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Interpeace Kenya Programme: A Learning Paper

The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region

May 2023[1]

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Executive summary

This report chronicles the processes that gave rise to two ceasefire agreements between majority clans in Kenya's Mandera County (2016-2021), and embattled communities in the North Rift's Suguta Valley (2019-2021). It draws on the lived experiences of conflict parties and mediation teams working across northern Kenya under the auspices of Interpeace and Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC). Analytically, the study explores exchanges and interventions that resulted in a precipitous and enduring drop in armed inter-communal violence. It sheds light on puzzling questions about how the unexpected ceasefires emerged, why they have continued to be sustained despite recurring criminal violence, and what the mediation teams ultimately contributed to unanticipated outcomes that continue to exhibit self-sustaining qualities.

Importantly, while mediators did not initially set out to convene, assist, or facilitate inter-group negotiations, the analysis shows how their peace support activities coalesced into opportunities that, while unforeseen, were anything but accidental. It reveals the transformative and adaptive approach adopted by the mediation teams and, for learning purposes, explores four core components that the iterative actions, decision-making, and conflict party experiences in both Mandera and North Rift shared: (1) preparatory groundwork and team assembly; (2) reflective activities rooted in participatory-oriented action research methods; (3) diverse intra-group engagements; and (4) support to inter-party negotiations. Results can be linked to the way NCIC/Interpeace teams assisted communities to identify and address multiple dynamics and dimensions of conflict. Their tenacious commitment to understanding the parties' conflict experiences and to embrace complexity proved as invaluable as their innovation and adaptability.

The report is organised to show how the processes themselves contributed in unique ways to the observed results, which emerged in conflict settings characterised by fragility, where peace mediation seems intuitively useful but where past negotiated agreements and implementation have struggled to materialise or endure. Recounting the process helps to crystallise the nature of the teams' mediative approach, which placed conflict parties at the centre, recognised the authority of genuine decision-makers, fostered patience, and generated trust; teams navigated risks and uncertainties and honoured emergence and self-organising by the parties over the prioritisation of any pre-defined timelines, settlement outcomes, or mediator directiveness. The learning demonstrates the value of integrating such principles in co-designed processes that are informed by ethical values and social-cultural insights that teams intentionally and skilfully used to guide their steps.

To detoxify and restructure the relationships between actors required time, patience, and creativity. In addition, however, this mediation work helps us develop a nuanced understanding of what an adaptive orientation to mediation looks like in fragile and complex contexts. The final section shares some key lessons and observations, which focus on team-generated objectives for internal learning and reflective practice. Though highly contextualised, these experiences can be useful to other peace support efforts in comparable conditions. The document suggests numerous points of departure for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, invites them to pause and re-visit their assumptions, and think beyond standard 'scripts' that commonly underpin thinking about mediation, much of which remains disconnected from realities of practice or nurtured by systematised learning in an era of growing complexity.

Key learning

1. **Identity matters.** The composition of both mediation teams and local peace structures underscores the importance that identity plays in the ability of mediators to navigate key challenges, co-design and adjust processes in complex settings, remain sensitive to the social and political environment, and support small but critical shifts over time.

2. **Flexible budgeting promotes effectiveness.** The budgeting approach used by the German Federal Foreign Office helped the programme succeed. Its consistent and flexible support enabled teams to accommodate and manage changes in the context and to allow processes and relationships to develop at their natural speed.

3. **Gender-responsive, generational, and power analysis, are critical**. The teams' willingness to work with the communities' social order, and with authorities, enabled them to harness the *power of process*, and to maintain trust and foster inclusivity through participatory action that meaningfully shaped the agenda. The method worked *with* rather than *against* endogenous decision-making practices, foregrounding gendered realities and roles, helping to normalize change, reduce barriers, and prepare people for it.

4. **Make sure process design is socio-culturally informed.** Rather than follow a pre-packaged 'ceasefire' script, that would have oversimplified the challenge of disarmament, the mediation teams adapted their approach to pastoralist and nomadic lifestyles. This enabled them to comprehend better the vectors of conflict and created relationships of confidence with and between communities that could support longer-term normative shifts.

5. **'Track 6' take-away: rethink the exclusion/inclusion binary.** To secure outcomes that had legitimacy and were enduring, teams diligently examined what inclusivity truly meant in relation to supporting community defined goals. This meant selectively excluding certain actors during specific phases of the process, but in the long term sought a Track 6 outcome. The teams' context-focused approach was intentionally designed to foster *transformational* result in view of what communities knew would help peace to endure, rather than seeking a mere business-as-usual settlement.

6. **Peace responsiveness is crucial.** Whether the aim is to reach an agreement, or to sustain that agreement's outcomes over time, it is vital to create an enabling and positive 'peace responsive' environment vis-à-vis collaboration with other peace, humanitarian, and development actors operating in the same area. The programme's investment in relationships (through process) at every level made a key contribution to that goal.

7. **Consistent, contextualised and non-directive approach to peace mediation has specific strengths.** The NCIC/Interpeace teams did not set out to play a classical mediation role. They followed the building blocks of process, and acted with an open mind. In the end, the route they found did not follow standard mediation practice, but was still consistent and principled in its own terms. This suggests that contextualised peace-promoting approaches are likely to be effective, if not more so than a scripted, settlement-oriented mediation model, provided teams implement them consistently and ethically.

8. **Mediative bricolage has benefits.** Scholars and practitioners have recognised the importance for mediation of creativity, responsiveness and flexibility; however, the benefits of 'mediative bricolage'

have not been *systematically* explored. These two case studies are valuable examples of this 'method' in action, underpinning the importance of adaptivity in complex environs.

9. **Non-dominant approaches have advantages over forms of mediation that employ dominant power.** The two case studies show that it is possible to achieve constructive and sustainable outcomes cooperatively, without imposing external power or authority over key parties. By contrast, many models of mediation involve the intervention of external parties who do, from higher authorities or mediators, who may nonetheless hold vested interests . The Kenya cases are also important because they show that consensual and dialogical processes of mediation may have more transformational and enduring outcomes than conventional approaches often modelled at Track 1 levels.

Hassan Ismail, the programme country representative introducing Suguta valley CMCs to the Turkana and Pokot communities during an intercommunity peace meeting in Lomelo.

Introduction

This report documents what the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace experienced and learned from their peace support activities with clans in Kenya's north-eastern Mandera County (2016-present) and embattled nomadic communities living in five counties of the North Rift region (2019-present). The experiences are significant not least because their peace support activities evolved into mediation, generating two unexpected ceasefire agreements between groups whose everyday lives had been shaped by decades of protracted ethnopolitical conflict, fed by complex national and local dynamics.

These pacts not only delivered an astonishingly swift return to non-violent *normalcy* in key areas long marred by armed attacks; despite the odds, they exhibited *self-sustaining* qualities, indicating that the communities in question bestowed on them a high degree of legitimacy. Evidence for this can be found in the collaboration of various 'track-level'[2] actors, many of whom, at the time of writing, continue to work diligently to prevent conflict and cultivate new norms of peaceful inter-group relations in these areas. More remarkable still, the generative process developed by NCIC and Interpeace not only played a significant role in making the agreements and 'stabilisation' periods possible, but succeeded a long line of mediation processes and pacts[3] whose commitments have since been broken. These accomplishments carry great promise and have inspired other Kenyan institutions to scale up NCIC/Interpeace's model regionally, to enhance violence prevention, accountability, and justice. Examples include the mediation work of the Kenyan Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC), and efforts to reinvigorate cross-border cooperation between Ethiopian authorities and Kenyan counterparts in Mandera.

In terms of what can be learned, this report examines both the experiences and the 'pathways' that led to these achievements and the changes that transpired. Although the two cases are vastly different, the evidence suggests that core components of NCIC/Interpeace's unique and unorthodox mediative approach were shared by, and were critical to, their positive outcomes. These findings challenge predominant thinking and *determined design* practices in the field of peace mediation; they underscore the value of re-thinking peace processes through a transformative lens, and adapting tools, such as mediation, to take account of the ways in which processes and outcomes are shaped by complexity.[4] By tracing the processes that NCIC/Interpeace teams followed in both areas, and understanding the changes that occurred within communities, it is possible to begin to explain how and why these efforts inspired shifts to peace in both violence-affected regions, including the self-sustaining collaboration between former enemies - even though the teams did not *initially* set out to mediate.

The report covers the period of teams' operations through the end of 2021. Since then, inter-clan violence in Mandera has remained minimal. The Suguta Valley and wider North Rift, however, have experienced a significant increase in violence since early 2022. While the situation had improved by the time of publication, the Kenyan Government was making new efforts to impose disarmament in early 2023, and armed groups of youth frequently carried out acts of violence, in many cases instigated by local elites to serve their political interests. Tensions were exacerbated by Kenya's general elections in August 2022 and compounded by extreme drought conditions. Despite this situation, however, the ceasefire agreements that form the subject of this report remains in place. The peace structures established through the processes described below remain active; elders from across conflict lines continue to work together to prevent and respond to violence by facilitating dialogue and recovering stolen livestock. Indeed, much of the violence in the Suguta Valley resembles violent crime more than inter-communal conflict, confirming the transformative potential of the approach documented in this report.

Report overview

This report chronicles the programme of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera and North Rift, and describes the mediative activities they have carried out to date. In doing so, it draws contrast to approaches and practices of mediation that have often been applied but which have frequently failed in the two regions discussed. The analysis contextualises observed outcomes, emphasises the value of reflection, and, where appropriate, constructively affirms and critiques the programme's work in order to improve it. With that objective in mind, it shows that the teams in Mandera and North Rift adopted a distinctive method, and makes a case, based on experience and practical learning, for changing the way practitioners approach ceasefire and peace agreement mediation in fragile contexts. Considering carefully how the mediation teams contributed to self-sustaining peace processes in Mandera and North Rift may help others to achieve constructive and sustained changes in Kenya, or beyond, including in other pastoralist and nomadic community settings. Understanding the specific features that made the NCIC/Interpeace mediation process *effective* can increase our confidence in adaptive mediation practices, and may re-shape some of the assumptions that drive modern mediation, many of which remains disconnected from responsive, practical learning.

Methodology

This learning journey started with a puzzle. When NCIC and Interpeace looked closely at the contexts in Mandera and North Rift, their reflections about their mediation work felt like a fuzzy change process that did not fit standard theories or practices. Nevertheless, national media sources, statements by members of the Kenyan security sector, and the comments of conflict actors themselves, told them that the changes they observed, and their contributions to them, were *significant*. After the two ceasefire agreements were reached in Mandera and North Rift, NCIC and Interpeace found evidence that relationships between once ardent enemies were in process of repair, and indications that the collaboration between adversaries to sustain the commitments they had made were also beginning to support substantive structural shifts. These surprising events were associated with activities that resembled (and were described as) unconventional forms of *mediation*.

This study was undertaken to make sense of what had happened, and give the mediation teams an opportunity to reflect and learn from their experience. Working in collaboration, a member of Interpeace's Advisory Team (IPAT) and Interpeace's Global Learning and Kenya Programme staff developed a study design that chronicled the teams' experiences and analysed first-hand data generated by NCIC/Interpeace team members, team leaders, conflict parties from diverse clans and communities, and other relevant actors from the regional contexts in which the work unfolded. The following questions helped to frame the inquiry: (1) *What* were the changes experienced by conflict parties? (2) *Why* were the perceived 'peace' outcomes sustained, against the odds and beyond the expectations of many? (3) *What* 'mechanisms' (if any) could be identified to show *how* such changes materialised? (4) *What* contributions (if any) did NCIC/Interpeace make to bringing changes about?

NCIC/Interpeace presumed that certain team practices had catalysed similar changes in two vastly distinct cases and spaces. Nevertheless, the study had to analyse two unique change experiences, and the influence of 'mediators', 'communities', and 'outsiders'. Stitching together a plausible understanding of analogous results required an approach that was both descriptively and analytically rich. Ideally, it would also affirm or clarify the programme's contributions and explain their role in change-making. It is important to say that, by design, neither the learning process nor the report directly compare the Mandera and North Rift cases - though it is clear that the programme's earlier experience in Mandera guided some of the decisions and actions of the team in North Rift, later, albeit informally. The report privileges the experiences of communities and other actors to understand some of the cross-cutting issues, processes and results.

An interpretive orientation[5] and abductive logic[6] guided the inquiry. This approach focused on the agency, actions, and perceptions of those who were involved. When thinking about the contributions that NCIC/Interpeace

teams made to the changes that occurred, methods that are commonly used when evaluating complex situations, such as Contribution Analysis[7] and Process Tracing, were obviously useful.[8] It required pragmatic creativity to work across two paradigms, create a coherent picture of seemingly disconnected larger wholes, answer key questions, and draw accessible lessons for the teams, for communities, and for external audiences.[9]

The author (IPAT member) started by reviewing the literature and data that the teams had generated since 2014, including NCIC/Interpeace publications, quarterly project reports, and summaries of the outcome harvesting conducted in late 2021. The Kenya Programme staff organized data-generation activities that were held between October and December 2021. Together, this information helped to chronicle team experiences and initiatives, and clarified factors that were likely to have contributed to observed results. Data generation methods included informal conversations during site visits, semi-structured interviews (individual, and small group), large group story-telling, and analytical exchanges with people directly involved in conflict. Discussions often started with three questions: What were things like before? What has changed? What are things like now?

Research activities and analytical discussions were facilitated by the author, with NCIC/Interpeace team members and staff in the Nairobi, Mandera, and Marigat offices, and with actors in Mandera (Banissa, Choroqo, and Mandera city), and in the Suguta Valley, North Rift. Participants included groups of male elders from clans and communities, members of women's community groups, young people of varying ages, and members of an inter-village Dialogue Committee, among others. Interviews and discussions were also held with customary and state authorities (chiefs, county and national officials), former NCIC staff, one current NCIC Commissioner, and members of the security sector: all were centrally or peripherally involved in the conflicts or in activities and events relevant to NCIC/Interpeace's programme.[10]

Report structure

The report has four interconnected parts, or 'stories', that illustrate key details of the larger learning landscape. As described above, analysis was based on a blended methodology that combined interpretivist methods with elements of contribution analysis and process-tracing. The aim was to narrate the experiences of communities and the programme as faithfully as possible through the voices and eyes of those directly involved, while looking for insights into process-related questions.

The first story (Part 1) sets out the conflict context. It describes the deadly and dynamic patterns of conflict and destructive cycles of violence that have shaped inter-group relations in both regions for generations. It summarises the experiences of Pokot and Turkana communities living in the Kapedo/Lomelo corridor of the North Rift, and Degodia and Garre clans in Mandera's Banissa Sub-County, from which the Orwa Peace Accord and the Banissa Nine-Point Ceasefire Declaration respectively emerged.

The second story (Part 2) lists the results. It describes the extraordinary changes that unfolded in the larger process that included the ceasefire agreements. When the first draft of the learning report was produced in late 2021, three years into the Banissa Declaration and six months after the Orwa Accord, the communities in both areas were continuing to experience an extended period of stability without politicised or other forms of armed violence. In contrast to Part 1, this section discusses what types of change helped to underpin a self-sustaining peace.

The third story (Part 3) describes how change happened. It portrays the key components of the mediative process that NCIC/Interpeace teams developed as they assisted conflict parties to achieve the inspiring and evolving results described in Part 2. It recognises that the NCIC and Interpeace process was not solely responsible for the changes that occurred, but also makes clear that their efforts played a significant role. Part 3 invites readers to 'peer behind the curtain' and understand the strategic and tactical elements of NCIC/Interpeace's

approach, and how their contributions helped to make change possible and the outcomes durable. To promote learning, it sets out a logic of intervention that contrasts with current models of peace mediation.

