EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

David Lanz, Martin Wählisch, Lars Kirchhoff, Matthias Siegfried

November 2008

swisspeace

European University Viadrina
Center for Peace Mediation
Project Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance

CRISIS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE
Building Bridges for Sustainable Security

INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

ABOUT IFP

The Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) is a consortium led by International Alert and funded by the European Commission. IfP draws together the complementary geographic and thematic expertise of 10 civil society organisations (and their networks) with offices across the EU and in conflict-affected countries. Its aim is to develop and harness international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure that all stakeholders, including EU institutions, can access strong independent analysis in order to facilitate better informed and more evidence-based policy decisions.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of IfP/swisspeace/CPM/CMI and under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union. To learn more, visit **http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.org**.

ABOUT SWISSPEACE

The Swiss Peace Foundation (swisspeace) is a practice-oriented peace research institute in the area of conflict analysis and peacebuilding. swisspeace researches the causes of wars and violent conflicts, develops tools for early recognition of tensions, and formulates conflict mitigation and peacebuilding strategies. swisspeace contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues of peace and security policy through its analyses and reports as well as meetings and conferences. It was founded in 1988 as the Swiss Peace Foundation, with the goal of promoting independent peace research in Switzerland.

The Mediation Support Project (MSP) is a joint venture between swisspeace and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the ETH Zurich. MSP was initiated by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and supports mediators and conflict parties in gaining knowledge and skills for effective peace negotiations. To learn more, visit www.swisspeace.org/mediation.

ABOUT CENTER FOR PEACE MEDIATION

The Center for Peace Mediation, institutionally integrated at the European University Viadrina and cooperating with the Project Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance, combines the theory and practice of international peace mediation. The Center's work is dedicated to an understanding of interest-based peace mediation as a key concept for constructive peace processes and long-term, sustainable solutions. As an academic institution, the Center for Peace Mediation brings together scholars and practitioners from different fields of conflict resolution and, as an impartial mediation support actor, helps to facilitate ongoing peace processes. To learn more, visit http://www.peacemediation.de.

ABOUT CMI

The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) is an independent, non-profit expert organisation. The aim of CMI is to strengthen the capacity and professionalism of international actors in conflict resolution and management, and to mount private diplomacy operations. CMI is the coordinator of the mediation cluster of the Initiative for Peacebuilding. To learn more, visit www.cmi.fi.

EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

David Lanz, Martin Wählisch, Lars Kirchhoff, Matthias Siegfried[1]

1   This paper was written by swisspeace (www.swisspeace.ch) in cooperation with the Center for Peace Mediation (www.peacemediation.de).

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contemporary peace mediation is a crowded and increasingly competitive field currently lacking established accountability mechanisms. The present paper proposes a general framework for evaluating international mediation activities. Its main purpose is to provide a tool for observers, donors and desk officers to achieve better quality control of mediation processes, while also facilitating critical reflection and lessons learnt among mediators.

Peace mediation takes place in extremely complex contexts and its contributions are multi-faceted and difficult to grasp. The first section of the paper discusses a range of dilemmas associated with the evaluation of peace mediation. For example, it is impossible to pin down the quantifiable results of mediation activities, particularly given their vastly differing objectives and scope. Furthermore, evaluation can be problematic insofar as it may restrain the flexibility of mediators and call into question the confidentiality of mediation processes.

Therefore, the evaluation framework proposed in this paper is different from standard evaluation methodologies. It does not assess gaps between what "ought to be" and what "is". Instead, the framework proposes a series of open and non-suggestive evaluation questions that allow for a systematic but flexible assessment of different aspects of peace mediation. These questions differentiate between the power-based, interest-based and transformative focus of mediation, and they are structured according to the evaluation criteria put forward in a recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on evaluating peacebuilding and conflict prevention projects (2008):

- *Relevance.* How did the mediation process relate to the broader conflict context?
- *Effectiveness and impact.* What were the direct and indirect, intended and unintended, positive and negative effects of mediation processes?
- *Sustainability.* To what extent did the benefits of mediation processes continue after their termination?
- *Efficiency.* How did the costs of mediation processes relate to their benefits?
- *Coherence and coordination and linkages.* What were the links between a mediation process and other conflict management activities within a conflict setting?
- *Coverage.* How did a mediation process include (or exclude) the most relevant stakeholders, issues and regions?
- *Consistency with values.* Was the mediation process consistent with the values of mediators and the international community, for example with respect to confidentiality, human rights or the impartiality of mediators?

The paper concludes by emphasising the role of the EU in peace mediation and in promoting the accountability and quality control of mediators. In this regard, the paper formulates a series of recommendations:

- The EU should contribute to refining a framework for evaluating peace mediation within the OECD or other collaborative fora.
- The EU should envisage carrying out a small number of pilot evaluations of past mediation activities based on the framework proposed in this paper.
- The EU should consider convening seminars with a wide variety of mediation actors to discuss challenges and lessons learnt pertaining to the evaluation of mediation activities.

