and 'traditional religion'.
- The terms tradition, custom, culture and indigeneity are often used interchangeably and in conjunction with one another, as in formulations such as 'cultural tradition' and 'indigenous culture'. For our purposes, 'tradition' can simply mean longstanding values, customs and practices that come to be manifested in conflicts.
- Faith and spirituality can exist without being rooted in religion; faith-based and spiritual actors may not necessarily draw on (one particular) religion. We therefore have used 'faith' as a broader term that encompasses, but is not limited to, religion.
- Certain actors can be classified as both traditional and religious. We do not see this as problematic, since what matters for our conceptualisation is how they use (or not) elements from tradition and faith in their peace mediation efforts.
- TFIMs may draw from non-religious (secular) and non-traditional thought and practice, as well as from religious (theological) and traditional elements of multiple faiths, cultures and traditions. Some actors may also draw from tradition and religion without wishing to be identified as faith-based or traditional actors, while some faith-based actors may be have inherited legitimacy without having had theological knowledge or training.
- TFIMs are significant not just in conflict contexts with religious and traditional dimensions.

As a basic conceptual framework, we therefore propose that TFIMs:

- Can be identified as those whose social position and function (i.e. who they are) is explicitly defined by tradition and religion and/or whose inspiration, motivation, strategies and methodologies (i.e. their reasons for doing what they do and how they do it) are implicitly shaped by tradition and religion.
- 'Constructively' manifest elements of tradition and faith in their peace mediation efforts.
- Are 'insiders' insofar as they belong to the communities concerned, but are also respected and trusted by other communities since they are seen as 'fair' mediators and do not privilege one conflict party over another. Their level of 'insiderness' may vary in space and time.
- Facilitate dialogical processes that create and nurture space for conflict transformation.
- Enjoy the moral legitimacy and respect required to influence the opinions and perceptions of conflict stakeholders – whether or not tradition and religion play a part in the conflict itself.
- May either be 'authoritative mediators' at top-levels or 'social network mediators' at the intermediate or grassroots levels (befitting categorisations by Christopher Moore in 'The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict, 4th ed., 2014').

The role of authoritative mediators tends to be prescriptive and doctrinaire. These mediators usually have close relations with state-level and international actors, and often have a political stake in the conflict. In some cases, they have the potential to exert significant influence on policy, while in others their mediation efforts fail to trickle down to the grassroots level, and may exclude certain societal groups. Such authoritative mediators include:

- **Religious authorities and elites:** individuals who represent religious institutions (bishops, sheikhs, muftis, abbots, monks, rabbis), or spiritual leaders with visibility and 'followers' at a national level.
- **Traditional authorities and elites:** individuals who represent traditional, indigenous or customary systems of authority or authoritative institutions, or who preside over village-level or tribal associations and networks of indigenous civil societies (village chiefs, tribal judges, senior headmen). In certain contexts, they may, but need not be, religious authority figures (e.g. sheikhs and monks). In many societies, elders unofficially assume such roles.

Social network mediators focus on people and relationships and tend to take a dialogical approach. They are often more flexible and active than the authoritative mediators described above; they have access to a wider network, their work is broader in scope, and they can influence and mobilise followers more easily than elites. They engage in multi-track diplomacy and are often able to influence policymaking at the macro-political level by initiating and facilitating track 1.5 processes. Such mediators include:

- **Mid-level religious actors:** abbots and monks attached to Buddhist monasteries, bishops, priests and pastors from the Christian Church, imams, monks, and nuns.
- **Faith-based organisations (FBOs):** NGOs, CSOs and CBOs with implicit or explicit association with a single faith or with multiple faiths (e.g. interfaith organisations). They may be local and independent organisations, or local bodies within international FBOs/networks, and may or may not be connected to religious institutions.
- **Tradition- and faith-oriented community & civil society actors:** individuals and organisations (NGOs, CSOs and CBOs) that are not expressly tradition- or faith-based, but that engage with tradition and religion and actively engage with all of the above actors to collaborate with, support or empower them. This category contains a wide range of actors, including women´s groups, artists, educators, politicians and entrepreneurs. These mediators tend to take a more 'moderate' and conflict-sensitive, traditional/religious approach. One example of such a mediator is the late Kenyan, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, whose peace mediation efforts combined traditional, religious and secular approaches in a unique manner.

