

# LEARNING FROM ASIAN PRACTICES OF MEDIATION, NEGOTIATION, AND DIALOGUE

---

Identifying Main Themes – Conference Summary

# Values of Peace Processes

- Acknowledgment that peace is the only way forward
  - “*When we stop talking, our guns will start talking*”
  - dialogue is better than violent conflict
- Patience, persistence and commitment in the process
- Cultural and historical sensitivity to the conflict setting
  - Commonalities of cultural systems provide a space for engagement
- Transparency and open communication
- Trust and confidence (willingness to continuously work on these issues)
- Local ownership and inclusivity of the process

# Main Themes

- Humanize the peace process (relational approach)
- Importance of building confidence of negotiating parties and laying foundation for trust to grow between them
  - No preconditions for negotiation, parity between parties based on respect, recognising/anticipating deal breakers
  - Importance of ceasefires and ability to independently monitor ceasefires
- During negotiations, important to recognise and encourage points that can be agreed upon by parties and leave those that cannot as outstanding points
  - Use of exposure visits to learn from other conflicts to address these points
- Peace agreement is just the beginning. The overall objective is to create a partnership between conflicting parties on the road to peace
- CSOs, CBOs and civil society are very important contributors to the process; acknowledge that diverse groups can ***influence*** the process
- Facilitators: technical expertise, ensure trust of parties in their impartiality and independence, professional and objective, optimistic, mindful of their partiality and biases during the process but still able to act objectively
  - redefining insider/outsider (unity in identity)
- External third parties have many different roles to play to support the peace process

# Main Themes

- Violent conflicts are not just a domestic matter; they have an international dimension
  - regional effects, geopolitical interests; form of involvement depends on context
  - Best practice: International Contact Group as an innovative approach
- Need to shift our perception about negotiations from zero-sum (win-lose), compromise-laden to a problem-solving approach
  - It's not about surrender; it's about finding solutions to a common problem
- Importance of continuous learning from the experiences of others (conflict contexts, academic community)
  - Fosters creativity in addressing blocks; provides concrete lessons learned
- Importance of taking a layered approach to peace
- Importance of creating independent institutions to maintain momentum of the peace process (ensuring credibility), help to measure gains, encourage ownership
  - Milestones, Roadmaps, Benchmarks, peace infrastructure

# Challenges

- Hate culture and the need to foster peace culture
- Ensuring inclusivity and local ownership
- Need to address basic human needs as the process goes on
- Quick fixes v. Negotiation fatigue