Key words: mediation, evaluation, peacebuilding, peacemaking

INTRODUCTION

Peace mediation has become a prominent activity in the post-Cold War world. A wide range of actors – international and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), eminent individuals, as well as states, large and small – have become involved in preventing conflicts and ending wars through dialogue and negotiations. Today, peace mediation is a crowded field characterised by multiple and varied initiatives resulting in growing competition between different actors. Many mediators make invaluable contributions to the transition of societies from war to peace. However, not all mediation processes succeed and some even make matters worse, for example by contributing to the fragmentation of non-state armed actors. Despite these issues, there are few accountability mechanisms and there is no recognised framework for the systematic evaluation of mediation activities.

This paper proposes a general framework for evaluating mediation in an international context that can be applied to a broad range of processes irrespective of their different tracks. The framework's main purpose is to provide a tool for observers, donors and desk officers to achieve better quality control of mediation processes that they fund and monitor. It may also be used by mediators themselves to facilitate critical reflection and lessons learnt.

As a follow-up to the debate initiated by the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) on the challenges of peace mediation in a European context, this paper aims in particular to contribute to the EU's increasing role in conflict prevention.[2] Indeed, the EU stands to benefit from a framework for evaluating peace mediation in three ways: first, a consistent framework will facilitate decision-making in terms of which mediation processes the EU should support both financially and politically; second, it can serve as a tool for EU desk officers to assess ongoing processes; and finally, when the EU or its Member States are to act as a mediator, the framework may facilitate the design of an effective mediation process.

A word of caution must be raised from the outset. Conflict dynamics and peace processes are extremely complex. The contributions of peace mediation in this context are multi-faceted and cannot be captured by simplistic input-output evaluations. Thus, this paper does *not* make absolute judgments about mediation "success" or "failures" – instead, it provides an instrument for a nuanced assessment of mediation processes. Overall, this paper is a modest first attempt to develop a framework for evaluating peace mediation. As such, it hopes to serve as the basis for continued discussion and debate in terms of improving our understanding of mediation processes, as well as the role that evaluation can play in enhancing them.

The structure of the paper is as follows: the first section provides an overview of existing evaluation methodologies including the dilemmas related to using these methodologies for the evaluation of mediation activities. The objective of this section is to distill relevant evaluation concepts into a practical framework that is suitable for peace mediation. Accordingly, the second section of the paper proposes a set of evaluation questions. As structuring elements of the framework, we use a recent OECD report (2008) on evaluating peacebuilding activities, as well as a typology that differentiates three models of mediation.

The study and practice of peace processes is characterised by a confusion and conflation of terms and it is therefore important to define relevant concepts. "Evaluation" refers to the 'systematic … assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results'.[3] "Peace mediation" as we understand it, is an intervention within an international setting by an intermediary who actively supports the conflict parties in negotiating a mutually beneficial and acceptable agreement.[4] Finally, "peacebuilding" refers to activities in support of 'structures which will tend to consolidate peace' in the aftermath of armed conflict.[5]

---

2   IfP (2008). *International peace mediation*. Analysis and evaluation meeting report. Brussels: IfP.
3   OECD (2002). *Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management*, p.21. Paris: OECD.
4   For further discussion about how to define mediation see: L. Kirchhoff (2008). *Constructive interventions. paradigms, process and practice of international mediation*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, pp.182.
5   Report of the UN Secretary-General (1992). *An Agenda for Peace.* A/47/277 - S/24111. New York.

EXISTING APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

EVALUATION IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND PEACEBUILDING

EVALUATION IN CONFLICT CONTEXTS

The initial development of methodologies and standards of evaluation arose from an increasing awareness on the part of donors and practitioners of the need for greater accountability and scrutiny of development aid activities. After the Cold War, these methodologies became more sophisticated and differentiated. Major donors such as the UN[6] and the EU[7] developed general evaluation frameworks and gradually mainstreamed their application. In the field of development aid, evaluation frameworks were developed and refined through the OECD, in particular its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), starting with the DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance of 1991.

Simultaneously, more and more governments and NGOs started working *in* conflict and post-conflict contexts. The pioneer in terms of evaluation in conflict contexts was the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP), led by the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA). LCPP brought together different development and humanitarian NGOs working in conflict zones, with the aim of better understanding how aid can fuel conflict and developing strategies to mitigate negative effects in order to enable aid to play a positive role in building peace.[8] The result was a comprehensive framework, known as 'Do No Harm', which provided the basis for actors in conflict contexts to analyse their work and identify the conflict and peace potential of their programmes.[9] At the same time, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) developed the 'Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' (PCIA) methodology, which focused on assessing the actual impact of a particular project in a conflict context before, during and after its implementation.[10] Subsequently, there have been many discussions about the operationalisation of PCIA, resulting in several adaptations to the IDRC's initial framework, for example the 'Peace and Conflict Assessment' (PCA) framework.[11]

