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