The fourth story (Part 4) identifies what we have learned. It lists several take-aways based on initial analytical outputs. These show how the two case studies described in the report can inform ongoing team efforts, as well as broader peace support efforts, and be valuable for both practitioners and policy makers. Although it is not exhaustive, Part 4 addresses key themes that emerged from the learning process, including the author's and team members' reflections on how these experiences can enrich a 'Track 6' approach and give practical content to principles such as inclusivity and meaningful participation.

CMC member addressing Eymole-Malkamari structure at Eymole

1 The Conflict Context

Part 1: The Conflict Context

In both Mandera and North Rift, social, cultural, environmental, and political elements interact dynamically to perpetuate and reinforce cyclical episodes of destruction and violence, over generations. Small skirmishes recur, embedding criminal and violent behaviours that are not held accountable, creating conditions in which deadly incidents proliferate in a cycle of retaliation. As a result, grievances, harmful perceptions and 'enemy-othering' have become deeply rooted in both regions. This history has shaped antagonistic inter-group relations, affecting identities, narratives, and social norms, and spread fear, insecurity, and mistrust. Conflict, like drought cycles in these regions, is an enduring dimension of pastoralist life for the Somali-Kenyan clans of Mandera and the nomadic communities of Marakwet, Samburu, Turkana, Pokot, Tugen and Ilchamus in the North Rift.

Understanding how conflict occurs in nomadic communities, or why non-violence remains elusive, is not straightforward. Comparing 'typical' conflict factors among groups who lead pastoral and semi-nomadic lifestyles cannot tell the whole story. This said, it is relevant to consider the social order in pastoral societies, lifestyles, and relationships, and how these are shaped by: (1) seasonal and market cycles that drive physical movement and encounters (transhumance); (2) broader economic trends and fluctuations (trading and production practices);[11] (3) environmental factors (drought and climate change); and (4) the influence exercised by political and economic actors *outside* these home communities (i.e., those seeking territorial control for economic gains).

Research for the learning-study shows that NCIC and Interpeace teams wisely decided to involve actors across the spectrum in careful formal and informal analysis about these elements, underpinning their work over the life of the programme. This helped to blur the boundaries between analysis as a tool for understanding and analysis used consciously as *transformative action*. In the early stages, this process of reflection generated insights into the specific experiences and unique facets of Somali-clan or North Rift community life in both regions, including diverse *gendered* and *generational* perspectives, that informed both the teams and the communities themselves. This provided a more fluid understanding of and relationship with the communities in conflict, and to identify the main challenges to peace.[12]

Some of these issues have been embedded in everyday life for generations in Mandera and in the North Rift. Examples include the use of small arms and light weapons; political incitement; manipulation of social norms and customs; impunity; changing environmental conditions and problems of access to natural resources (water and pasture); and security. The diversity of this list implies that no single factor presents a decisive cause of the conflict cycles those in both regions experience. Rather, a mix of factors dynamically influences how conflict has emerged and persisted. This conclusion heeded by the teams had important implications for the design of process that supported transformation within systems that nourished conflict.

Key take-aways

This learning ultimately shows that actors who mediate or intervene in comparable ways to address complex conflicts may be more successful if they put aside some of the scripts that have underpinned mediators' strategies, processes, and even communication skills. If actors do this, they need to reflect particularly carefully about the nature of the conflict and its context, preferably *together with* those who are experiencing the conflict or perpetuating and resisting proposals for peace. This process of accompaniment will benefit from practitioners' awareness of, and ability to use, different mediation orientations, tactics, and techniques, and to think widely and creatively about actors and motivations, process design in complex settings, and theories of change.

By contrast, had the mediation teams in Mandera and North Rift pre-designed their approach, using a simple categorisation of conflict types or a standard model of mediation, they would likely not have contributed as sig-

nificantly to the outcomes observed in these cases. The NCIC/Interpeace teams retained a framework of principles, but *accompanied* the process they initiated with the communities and followed the logic that emerged. Doing this enabled the communities and mediation teams to jointly address overlapping layers of conflict, even if they did not fully grasp at the time the significance of exactly what they were addressing in a larger whole. Holding to the conviction that building and sustaining trust was central to progress and to any form of sustainable outcome, they gradually muddled their way together towards small steps and achievements that in the end proved potentially transformative. At no point was the process of moving forward determined by a presumed outcome, even if the objective was always to constructively influence a conflict system, rather than simply reach a (peace) agreement.

Notes from the North Rift Region

In the valley of Suguta (the 'valley of death'), villages along the Kapedo-Lomelo corridor had become synonymous with bloody conflict, grieving, and loss. Repeated cycles of violence had drawn in ethnic affinity networks, entrenching animosity and fear. Whole groups became locked in a battle for survival against the elements and each other. To illustrate: when members of one community (for example, Pokot) send their undernourished livestock to graze in territory claimed by another group (for example, Turkana), the perceived incursion can ignite a chain reaction. Turkana may seize or slaughter Pokot livestock, Pokot may then attack Turkana in revenge. A vicious cycle of retaliation can spin out of control, leading to cattle raids, material plunder, murders, massacres of extended kin (Pokot or Turkana from other villages), and eventually confrontations with police or security forces.

In the Kapedo-Lomelo corridor, young pastoralists openly carried AK-47s as they herded flocks of camels, cows, and goats. A chance encounter with 'others' was likely to result in somebody being shot dead on the spot. Inter-group theft and carnage became so common, and the social distance between neighbours living a few kilometres apart so stark, that those who lived on the front lines of old conflicts personally knew no members of 'other' communities, only dead enemies. Estrangement rapidly became a mechanism for survival. Hostilities were so pronounced that when Pokot and Turkana elders jointly convened villagers to tell them about the Orwa Ceasefire Accord, some Turkana came to the event out of mere curiosity just "to see a real live Pokot".

Adding to these problems, a burst of violence in December 2020 led to the murder of the Superintendent of Kenya's General Services Unit (GSU), at the Ameyan bridge near Kapedo. The Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF), Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU), and GSU were subsequently ordered to forcibly disarm the civilian population. In the months that followed, violence in the communities increased exponentially. Roads were closed because of the fighting, hindering the movement of people and supplies in and out. Subject to militarised security and forced searches, people and animals perished. Heavily armed police and military transports were the only vehicles crossing the rugged terrain; civilian forms of transport could no longer operate.

These conditions rapidly created social and economic paralysis. Schools, businesses, and markets shuttered as a precaution and from panic. Commerce was effectively disabled, and informal territorial no-go zones emerged. In Kapedo town, women required a police escort to fetch their daily firewood. Families continued to suffer from injury, displacement, and trauma. Public services were closed, potable water was difficult to obtain, and the smallest of needs was one step removed from an emergency. For communities, it became a life-threatening risk to herd livestock and to seek food, basic supplies, or medical services. Although they had grown up in close proximity to one another, the inhabitants of now 'enemy' villages might as well have been on another planet.

Notes from Mandera County

Nestled in Kenya's north-eastern corner, bordering Somalia and Ethiopia, the large Garre and Degodia clans were caught in a similar dynamic of killings, livestock raids, and retaliation.[13] In this region, villages are scattered across land divided by former colonial borders, seemingly arbitrary lines across which people and animals regularly roam in search of grazing pastures. Histories of violence blanket a region whose pastoralists have always disregarded borders that obstruct their nomadic way of life.

Over time, skirmishes over scarce resources needed for families and livestock became more violent, exacerbated by politically-fuelled tensions that deepened the antagonism between clans. As in the North Rift, encounters became more frequent but also more dangerous, causing an increasing number of fatalities. Eventually, the vicious cycle of attack and retaliation claimed hundreds of lives and displaced tens of thousands of people. Periodic massacres left families destitute without hope of justice, harbouring grievances that might persist for generations. In the words of one NCIC/Interpeace team member, "everybody has some beef with somebody else". This was an extremely complex environment for any type of peace mediation.

Mandera's "demilitarised zone"

"In Mandera, one death can result in ten, in retaliation. Somalis kill each other, that is what has been happening. Communities don't crisscross. [It is] like the DMZ between North and South Korea. If an animal wanders off, you don't go after it because it can be you who winds up dead. There are places [that] people **just don't go**. These are **vast** areas. There are lines known to the local people. Raids were also regularly part of the conflict."

County Government Official and Member of the Mandera Peace Actors Forum (MPAF)

Although both communities shared a similar history of suffering and loss, violent crime became actively and passively ethnicised along clan lines. This shift can be viewed as both a reaction by communities toward others in the face of the harms they experienced, and a tactic that anyone can conveniently use simply to stir and sustain resentments. In the event, the latter both distracted attention from other sources of conflict and proved more difficult to address. Nevertheless, the gradual ethnicisation of violent conflict and the clans' practice of protecting perpetrators led to a situation in which the victim of a crime could 'legitimately' retaliate against *any* member of the 'other clan', not just the perpetrators of the crime in question.

Elders in Mandera are known to be the main stewards of justice. They were expected to act as unbiased arbiters for the good of the collective. In this environment, however, they lost their ability to control events, and began to lose the confidence of their people as a 'hear nothing, say nothing, do nothing' norm took hold. As expectations of accountability on all sides quickly eroded, killing to resolve grievances continued relatively unabated, exacerbated by weakening faith in the customary *xeer* practices that Somalis use to regulate and mediate conflict. To complicate matters, *xeer* practices diverged locally from clan to clan: the system for conflict management, justice, and conflict resolution became so diverse and disagreeable that its very use became grounds for inter-clan animosity and distrust.

Cascading instability

In a classic form of retaliation, violent cyclical conflict between Mandera clans and between communities in the North Rift left countless people and animals dead, missing, or displaced. Homes and material wealth were destroyed, deepening impoverishment. The situations were further complicated by cross-border incursions, for instance when violence between Garre and Degodia villages in southern Ethiopia led to retaliation violence against the opposing clan's kin on the Kenyan side of the border. The practice of targeting anybody linked to 'the other' by kinship association embedded deep grievances in the fabric of inter-clan relations.

The whole process promoted instability. In Mandera, within a day or two of a killing, people packed up and fled their homes. Knowing that they might be subject to retaliation, perpetrators sometimes alerted their families and neighbours to what they had done. Word spread fast. The mass exodus of internally displaced persons (IDPs) exacerbated tensions in other areas as people sought shelter and means of survival. The flow of IDPs from rural areas into places like Mandera town posed a challenge for local authorities. Political actors learned to use pop-up settlements to secure electoral votes, motivating political leaders to sustain the political instability that was driving displacement and migration. The authorities also had to respond to the emergency needs of those who had been displaced. IDPs often settled in less populated but contested locations, creating potential for social conflict.

In the North Rift, political interference in everyday social life encouraged elders to put their personal gains before community well-being. Elder behaviours included ordering young men to raid livestock,[14] to attack to kill, or to use weapons to defend their community against 'others'. As in Mandera, this created chaotic conditions that eroded the elders' authority and effectively snared them in an unending cycle. While men and boys were directly involved in fighting, both in the North Rift and in Mandera, women and girls provided material and moral support to the young men. At the same time, women and girls faced additional risks. They were targets of retaliation, but also acted as carers, managing the vulnerability, trauma, and despair in their communities, in addition to fulfilling normal and emergency domestic responsibilities, and meeting basic family needs when they were forced to move their families and homes. In the absence of reliable and unbiased stewards, or trustworthy systems to regulate and resolve disputes, conflict grew exponentially, further ethnicising crime and violence. As one of the few means available for navigating these circumstances, communities would eventually come to *justify* retaliation, even against individuals who had nothing to do with the original transgression.

The politicisation of violence

Historically, the high incidence of violence can also be linked to long-standing political and economic policies that marginalised these societies, both during British colonial rule and since independence. Public services and infrastructure were not developed, and populations were largely under-served.

Kenyans generally appreciate today's devolved system of governance,[15] which has improved investment and public service delivery, but has downsides. The objective of devolution was to increase the effectiveness of local governance; but in practice it further intensified local political competition. Patronage and political favouritism are perceived to have worsened; some groups are seen to have been rewarded with public goods, while others have been deprived. Political actors have competed to control decisions on resource use, commercial investment, allocation of public service budgets, the demarcation of borders, multinational investments, etc.[16]

In this way, political interests directly influence levels of violence, in villages as well as at county and national level. In both urban and rural areas, kinship networks form an important part of one's political constituency. Political leaders call on them for support and promise advantages to elders and persons of influence if they help to secure votes. These practices subvert the political economy of these regions and deepen antagonisms between clans and communities.

Beyond these more explicit political interests, climate shifts and cycles of drought, as well as local skirmishes over scarce resources such as water and grazing land, have also fed into broader inter-group tensions. These have been exacerbated further by the influx of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which have increasingly been used for criminal acts and for self-defence.

The Mandera Peace Actors Forum gathers to discuss strategies for joint resource mobilization in response to the Banisa conflict.

Lokwasol, Suguta CMC member signing the Orwa peace accord.

2
The Results

Part 2: The Results

Notes from Lomelo

"In 40 degrees of heat, we are huddled in a small triangle of shade at the Lomelo police base. The NCIC/Interpeace team lead turns my attention: 'Those armoured vehicles you see over there, this is the only vehicle that could come in and out. You couldn't come here just three months ago without it. You might be the first Mzungu [white person] to visit this place in a very long time.' To my right sits a Turkana Chief, sipping a bottle of warm Sprite. To my left, two Pokot elders, one drinking milk from a plastic bag. All share laughs with the Somali-Kenyan Commander of the police base, whose gaze looks distant, though oddly relaxed. At the entrance to the base, a mere 20 metres away, sit two teenage Pokot herders, sipping Coca-Cola, waiting serenely while they charge their mobile phones. They take shelter from the heat under a tarp, using an electric generator that the Commander has provided, resting before continuing their long walk across kilometres of this rugged terrain. I realise that this is the same Commander for whom, just months ago, the proximity of those adolescents would have posed a mortal threat. In the Suguta Valley, former enemies relax together. Aside from officers guarding the gate, one can see no guns in sight. I ask my colleague aloud: 'How can this happen? For those former young warriors, war is all they have known.'

'You see,' my host replies with a grin. 'First, we disarmed their minds.'"

Ceasefire results

In July 2021, Pokot and Turkana elders from the Kapedo-Lomelo corridor signed the Orwa Accord, putting an end to decades of cyclical conflict and deadly violence. Before Orwa, many peace agreements signed in the North Rift had broken down, because they were not implemented or could not be transferred from the 'negotiating table' to the 'town-square'. The peacebuilding teams and residents will say more in the pages that follow. What counts is that the Orwa Accord had immediate and evident effects.

Kapedo was once a ghost town that made news for all the wrong reasons. At the end of 2021, when the research for this paper was conducted, its roads, businesses and markets had re-opened. Young, unarmed herders walked about freely, while men, women, and children crossed the invisible lines that they used to avoid for fear of losing a limb or their lives. Former enemies had once again begun to sleep over in each other's villages. At the epicentre of the Kenyan Government's forced disarmament campaign a few months earlier, a community-driven peace had halted a major security operation.[17]

As in the North Rift, criminal cattle raids, property damage, and displacement in Mandera dropped precipitously and almost instantly in the two-year period after the 2019 inter-party Banissa Declaration. Killings and retaliation effectively ceased. When thefts occurred, culprits were tracked and pursued, in accordance with new norms and practices the clans had established during the NCIC/Interpeace process.

Importantly, the Kenyan Government's forced disarmament operation had been relatively ineffective in its stated purpose, and neither the Orwa Accord between Pokot and Turkana, nor the Banissa Declaration between Degodia and Garre, were comprised of conditions imposed by outsiders. Yet, when the warring parties were finally brought together by NCIC and Interpeace over the course of a few days (at specific moments and in a calculated way), they quickly opened conversations about a collaborative pathway forward, and moved towards peace *together*. This was the puzzle at the heart of their process.