In essence, both PCIA and PCA follow the linear project cycle methodology used in traditional donor evaluations of development aid projects: the design cycle is followed by implementation and finally an evaluation cycle feeding into the design cycle again. However, criticisms of this linear approach, such as the synthesis report of the Utstein Study,[12] have argued that external interventions in conflict contexts function within an extremely complex environment, which makes it simply impossible to assess the exact impact of one project on broader structural processes.[13] Moreover, PCIA has also been criticised for its top-down, non-participatory approach, and for restricting the independence and creativity of NGOs by imposing standardised planning and evaluation criteria.[14]

6   For the purpose of evaluation, the UN set up the Interagency Working Group on Evaluation (IAWG) in 1984 and its successor, the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).
7   The relevant framework for evaluation of the EU Commission's policy instruments, such as expenditure programmes and legislation is the Communication on Evaluation of 2007. See also: Communication to the EU Commission (2000). *Focus on Results. Strengthening Evaluation of Commission Activities* – SEC(2000)1051. For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/evaluation_en.htm.
8   M. Anderson (2004). Experiences with impact assessment: Can we know what good we do? in A. Austin, M. Fischer and N. Ropers (Eds.). *Transforming ethnopolitical conflict: The Berghof Handbook*, pp.194–206. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
9   M. Anderson (1999). *Do no harm: How aid can support peace – or war*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
10   K. Bush (1998). *A measure of peace: Peace and conflict impact assessment of development projects in conflict zones*. Working Paper No. 1. Ottawa: IDRC.
11   T. Paffenholz and L. Reychler (2007). *Aid for peace: A guide to planning and evaluation for conflict zones*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
12   The Utstein Study is based on a comparative survey of the peacebuilding experience of foreign and development corporation ministries of four countries: Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK. The final report of the Utstein Study is cited below.
13   D. Smith (2004). *Towards a strategic framework for peacebuilding: Getting their act together*. Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. pp.59–60.
14   D. Körppen (2007). Peace and conflict impact assessment (Über die Utopie einer einheitlichen Methode). In Weller, C. (Ed.) *Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung: Aktuelle Forschungsergebnisse*. Duisburg: Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden, Universität Duisburg-Essen.

EVALUATION IN PEACEBUILDING

Partly as a result of these criticisms, and partly in an attempt to capture the specificities of peacebuilding – working *on* conflict – alternative evaluation methodologies have been developed in recent years. Based on the same bottom-up, participatory model as LCPP, CDA initiated the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project, whose final report aims to provide a practical framework for evaluating the effectiveness of peacebuilding projects.[15] At the same time, the OECD-DAC Networks on Development Evaluation and on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation brought together development ministries, peacebuilding practitioners and evaluators with the aim of elaborating a commonly acceptable evaluation framework for peacebuilding projects. After several years of consultations, a draft synthesis report entitled *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* was issued in 2008 for a two-year application period. The report provides concrete steps on how to carry out an evaluation. To this end, it proposes five standard evaluation criteria from development cooperation – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact – as well as four evaluation criteria from humanitarian aid – coherence, coverage, linkages, and consistency with values.[16]

The DAC guidance on evaluating peacebuilding does not specifically look at peace mediation and indeed, to date there is no commonly accepted framework for evaluating peace mediation. However, the OECD-DAC Network on Conflict and Fragility has announced its intention to elaborate guidance 'on international support to political settlements and on the role of mediation and peace negotiations in creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace and state building, including in situations of protracted crisis'.[17] Thus, the present working paper intends to stimulate discussions and to provide a first sketch for such a future framework to evaluate peace mediation.

THE CHALLENGE OF EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

DILEMMAS IN EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

As mediation became more prominent after the end of the Cold War, scholars and practitioners sought to better understand why and when mediation processes are "effective" or "successful".[18] This is an inherently difficult exercise as there is no agreement on what successful mediation is or does. A range of scholars have identified different factors that make a successful mediation outcome i.e. producing a peace agreement, more likely. For example, peace mediation is more likely to lead to an agreement if it occurs in the context of a conflict that is 'ripe for resolution';[19] if the people at the table are recognised as the legitimate spokespersons of their parties; or if the parties are united and their representatives duly authorised and capable of following through on their commitments.[20]

These factors are relevant for evaluating mediation and they will be incorporated in the framework proposed in this paper. However, they are not sufficient, most evidently because the value of mediation goes beyond merely producing a peace agreement: mediation processes may change the way conflict parties interact; they may lay the foundation for future negotiations; they may improve the humanitarian situation on the ground; they may give hope to affected populations and so forth. This goes to show how difficult it is to grasp the effects of mediation. More specifically, there are seven dilemmas, deriving from the characteristics of mediation as well as from the limitations of evaluation, which make it difficult to evaluate mediation activities:

- *Complexity of context.* Mediation depends on the context in which it operates, often characterised by a variety of complex political, economical, social and cultural processes.[21] This calls for context-specific analysis and makes it extremely difficult to devise general "rules" for evaluating mediation.