The concept of a TFIM is not to be seen as static, since the dynamic nature of conflict means that TFIMs' roles, forms of engagement, and relationships with conflict stakeholders are in constant flux. They therefore need to constantly monitor their influence and legitimacy. Furthermore, depending on the conflict context, a TFIM may have to walk a fine insider/outsider line, so that they are enough of an insider to be subjectively interested in the process (to empathise with the interests and emotions surrounding the conflict), and enough of an outsider to remain objective (to consider the needs of the conflict system in a holistic manner). There are interesting examples of 'regional insiders'– those who, on account of their religious or ethnic identity, may become legitimate mediators in a context other than their own (e.g. Elders across African contexts or certain Monks in Southeast Asia). Committed TFIMs are usually able to remain dynamic by positioning themselves within a collective that maintains informal networks involving a variety of actors (often regionally).

What do TFIMs do, and how do they do it?

Depending on the different phases and levels of the conflicts they engage with, TFIMs take on various proactive and reactive roles in peace mediation, which can best be described as dialogical processes that create and nurture space and possibilities for conflict transformation. The essential characteristics of TFIMs in contrast with other peacebuilders are (a) that they have a specific set of (traditional, religious and other) resources that may give them the upper hand in certain contexts and situations, and (b) that TFIMs are usually involved at multiple stages in the spectrum or cycle of peace mediation activities. TFIMs:

Engender peaceful coexistence

- Sensitise communities about "the other" and build bridges.
- Heal, reconcile and rebuild relationships.
- Facilitate intra- and inter-faith dialogue and diapraxis.

In Lebanon, the interfaith organisation Adyan creates spaces for interfaith encounters that encourage a culture of mutual understanding between people from different religious groups by stressing the value of religious diversity and promoting the coexistence of communities in relationships of mutual respect.

In Southern Thailand, TFIMs provide training for officials on how to apply nonviolent tactics with demonstrators, peaceful third-party intervention, and the relations between conflict and religion. Aspects of the nonviolent intervention training run by faith-based CSOs have been taken up by the Border Police and incorporated into the police training curriculum. The recommendations made by TFIMs to incorporate healing measures and compensation schemes for victims at the national policy level were also acted upon.

Respond to violence with short-term and long-term schemes

- De-escalate violent conflicts and limit retaliatory violence.
- Help to develop alternatives to violence.
- Address so-called 'violent extremism'.

In Kenya, traditional and religious leaders function unofficially as the primary mediators in sporadic clan-based and pastoral conflicts, employing traditional and religious mechanisms to deliver swift justice and establish order. Creative forums for dialogue like the 'coffee club' run by pastors in Nairobi and microloan provisions in various parts of Kenya constitute sustainable methods of countering youth recruitment by Al-Shabaab and the drug dependency that fuels it.

During the communal riots in Myanmar in 2012, TFIMs played an active role in staging community dialogues that aimed to reduce violence, while also providing shelter to victims in churches and monasteries.

In certain cases in Southern Thailand, the intensive groundwork undertaken by TFIMs, who used religious principles to strengthen community relations, has resulted in a significant decline in recruitment by militant groups.

Facilitate peace processes in protracted armed conflict

- Facilitate intra- and inter-group dialogue to encourage armed actors to reach ceasefire agreements and find political solutions.
- Act as representatives for civilian/community interests with armed actors.
- Negotiate release of hostages and prisoners.

In Myanmar, the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) is a crucial actor in the peace process involving armed groups in Kachin State and the government.

In Mali, the Gina Dogon cultural association has helped to mediate prisoner release deals using traditional local communication methods such as Sinagouya/Sanankuya ('cousinage à plaisanterie').