The birth of Ceasefire Monitoring Committees (CMCs)

At the end of 2022, as the 'Nine-Point' Banissa Declaration completed its third year unbroken, nobody has illusions about the effort that will be required to move from initial stabilisation to a more sustainable peace. Nevertheless, clans have shown that they are genuinely committed to implementing the critical steps required to achieve long term peace. The 'mediations' that took place at Orwa and Banissa were possible because there was willingness and commitment to share a new future together. That willingness and commitment, however, took shape long before anyone sat down 'at the table' to talk. When they did talk, the parties convened by NCIC and Interpeace had the power, not only to halt the violence, but to break with old norms and establish new norms to support non-violent coexistence as a key cornerstone for broader peace. Indeed, they were the only persons in whom communities vested authority (not simply formal status) to sign an agreement – but also those in a position to take steps (albeit only together) to begin steering their communities away from fear and eliminate the impetus for violence in the context of wider inter-group interactions.

A return to a state of non-violent coexistence required more than carefully crafted words on paper. The communities needed to assume significant and ongoing obligations. To ensure effective implementation, the 20 Garre and 20 Degodia elders convened by NCIC and Interpeace at Banissa, and the 20 Turkana and 20 Pokot elders who gathered at Orwa, recognised that one of the long-standing *impediments* to peace had always been the failure to implement past accords. To address this, at Banissa, each clan nominated three of its most-trusted representatives, to include a Chief and two elders. At Orwa, to cover a vast territory, that number rose to four. These became the Ceasefire Monitoring Committees (CMCs).

In addition to cross-clan representation of elders, the CMC members included government authority through the role of the Chiefs, enabling these small groups to deliver a more coordinated response. The selection of CMC members legitimated their mandate in the eyes of all clans and community groups. Members were peer-selected on the basis of their reputation for resisting clannism and nepotism. Under the gaze of their anguished communities, they solemnly vowed to fulfil their responsibilities. Both the Banissa and the Suguta Valley CMCs began to operate as rapid response teams that played a critical role in leading the transition.

Ceasefire Monitoring Committees

CMCs form the backbone of a self-sustaining prevention and peace mediation system. As one Mandera County Official described it: "They personally go and look for lost animals to prevent harm and bad blood. The people always waited for Government or NGOs to respond, but the CMCs go out on their own and now do that. They use their own resources even, so that shows [their] investment". The CMC in each region:

- Provides a rapid conflict response, extinguishing sparks, interrupting violence, intervening at the source. Its role includes investigation, enforcement, and mediation, for example in the recovery of stolen or 'wandering' animals.
- Treks vast distances to assert a new 'law of the land', convening villagers and disseminating information about the terms of inter-clan or inter-community agreements. It sensitises people to the CMC's role while modelling collaborative norms. Alongside local Inter-Village Dialogue Committees (IVDCs, see more below), the CMC helps to bridge distant villages and reach wandering pastoralists who may still be prepared for hostilities and to fight.
- Verifies or denounces rumours, counters misinformation, stamps out disinformation.

- Supports the work of IVDCs, which meet monthly to analyse situations and trends. Coordination between IVDCs and the CMC helps to ensure that a broad range of relevant conflict-prevention services are available, because the CMC is able to obtain additional resources and can convene appropriate dispute resolution actors (for example, religious leaders) in situations where their intervention and guidance may be necessary.

- Helps to resettle IDPs in their areas, reassure those who return, and coordinate local donations.

- Demobilises the minds of young men, in part by encouraging their compliance. This work is especially important in the North Rift, where warrior sons have often been conditioned to carry weapons and participate in criminal activities such as raids or the illicit meat trade. The CMC helps to reassert community rules that have been ignored or fallen out of use. It reminds young people that a new code of conduct applies, and that penalties will be imposed on those who violate the terms of the agreement. (For example, those caught selling or buying stolen animal meat might each be forced to provide five goats.)

Reversing a dangerous trend

According to members of the Banissa CMC:

> *"[After the October 2019 massacre] in Banissa, 20 people had been killed, and [about] 2,000 displaced. [There was no] communication across [Garre and Dedogia] clans. The establishment of the CMC created a roadmap. At that moment, we swore to each other, and on the Holy Quran, to cooperate. We prayed together, us six [nominated peer CMC Members]. We committed to each other to be brothers, no longer just Degodia or Garre. One thing eased our work, which was that we acted as a unit. When our people saw that trust between us, this model, this helped them to also trust the 'other'. We went around and returned people to their communities [reassuring them there was nothing to fear, that we had an agreement]. We also created an inter-village dialogue committee, so that villages from Banissa to the [Ethiopian] border were twinned. Each village had a mechanism, [so we] were in constant communication, while those [village dialogue committee] members became observers of flare-ups and tracked footprints. Retaliation has stopped, and people even started returning animals to each other. Even one man decided to return livestock he had stolen as a young man during the 1960s! Fear has decreased."*

The CMCs work to create the conditions for a new era of peace by transforming the pathways by which conflict has persisted. They seek to disarm triggers of fear and mistrust that create inter-clan hostility and enemy-othering, working consistently and collaboratively in a way that has not been seen before. When a conflict incident or crime occurs, members of the CMC from *both* clans show up on the spot, to interact with affected villagers, who are able to then engage in their own language with an elder they trust. This inter-clan collaboration reduces fear, particularly when opposing clan members are involved in a skirmish or suspect one another of a crime. CMCs offer multi-dimensional roles and reach; they are much more than just 'a new sheriff in town'.

CMCs in action: Notes from Turkana County, North Rift, 22 November 2021

We sit among 60+ Turkana and Pokot villagers sharing what life was like before, what has changed in the months following Orwa, and what life is like now. People sit patiently through four-way translation (between Pokot and Turkana, and for me, into Swahili and then English). Reconciling enemies sit calmly together. But there is a vibrancy in this room as communities listen attentively to each other. They take turns to raise their fears, and even challenge their elders to respond to their lingering concerns about the fragile peace they have built and must inevitably share. Elders engage with the group in turn, listening, reassuring them, and challenging them back. They remind people, in call-and-answer fashion, that they hold the key to sustaining the conditions the ceasefire has delivered.

A Pokot elder remarks: 'This peace came through elders, women, and young people, did it not? [Yes.] Everybody is tasked to care for it. And that includes the livestock! Are our animals and humans not peaceful with each other? [Yes.] Are the roads not now passable? [Yes.] That is what was brought from Orwa. Is this good or not? [Yes!] Wherever there's an incident, you mustn't always come looking for the CMC; these things are everybody's business to address. If this peace is so good, then we must take care, take hold, and protect it. This conflict started long ago with a small act of livestock theft. That's how it started. Take note of small things and deal with them so that we don't see things escalate again. Now we pray and focus on [dealing with] drought. Even if it rains, and pasture grows, [the grass] will always get used up again.'

A Turkana chief chimes in: 'People are trekking again to the river. We address small incidents to avoid bigger problems. You can call [on the CMC] to report it. When escorting women for firewood, leave your firearms behind.'

A Turkana woman rises: 'In the four months of peace, children started to learn again. Conflict paralyzed learning. Initially, when a vehicle passed here, everyone was on alert to hear about an attack. We were on high alert when fetching water. But now we do so with ease. We are sleeping again. [Come] enrol your children back in school!'

A Pokot woman replies: 'On behalf of the women, we are happy with these months of peace. We are grateful to Hassan and his team that came to reconcile our communities. Before that, they could not access water or firewood – the only way was the police vehicle. The politicians living far away used to make us fight. People living side by side need to find a way [to coexist]. Unresolved issues can spark other things.'

A young, reformed warrior speaks of the need to disarm: 'We need language to convince [our peers] that this is a good idea. Perhaps the white people should come fetch these weapons [hidden underground]. Were they not the ones who brought them here in the first place?'

We are witnessing interactions of camaraderie borne from the NCIC/Interpeace process, and of the CMC in action. Both have been key to shifting generational patterns. None of this was thinkable just three months ago. Meetings like these help to re-establish and reset the norms of peaceful inter-community relations, enforce the agreements they made, and re-enforce mutual obligations before both communities. Together, they are listening and reiterating their resolve to materialise the promise of peace, reminding people that the fruits of their labour that they've begun to enjoy ("a decent night's sleep" most say!) are in their hands to help sustain

Supporting self-sustaining shifts towards peace

Through their work to ensure that the agreement is implemented, the CMCs in both regions have quickly become a mechanism that plays an essential role in supporting a self-sustaining peace. To understand the CMCs simply as a form of law enforcement or community mediation would obscure their significance and their links to other levels of conflict and other actors in the system. Their legitimacy as elders gives them authority to support critical *normative shifts* towards genuine transformation that they were charged to make. Enabled by the design of the NCIC/Interpeace process, these shifts were already catalysed *within* communities. The CMC, combined with PAR methods and MAVU tools (Participatory Action Research and Mobile Audio/Visual Units discussed in section 3), primed communities to respond positively.

These methodological choices were arguably the features that most clearly distinguish the NCIC/Interpeace 'mediation' process from a determined design mediation model and help to explain its capacity to inspire change. Leaders signed up to a new roadmap for non-violent coexistence, but they also worked to support a new way of living and relating, to foster peaceful conditions that all *were already genuinely interested in sustaining*.

Addressing hearsay, hate speech, and rumours: all in a good day's work

When misinformation and disinformation circulate, rumours quickly ripple through a region. False alarms raise tensions that threaten a fragile peace. As one NCIC/Interpeace team member from Mandera said: "Within that short span, phone calls are everywhere. Societies are on alert, as in some areas the peace work is not [yet] very rooted. So everybody is sleeping with one eye open." Across large areas of territory, information is difficult to verify and triangulate. A (false) warning of an attack or the mere mention of an attack that has occurred can destabilise a community, prompt villages to take pre-emptive or defensive action, cause families to pick up and leave. In such a context, hearsay and rumours on social media can spark violence and be difficult to track. It is vital to respond immediately, and locally.

Misinformation and disinformation continue to threaten the fragile peace in Mandera and the Suguta Valley. Everyone living in those regions faces serial tests. As first responders, CMCs and IVDCs work together, to monitor local rumours and hearsay, to inform villagers about the veracity of reports, and to monitor and guide their response. On occasion they need to address situations on the ground. At other times, they communicate with the security forces or other elders to verify evidence and confirm or dispel concerns. This responsiveness partly explains why both regions have begun to write a new story together, rejecting the inevitability of violence that shaped their past.

While the first draft of this report was being written, the Kapedo CMC verified a 'shots fired' report near the Ameyan bridge just south of Kapedo, where many people had been killed in the past. When the Kapedo CMC cross-checked with kin, it discovered that the rumour began with a long-distance phone call by someone who seemed highly unlikely to possess such information first-hand. For the NCIC, the NCIC/Interpeace process *and* the CMCs, a key target has been to block the pernicious effects of hearsay and rumour in the escalation of conflict. It has done so with some success.

Inter-Village Dialogue Committees (IVDCs)

The CMC in Banissa is as active as the CMC in the North Rift. The first Inter-Village Dialogue Committee (IVDC) formed in the vicinity of Banissa. Borrowed from a method that two chiefs had used previously in nearby Rhamu town to prevent electoral violence, the IVDCs help the CMC to sensitise their communities and encourage them to adopt new norms and expectations. Established in hot-spots, IVDCs provide continuous on the ground monitoring, and twin neighbouring Garre and Degodia villages. Membership of one key IVDC, for example, includes Garre and Degodia men, a few women, and younger male members from villages of Choroqo and Domaal, which experienced the worst violence during the 2019 Banissa massacre. All its members have lost some family, and some have lost nearly all; one still grieves the loss of his eight children, and his wife, who was forced to watch them being killed before she was murdered too. In ensuring the non-recurrence of violence, IVDCs are also redemptive.

The committee meets monthly, alternating between villages, and shares the small but burdensome costs of food and fuel associated with its meetings and work. The group exchanges information, works to sensitise neighbours and pastoralists, updates people about the *xeer* customary law reforms that clans are working to finalise, and alerts the CMC when suspicious unidentified footprints are reported. In the past the IVDC has helped remove barriers to IDP resettlement, and provided physical and psychological assistance to people suffering the effects of trauma, fear, and uncertainty.

Using motorbikes (*boda-boda*), IVDC members crisscross the rough terrain to reach grazing and borehole areas, and often defuse skirmishes between herders or serve as peace ambassadors by encouraging clan kin to offer 'other-clan' visitors first access to water, the most genuine gesture of peace by past enemies in times of scarcity and drought. IVDCs provide a model for their communities; they are slowly removing key triggers of violence from the environment and steadily reinforcing sustainable changes in relationships.

The IVDCs also help the CMC to react immediately and intervene to mediate skirmishes, which occur predominantly amongst men. Over time, in parallel, women have begun to withhold material support (such as food, resources and shelter) that they once provided to kin militia or criminals who sought their silence or help. As in the North Rift, too, efforts are being made to discourage the types of ritual ceremonies, practices, or behaviours that celebrate and incentivise warriors who return victorious from raids, and ones that shun them openly if they return empty-handed.

In both areas, another significant shift has occurred in women's information-sharing networks. Once these raised the red flag of alert, or spread fear and mistrust; now local female social networks are being used to kill rumours, deliver clear news, and help CMCs to investigate and pursue cases of animal theft.

Disrupting the mediation script

> *"We go to the most remote villages, where [people have] prejudices. We use audio-visual [tools] to reduce misinformation. We have the film that shows them [recounting stories of] their own acts. When people see that, their prejudices soften, and they realise that it's not about a [out-group] animosity, but rather, that they also have common problems. There was always a lot of finger-pointing [at the other], but they [only chose] to begin [their] storytelling at the point when they became the victims. They did not tell what they had done before, to provoke that attack on them. So you see, we said to them that you have one finger pointing at somebody [else] but the other fingers are pointing back at you. And in the inter-group session [at Orwa], we had them listen to each other about how each had been harmed.*
>
> *Actually [the parties] start to learn they have more in common than differences. And through MAVU [Mobile Audio/Visual Units], they started to realise: 'Oh, so you mean "those" people think we are human'. One of the Turkana women said: 'I really feel for the Pokot women. Imagine, when they are about to give birth, they have to go all the way back to the main town, yet there is a hospital right here, but they cannot come here'. So when the Pokot women saw that [they] said: 'Oh my god, that is what they [truly] think about us?' Such small things change their perspective. It helps the other community see that the others are open on at least certain things, not on everything, but about the hospital, you know? And it's only this year that this happened. For years, for decades, this has never happened. Before the mediation, if they would see a Pokot, they would kill them without asking any questions. It doesn't matter what you came to do. But that fear has now been broken down."*
>
> NCIC/Interpeace team interview

It is important to note that the above discussion of MAVU also describes key components of a longer-term process that ultimately delivered cease-fire agreements. In both regions this process was central to the advent of eventual inter-party mediations and, more importantly, their aftermath. The use of these tools in an intra-party space enabled communities and clans to make necessary shifts in orientation toward both themselves and the 'enemy-other', which in turn helped to introduce new norms vital for long term and sustainable changes that communities could work towards together. The use of such tools reflects a somewhat unorthodox focus on 'recognition' and on *process design,* marking a departure from the interest-based and problem-solving 'script' that has dominated technical approaches to peacemaking and mediation practice in general. Dr. Sellah King'oro of NCIC spoke of this 'script' when she discussed the benefits of "disrupting the script", drawn from her own experience long before NCIC worked in Mandera and North Rift:

> *"I have learned that these peace agreements are all named after a hotel. We [used to] go bring elders to Nairobi or Nakuru, [those] who speak English. We do the mediation in a day or two [at the hotel], and bring them [home]. And the agreements don't hold, because when these people who speak English tell the real power-bearers [at home] what they have agreed to, they reject the agreements, because [those elders] made us believe that they were the real leaders. But they don't come back to us and tell us that they aren't the real leaders. Moving out of hotels and going to [the community] was powerful. The approach we have taken in Mandera and North Rift is that we go to people's home settings. So they will not tell you anything [simply] because they are eating nice [hotel] food or sleeping in nice beds. They will just tell you what is, because it's probably a challenge they even encountered that morning.*

All communities need to be reached out to. We go to reach out to people who were never reachable, because normally when peace organisations go to the field, they only deal with people who speak Swahili or English. But because of the nature of the peacebuilding team, we were very comfortable to have conversations with them [in their own languages]. And that gave the communities a bit more confidence. It helped them to bring out their elders and religious leaders, people who on most occasions are hid in the background, because they cannot speak English or Swahili, and yet they are the ones who actually make decisions. So they will put the young people who

speak English in front, while they would make decisions anyway at the end of the day. So this process helped me learn that we cannot really [do that] – if only we can be more flexible, and intentional..."