15 M. Anderson and L. Olson (2003). *Confronting war: Critical lessons for peace practitioners*. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

16 OECD-DAC (2008). *Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities*. Working draft for application period. Paris: OECD.

17 OECD (2008). *10th Meeting of the DAC Fragile States Group and Conflict, Peace and Development Co-Operation*, Joint Room Document 9, Proposed PWD 2009-10, p.4.

18 For a discussion about the differences between mediation *success* and *effectiveness*, see: D. Frei (1975). 'Conditions affecting the effectiveness of International Mediation', Peace Science Society (International) Papers (26), pp.67-84; and D. Henderson (1996). 'Mediation success: An empirical analysis', *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution,* (11), pp.105–47.

19 I. W. Zartman (1985). *Ripe for resolution: Conflict and intervention in Africa.* New York: Oxford University Press.

20 J. Bercovitch and J. Langley (1993). 'The nature of the dispute and the effectiveness of international mediation', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 3*7(4), pp.670-691; J. Bercovitch (1986). 'Successful outcomes: international mediation: A study of the incidence, strategies and conditions of successful outcomes, cooperation and conflict', *Cooperation and Conflict 21*(3), pp.155–168.

21 See: R. Picciotto (2005). 'The value of evaluation standards. A comparative assessment', *Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation,* (3), pp.37–38.

- *Subjectivity of success.* Mediation success is in the eye of the beholder, as it is manifestly linked to intangible factors, such as justice, fairness, or personal satisfaction, which cannot be objectively defined or evaluated. Moreover, mediation success differs depending on *when* the evaluation is conducted.[22]

- *Flexibility inherent in mediation.* Mediators thrive on flexibility. What may work for one mediator in one context does not necessarily work elsewhere. This makes it difficult and even counter-productive to identify best practices and codify norms against which the performance of mediators is evaluated.[23]

- *Multiplicity of mediation styles.* Mediation comprises activities ranging from big-power politics to transformative approaches rooted in cognitive psychology. The multiplicity of mediation activities makes it impossible to define a unitary framework for evaluation.

- *Multiplicity of mediation aims and scope.* Mediation projects have different objectives and scopes: some aim to facilitate a comprehensive peace agreement, others merely to produce a ceasefire agreement, or even more modestly, to strengthen the negotiating capacities of a conflict party. Some processes last several years, while others conclude after a week. Again, a unitary evaluation framework is not suitable in this context.

- *Result-focus of evaluations.* Most evaluations assess quantifiable results of an intervention, whereas the value of mediation is often intangible. Thus, the impact of mediation on the relationship between parties may be more important than whether or not a peace agreement has been achieved.

- *Confidentiality of mediation.* The concessions that conflict parties make at the negotiating table often contradict the hardline positions they may have articulated beforehand. To allow for progress, mediation processes are mostly confidential. Evaluation could be problematic and even counter-productive in this context because it exposes the dynamics and inner workings of the process.

DIFFERENTIATING THREE MODELS OF MEDIATION

These dilemmas do not make it impossible to evaluate mediation. They do, however, oblige evaluators to be very cautious not to make sweeping statements about what mediators ought or ought not to do. What is needed is a flexible and context-specific approach that appraises activities on an individual basis and is aware of the tricky dilemmas that often confront mediators. Another step in dealing with the above-mentioned obstacles is to distinguish different models of mediation and to recognise that the evaluation will differ depending on the mediation model being used. Mediation is not simply an art that stands or falls with the personality of the mediator. To the contrary, there are significant qualitative differences between various models, which operate according to different concepts and emphasise different goals and techniques. In this context, three principal models of mediation can be distinguished:[24]

- *Power-based, deal-brokering mediation.* In this model, mediators bring their power to bear on the parties by threatening punishments and promising rewards ("sticks and carrots") in order to broker a deal. Power-based mediators usually direct the process resolutely and use manipulative tactics to get the parties to reach an agreement.
- *Interest-based, problem-solving mediation.* In this model, the mediator uses a more facilitative style and often promotes the ownership of the process by the parties. Interest-based mediators focus on generating creative options for an agreement that satisfies the underlying interests of all parties as a basis for conflict resolution.
- *Transformative, long-term mediation.* In this model, mediators intervene on different levels with the aim of changing the relationship between the parties, as well as their perceptions of themselves and other parties. According to this logic, conflict resolution is a long-term process, which happens through the empowerment and recognition of a broad variety of actors in conflict societies.

---

22   'Success in conflict resolution is an elusive quest. Often what appears as successful to one person may be seen as unsuccessful by others. What is more, mediation may seem successful at one time, only to be seen as totally unsuccessful months or years later'. J. Bercovitch (2006). 'Mediation success or failure: A search for the elusive criteria', *Cardoso Journal of Conflict Resolution,* (7), pp.301. See also: M. A. Sacks; K. S. Reichert and W. Trexler Proffitt (1999). 'Broadening the evaluation of dispute resolution: Context and relationships over time', *Negotiation Journal, 4*(15), pp.339–345.
23   L. Kirchhoff (2008). Op. cit. p.323.
24   See L. Kirchhoff (2008). Op. cit. Chapter 4.