In Colombia, the Catholic Church has used "dialogueos pastorales" (pastoral dialogues) to mediate between communities and armed groups in order to negotiate access to food, improve security conditions, and prevent the recruitment of minors.

In Southern Thailand, some TFIMs work as 'indirect connectors' to facilitate the involvement of neutral outsider mediators in cases where they themselves do not enjoy sufficient trust and credibility among the conflicting parties.

Mobilise nonviolent action for social change

- Empower communities through dialogue and debates on issues of justice and human rights.
- Develop social and human capacities for sustainable change, e.g. training new TFIMs.

In Kenya, pastors and sheikhs in Nairobi and Garissa serve as catalysts for communities in gaining critical mass in demanding their rights from the county/central government.

In Lebanon, Adyan brings together pairs of religious leaders and members of their communities to carry out joint community projects that empower them to better address conflict in their communities.

In Myanmar some TFIMs have taken a creative, human-centred approach, engaging traditional and religious leaders in a process that empowers them to gently peel away the layers of stereotypical notions and prejudices that each side holds regarding the other.

The approach taken by TFIMs and the resources they draw upon may have either a religious or traditional character, a mixture of both religious and traditional elements, or may not (visibly) include such elements at all. In many cases, TFIMs´ social positions of respect and their status as moral reference points may be more relevant than what approach they take. In conflict contexts with a religious dimension, faith-based TFIMs may not necessarily manifest religious elements (though they may have been intrinsically guided by them). This was observed in Kenya and Myanmar. In contrast, in conflict contexts with no intrinsic religious dimension, TFIMs may still be able to employ religious and traditional elements to guide people out of violence. This was the case in Colombia, Mali and Kenya. According to TFIMs, their strategy largely depends on what appeals most to the conflict stakeholders on and what is really at stake in the conflict.

TFIMs can influence people's opinions and perceptions, by re-humanising the 'other' on the basis of traditional and religious norms and values such as justice for all, forgiveness, harmony, and human dignity, and motivating and mobilising them to work towards peace, as in Colombia and Lebanon. The traditional and religious practices of healing and reconciliation implemented by some TFIMs are based on a pluralistic community vision and aim to achieve unity through diversity, as in Lebanon and Kenya.

What constraints are TFIMs subject to?

Challenges in the prevailing support structures for TFIMs include:

- A lack of (effective) collaboration and coordination between TFIMs and other peacebuilding actors.
- Conflict-insensitive interventions on the part of international actors, who often have an Orientalist view of TFIMs and their methods, seeing these as backward and in need of reformation.
- A lack of financial and organisational means to engage efficiently in short-term and long-term activities.
- Limited room for manoeuvre due to traditional mechanisms being overshadowed by national or international peacebuilding agendas, structural restrictions on TFIM engagement at the track 1 mediation level, and prohibitions on interaction with armed actors.

Limitations pertaining to the approaches taken by TFIMs themselves include:

- A lack of (effective) collaboration and coordination between different types of TFIMs due to fractionalisation, power struggles, and a desire to maintain the status-quo.
- A lack of inclusion of women and young people as potential mediators, and of strategies to redress these imbalances.
- Non-transformative approaches that do not deal with the root causes of conflict and thereby cannot prevent violence from recurring, e.g. traditional rituals for healing, cleansing and reintegrating offenders, or religious injunctions to 'forgive and forget'.
- Uneasiness of some TFIMs to deal with value systems that contradict with or challenge their own (e.g. human-rights related consideration).
- Primarily reactive (rather than proactive), ad hoc forms of mediation which are deployed only when violent incidents occur, without follow-up mediation, and which are seemingly based on a narrow understanding of peace (as the absence of violence).
- A failure to take timely action and remaining silent when peace mediation is much needed, or limiting such activities to speeches.
- Knowledge gaps pertaining to theological knowledge or languages.
- Remaining exclusively apolitical in mediation processes where political issues need to be discussed, e.g. in interfaith dialogue.