Origins of the 'script'

The 'mediation script' that Dr. Sellah of NCIC and Hassan Ismail of Interpeace opted *not* to follow in leading their teams, led to a new approach and co-design with parties, generating and sustaining unexpected changes.

Generally speaking, mediation models and orientations draw on certain principles, assumptions and beliefs about conflict, parties, and process, which in turn guide how mediation gets done. These inform mediator decisions and actions regarding participation, process, content, and goals, and to assess *what the meaningful sources of conflict are*, *how they can be addressed*, and even *who may be best positioned to support.* These help to further shape one's mediation *strategy,* clarify the mediator's role, tasks, and objectives, and inform the *structure of a mediation process*, in addition to clarifying appropriate micro-techniques.

A variety of traditional and modern approaches to mediation are practiced, but one 'script' has, at the expense of others, tended to dominate the practice of peace mediation in recent decades. Although practitioners affirm that mediation can take years and require both creativity and patience, even this type of thinking and expectation faces an uphill battle. At the risk of oversimplification, it can be useful to think of the 'script' as determined design[18] approach, which guides mediators when their intention is to bring parties to the negotiating table to reach agreement. It has become shorthand for a settlement-seeking, often interest-based process undertaken by styles that include a facilitative orientation to practice conducted by mediators who have largely been those external to the conflict setting. Strategy and design, in turn, follow a rational, sequential, linear-causal logic, broadly informed by the belief that addressing conflict between parties is a matter of managing conflict by containing it through the negotiation of incompatible interests, the satisfaction of which should in turn enable peace to emerge. Though the assumptions and beliefs that underpin the script are often left implicit, this logic presumes conflict and parties as static entities, and proposes sequential steps, stages or phases that mediators work through in pursuit of settlements as a final 'peace destination'. Indeed, a simple internet search of terms (e.g., 'stages of mediation') produces a strikingly similar set of results.

Each stage or step in this problem-solving orientation establishes tasks and objectives, whose completion allows the next stage to begin. When mediators convene "key" parties, they work dutifully to help those selected to move beyond intransigent attitudes, address material obstacles or historical disagreements, unpack positional thinking to spot rational interests, or even re-engineer differences or divergence to frame feasible subjects of negotiation. As they do these things, many opt to carefully navigate around (or suppress, or dismiss altogether) other pressing issues of concern (such as grievances or emotional experiences,[19] or even other parties), because they are believed to be obstacles to reaching a settlement. These processes seek to creatively generate options for satisfying parties' interests, removing roadblocks to a 'win-win' outcome.

The predominance of this script in shaping peace mediation can be traced historically to peace-making evolution from diplomatic methods for addressing inter-state conflict[20], and the rise of mediation's use in the lead up to the end of the Cold War and decades thereafter, inextricably linked to Liberal Peace orientations. While other paradigms and orientations have also shaped peace practices, the script's linear-causal logic remains highly influential in practices including mediation and other realms. It continues to inform professionalised learning spaces, where its tenets appear in guidance reproduced and promoted in medi-

ation handbooks issued, for example, by multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), as well as States (for example, the German Government's *Peace Mediation*). Linear-causal logics continue to guide mediation in terms of both policy and practice, and actors are only beginning to consider seriously approaches and practices that are more transformative, non-linear, and adapted to complex settings.

The case studies described here are innovative examples of an approach to self-sustaining peace that does not start by first attempting to understand parties' interests, nor is it simply a question of knowing a local language. Notably, the NCIC and Interpeace avoided any attempt to persuade or coerce or compel the parties to sit down and hash out a ceasefire agreement. Instead, they adopted a process that, while reflecting some prevailing norms, had a different kind of *intention*. Using methods inspired by PAR and the integration of MAVU tools, it applied contextualising principles first to the formation of the (mediation support) teams, and then to core ethical (and calculated) risk-taking practices that helped to materialise them. The process was not driven by implicit assumptions derived from any typology of ceasefires.[21] Rather, it prioritised the creation of trust and consent, on breaking down barriers, bringing into focus the pernicious effects of conflict (including misinformation and disinformation) and supporting all parties to recognise how much these had shaped their own experience and the experience of the 'enemy-other'.

Encouraging such shifts ultimately reinforced clans' and communities' belief in, and adherence to, the CMCs' work, but not principally because it had been approved by authorities. The NCIC/Interpeace mediation process consciously shifted social defences that were supported by deeply held narratives, enabling members of communities to recognise the situation of others as well as themselves. Only then were they in a position to make critical shifts in their attitude and orientation to and empathy for the 'other', but also in the mediators and the process. These shifts were not imposed but organic, fostered by an unorthodox bricolage of practices that NCIC and Interpeace adopted. In these ways, the NCIC/Interpeace approach differed in key respects from the predominant 'script', which had failed repeatedly to achieve sustained change in the same conflict areas.

Inspiring changes in political (and peace) actors, and process design

It is important to say that, in both regions, the gradual emergence of inter-group reconciliation in the post-ceasefire period has acted as a defence, or countermeasure, against the recurrence of violence. It should not be assumed, however, that such relational effects are hyper-local, or have no effects on the wider system; or that relational strife was the principal driver of conflict, as if conflict could be ended by a relational repair alone. In the teams' view, the NCIC/Interpeace process and the work of CMCs also effectively defused other drivers of violence that have been features of Kenya's recent national experience, notably electoral violence. Beyond repairing relations between communities, one of the most significant effects of the NCIC/Interpeace process was to *disable* the ability of political actors to use their power to incite violence. The communities no longer accept such practices, because they identify with the very different norms that emerged during the peacemaking process, which are espoused by the CMCs and IVDCs. This change to a key dynamic of conflict has to do with the way teams materialised inclusivity in the process. At the time of writing, elders in authority were still digesting the abrupt benefits of a new peace, but were largely refusing or rejecting the demands of political actors to use violence to advance their personal interests.[22] A nuanced understanding of political- and peace-actors' roles was critical to process adaptation.

Accessory parties

It is an understatement to say that many Kenyans do not hold politicians in high esteem. Communities in both regions strongly criticised their role in undermining prospects of peace. Many elders, and even county-level officials interviewed for this study, some of them politicians themselves, acknowledged this was a core problem. It is at first sight more surprising to discover that communities were almost as critical of 'peace actors', whose role, like that of politicians, was also intimately entwined in past peace failures.

In a nod to complexity, it is important to note here that 'failure' was not *always* due to active spoliation or nefarious intentions. Nevertheless, if they wanted to catalyse and support constructive change, the NCIC and Interpeace were obliged to consider the contributions that external actors had made to past peace negotiations and their breakdown, and to consider them as de facto parties to the conflict. This meant assuming that actors and institutions working for peace might promote as well as hinder conflict. In accordance with their commitment to centring community and the local context in the process, NCIC and Interpeace opted to exclude national and county political leaders, civil society actors and peace organisations, and urban grandees from key phases of the programme; in the latter-stage inter-group events, for example, they were not informed and involved until the communities had firmly settled on the outcomes they wanted.

In hindsight, the influence of the NCIC/Interpeace process helped to constructively shape how peace and development actors now operate, particularly in Mandera, where the NCIC and Interpeace have been involved for a longer time. Nevertheless, it is vital to recognise that the mediation achievements of NCIC and Interpeace were not based on the *inclusion* of all relevant actors, but on the strategic, selective, and timely *exclusion* of peace actors and politicians who have been at the forefront of peacemaking initiatives, and whose names often show up on formal peace agreements.[23]

Patterns of political interference in Kenya are complex but consistent. Politicians of all ethnic origins exercise influence in rural regions, especially ahead of elections, but often from afar (Nairobi or Nakuru). In pursuit of their personal interests in the broader political economy, they persuade local contacts and kinship allies to spread politicised messages, influence local decisions, or (albeit indirectly or incrementally) acquire control over lucrative resources (such as development contracts). Time and again, evidence has indicated that political actors have incited hate speech or spread disinformation to advance their goals, and encouraged elders, who command young warriors, to carry out acts of violence. In return, they offer benefits that never seem to materialise, whether they gain office or lose it.

In the past, politicians have also directly influenced peace mediation efforts. Political actors or their proxies have subverted the process or distorted the substance of agreements or mediation outcomes in different ways, for different reasons. It is also true that some engagements and arrangements were well-intentioned and failed for other reasons. On balance, it is not surprising that communities have come to distrust the involvement of political actors in processes to resolve conflicts that in most cases do not affect them. Based on the long history of peace agreement collapse in these two regions, people associate *inclusion* with *interference*. A team member explained:

> *"You see, always, when you start [mediating conflict] from the top, the grassroots will not have an impact, it will not <u>own</u> the process. But there is no way the top can influence the ground, grassroots [without their permission]. That is why [external] peace actors [commonly] engage [other] peace actors, elites, and politicians. Elites don't reside in those [grassroots] areas, and they don't control power in the villages. And most of these politicians come to see these people [barely once] in five years. Yet, the peace actors have only been engaging [these politicians] since the time they were elected in Nairobi, thinking that they are*

in charge! A politician will act as if they are living in that community. But the community [themselves] will tell you, 'The last time we have seen that guy here, was just after the rituals' [coming of age ceremonies]."

NCIC/Interpeace team member

The teams used the term 'peace actor' to refer both to peacebuilding organisations and their local staff, and prominent civic and professional personalities. 'The script' accords prominence to this echelon of actors, who are expected to play roles in training for, analysing, and convening inter-community dialogues, and may directly mediate between 'grassroots' conflict parties. NCIC/Interpeace teams called such actors "professional workshop goers". They commonly include political figures and opinion-shapers (i.e., track 2 level actors) who live in larger towns like Nakuru, Eldoret, Marigat, or Mandera. They are well-intentioned, enjoy visibility and professional recognition due to their work in development, (social) media, civic activism, or humanitarian organisations, and may have a connection to one or another elder or community in conflict.

Even if they have a kinship association to warring clans or communities, such people have at best a peripheral involvement in events that occur in places such as Kapedo or Banissa. Their distance from contexts in which violence shapes everyday life, and the influence that external peace support actors bestow on them, give them a false standing. They do not have a deep understanding of the communities in conflict and simultaneously crowd out more legitimate opinions, hardening the belief in communities that the form of peace making that runs through them, does not work. Teams described some of the more politically involved peace actors as:

"...activists, professionals, community areas, some position or maybe some affiliation to politicians, or some chairlady so-and-so, or chairman of something or other, some religious something or other, or defunct District Peace Committees, etc.

They have perfected the act of 'contributing', and really positioned themselves, about everything. They are the ones who are attending all the workshops – even school board meetings, workshops about land, livestock, peace, education, etc. A [peace actor or politician] goes to [a meeting in] Nairobi or Nakuru for the DSA (Daily Subsistence Allowance). And if they ... return with [peace] agreements, the people don't trust them because [people think], 'maybe our enemies are cheating us somehow', or the transfer from table to community gets lost.

Some of them are taking advantage and saying [to peace organisations]: 'You must seek our permission to operate in that area'. And they want you to become captive. And when you go to these [outside] people sometimes, they may even try to give you a false picture [of what is happening in communities]. They get upset if they weren't selected to participate in [NCIC/Interpeace facilitated] meetings – and if they weren't selected, we [downplay and] say: 'No, [listen] one of your [ethnic group] members was at the meeting', but they are upset that they weren't selected [by the community]. Because they were used to [always being in the centre]."

NCIC/Interpeace team interview

In the quotations above, team members drew attention to the relationship between political actors and workshop-goers who, one step removed, have at times represented themselves to outsider peace-sponsoring entities as being from, or part of, the communities who are directly involved and affected by violent conflict. Teams noted that such actors, despite good intentions, have played central roles in contributing to agreements that not only dissolved, but calcified resistance to the processes that produced them.

Process adaptation

Professional workshop-goers, peace actors and politicians became accessories in the 'failure' of past mediation processes because the 'mediation script' itself can be exposed to politicised manipulation of the agenda of a peace process or its participants. Influence can be subtle, and easily overlooked by those implementing the mediation script do not pay close attention to how power dynamics sway conduct before and after an agreement, or focus too closely on the agreement itself. In many situations, these actors, who continue to exercise influence over decisions and implementation, obstruct the formation of a genuine consensus among legitimate decision-makers from the communities. As a result, agreements lack traction when they transfer from the 'negotiating table' to the 'street'.

One Turkana elder memorably remarked in frustration that "hotel peace-making workshops are for those who have taken peace hostage". Asked to explain, he said that such actors act as *gatekeepers* for Kenyan or external sponsoring organisations, who wish to deliver technical peace support. As a NCIC/Interpeace team member observed, gatekeepers manage "every [outside] person who wants to interact with the elders or community". More self-interested outside actors influence peace processes and their outcomes by proxy: they insert local participants into a negotiation who will represent *their* narratives and perspectives and political interests.

The result is a disconnect between inputs to mediation activities and outputs of meaningful change affecting the communities. This is not due to any *lack* of peace initiatives. It is a problem linked to the participation, honest or otherwise, of outsiders who remained distant from the communities in conflict. This is where the NCIC/Interpeace approach stood out. As another North Rift elder remarked, NCIC and Interpeace "came directly to us", short-circuiting this pattern obscured by the word *participation*. Together with some of the unique activities described in Part III, this marked a shift of focus with significant implications. As a team member recalled, it occurred against the odds, and only because NCIC and Interpeace operated *together* to disrupt the norm:

> *"[We] can work anywhere now that we [NCIC and Interpeace] have been given a national mandate, so we don't need [anybody's] permission. Politicians were initially uncomfortable with us. They lost youth who they need during elections, [using] guns to create chaos. We took away their violence as an electoral instrument. They bad-mouthed us. But we penetrated [the community space] without them. And now they are recommending NCIC and Interpeace. Now, politicians call us. You see we operate in a very complex space. We are [still] worried about hijackers who try to hijack the peace process. The peace that is now enjoyed along Suguta Valley – all the politicians are now subscribing to it, even those who were against it before. The reason is, the grassroots is intact, and the people down there [are] owning the process. So if [politicians] attempt [to undermine] them, the high chance is [they] will not be re-elected. So [they] subscribe. These are the ones who would manipulate in the past, and now [politicians] are [becoming] 'peace ambassadors'."*

As they cooperated more closely with communities and learned why past agreements had failed, the teams reconfigured the way in which they worked. Recognising the perverse influence of political actors, they co-constructed a process that would reconnect process inputs and outputs and, to contest dominant power, eventually developed a *non-dominant* process design. In this sense, teams reaffirmed the important role that power analysis and mindful process design play in discerning 'who needs to talk, with whom, about what'.[24]

The Mandera Peace Actors Forum (MPAF)

Unlike in the North Rift, several peacebuilding organisations had offices in Mandera town. Over time, however, their interventions had little cumulative effect, suggesting that their orientation or methods were ineffective. The NCIC/Interpeace teams' initial consultations indicated that clan affiliations were an impediment to peace. In some cases, peace organisation staff were an obstacle; District Peace Committees embedded in the County Government, too, had been paralysed or captured by clan interests. As in the North Rift, harm was not always intended, though some individuals were reported to have supported arms trading or 'stirred up bad blood' in the past. To the extent that political, economic or criminal interests had shaped the process and content of past mediations, this piece of the puzzle helped to explain why they had constantly fallen apart.