TOWARDS A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

APPROACHES TO EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

The overview of different peacebuilding evaluation methodologies demonstrates that there are multiple ways of designing an evaluation framework. Likewise, existing research on mediation suggests that mediation processes can be appraised from different perspectives.[25] In this context, several evaluation approaches can be differentiated based on their purpose, scope, criteria, beneficiaries, and time of an evaluation.[26] One approach would propose a linear procedure that focuses on the tangible outcomes of mediation processes. Thus, evaluators would compare the mediator's initial objectives with measurable results of the process in order to identify compatibilities and discrepancies. This approach might also include a comparison of the conflict context before and after peace negotiations and an assessment of the role of the mediation process in the improvement or deterioration of the situation. A second and related approach would investigate the performance of the mediator against a set of norms. These norms would be derived from mediators' honour codes, legal frameworks – for example, international human rights or criminal law – or other principles, such as democratic governance. Thus, external evaluators would assess a process *ex post facto* and, much like human rights groups evaluating the policies of governments, conclude whether mediators complied with a set of universally applicable norms.

DEFINING A NON-LINEAR EVALUATION APPROACH TO MEDIATION

However, these approaches are not suitable for evaluating mediation activities in part because of the critiques of PCIA and similar evaluation methodologies, as previously discussed. The complexity of the environment in which mediation operates simply makes it impossible to identify clear-cut cause-and-effect correlations. It is already very difficult to isolate the impact of the style, strategy and skills of a mediator on a specific negotiation process, let alone determine its impact on a peace process that may go on for years or even decades. Furthermore, the process of mediation is often more important than its measurable outcome and a linear evaluation framework does not sufficiently capture these dynamics. Likewise, a normative evaluation framework is not appropriate. One of the most important assets of mediators is that within their mandates, they enjoy flexibility and leeway - that is, they have the possibility to try out things and to shift strategies when needed. What is effective in one case, may not work in another. Against this background, it appears futile and potentially counter-productive to force mediators into a normative corset – which is not to say that mediation operates in a legal vacuum.[27]

The evaluation framework proposed in this paper does not aim to assess gaps between what "ought to be" and what "is". Instead, this paper proposes different evaluation questions that allow for a systematic, but flexible assessment of mediation projects. The questions relate to different aspects of mediation and are formulated in an open and non-suggestive manner. Thus, this approach recognises both the complexity of peace processes, as well as the need to allow for the flexibility of mediators. In other words, it appreciates that mediation is both an art and a skill. Moreover, whereas a linear or normative evaluation approach seeks to compare between cases (i.e. 'which mediation process is better'), the approach proposed in this paper aims to shift the focus to a more nuanced and individual consideration of 'what each mediation process did best'.[28] In so doing, evaluators may consider accounts from mediators, parties and affected communities in addition to more tangible benchmarks, such as the reduction of armed incidents after the signing of a peace agreement.

25 Instructive: J. C. Munévar (2005). 'A new framework for the evaluation of mediation success', *BSIS Journal of International Studies*, (2), pp.70–93; A. Lempereur (2003). *Identifying some obstacles from intuition to a successful mediation process*, ESSEC Centre de Recherche, Working Papers; L. Susskind and E. Babbitt (2002). 'Overcoming the obstacles to effective mediation of international disputes' in J. Bercovitch (Ed.). *Studies in international mediation*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, p.262; J. Bercovitch and J. W. Lamare (1993). 'The process of international mediation: An analysis of the determinants of successful and unsuccessful outcomes', *Australian Journal of Political Science, 2*(28), pp.290–305; J. Bercovitch and R. Wells (1993). 'Evaluating mediation strategies: A theoretical and empirical analysis', *Peace and Change,* (18), pp.3–25; J. Brett, R. Drieghe and D. Shapiro (1986). 'Mediator style and mediation effectiveness', *Negotiation Journal,* (2), pp.277–86.

26 For the pros and cons of different approaches commonly used in development evaluation, see C. Church and M. Rogers (2006). *Designing for results: Integrating monitoring and evaluation in conflict transformation programs*. Washington DC: Search for Common Ground.

27 On the interplay between mediation and human rights, see C. Bell (2006). *Negotiating justice? Human rights and peace agreements*. Geneva: International Council on Human Rights Policy.

28 T. Pearson d'Estree, L. A. Fast, J. N. Weiss and M. S. Jakobsen (2001). 'Changing the debate about 'success' in conflict resolution efforts', *Negotiation Journal, 2*(17), pp.101–113.