How can TFIMs´ constraints be addressed?

The concrete support needs articulated by TFIMs, TFIM supporters and TFIM critics include:

- Recognition of TFIMs´ mediation work by the state and other local, regional and international actors.
- Expansion of the role of women and young TFIMs in conservative patriarchal societies. This ought to be done, not in a prescriptive manner, but in a strategic and conflict-sensitive way that leads to the internal transformation of such social systems.
- Opportunities for learning (coaching and training on technical facilitation skills, organisational management, conflict analysis, project proposal writing) and exchange (peer-to-peer learning within and across local, regional and international levels).
- Financial and organisational support relating to staff salaries, the costs of travelling to conflict hotspots, hiring extra manpower, accounting, etc.
- Basic security support to ensure personal safety when mediating in extremely violent conditions.
- Technical support from local and international bodies relating to process -design and -documentation, and from advisory councils that might act as sounding boards.

Reflections on opportunities and needs for (collaborative) support

The support needs mentioned above are not exclusive to TFIMs, since most other peacebuilding actors would likely report similar support needs. Take the lack of (effective) collaboration and coordination among TFIMs and between TFIMs and other peacebuilding actors mentioned above; 'systemic thinking' tells us that this is bound to undermine the efforts of everyone. This indicates a larger structural and process-oriented need for a ***collaborative support framework***, which

- weaves actors into an informal, self-organising and flexible network that facilitates the identification and addressing of support gaps
- sets the conditions for actors to contribute according to their own resources and capabilities,

- is based on mutuality and complementarity, hence eradicating duplication of efforts, and
- is sufficiently communicative and transparent.

With a basic sensitivity of not undermining or downplaying already existing structures, mechanisms, processes and 'network of networks', such a framework would allow the structures currently inhabited by tradition- and faith-based actors to continue to exist without getting destabilised. Indeed given the variety of actors involved, it would encourage a creative challenge in engaging collaboratively to address the needs of the conflict context. A number of steps could to be taken to evolve this framework:

- Identifying and mapping 'actors – expertise – experience'.
- Creating a support pool that can be drawn upon in deciding which actors can most effectively deal with which aspects of a given conflict.
- Creating channels and mechanisms to meet needs-based demands.
- Creating issue-based forums that bring together actors to collaboratively analyse conflict dynamics, identify support gaps, duplications and challenges, and formulate strategies to address them.
- Designing multi-level, multi-stakeholder approaches that link short-term rapid responses to longer term processes.
- Maintaining the dynamism of collaborative networks through clear communication, and actively following-up and re-strategising as the situation requires.
- Actively seeking out potential agents of peaceful change within the conflict context and bringing them on board in the collaborative process.

Such a framework is not a utopian ideal; indeed, in some contexts it already exists to a certain extent. In Myanmar, for example, a number of initiatives are slowly but surely being connected to one another, against all the odds.

Recommendations

General recommendation for all actors

- Create inclusive spaces for dialogue between all of the relevant actors: middlemen, so-called 'extremists', armed groups, hardliners, state actors, etc. Deliberate on how to engage and collaborate with unfamiliar or 'difficult' actors, instead of pondering whether to engage. Paradigm shifts take place when we are exposed to encounters and situations that are unfamiliar to us not only by accident, but also through strategically planned intervention. Play an active part in evolving and maintaining collaborative support frameworks in the conflict context you are part of.
- Identify, in collaboration with the relevant actors, the parameters of the traditional (patriarchal) or religious context (if any) that prohibits or limits mediator roles for women and young people. Then establish and communicate, via a conflict-sensitive approach, the possible advantages of women and young mediators, using inspiring stories from similar contexts. If a congenial atmosphere can be generated, encourage the training of future TFIMs, especially women and youth TFIMs.
- Work intensively on intra-group mediation in order to sensitise groups for inter-group mediation (e.g. intra-faith mediation as a basis for inter-faith mediation).
- Allow space for creative thinking. While mediation is an established tool, it can always accommodate and benefit from creative approaches, which may involve some trial and error, and which constitute learning exercises in their own right. Experiment with the arts (e.g. storytelling, theatre, photography) and technology (e.g. social media) to extend the available spaces for dialogue.
- Nuance the prevalent discourses of 'countering/preventing violent extremism' to be able to reflect on potentially conflict-insensitive formulations/language and policies that make engagement with certain actors more difficult (e.g. proscribing and listing of 'extremists' and 'terrorists'). Strive for transformational approaches that unpack the complexity of 'violent extremism' and address its root causes, thereby promoting a culture of tolerance.