The NCIC and Interpeace established the Mandera Peace Actors Forum (MPAF) in 2018. Its creation led to a sharp change in the patterns identified above, and it helped to shift and shape the nature of organisational engagements overall. MPAF became an instrument that could enable peace. Foreshadowing the future of its own peace support work, NCIC and Interpeace promoted collaboration and ethical guidelines, so that MPAF became an institution that *mediated between mediators*, or those providing peace support. It also brought government into relationship with peacebuilding and development organisations,[25] and built a consensus in support of a coordinated and principled approach to conflict intervention. Chaired and vice-chaired by representatives of the National and County Governments, MPAF's collaborative approach guided the *collective* contributions and responses of its member organisations, while mutually reinforcing their relations with one another.

MPAF established agreed rules for liaison and information sharing, and for intra-MPAF advisory support. Collaborative analysis and idea exchange helped to enhance members' collective understanding of conflict dynamics and to streamline their responses. This promoted synergies that reduced programmatic duplication (as well as the inattention previously given to important matters) and encouraged sound use of limited resources. MPAF's increasingly coordinated and collective response to 'flare-ups' in Mandera County lowered the suspicion of warring parties and began to build their trust well before CMCs had been established. By these means, MPAF members working on conflict began to do their work in more peace-responsive ways by avoiding harm while deliberately contributing to peace outcomes, demonstrating the value of exploring all the ways in which well-intentioned actors can contribute constructively, and destructively, to a conflict context.

An ethical pivot towards peace

Rather than rely on 'good faith', MPAF members signed a set of internal *ethical guidelines*, a shared code of conduct that required them to prioritise conflict actors' best interests over their own. Adherence to these principles proved significant in the lead up to the Banissa Declaration, when MPAF members and peace actors joined 20 Garre and 20 Degodia representatives during the 2019 inter-group mediation to participate in an exercise that helped clans to identify what actions would help foster peace after the massacre that occurred. At that moment, Interpeace's Kenya Country Representative, Hassan Ismail, reminded everyone of a critical criterion, aligned with the MPAF ethical code: although members of MPAF present at the event supporting facilitation had clan relations and interests, *they would only record proposals and ideas that came directly from the immediate parties, that is, from members of the communities themselves.*

When clan Secretaries later read their results of the exercise aloud, it quickly became evident that the warring clans had independently identified concerns and solutions that were almost *identical*. This led one clan Secretary to look across at his counterpart and joke: "I think that this guy has stolen the answers from my paper!" The laughter of relief and excitement that erupted marked the turning of a new page.

In hindsight, the key ethical decision was to make sure that the parties (rather than outsiders 'once removed') framed the substantive inputs during inter-group deliberations from which ceasefire terms organically emerged. While many mediation practitioners follow a similar rule, the NCIC/Interpeace leadership's proposal to adopt an ethical code long before the opportunity at Banissa bore fruit when it mattered most. As one MPAF member with a clan affiliation later admitted, "If we had left [our interests] in there, there would not be an agreement [in Banissa] today". The mediation ended with participants signing onto the Banissa Declaration. As a key facilitator at that time, Hassan Ismail reminded clan leaders in attendance what they had accomplished. Rhetorically, he asked: "Were we [NCIC, Interpeace, the MPAF] the ones defining these issues? We were just part of the process. [These are] your definitions. You have generated these ideas. You have found consensus points together. We have just printed your agreement."

An agreement tested but unbroken

In early November 2021, two years after the Nine Points Declaration, two people were murdered in Malkamari, a few kilometres from Banissa. It was the first incident of its kind since the document was signed. The perpetrators were tracked to the Ethiopian border, where authorities could go no further. Word of the killings spread a ripple of fear across villages in the area. Tensions were palpable.

As research for this report took place, local schools remained closed. Despite reasonable concerns, community reactions nevertheless did not follow the retaliation pattern of previous years. This time, the CMCs, together with MPAF members, mobilised. No further killing occurred: the clans' ceasefire held.

By December, Mandera County Government sources confirmed that authorities from both sides of the border were working to come together to discuss the matter on the Kenyan side. This was unique, suggested a more promising future, and indicated that the process, now led by the CMC's work and influence, might reach well beyond strictly local efforts to foster relational and normative change.

The programme country representative, Hassan Ismail leading a peacemeeting in Orwa with Pokot and Turkana community elders

INCEPTION

Rapid assessment + team recruitment, induction, and training

- → Initial context scoping by experienced mediators.
- → Contact with actors in remote areas affected by violence.
- → Affirmative action recruitment for identity and skill.
- → Strategic planning.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

Inquiry, validation, restitution

- → Mapping the territories.
- → PAR-inspired activities, focus groups and interviews.
- → Use of MAVU tools to capture stories and oral contributions.
- → County-wide validation of analytical results and selection of priority issues impeding peace.
- → Restitution of results: presented back to *all* participating and affected communities.
- → Second round of PAR to dig deeper into priorities.

INTER-GROUP MEDIATION

Direct ceasefire agreements

- → "Changes of tack" but only at opportune moments.
- → Criteria used to limit meddling by political actors.
- → Structured inter-group mediation employing unorthodox methods.
- → Emphasis placed on exchanges of antagonism and emotion, enabling 'right sized' opportunities for truth-telling and expression of grievances, rather than *directive facilitation*.
- → Collaboration with Government and security teams.

INTRA-GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

Pre-mediation potential

- → Intra-group activities were organized without intention of inter-group mediation.
- → Budget flexibility permitted responsiveness.
- → Dialogue activities focused on key underlying impediments to peace that had been popularly prioritised through PAR.
- → Taking time led to affirmations of trust and readiness.

Degodia and Garre community members come together to share the Doomal water point, demonstrating the power of collaboration between villages in the face of scarce resources

3

How Change Happened

Part 3: How Change Happened

"We don't do workshops. We sleep under trees."

NCIC/Interpeace team member

This section clarifies the core process components that, taken together, underpinned NCIC's and Interpeace's approach. While each of the two regional experiences is distinct in terms of timelines, circumstances, and actors, their process shares core features. The bricolage of activities that delivered effective mediation was anything but linear and 'script'-driven but led to inter-group ceasefire agreements that bedded in. The Orwa Accord and Banissa Declaration sprang from sudden opportunities that were, at the same time, rooted in many months of analysis, activity, and adaptation. That long process and methodology that supported the peace arrangements achieved by the Garre and Degodia clans, and the Turkana and Pokot communities in the Suguta Valley, are significant for peace work with kinship networks in other geographical areas.

The components are summarised below and capture the unique features of each case. They describe the experiences of the teams, and their decisions, show how NCIC and Interpeace learned from and replicated elements of the programme's unique approach to make critical shifts in two very different, but fragile contexts.

INCEPTION

Rapid assessment, team recruitment, induction, and training

Experienced mediators led by Dr. Sellah King'oro of NCIC and Hassan Ismail of Interpeace carried out initial context scoping and inquiry. This phase included extensive desk research and face-to-face meetings with people in formal and informal positions of authority, with whom they clarified the programme's intentions. They also spoke to community knowledge-holders. Rapid assessments took place in Mandera in 2015, and in North Rift in 2019. These were the first of many opportunities that NCIC and Interpeace took to interface with all actors in the regions. Efforts included risky journeys to contact communities living in remote areas, many of which were considered isolated 'no-go' zones for Kenyans and outsiders.

Experienced mediators also conceived and led team recruitment. They returned to the same counties and authorities to post job descriptions, explain their team-building plans, and keep key actors informed. They used an 'affirmative action' approach to assemble teams that possessed key programmatic technical skills *and* an identity composition that helped lower initial barriers to entry. The aim was to build trust with key conflict parties in already extremely cautious, guarded, and suspicious communities. Team composition therefore intentionally mirrored the pattern of clan and/or community identity. Team members spoke local languages, not just Swahili and English, enabling them to relate directly, socio-culturally, with target communities. Together with the personal relationships that teams built, and which continue today, these features helped the teams to create trust, understand and address power relations, and proactively disrupt the ethnicisation of conflict and justice.

Specialists from NCIC and Interpeace trained the members of the Mandera team, who subsequently trained and mentored the North Rift team, enabling key orientations, principles and beliefs about conflict and communities, and the learning acquired, to become useful in a new operational context.

Shifting perspectives

Identity was critical for mediating teams in the North Rift. Teams used process and micro-techniques to convert scepticism into trust and turn defensiveness into a curiosity that *opened* conversations. A team member recalled one such moment:

"[One time] in Samburu County, Pokots had raided and killed many, but also lost many in return. Maybe 30 plus people were killed. [The team] went there [shortly after] to do an activity. One [Samburu] guy came up to me and said: 'Oh, so you are Pokot! You know, we really gave it to them good that day.' And you see, he was trying to provoke me. And I said to [his evident surprise]: 'When they come next [time], you need to just give it to them, so that they learn not to [attack you] again!' Now, we have a conversation going. I told him, "Next time they come, just punish them... even though they are my brothers, who told them to come here [to harm you]?' We are talking about peace here now!"

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

Inquiry, validation, restitution... Repeat.

Teams ran PAR-inspired inquiry activities that materialised local ownership principles. In addition to programmatic consultations,[26] teams convened clans and ethnic-community groups separately in an ongoing series of internal discussions and interviews, held in conflict parties' own villages and local languages. This helped to generate an agenda from the outset. Conflict parties began to examine and define their conflict experiences in their own terms and words, and identify obstacles to peace as well as sources of resilience. In the North Rift, for instance, the team convened 1,200 people in 60 discussion sessions across five counties. The meetings included mixed and homogeneous groups (for example, women-only, youth-only, to be able to raise issues they may not have otherwise). In Mandera, the team brought together nearly 800 people across almost half the county's civic wards.

The PAR-inspired approach enabled clans and communities to discuss important cross-cutting issues for the first time *within* and among their own clans and communities. This permitted teams to progressively map the actors and the terrain, identify the most important power-bearers in hotspot areas, and develop a genuine rapport with communities. Then the teams used an interactive approach to deepen an understanding about how conflict and violence affect people's lives, which subsequently informed both community introspection and their interventions. During this process, teams also learned the value of storytelling, which served a variety of purposes. When they, as Kenyans, shared their own stories of conflict, suffering, or perseverance, they encouraged others to bring out their experiences too.

During PAR activities, the teams used mobile audio-visual units (MAVU), including equipment and generators where necessary, to capture (and later replay) stories and key elements of discussion. With community consent, this information was turned into short films and documentaries that illustrated analyses of conflict. After completing their large-scale analyses, teams convened representatives from all parties and authorities across the target regions for a revalidation and legitimation session. At that event, groups worked to agree what priorities should receive immediate attention. In Mandera, the top priorities included social reconciliation and trust-building. In North Rift, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and disputed territories topped the list.

Teams then restituted the results. They returned to *every participating community* and, using MAVU tools, presented the findings and priorities that had been worked out in the validation session. Use of MAVU was critical here because it meant that even the most remote villages, whose residents lacked literacy and electricity, could engage with the results, discuss ideas, and even listen directly to the 'enemy-other' via audio/visual recordings. Through this process, conflict parties became 'participant researchers', examined their own and others' experiences, including experiences of suffering and pain, and discussed the potential for a different future. These

methods created spaces that villagers used to empower new decision-making, and also recognise and re-humanise 'the other'. Importantly, the process invited communities and clans to grapple with their own defensive narratives, and their accountability, no longer just as conflict 'victims' but as conflict *protagonists* too.

The teams did not rush into mediation based on PAR results. Instead, they ran a second round of PAR inquiries. Though the experiences of communities and clans were similar in many areas, in other respects their experiences were different and specific. Teams dug deeper into the priorities that communities had identified, always putting communities at the centre and asking how issues affected their lives and how they should be addressed. Indirectly, this work helped to reconcile narratives, while refining an agenda for mediation (even though at this stage mediation was not explicitly foreseen).

INTRA-GROUP ENGAGEMENTS

Pre-Mediation Potential

On the basis of the PAR results, teams then organised a series of 'intra-group' activities. None of these were conceived or run with the deliberate intention to prepare for inter-party mediation, either to achieve a ceasefire or a broader peace accord. In the same way that they used MAVU, the teams sought throughout to be creative. Helped significantly by budgeting flexibility, they were able to shun the 'hotel workshop' model and ensure that all activities took place inside communities, where conflict actors and those most affected live.

In Mandera, teams supported a range of mainly intra-group activities for clans and other key conflict actors (such as security forces). The activities included several months of *internal* clan/sub-clan consensus building: dialogues with area chiefs intended to prevent election violence (in 2017); workshops for Kenyan security agents to build awareness; dialogues to increase trust between security and local populations (including key groups such as youth susceptible to Al-Shabaab recruitment); depoliticisation training for elders (using MAVU techniques); and PAR-inspired inquiries that helped advance priorities such as reform of the Somali customary law framework (*xeer*). When instances of violence or retaliation occurred (such as a massacre in Banissa in March of 2018), the NCIC/Interpeace team and other MPAF members deployed immediately to de-escalate tensions, calm the public by holding 'peace rallies', and work with clans to prevent further escalation, both independently and through ad-hoc 'shuttle' and 'proximity' efforts.

As tensions rose in the North Rift between Pokot and Turkana communities along the Kapedo/Lomelo corridor, teams held a series of intra-group meetings in the second half of 2020. They separately convened forty male elders from each community to explore key issues associated with violence over disputed territory that PAR results had previously highlighted. Even at this point, teams did not pressure parties to negotiate, but followed the parties without being directive, allowing the process to advance at its natural pace. As one team member observed: "We gave them the opportunity to think and strategise, and they gave us the suggestions. And what they [were] relaying is that they needed time to discuss on their own. We will head in that direction, but already we noted how the process will be, because we see they are not yet ripe for that stage of direct negotiation. There are indicators of that. They [first] need to put their houses in order." 'Following the parties' developed trust. For the NCIC/Interpeace team, a significant indicator was when Pokot elders opted to hold one of their meetings with the team under one of their most sacred trees. Shortly thereafter, the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) deployed into the area, beginning their forced disarmament campaign, effectively locking down the entire corridor for months, stifling the process.

INTER-GROUP MEDIATION

Direct Ceasefire Agreements

After the October 2019 Banissa massacre left 20 people dead (and after two more were killed *during* a peace rally led by NCIC, Interpeace and MPAF), the Mandera team changed tack. They opted to convene Degodia and Garre clans of Banissa sub-county together, over the course of three days. Before the meeting, NCIC and Interpeace asked [local] elders to convene 20 of their kin from across the sub-county: they asked elders to ensure that representatives from conflicting villages were present, and actively participated, and that certain political 'gatekeepers' were kept out.

On the first day of the inter-group process, facilitators invited each party to state its *current and historical accusations* in turn, while the other party listened. Each was then invited to respond. This constructive use of antagonism not only alleviated tension but helped groups to dispel some of the historical misinformation and myths that perpetuated divisions. On the second day, the parties discussed what made such tragic and *recurring* episodes of violence happen. On the third and final day, parties identified solutions and drafted the Banissa Nine Points Declaration. This approach required highly skilled facilitation.