DEFINING A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

STRUCTURING A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

As stated above, the aim here is to propose a general framework, which leaves leeway for evaluators and does justice to the flexibility and specificity of each mediation case. For this purpose, we propose a set of evaluation questions, which may differ in relevance depending on the particular case. To structure the evaluation, we use two existing frameworks: the criteria proposed in the OECD-DAC report on evaluating peacebuilding, as well the above-mentioned mediation typology.

The reason for using the DAC criteria is that they are likely to become the points of reference for evaluation in the conflict prevention field. The aim is to propose a framework that is consistent with the DAC criteria and can thus serve as a basis for discussion, as DAC works to elaborate a specific framework for evaluating peace mediation. Moreover, the DAC criteria are general and provide sufficient leeway to take into account the specifics and dilemmas of peace mediation. As such, DAC distinguishes nine interlinked criteria that shed light on the different aspects of a peacebuilding intervention:[29]

- *Relevance.* How does the intervention respond to the needs of the broader conflict context?
- *Effectiveness.* Has the intervention reached its objectives?
- *Impact.* What are the short- and long-term effects of the intervention?
- *Sustainability.* Do the benefits of the intervention continue after its termination?
- *Efficiency.* How do the costs of an intervention relate to its benefits?
- *Coherence (and co-ordination).* Is the intervention consistent with the larger policy context in which it takes place?
- *Linkages.* Does the intervention link with activities and policies in other peacebuilding sectors?
- *Coverage.* Does the intervention cover a broad range of stakeholders, issues and regions?
- *Consistency with values.* Is the intervention consistent with the norms and values of donors or implementing agencies?

The idea is to adapt these criteria so as to capture the most important themes in peace mediation. For each criterion, we distinguish general questions that are valid regardless of the type of mediation. In addition, we formulate specific questions according to the dominant character of the process in order to differentiate between the power-based, interest-based and transformative focus of mediation. It is important to note that a given mediation activity often does not fit neatly into one particular model and that sometimes a larger mediation process may consist of different models. The idea is not to artificially categorise mediation projects, but to create awareness among evaluators, such as EU desk officers, that mediation processes – and even elements within these processes – differ depending on the objectives and style of mediation, especially pertaining to the resources and power that a mediator may deploy in the process.

---

29   OECD-DAC (2008). Op. cit. pp.39-45. See also OECD (2002). Op. cit. p.21.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PEACE MEDIATION

RELEVANCE

In evaluation vocabulary, the term "relevance" describes the interaction between an intervention and the broader context. Thus, a project or programme is relevant when it is in sync with the broader political and military *context* that determines the dynamics of the conflict, often referred to as "conflict ripeness", as well as the overall *strategy* to manage conflict i.e. through military intervention, sanctions and pressure or peace negotiations.[30] Evaluating peace mediation requires an assessment of the identity and affiliation of the mediator before looking at their mandate and specific interests in getting involved in the process. The evaluation also looks at the mediator's use of conflict analysis, an indispensable tool before and during the process.[31]

RELEVANCE	Evaluation questions
General	- Who mediated (gender, age, experience, institutional affiliation etc.)? Why, how and when did the mediator(s) get involved? - Did the parties request mediation? Did the mediator obtain a mandate? If yes, what was its content? Was the mandate clear? - How did mediation relate to the broader conflict context? Was the conflict "ripe for resolution"? - How did mediation relate to the broader conflict management strategy? Were there more effective alternatives to mediation, e.g. coercive diplomacy or mediation (e.g. coercive diplomacy or arbitration) in the the given context? - Has an up-to-date conflict analysis been carried out? Did conflict analysis influence process design? Has the conflict analysis been revisited during the process?
Power-based	- What were the interests of the mediator in getting involved? Was the mediator sensitive to the broader conflict context? - Did the parties accept the mediation process and the mediators? How did this acceptance evolve during the process?
Interest-based	- Did the parties have a clear understanding of the role and intentions of the mediator? Was the design of the mediation process transparent? - Did the mediator gain a clear understanding of the various parties' interests by means of a conflict analysis?
Transformative	- Was it realistic to achieve mutual recognition of the parties' needs at this particular time and phase of the conflict?

30 See United States Institute of Peace (USIP) (2008). *Managing a mediation process*. Washington, DC: USIP Press. Chapter 3, p.31. Available at www.usip.org/mediation/peacemaker_toolkit.html.
31 See P. Wallensteen (2007). *Understanding conflict resolution*. 2nd Ed. London: Sage. Chapter 3, p.31.

EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

Evaluators use the term "effectiveness" to assess the changes that an intervention has contributed to and whether it has reached its intended objectives. "Impact" is a related concept that looks at different effects of a project or policy. These effects may be direct or indirect, intended or unintended, positive or negative, immediate or long-term. In the context of peace mediation, it makes sense to combine effectiveness and impact, as they both look at the outcome of a mediation process. A mediation process produces different outcomes. It may change the level of violence and affect the humanitarian situation in a country. Mediation also influences the relationship between the parties and may alter the way they interact with each other. The most obvious outcome of mediation is a peace agreement, which may or may not be the starting point for the peaceful transformation of conflict societies. Parties sometimes engage in negotiations for purely tactical reasons and thus the mediation process may have negative effects in terms of covering up military advancements on the ground.