TFIMs and civil society actors

- Proactively engage with and create opportunities for collaborative peace mediation with other TFIMs, other state and non-state (peacebuilding) actors.
- Use your moral influence to address the so-called 'violent extremism', but also help others gain a sense of the root causes of extremism and ensure that mechanisms are in place to address these root causes. Utilise mass media to achieve greater impact in sensitising the communities concerned.
- Stay grounded: your context needs you most (there have been cases in which the crucial work of TFIMs, in the course of gaining much-deserved international attention, gradually got detached from the national context).

State actors

- Recognise the unofficial peace mediation efforts of TFIMs and support them with the logistical and human resources that they require. Establish/strengthen the legal foundations that underpin and secure the mediation efforts of TFIMs, e.g. by enforcing the rule of law and making security arrangements that ensure safe and secure conditions for mediation processes.
- Avoid imposing top-down structures and processes, which are rarely sustainable, even if they seem to be worthwhile solutions. Be aware of the pitfalls of formalisation and institutionalisation; informal structures and networking processes are often more effective and better complement the state´s peacebuilding efforts.

International, supranational and intergovernmental actors, INGOs, donors, and development agencies

- Systematically include tradition and faith as cross-cutting elements in programme/project planning (just as gender issues or do-no-harm approaches are usually mainstreamed in development work). Support the revival and transformation of indigenous/traditional mediation mechanisms.
- Avoid undermining the existing efforts of TFIMs. Understand their cultural specificities and capacities for addressing conflict, and draw on their knowledge and experience in order to engage constructively and in a manner that is conflict-sensitive. Build on their current activities in a collaborative manner rather than prescribing solutions. Suggest and offer technical support if the context requires it. Tailor support according to the context and the actors involved. Avoid 'projectisation' and 'NGOisation', which by and large tend to render local efforts unsustainable.
- Depending on what is most useful in the local context, support networks/platforms as well as individual initiatives, since both can be very worthwhile.

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (and other platforms and networks)

- Establish partnerships with academia, think tanks and policy centres to conduct research that can inform practical engagements and vice versa, e.g. on specific faith-oriented approaches to mediation, interfaith entry points for mediation (e.g. Christian-Muslim, Buddhist-Muslim etc.), comparative analyses of different approaches to mediation and extensive research on mediation approaches in indigenous communities.
- Build a global knowledge-base to gather information on TFIM efforts scattered throughout the literature and in worldwide mediation praxis. Create spaces and mechanisms for regional exchange, peer-to-peer and collaborative learning, coaching and training. Create regional TFIM pools and TFIM support channels to foster cross-national mediation exercises. Make effective use of technology and media to facilitate these processes.
- Help to establish links between TFIMs and high-level policy makers at the national and regional levels.

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers brings together actors to provide global support for grassroots to international peace and peacebuilding efforts. The aim of the Network is to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of peace focused efforts through collaboratively supporting and strengthening the positive role of religious and traditional actors in peace and peacebuilding processes.

www.peacemakersnetwork.org

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Finn Church Aid is the largest Finnish development cooperation organisation and the second largest provider of humanitarian aid. FCA operates in over 20 countries, where the need is most dire. FCA works with the poorest people, regardless of their religious beliefs, ethnic background or political convictions. FCA's work is based on rights, which means that FCA's operations are guided by equality, non-discrimination and responsibility.

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