In the Suguta Valley, the KDF disarmament campaign and the pressure of a near total blockade forced the Pokot community to request some form of relief, particularly after meddling by political actors cut short an amnesty that Pokot leaders had negotiated directly with the Kenyan Government. At this juncture, the NCIC/Interpeace team adopted a similar approach to that in Mandera: "Abandon the political [gatekeepers] and proceed". In close coordination with security and government officials who signed off on their effort, the NCIC/Interpeace team convened 20 Turkana and 20 Pokot male elders from the embattled Kapedo/Lomelo corridor at Orwa. They structured the inter-group engagement using a format similar to the mediation conducted one year earlier in Banissa. Each party was given an opportunity to air and respond to accusations, before identifying solutions that were set out in the Orwa Peace Accord.

An unconventional approach

"Even at Orwa, they said, 'Why are you shooting our animals as if they are wild animals?' The [others respond], 'No, when our animals go astray you kill and eat them and don't return them to their owners, so that's why we attack you'. And all the while they [have claimed]: 'We are not doing these things.' They are subjected to [answering] hard questions [in the process], and they can't escape from that. Or the elders [can legitimately dispel accusations]: 'That area is much too far, my boys can't go that far [even to steal]!'

One thing I realised, when you give them the opportunity, when they all realise they are <u>also guilty</u> (of violence), then their negotiation power is weakened, so that creates balance amongst them. You realise one community has been labelled as the aggressor, but now you hear that everybody has a right to be heard and respond, like a justice system. And by the end you hear [that] all are aggressors. This is something that may not come out, if you don't provide this platform. Only then do they become humble. Now all are [exposed as] aggressors, nobody is claiming moral high ground."

NCIC/Interpeace team member

Mohamed Abdullahi, also known as Arrow, a member of the Banisa CMC, addresses members of the Eymole-Malkamari inter-village dialogue space structure at Eymole

4

What We Have Learned

Part 4: What We Have Learned

"We changed the mental model. Let's deal with reality and look for sustainability. We want to sustain peace, not [to sustain] peace actors. We wanted to work with those who had been directly affected by the crisis, not the indirect ones [like] the Marigat elders sending a call to Kapedo, or [from] Mandera to Banissa. We wanted to work with those in the theatre of war, people who are actors of war, not spectators of it. And when you give space to [these] actors, it opens a way forward. Those people [begin to] ask themselves – why are we fighting?"

NCIC Commissioner

Reflecting on "success"

The efforts of NCIC and Interpeace to assist parties to negotiate self-sustaining ceasefire agreements in fragile contexts clearly show that teams chose a distinctive pathway, effectively 'flipping the script' on conventional peace mediation practices. In both the cases discussed here, the teams adopted a similar orientation and intentionality. Whereas the early work in Mandera initially began without direct inter-party mediation in mind, core elements of a process began to emerge more clearly when teams transferred their experiences, adapting key principles to the embattled North Rift. In both environments, they integrated similarly 'unorthodox' methods in a similarly 'unscripted' manner, building process as they went, by applying techniques grounded in transformative objectives that went well beyond the traditional 'script-based' model.

With respect to key learning, the two experiences and the approaches taken by NCIC and Interpeace have exceptional value. These can be compared and contrasted, in some respects, both to the succession of collapsed negotiations and agreements that preceded them, and to the State's failed disarmament and security interventions[27] to halt violence. The stability that conflict parties achieved as a result of the NCIC/Interpeace approach was self-sustaining and had far more promising outcomes than observers had expected. This was at least partly due to the teams' orientations and principles, and partly due to their use of multiple tools and approaches, flexible decision-making, understanding of the socio-cultural environment, and detailed, iterative grasp of the conflict dynamics in each place.

With these resources, the NCIC/Interpeace teams were able to confront and question actors constructively, challenge deeply held narratives, but also slip away from a narrow focus on interests and from multiple process conventions, upending the ways that peace 'has always been done'. The use of less orthodox practices, as part of a non-linear and adaptive (rather than pre-designed) process and logic, inspired the parties to make normative shifts over time. This encouraged community decision-makers to discover new relationships with each other, enabling them to reach terms of agreement (when teams suggested an inter-group mediation) and to sustain the agreements afterwards. The process also allowed the communities to define collaborative processes and structures that they then applied in the longer term to establish their agreements and work towards peace.[28]

This section explores some of these core processes and shows how they are both distinctive and valuable.

1. Identity matters

The NCIC's national mandate gave teams the room they needed to operate. In addition, because teams operated under the auspices of an independent high-level national actor that was reputed to have an ethic of care, the communities' mistrust of the State was not triggered, and teams could build relations of trust that gradually reverses the long history of marginalisation. Moreover, because the social composition of the teams mirrored the social composition of the communities, teams did not need to rely on 'gatekeepers' but could work directly with their interlocutors without fear of outside distortion or influence. In parallel, Interpeace's technical know-how enabled the partnership to collaborate and interactions with strategic Track 1 actors who helped to prevent violence; they included senior security officials and others who could open doors, hold space, and facilitate communication with counterparts at appropriate moments.

Those in charge of the NCIC and Interpeace initiative also knew that constructive progress, and positive outcomes depended on the recruitment and retention of team members: the composition and identity mix of teams would influence or determine the programme's ability to enter into clan and community spaces, establish dialogue and trusting relations with key sub-groups (for example, young people) and understand their perspectives, gather reliable information, pick up nuanced changes in social attitudes and the social environment, and constructively resist ethnic politicisation and ethnicisation of violence. The composition of CMCs was similarly decisive: they needed to be legitimate in the eyes of constituent communities and clans. The NCIC and Interpeace did not engineer or impose the mixed identity of these groups. Their composition and commitment to peace action emerged from the longer-term investment that teams made to work in close collaboration with communities, to conduct analysis and link analysis to action. This history enabled elders from warring sides to reach consensual decisions about who should be involved in the CMCs and how they would work.

2. Flexible budgeting promotes effectiveness

Not following the 'script' meant building a process that *followed the parties*.[29] It is here that the benefits of flexible donor support become evident. The programme's principal donor allowed room for a responsive form of mediation. Orthodox logic is linear: donors tend to require peace programmes to order their activities and resources sequentially in a pre-agreed logframe.[30] By contrast, the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) agreed to allow the NCIC and Interpeace to design the programme *step-by-step*, progressively, in response to the evolving situation. This highly strategic attitude showed both foresight and flexibility.

The GFFO's willingness to make long term funding available reliably, and its consistent interest and trust, enabled NCIC/Interpeace teams to sustain the community-led and context-driven option they had chosen (even when its direction seemed unpredictable), and helped them to make sound and consistent choices in the face of uncertainty and flux. This set teams up for success, and shifted the emphasis and attention to where it mattered most: building trust and changing pace 'in mid-stride' to match the pace of conflict parties. These arrangements allowed the teams to make context-responsive and informed decisions every step of the way, and build a process *with*, not despite, the parties, as the parties took decisions about how they wanted to proceed.

Finally, a direct link can be drawn between the GFFO's funding approach in Kenya and the self-sustaining character of the agreements that emerged. Because the GFFO did not demand to see early logframe results, the teams did not need to spend a lot of time on reporting and additional fundraising but focused on achieving the longer-term objectives of the programme. In the end, this delivered massive returns.

3. Gender-responsive, generational, and power analysis, are critical

NCIC and Interpeace are not the first organisations to use PAR or MAVU tools in peace-building or peace-making. Despite the long and synergistic relationship between conflict transformation and action research,[31] their potential *complementarity,* however, remains significantly underexplored, particularly for mediation purposes. These tools were critical for materialising inclusivity[32] principles in the process, and may count among the few times that they have been used intentionally and faithfully used to support mediation in fragile and complex settings. The Kenya cases show what contextualised and creative use of these traditions can deliver.

Specifically, the use of PAR and particularly MAVU supported gender-responsive analysis and threw light on the hidden role of power[33] in both perpetuating conflict and subverting past efforts to resolve it. Women and young people in these particular pastoral communities are not expected to participate in mediation processes or contribute to important public decisions. However, PAR and MAVU created opportunities for women and youth to tell their stories and describe their priorities and male elders, occupying their own gendered social roles, were compelled to listen and take account of them. Intra-group activities also opened non-threatening pathways for male elders to reflect on their roles as decision-makers. They came to understand that (gendered) participation in violence obstructed peace for the community, for whose members' wellbeing they were responsible. Unpacking individual and communal narratives proved vital for change to occur. As a result of the process, male elders lifted broader community needs higher on their negotiation agenda. From a gender and generational perspective, MAVU tools facilitated the programme's intra-group work as well as inter-group agendas and agreements, and may make an essential contribution to longer transformative processes.

This is a powerful practical example of how teams harnessed the *power of process* to foster inclusion[34] in ways that were responsive to gender, power relations, and needs. It is to be noted that the teams did not openly contest or reject patriarchal socio-cultural norms in the communities because this would probably have been perceived as highly intrusive, and might have undermined essential peace outcomes and objectives. Teams understood that male elders are culturally authorised to make decisions and commitments and to steer normative change. For this reason, CMCs were also exclusively composed of male elders. NCIC/Interpeace teams took account of gender and the legitimate authority vested in male elders, recognising the influence of socio-cultural status and relations on transformative outcomes that were not defined by male elders alone.

Ultimately, the teams can return and reflect with communities on the contribution that gender and generational perspectives made to their ceasefire process, and discuss their contribution to other pressing community concerns. More work can be done: the learnings are that the teams made progress because they decided to be non-directive; and that they maintained a principled, not box-ticking attitude to inclusion. Gender is one area where this was the case; the selective inclusion of external actors (discussed above) was another; the approach taken to disarmament (see below) was a third. In all three cases, the underlying thinking was the same: What will foster conditions favourable to a reduction of violence? But in each case, the action taken was different.

4. Make sure process design is socio-culturally informed

Theorising about how 'peace' takes hold cannot be done well in abstract: thinking needs to be informed by the realities of everyday life in specific settings. It is important to understand how communities and societies order themselves socially, and to discern where and how elements of the social order are vulnerable in specific ways to political manipulation, or promote or lead to violence – and equally, how these elements might be *transformed* to support peace. As described earlier, the nature of conflicts (and peace) in pastoral communities is influenced by their semi-nomadic lifestyles. Transhumance influences movement and the form that encounters take; animal husbandry is subject to uncertainties in trade and production, as well as natural and man-made shifty in grazing and access to water. Using the example of disarmament, a key learning is that the teams' socio-cultural under-

standing of pastoralist and nomadic lifestyles in the two areas helped them first to understand the vectors of conflict, then informed their approach to 'mediation' and the steps they took to create conditions for peace.

In the North Rift, for example, the teams' decision to work *with* rather than *against* the social order of the communities contributed to the sudden disappearance of automatic weapons carried by young pastoralists – a measure that elders later imposed, and which contributed significantly to reducing threat perceptions and building mutual confidence. Particularly in the North Rift, guns have become much more than a weapon for war. They provide basic protection against intruders or intrusive authority, while serving symbolic purposes in relation to cultures and livelihood. Teams recognised that, if they made a demand to disarm, it would be resisted (just as the demand to disarm made by the Kenya Defence Forces had been resisted).

When teams debated this question internally, they agreed that initially they should listen to the communities and accept the wish of each community to enforce the agreement through its own structures. The teams joined a long line of outsiders and Kenyan peacebuilders who have grappled with the issue of disarmament.[35] In the end, they left it to the CMCs in the North Rift, to find a solution. One team member recalled that Hassan Ismail was adamant that it was essential *not* to apply pressure. "If they really don't use [the guns] over time," he said, "they will get heavy, the bullet suppliers will no longer be relevant, and [the guns] will rust." NCIC and Interpeace did not insist either that disarmament arrangements should be included in the ceasefire agreement, breaking again from standard peace-making 'scripts' when working with non-State armed actors. The leadership of NCIC and Interpeace also worked with security officials to communicate community thinking and the symbolic nature of weapons for pastoralists, thereby shifting perceptions about the threat environment.

Nobody is so naïve as to believe that small arms have vanished from the context, but their disappearance from view marks an important first step. When teams "worked to disarm minds", they operated on the logic that local mechanisms of social order would be more powerful than any clause imposed in an agreement. A majority of the young people who had used guns to kill or rob did so under the influence of their elders. If the latter changed course, they would too; as one team member said, they would begin to "see that they no longer need to carry guns". This would be an economical and far less violent solution to one of the core threats to stabilisation. Although SALW remain a long-term challenge, the approach taken suggests that mindful and creative approaches to disarmament and related security issues can work, if they are contextualised and socio-culturally aware.

5. 'Track 6' take-away: rethink the exclusion/inclusion binary

The mandate of the NCIC and Interpeace was to put 'peace' on the agenda at all levels. The two partner organisations involved Track 1 actors in the national and county governments in meaningful ways that had not previously been explored. From the start, teams worked to build a rapport with relevant authorities, both to involve and inform them. The evidence suggests that this effort generated a certain *solidarity for peace*, helped to legitimise the programme, and afforded the teams room to manoeuvre. Teams acknowledged the contributions of Chiefs, Assistant County Commissioners, District County Commissioners, and other authorities, though it took time before they supported the programme actively.

Working with actors across 'track' levels aligns with standard approaches to mediation that emphasise complementarity and coordination to shape positive outcomes. The model recommends linking Track 3 interventions to other levels. However, the purpose of making such links is to address more effectively systemic and structural factors that enable conflicts to persist within a system, when operating at only one level will have little effect. Put differently, a mediated peace agreement between Track 3 actors is not likely to endure, much less have wider effects, unless drivers of conflict at other levels are addressed by Track 1 and Track 2 actors.

The learning from the two case studies is that, despite the theoretical promise of 'Track 6', *any* actor at *any* level can take advantage, undermine, or manipulate peace processes for personal gain. Furthermore, as these cases suggest, the standard 'script' is highly exposed to such manipulation by actors in the broader political economy. This is more difficult to see when such actors are 'legitimate' authorities or peace actors themselves. Nevertheless, the teams' experiences confirm the importance of paying meticulous attention to power relations and influence, and to the role of *all* actors in that context. For purposes of Track 6, complementarity and coordination (theoretically desirable) are secondary to the wishes and interests of the primary actors (in this case pastoral communities in Mandera and North Rift) and the objectives of the peace intervention. Binary terms, such as 'exclusion' and 'inclusion', often fall short in complex settings of conflict.

a. Strategic exclusion

The two Kenya studies are a case in point. The ceasefire agreements that the communities signed took virtually no account of 'upstream sources', including sources of conflict that were outside the control of the communities and could *only* be realistically addressed by, or with the assistance of, Track 1 and Track 2 actors. In both cases, the inter-group negotiations focused on parties on concerns and commitments that the communities were in a position to resolve, manage and follow up themselves. Both agreements addressed issues that the communities had power to control. This underscores the benefits of focusing a negotiation on achievable objectives - not biting off more than the parties can chew. The commitments the parties sign up to are then realistic, not only in the sense that they are achievable, but because their achievement does not rely on external actors (for whom they are likely to be less important). It is not unusual for mediators to make this point. In practice, nevertheless, the text of numerous agreements makes outsiders partly responsible for implementation. In many cases, the documents in question are products of what Dr. Sellah referred to as 'hotel mediation'.[36]

By contrast, in the Orwa Accord, parties affirmed a shared belief that "nobody can take away the land". They did not address the influx of small arms, although it is a major influence on the persistence of violence, and focused on arrangements for territorial control in the belief that these could provide the foundation for a mutually agreed ceasefire in the Suguta Valley. They took it upon themselves to secure the interests of their communities, mindfully distancing outside actors who, they were aware, actively instigated chaos and violence. Signatories to the accord therefore had hard decisions to make. They recognised but could not resolve the contentious issue of demarcating the county border; but the agreement they reached could halt hostilities between those living and fighting each other on the front lines.