EFFECTIVENESS/ IMPACT	Evaluation questions
General	- What were the direct and indirect effects of the mediation process? Have there been unintended side-effects on the ground? - Has the conflict situation (e.g. sense of security, level of violence, humanitarian situation, conflict dynamics etc.) changed over time? How did the mediation process contribute to this change? - What were the objectives of the mediator? Were they clearly articulated and communicated to the parties? How does the outcome of the mediation process relate to these objectives? - Has an agreement between the parties been reached? How does it relate to the objectives of mediation at the outset? How is the agreement perceived among affected people and local civil society groups? - Has the mediator been co-opted by one or several parties? Did the parties use the façade of negotiations to cover up abuses and military advancements on the ground?
Power-based	- Did the behaviour of the mediator change or diminish the reputation of international actors in conflict societies? Has the parties' view of negotiations and mediation been negatively affected? - Is there a discrepancy between short-term and long-term effects of the mediation process? What happened after the mediators' "sticks and carrots" (sanctions or rewards) disappeared?
Interest-based	- Does the outcome of mediation (e.g. a peace agreement) satisfy the fundamental interests of the conflict parties? - Did the mediation process contribute to building the capacity of parties to participate in negotiations? Did the parties receive training to this end?
Transformative	- Did the relationship between the parties change as a result of mediation? - Did the mediation process empower the parties and enable them to solve their conflicts constructively going forward?

SUSTAINABILITY

"Sustainability" in evaluation refers to the continuation of benefits from an intervention after it has been completed. Often, mediators help produce a peace agreement, the value of which essentially depends on whether it is actually implemented. Consequently, evaluators are advised to scrutinise the implementation mechanisms and incentives that were devised during the mediation process. Sustainability also depends on the "ownership" of the process by the conflict parties, that is, the perception of the parties of being in control of and shaping the process and outcome of negotiations. Also important are strategies to deal with those who benefit from war and resist efforts to make peace i.e. "spoilers". Moreover, the way in which mediation engagements are terminated may influence the prospects for long-term gains. Finally, sustainability also refers to peace mediators' contribution to developing and professionalising their own field through skill-sharing, lessons learnt and documentation.

SUSTAINABILITY	Evaluation questions
General	- Do the parties remain committed to the agreement after the mediation process? Are there mechanisms and guarantees for the implementation of the agreement? What is the role of international actors in implementation? - Did the parties "own" the mediation process? Did the mediator draft and structure the agreement with or without the participation of the parties? - How did mediators address "spoilers" during the process? How did this affect the role of "spoilers" in the implementation phase? - When and why did the mediator withdraw? Was there a hand-over strategy so the gains of the process could be preserved? - Have the mediators made a contribution to developing their profession after the process? Have they documented their activities? Have they shared skills and experiences with other mediators, practitioners or scholars?
Power-based	- Did the mediators, sponsors, or political backers impose unrealistic deadlines that brought the process to a premature end? What were the implications of this in the long run?
Interest-based	- Did the mediation process change the parties' attitudes and their interactions with one another? Have they learned to better understand each other's interests?
Transformative	- In what way have the mediation process and peace agreement been catalysts for the transformation of different stakeholders from armed conflict to peace and from confrontation to dialogue?

EFFICIENCY

"Efficiency" is used to evaluate how economic resources are deployed to achieve a given result. An intervention is efficient when benefits clearly outweigh costs. Cost-benefit calculations are not common in peace mediation – probably because the costs of war are always greater than those of mediation processes. Nonetheless, it makes sense to think about the financial aspects and to assess possible opportunity costs of mediation processes. It is also important to assess the resources that the mediation received, in particular the size and expertise of the mediation team. In this context, it is not necessary to distinguish questions for the different mediation models, although one should keep in mind that power-based mediation is likely to receive more resources than the interest-based and transformative models.

EFFICIENCY	Evaluation questions
General	- How do the costs of a mediation process compare to its benefits in terms of humanitarian gains, change in the relationship between the parties etc.? - Were the resources set aside for the mediation process spent as planned? Were there shortcomings in the budget allocations? If yes, where? - Were the resources given to the mediators sufficient to achieve their objectives? - How did the financial and other benefits of a mediation process (per diem, accommodation, travelling) relate to the parties' willingness to negotiate?

COHERENCE/COORDINATION AND LINKAGES

"Coherence" in evaluation designates the relationship between an intervention and the larger policy context and country strategy. "Linkages" is a related concept that covers connections between projects and programmes on different levels and across sectors. In the context of peace mediation, both criteria pertain to issues of coordination and therefore it makes sense to combine them. Thus, the following questions serve to assess coordination and rapports between peace mediators and other third parties, political actors and other players, such as the International Criminal Court. These issues are crucial, given the increasing competition between third parties in the field. This section also addresses issues of coordination within mediation teams.