Finally, processes that began with analysis and culminated much later in inter-party mediation confirmed once more that, under certain conditions, 'bottom-up' Track 3 interventions can significantly disrupt violence-enabling behaviours and norms, and achieve local peace milestones that reduce or marginalise 'upstream' influence. Learning from Mandera's experience, the process NCIC and Interpeace supported in the Suguta Valley took more conscious steps to halt or reverse the usual direction of flow of power and influence in peace mediation. Whereas decision-making authority typically flows downwards (from Track 1 to Track 3), the teams intentionally excluded Track 1 and Track 2 actors from certain stages of the process, sometimes holding them at bay by downplaying the significance of the teams' activities. Teams did involve these actors later on, but only when work with the communities was so far advanced that attempts to undermine it, or change the process, had become politically costly. Indeed, the teams cleverly assisted the communities to reverse the flow of influence and exert pressure 'upward'. Community solidarity became so firm that outside actors had little choice but to get on board or risk being further delegitimised. In a similar manner, the upward influence the ceasefires have generated led regional institutions, such as Kenya's FCDC, to replicate elements of the NCIC/Interpeace model. Influenced by the CMCs and the work of the NCIC and Interpeace, the Ethiopian and Kenyan authorities have also taken up constructive cross-border initiatives to prevent conflict.

Adding to the importance of these inter-track achievements, the agreements may also influence the behaviour of other kinship networks. Intra-clan differences abound in Mandera, for instance, but the Banissa agreement has nevertheless 'spread peace' by putting social pressure on extended networks and leaders with higher authority, whose influence will in part determine whether agreements are sustained. This was understood by the teams, which worked intentionally to animate the change-potential inherent to the social system. When strategic *exclusion* was no longer necessary, they built strategic connections with track-level actors, to support the communities' efforts to sustain peace. The learning is that mediation can be conceptualised and applied for specific purposes within a larger peace process. So far, observers have rather overlooked this issue.[37]

b. Inclusivity to *include* vs. inclusivity to *transform*

The NCIC/Interpeace teams recognised the complexity of the social environment in both Mandera and North Rift, and privileged longer-term change over a short-term agreement. In doing so, they may have generated change and a long-term agreement. Several factors distinguish the Orwa Accord and the Banissa Declaration from past agreements. As described above, some concerned which actors were included, how actors were involved, who contributed what, and when. However, a less visible but vital factor is that the communities, no longer beholden to the hotel mediation model, discussed concerns that went beyond pacification, that addressed social and economic justice alongside armed violence.

The potency of these concerns emerged in the intra-group spaces that teams created to enable clans and communities to discuss their contemporary situation, their historic relations with enemy-others, and their needs and concerns. We have described how the teams used PAR and MAVU to materialise inclusivity.[38] These methods enabled far more people to participate in putting wider grievances and priorities on the agenda. As already seen, the process led key elders (not politicians or other peace actors) to recognise these when they formulated the ceasefire agreements, and also when they implemented them afterwards. The learning is that, when the teams selectively excluded politicians and peace-actors, they did not simply 'give the microphone to local actors', or simply restrict 'meddling' by outsiders: they started to explore the notion of *inclusivity*, which has often been conceptualised in narrow terms.

Depending on how a peace process or negotiation configures the participation of different actors, the notion of inclusion can promote pacifying, or transformative ends. It has often been used (sometimes unwittingly) to generate securitised peace outcomes rather than transformative ones.[39] The NCIC/Interpeace programme shows what can happen when a process prioritises the concerns of actors who are normally secondary. In the two case studies, teams supported communities to name the issues that most concerned them, and they placed social and economic justice concerns alongside the harms caused by armed violence. Had political actors and peacemaking bodies participated, the outcome would almost certainly have been different: social and economic justice issues were consistently less prominent in previous peace processes and agreements.

As discussed above, communities recognised that even well-meaning 'hotel mediations' *include* certain types of decision-makers but *exclude* others, with the result that proxy actors determined what the communities got to say and to ask for. Past ceasefires tended to seek the restoration of general stability, but did relatively little to address why community actors had opted to use violence. They prioritised the silencing of guns but decoupled that objective from the social and economic justice needs and concerns that underpinned inter-community strife. Marginalising or excluding some community elders from those talks, even though they primarily determined whether violence continued or stopped, had also prevented the emergence of *alternative thinking* that might address the reasons why elders and young warriors (so-called spoilers) opted for violence, why their communities chose to support them in doing so, why disarmament was politically so thorny, etc.

In sum, past agreements that prioritised stability and civic order and had not engaged with social or economic justice issues, ultimately sustained the recurrence and reproduction of violence. The NCIC/Interpeace process was premised on a much broader foundation. From the beginning, it possessed and drew upon analysis that linked the use of guns to survival, and impoverishment and socio-economic governance issues to violence in the North Rift.[40] Teams co-designed the process to address both dimensions at once. In their inter- and intra-group discussions, communities deliberated and negotiated an array of needs that they identified without external direction. Elders then reached agreement on the basis of that analysis, making clear what they needed and what they could achieve, to respond to community-driven priorities.

For process design, the learning has to do the teams in both areas did so effectively: focus on *whose concerns count*. This was not a new idea.[41] Nevertheless, these case studies clearly show the importance of examining *all* actors (including peace actors and political actors), analysing their power relations, and then approaching participation and inclusivity based on the wishes and interests of those who are determined to be primarily affected by a mediated agreement.

Practitioners have noted that political will and process design are fundamental to the "success" of peace agreements, and to the adherence to ceasefires of parties involved in intra-state conflicts.[42] Analysts of "track-level" process design have argued that identity-based 'inclusivity' can reproduce conflict by reinforcing marginalisation and exclusion rather than transforming conflict patterns.[43] There are evident general benefits of coordinating across several "tracks", but it is important to recall that the multi-track idea emerged in conflict resolution[44] and conflict transformation[45] paradigms from conceptual modelling rather than a fixed blueprint for action. Overall, the learning is to add a caveat with respect to "Track 6". It can be very useful for assessing a range of actors and their relationships, and linking tracks can catalyse important resources for a peace process. But these benefits retain their value provided that practitioners remain clear about whose concerns count (most), resist decoupling identity difference and political economy conflict sources, and target *transformation* of the conflict (and necessarily the society), rather than *pacification*.

6. Peace responsiveness is crucial

The Mandera Peace Actors Forum (MPAF) is an accessible model for humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors that want to enhance peace responsiveness in fragile contexts while respecting their individual mandates.[46] In Mandera County, MPAF's consensus-based collaboration continues, based on a joint framework for ethical action. In areas such as the North Rift or Marsabit (a county where mediation activities have been underway since 2022), this work is at an earlier stage; actors and organisations have not yet agreed an ethical code. Like conflict sensitivity hubs elsewhere, MPAF is able to promote local peace responsiveness and act as a learning platform on which global, national, and regional institutions can reflect and improve. Its model can help them to deliver the country commitments they have made to introduce just and conflict-sensitive practices in the course of supporting and sustaining peace. The learning is that peace responsiveness is essential in the 'stabilisation' phase that follows ceasefire agreements, when conflict parties start to implement the commitments they made to shift their energies and attention from violence to survival and development.

7. A consistent, contextualised and non-directive approach to peace mediation has specific strengths

Flipping the linear model of mediation enabled conflict parties to collaborate willingly in a new social contract. As noted above, though the teams did not initially set out to 'mediate' (in the classic sense of assisting inter-group negotiation), certain key features of their unique 'approach' emerged clearly. Teams stepped round some standard mediation practices and challenged assumptions about inclusion and the roles of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. With respect to this methodology, it seems clear that discarding even *one* of the programme's four main process components would have changed the outcomes significantly, precisely because each component supported necessary shifts in attitude and behaviour that affected the results. The learning is that, while the NCIC/Interpeace teams opted to avoid a scripted pathway, they had a plan and clear principles.

It is important to say that team members were not trained formally in any style of mediation. Enhancing their skills would complement their experiential knowledge. However, what arguably proved most important was the integrity of the teams' decisions, both in relation to the programme's ethical orientations and criteria, and in relation to their understanding of the social-cultural environments in which they were working. As a result, the direction the teams took to co-design a process in a complex setting was absolutely *not* accidental. Their often painstaking application of principles and values led to practices that placed the parties at the centre, recognised the authority of genuine decision-makers, and fostered trust between all involved. The teams confronted risks and uncertainties, but honoured self-organising by the parties, avoided taking control or giving direction, and learned consistently from the communities in the course of taking the process forward.

In doing so, they also avoided 'people-to-people' peacebuilding activities across lines of antagonism which, according to standard theory, are presumed to promote positive contact, narrow distance, build trust, locate common ground, or catalyse cooperation.

Instead, with the support of PAR and MAVU tools, the teams supported conflict parties to begin making normative shifts within themselves and within their home communities from the start. They did this before they elevated key issues even to the level of *internal* group discussion, and long before initiating any inter-group contact. These choices enabled the communities to recognise themselves and 'others', re-tell their collective stories (illuminating inter-generational and gendered experiences), echoing key hallmarks of transformative and narrative models of mediation and change. These orientations are not common in the realm of 'peace mediation'; observers have noted the striking absence of guidance and competence frameworks overall for building mediator capacity.[47] Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that the standard mediation "script" has continued to influence process design and mediation practice, although a transformative and dialogical paradigm increasingly characterises peace support in general.

The key learning here is that teams made certain strategic choices at the start and used them consistently to guide their approach. When they did facilitate inter-group engagement, they held 'accusation and response' sessions in both ceasefire mediations. This reflected the teams' focus on the quality of the process and its outcomes, and their decision not to *push for* an agreement, but to respond to what the parties needed to *sustain* the *outcomes* of an agreement (rather than its mere achievement). In both cases, they decided to ask parties to air long-standing grievances[48] and engage in a type of truth-telling exercise *within* the peace making process, rather than apart from it. This was an experimental yet restorative step during the inter-group mediation, although it was an extension of previous intra-group activities, one for which parties thus came well-prepared. It proved to be 'just enough justice' for opposing leaders to digest and accept from each other, enabling each side to move to the next steps of the process. These decisions were taken with key leaders from NCIC and Interpeace whose advanced facilitation skills guided such moments. Here once more was a non-accidental blend of elements, drawing from transformative and deliberative forms of dialogue,[49] that formed and built consensus amongst decision-makers.

8. Mediative bricolage has benefits

The two cases provide examples of process design practices that align with a transformative paradigm and have inspired self-sustaining peace outcomes. They contribute to the pluralism of traditional and contemporary mediation practices around the globe and allow us to learn more about what an adaptive approach to mediation looks like in practice. The confluence of ethics and context-informed decision-making underscored by the hallmarks described above might be described as a type of mediative bricolage. This suggests an area for further exploration as part of mediator training and preparation in complex settings.

The four process components reflect elements of process-orientation and micro-skill guidance seen in Transformative Mediation[50] and Narrative Mediation practices[51], neither of which assert that agreements should be the core focus or prioritised outcome of mediation. These two approaches, however, have traditionally been applied to the realm of interpersonal and organisational disputes, decidedly *non*-complex or fragile settings.

The team's approach and process components further illustrate the importance of aligning process with communities' customs and traditions, including consensus-seeking, harmony-oriented circle processes,[52] without romanticising or overlooking key power dynamics inherent to them. There is further coherence with aspects of Abdi & Mason's S.M.A.L.L. framework,[53] borne from Kenyan contexts, which brings together endogenous and outsider traditions in ways that link short, medium, and long-term stages of change. The S.M.A.L.L. model proposes cross-cleavage collaboration, as well as consensus building to support *governance* changes while constricting the "predatory sphere" as a medium-term response. It demonstrates the importance of non-linear thinking, and the value of breaking free from the insider/outsider mediator dichotomy, extoling 'the best of' outsider and insider perspectives and knowledge. Many parallels exist between this model and the two cases in review. However, a key distinction is the importance that NCIC and Interpeace teams placed on the 'predatory sphere' within the *short-term*. The S.M.A.L.L. model and others have made arguments for pursuing agreement (or partial agreements) in the short-term, which teams in these two cases opted not to do.

Abdi & Mason (2019) are among the very few scholars who have provided systematic practical guidance on how to synthesise diverse models and approaches to maximise the effectiveness of interventions in specific conflict settings.[54] Individual practitioner experiences can be highly informative but have not been explored *systematically* either. This leaves a relative gap in our understanding about the benefits (or drawbacks) of pragmatic "bricolage", the practice of merging styles and models to increase effect and adaptivity. The learning here is that a bricolage approach may have great value, *provided that* a contextualised synthesis is undertaken to ensure that the ensemble of elements reflects ethical values,[55] supports nonviolent change, and "leave[s] the residue of imperialism behind".[56] The two case studies provide encouraging evidence that deeper exploration of adaptive mediation practices in such environments would be fruitful, including from a *peace sustaining* perspective.

9. Non-dominant approaches have advantages over forms of mediation that employ dominant power

The approach of NCIC/Interpeace can clearly be distinguished from conventional problem-solving models of mediation. The latter typically emphasise that mediators must demonstrate neutrality and objectivity as they chart a path to settlement, and focus intently on agreements as the primary outcome. Mediators are expected and often do (implicitly or explicitly) apply various forms of power to enable "ripeness" and bring negotiations to term.[57] Mediators who have adopted narrative, transformative, or even social justice traditions would argue that standard models of mediation offer just one of many forms or uses of power to shape process and outcomes.

Teams in the NCIC/Interpeace programme chose carefully when and where it was appropriate to adopt certain tactics or embody certain roles.[58] In both regions, when they changed tack to facilitate inter-group engagement, they adhered to their adaptive principles;[59] conventional practices of facilitation, formulation and manipulation were not part of their repertoire. In sum, they applied a model of *non-dominating power* ('power to' or 'power with' rather than 'power over').[60] When applied to mediation in complex and chronically violent settings,[61] this model enables practitioners to shape processes and navigate obstacles *together* with actors, recognises parties' potential and capacity to co-produce outcomes, and fosters non-dominating norms that change the spirit of post-agreement decision-making and behaviour.

By contrast, coercion, intimidation, and even mediator 'neutrality', can be used to *dominate* (exercise 'power over'). Power is often employed, notably by political actors to persuade or dissuade parties or, in some cases, to destabilise a *settlement-seeking* strategy. The NCIC/Interpeace teams blocked such efforts at every turn. They used non-dominating mediation practices to skilfully divert conflict parties' attempts to 'test' their (clan or ethnic) identities, for example, by provoking *curiosity*. They dealt with 'peace saboteurs' by disparaging the significance of their activities, or using *community-generated knowledge* to counter false claims by political actors. They undermined polarisation and the power of rumour by making information directly available to the parties, and placing MAVU and other PAR-oriented tools at their disposal. They selectively excluded actors who might have undermined community leadership of the process until they believed such actors could be sensibly or safely included.

The outcomes of the work of the NCIC and Interpeace programme in Kenya clearly demonstrate the value of the methods they adopted. The programme created an enabling environment in which conflict parties themselves opted to take calculated risks, and foster normative shifts that were essential to *sustain* a mediated peace *without* significant losses, compromises, or trade-offs. State actor mediators have often used carrots and stick incentives to align parties and settle or sign agreements:[62] these have not usually resolved conflict, however, or generated agreements that are feasible to implement, but rather nourished unending disputes. In place of 'neutrality', or power-based forms of mediation, the two case studies and the approach developed by NCIC and Interpeace offer an alternative model, based on non-dominant power and "credibility leverage",[63] that appears to increase the likelihood of achieving constructive and sustainable outcomes. ■

Endnotes

1 An internal version of this study was drafted in December 2021. This public version of the document has been edited to take account of subsequent research.

2 In the peacebuilding field, initiatives that involve government officials and other high-level decision-makers are often referred to as Track 1. Initiatives that work with influential actors from civil society are referred to as Track 2. Those that engage the local population at community and grassroots level are called Track 3. For more information on tracks, and on the Track 6 approach, see https://www.interpeace.org/our-approach/track-6/.

3 Peace accord data from across Kenya can be found on the PA-X peace agreement database (accessible online: https://www.peaceagreements.org/). https://www.peaceagreements.org/visualizing-peaceWhile it was not within the scope of this study to conduct a comprehensive review or comparative study of negotiated agreements in Kenya or its counties, a cursory review suggests that the content and construct of past agreements differ in specific ways from the Orwa Peace Accord and the Banissa Nine-Point Ceasefire Declaration. In particular, external mediators were central to past agreements, and a distinct process was adopted to frame and write both the Orwa Peace Accord and the Banissa Declaration.

4 See de Coning, C., Gray, S. (2018), 'Adaptive Mediation', Accord, https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/adaptive-mediation; and Paffenholz, T. (2021), 'Perpetual Peacebuilding: A New Paradigm to Move Beyond the Linearity of Liberal Peacebuilding', Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 15 (3): 367–385.

5 Morehouse, R. (2011), 'Beginning Interpretive Inquiry: A Step-by-Step Approach to Research and Evaluation', Routledge.

6 'Abductive inquiry' is a puzzling process that engages with many pieces of information at once, for the purpose of revealing a more comprehensive whole. It can help to draw out key elements from a set of stories, and enable additional data to be introduced later, including comparative reflection on change and mediation processes. For more on interpretivist research, see Schwartz-Shea, P., Yanow, D. (2012), 'Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes', Routledge.

7 Contribution analysis is an evaluation method used to generate a plausible, evidence-based narrative that explains the relationship between an intervention and a change, in situations where many external factors or steps may be causally involved. It seeks rigour but does not aim to *prove* or *measure* the extent to which an intervention contributed to change. It can help to show some of the ways that targeted interventions directly or indirectly accomplish change. The model is more credible and plausible because it also challenges and identifies weaknesses in the story told (see INTRAC, 2017; Mayne 2008).

8 Scholars like Moya (The Philosophy of Action, 2003) have argued that process-tracing is incompatible with interpretivist research. However, process-tracing methods were not used here for *explanatory* purposes. There was no intention to explain outcomes by 'revealing' the causal effects of specific mechanisms. Instead, the learning study's design was influenced by the ability of process-tracing to reveal connections between seemingly separate elements in a process that links multiple actors.

9 Methodology enthusiasts will recognise there is an inherent pragmatist thread, and that it is paradoxical to use an interpretivist inquiry to understand the change phenomena under study while employing elements of contribution analysis and process tracing, the latter of which aims to measure changes before working backwards to identify specific causes for them. In this case, process tracing was not used for explanatory purposes (proving or theorising) but to interpret mediation legibly as a set of activities that catalyse change in peace processes. Provided no attempt is made to ascribe causality, this approach helped to clarify the importance of 'small things' described by conflict actors that shed light on the links between their actions and the changes that were observed over time. This strategy contextualised interpretations of what made change possible, and illuminated the 'black box' relationship (Beach & Pederson, 2013) between independent variables of an intervention and dependent variable of an outcome. As a result, teams and Interpeace could use the learning more easily in their work in Kenya, and elsewhere.

10 On many occasions, NCIC/Interpeace team members provided interpretation in multiple languages to support discussions between the author and study participants, as well as enriching opportunities for abductive inquiry. Multiple rounds of discussion between the author and NCIC/Interpeace teams helped to unpack their experiences, make sense of pieces of the puzzle, and collectively challenge perspectives, assumptions, and memories.

11 Jobbins, M., McDonnell, A. (2021), 'Pastoralism and Conflict: Tools for Prevention and Response in the Sudano-Sahel', Search For Common Ground, https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pastoralism_and_ Conflict_Toolkit_Search_for_Common_Ground_2021.pdf.

12 Details can be found in NCIC and Interpeace (2017), 'Voices of the People: Challenges to Peace in Mandera County', https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-ECA-Kenia-Mandera-County-Note.pdf. See also NCIC and Interpeace (2021), 'Voices of the People: Impediments to Peace and Community Resilience in Kenya's North Rift Region', https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/North-Rift-Regional-Note-Web.pdf.

13 In addition to the Garre and Degodia, clans and sub-clans include the Murulle, Meheran, and smaller 'corner tribe' groups. To learn more, visit the Mandera County Note on Interpeace's website.

14 The distinction between livestock raiding as a cultural practice and as a criminal enterprise became blurred long ago. Raiding also exacerbates climate-related challenges. According to Interpeace, "Scarcity defines the nomadic culture of communities, explaining the common practice of trespassing on the grazing lands of other communities". As more animals are acquired, "overstocking leads to overgrazing which depletes soil nutrients and causes soil erosion". Similarly, "deforestation and land-clearing for development projects play a role, where displaced communities compete with their host communities for grazing land". See Interpeace, North Rift Regional Note.

15 Kenya's 2010 Constitution created a devolved structure of governance. All 47 counties acquired fiscal, legislative and administrative powers to address the development needs of their communities. As a result, county governments acquired larger budgets and more control over those budgets. The reform brought development efforts closer to the people but also increased competition for power at county level.

16 The North Rift may attract new oil exploration, as well as devolved government investments. Interest in these opportunities tends to feed ethnic resentments, hostilities, and perceptions of marginalisation. There is inevitably a link to national politics whenever Members of Parliament (MPs) or other political actors campaign for narrower interests rather than the general good. Successful campaigns benefit clan interests and the MP's standing, but most people tend to lose out and communities are caught in a poisonous crossfire.

17 In early 2023, as this report was being completed, fear and suspicion between Pokot and Turkana communities had taken hold again, after a spike in raids and incidents of violence. Weapons were again being carried openly and movement along the Kapedo-Lomelo corridor was significantly curtailed; members of both communities moved almost exclusively with armed security escorts.

18 de Coning, C., Gray, S. (2018), 'Adaptive Mediation', Accord, https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/adaptive-mediation/.

19 As Matthias Ryffel (2021) observed in 'Talking Feelings when Talking Peace?', peace mediation has only just begun to grapple with such issues. See: http://www.swisspeace.ch/assets/publications/Policy-Briefs/PB42021_Talking-Feelings-when-Talking-Peace.pdf.

20 Further reading on this can be found in Anderlini, S. N. (2007), 'Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters', Lynne Rienner.

21 United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (2022), 'Guidance on the Mediation of Ceasefires', https://peacemaker.un.org/thematic-areas/ceasefires-security-arrangements.

22 Despite the recent deterioration of the security situation, elders from different communities have continued to resist these demands and are working together to address incidents of violence and organize dialogues. However, incitement by political leaders does constitute a significant concern in the North Rift today, mainly targeting groups of youth, who carried out most of the recent attacks and thefts.

23 The PA-X peace agreement database lists examples of Kenyan peace accords: https://www.peaceagreements.org/.

24 Cleven, E., Saul, J. (2021), 'Realizing the promise of dialogue: Transformative dialogue in divided communities', Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Vol. 38, No. 3, Realizing the promise of dialogue: Transformative dialogue in divided communities (wiley.com).

25 MPAF members include NCIC/Interpeace teams, authorities from the national and county governments, and organisations such as PACT and the Danish Demining Group, among others.

26 Early on in both processes, large scale participatory analytical exercises were carried out in Mandera County. See the Mandera County Note and North Rift Note.

27 Koech, F., 'Kenya: Inside the Government's Failed Disarmament in Banditry-Prone North Rift', The Nation, 23 June 2021, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/inside-failed-disarmament-in-banditry-prone-north-rift-3446928 *or* https://allafrica.com/stories/202106230639.html.

28 As Kenyan Peacebuilder Dekha Ibrahim Abdi once observed of her work in Wajir, "We were naïve to think that we were at the end of the road when we had a deal, when we had a group who all agreed and who disseminated the information in the agreement. You also have to find a strategy for any new emerging conflict." See Ibrahim Abdi, D., Mason, J. A. (2019), 'Mediation and governance in fragile contexts: Small steps to

peace', Kumarian Press, p. 12. For additional perspectives on sustainability, see Dziatkowiec, P. (2017), 'The Inside Story: The Impact of Insider Mediators on Modern Peacemaking', HD Centre Publications.

29 Bush, R. A. B., Folger, J. P. (1994), 'The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict through Empowerment and Recognition', Jossey-Bass.

30 Brusset, E., de Coning, C., Hughes, B. (2016), 'Introduction', in Brusset, E., de Coning, C., and Hughes B. (eds.), 'Complexity Thinking for Peacebuilding Practice and Evaluation', Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-16.

31 Allen, S. H., Friedman, V. J. (2021), 'An emerging conversation between action research and conflict transformation', Action Research, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 3-8.

32 The UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) has noted that: "The argument for inclusion in mediation is premised on the understanding that integrating diverse societal perspectives can help to address the root causes of conflict, reflect the needs and experiences of those affected by violence, and generate a sense of ownership in the agreement among local populations. Inclusion can strengthen the legitimacy of a process, transform community relations, reduce external risks and, above all, increase the sustainability of outcomes." UN DPPA (2022), 'Guidance on the Mediation of Ceasefires', p. 30. The Kenya case studies suggest that in many circumstances inclusion should not be unconditional.

33 Gaventa, J. (2006), 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', IDS Bulletin, 37, pp. 23-33.

34 For other practical examples, see Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative and UN Women (2016), 'Making Women Count: Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations'.

35 Ibrahim Abdi, D., Mason, J. A. (2019), 'Mediation and governance in fragile contexts: Small steps to peace', Kumarian Press.

36 See the PA-X peace agreement database for data on peace accords in Kenya: https://www.peaceagreements.org/.

37 Lehti, M. (2019), 'The era of private peacemakers: A new dialogical approach to mediation', Palgrave Macmillan.

38 Paffenholz, T. (2015), 'Inclusivity in Peace Processes', Briefing paper for the UN High-level Review Panel, United Nations University.

39 Analysis elsewhere has shown that certain actors, through inclusion and how they exercised power, have been able to prioritise public order amid the chaos of fighting or war, and stabilise otherwise disordered settings. See van Santen, E. (2021), 'Identity, Resilience and Social Justice: Peacemaking for a Neoliberal Global Order', Peacebuilding, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 344-365. On the basis of a trend she identifies in four case contexts, Van Santen suggests that a politics-crime binary is the ordering logic of peace processes, despite their 'inclusive' label, and that ultimately this suppresses grievances rooted in class and identity that are linked to key conflict dynamics, and tends to stymie social inclusion strategies. Far more than decisions about who sits at the negotiating table, the exclusion or denial of core grievances means that peace processes include some parties, but exclude others and in doing so exclude transformative outcomes. See Pearce, J. (2013), 'Power and the Twenty-first Century Activist: From the Neighborhood to the Square', Development and Change, Vol. 44, No. 3; and van Santen, E., (2021), p. 359.

40 For more on these issues, see Interpeace's North Rift Regional Note, and other Kenyan voices, such as Maloba, E. (2022), 'How Local is Local? A Bottom-up Perspective of Localization from Narok', CDA Associates, https://www.cdacollaborative.org/blog/how-local-is-local-a-bottom-up-perspective-of-localization-from-narok/.

41 Anderlini, S. N. (2007), 'Women building peace: What they do, Why it matters', Lynne Rienner Publishers; see also Paffenholz, T., Ross, N., Dixon, S., Schluchter, A-L., True, J. (2016), 'Making Women Count - Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations', Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and UN Women.

42 Clayton, G. et. al (2019), 'Ceasefires in Intra-State Peace Processes', CSS Analyses in Security Policy. No. 252, https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse252-EN.pdf.

43 van Santen, E. (2021), 'Identity, Resilience and Social Justice: Peacemaking for a Neoliberal Global Order', Peacebuilding, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 344-365.

44 McDonald, J. W., Diamond, L. (1991), 'Multi-Track Diplomacy', Iowa Peace Institute; and McDonald, J. W., Diamond, L. (1996), 'Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace', Kumarian Press.

45 Lederach, J. P. (1997), 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies', USIP Press.

46 More information about *Peace responsiveness* can be found on the Interpeace website.

47 Philips, I. A. (2017), 'The ADR / CR Divide: An Autoethnographic Interrogation of its Impact on the Theory and Practice of Mediation', doctoral thesis, University of Bradford.

48 Readers are encouraged to consider parallels to 'antagonism' in Jay Rothman's A.R.I.A. framework. See Rothman, J. (2012), 'From identity-based conflict to identity-based cooperation', Springer.

49 Readers are invited to explore some of the many purposes and orientations of dialogue through the following works: Bojer, M., Knuth, M., Magner, C. (2006), 'Mapping Dialogue: A Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools and Processes for Social Change', Pioneers of Change Associates; Cleven, E., Baruch Bush, R. A., Saul, J. (2018), 'Living with No: Political Polarization and Transformative Dialogue', Journal of Dispute Resolution; Maddison S. (2015), 'Relational Transformation and Agonistic Dialogue in Divided Societies', Political Studies, Vol. 63, no. 5, pp. 1014-1030.

50 Bush, R.B., Folger, J. (2007), 'Transformative Mediation and Third-Party Intervention: Ten Hallmarks of a Transformative Approach to Practice', Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 263-278.

51 Cobb, S. (1993), 'Empowerment and Mediation: A Narrative Perspective', Negotiation Journal, Vol. 9, No. 3, Harvard Law School; Winslade, J., Monk, G. D. (2008), 'Practicing Narrative Mediation: Loosening the Grip of Conflict'.

52 Bagshaw, D. (2015), 'Mediation in the World Today: Opportunities and Challenges', Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis. Vol. 2, No.1; see also Njoroge Karanja, D. (2020), 'Beyond Mediation: Exploring Indigenous Models, Narratives, and Contextualization', Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

53 Ibrahim Abdi, D., Mason, J. A. (2019), 'Mediation and governance in fragile contexts: Small steps to peace', Kumarian Press.

54 da Rocha, J. P. (2019), 'The Changing Nature of International Mediation', Global Policy Special Issue: New Diplomacy for New Conflicts, Vol. 10, No. 52.

55 While mindfully avoiding transplanting ideas from one context to another, it is worth noting what John Paul Lederach (1995, p. 38) called the 'residue of imperialism' that is unconsciously embedded in many Western mediation and peacebuilding orientations. However ethical, outsider techniques to support change are only useful to the extent that communities' find them useful for their own purposes and ambitions.

56 Lederach, J.P. (1995), 'Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures', Syracuse University Press.

57 Touval, S., Zartman, I. W. (1985), 'International Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Power Politics', Journal of Social Issues, 41(2), pp. 27– 45. See also Zartman, I. W. (2001), 'The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments', The Global Review of Ethnopolitics, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 8-18.

58 Readers who are less familiar with mediation are invited to explore some of the conventional roles and functions of mediators. See, for example, Mitchell, C. (2003), 'Mediation and the Ending of Conflicts', in Darby, J., MacGinty, R. (eds), 'Contemporary peacemaking: Conflict, peace processes, and post-war reconstruction', Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 94-104; and HD Centre (2017), 'The Inside Story: The Impact of Insider Mediators on Modern Peacemaking'.

59 de Coning, C., Gray, S. (2018), 'Adaptive Mediation', Accord, https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/adaptive-mediation/.

60 Pearce, J. V. (2007), 'Violence, power and participation: Building citizenship in contexts of chronic violence', Institute of Development Studies, Working Paper 274.

61 Ordway, J. L. (2015), 'Exercising Non-Dominant Mediative Power: Violence Interruption in the Periphery Communities of Florianópolis, Brazil', doctoral thesis, University of Bradford.

62 Lehti, M. (2019), 'The era of private peacemakers: A new dialogical approach to mediation', Palgrave Macmillan.

63 Reid, L. (2015), 'Finding a peace that lasts: Mediator leverage and the durable resolution of civil wars', Journal of Conflict Resolution, 61 (7), pp. 1401-1431.

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