COHERENCE/ LINKAGES	Evaluation questions
General	- Were other third parties present before the mediation? Did the mediators share information, coordinate and cooperate with other third parties? Did the process undercut other mediation initiatives? - Did the mediators coordinate with other processes, especially Track II and III initiatives? Were these processes complementary? - Within the mediation team, were the roles clearly attributed? Did technical experts and support actors make a useful contribution? How were disagreements within the mediation team dealt with? - What was the role of donors, sponsors and political backers of a mediation process? Did they work in phase with the mediators? - How did the mediators deal with actors that were interested in peace negotiations, but did not participate in them (e.g. the International Criminal Court, the UN Security Council, neighbouring governments etc.)? - Were links created to other conflict management actors, such as humanitarian organisations or peacekeeping missions?

TABLE CONTINUED

COHERENCE/ LINKAGES	Evaluation questions
Power-based	- How were parallel mediation processes dealt with? Were they simply sidelined or was there an attempt to include them in a coherent strategy?
Interest-based	- Given the individual interests of the parties, did the mediators design a coherent process for resolving conflict?
Transformative	- Have there been multiple processes to address the needs of conflict parties and affected populations? How were these processes connected?

COVERAGE

Evaluating the "coverage" of a peacebuilding intervention assesses the inclusion and exclusion of actors, issues and regions. As such, coverage is highly relevant for peace mediation. Indeed, one of the most important themes in peace processes is the dilemma between a logic of *inclusion* – peacemaking is supposed to herald the democratic transition of a conflict society and should therefore include the broadest number of actors – and a logic of *exclusion* – peacemaking means cutting a deal between the strongest and most powerful parties and therefore excludes more marginal actors. The following section provides questions for a nuanced appraisal of issues related to participation in peace negotiations, with a particular focus on non-military actors, such as civil society, political parties, women[32] and displaced people.[33] Coverage also sheds light on different issues that the negotiations covered and assesses how mediators dealt with the emergence of splinter groups within parties, a common phenomenon in many peace talks.

COVERAGE	Evaluation questions
General	- Who participated in the mediation process? Who was excluded and why? What were the effects of the inclusion or exclusion of different stakeholders on the broader conflict dynamics? - Did mediators include civil society actors? Which groups participated in the negotiations? Was their participation meaningful? - Did women and men participate in the negotiations on equal terms? Were women's groups included? Were the needs of women addressed in the process? - Did representatives of other non-military actors participate (e.g. displaced people, traditional and religious leaders, political parties, leaders of minority groups etc.)? - - Have the relevant regional actors (i.e. neighbouring states and regional powers) been included in the mediation process?

32 C. Reimann (August 2008). *Peace mediation essentials*: Gender and peace mediation. Bern, Switzerland: Mediation Support Project (swisspeace/ETH Zurich). Available at http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/en/peacebuilding-activities/mediation-support/publications/index. html.

33 The Brookings Institution and University of Bern (September 2007). *Addressing internal displacement in peace processes, Peace agreements and peacebuilding*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution/Bern, Switzerland: University of Bern.

TABLE CONTINUED

COVERAGE	Evaluation questions
General	- Have the most relevant issues of the conflict been addressed? What issues were left out? Does the peace agreement tackle the root causes of the conflict? - How did the mediators deal with splinter groups within parties? Were there strict accreditation mechanisms? How were dissenting members of a delegation dealt with? How did the mediators manage dominant leaders?
Power-based	- What was the role of the mediator in including or excluding stakeholders? Why were some actors included and others excluded? - Did the mediators give sufficient attention to non-military actors?
Interest-based	- How have the interests of actors that were not at the negotiation table been dealt with?
Transformative	- Has mediation contributed to realising the peace potential of grassroots actors and civil society? - Do the benefits of mediation reach broad segments of society? Does mediation foster the transformation from war to peace of societies as a whole?

CONSISTENCY WITH VALUES

Although it is not yet a common evaluation criterion, OECD-DAC suggests evaluating whether peacebuilding interventions are consistent with the values of those who implement them. This is undoubtedly pertinent for peace mediation. Peace negotiations are complex processes and they involve compromises, which often expose tricky moral dilemmas. Mediators have to be pragmatic, but there are core principles and values that they defend, such as confidentiality, impartiality, obligations to parties and people, the voluntary character of the mediation process, and the inclusion of marginalised groups.[34] Also, governments and international organisations that act as mediators have obligations in terms of international law, which they are bound to respect. The following questions help to assess the mediators' actions against their above-mentioned principles and values. It also assesses how mediators address issues with a normative dimension, such as human rights and dealing with the past.

CONSISTENCY WITH VALUES	Evaluation questions
General	- What are the values and norms with which the mediators approached the process? What were the mediators' relevant obligations in terms of international law? - How did the mediators address issues with a normative dimension, such as human rights, dealing with the past, rights of displaced people, gender issues, democratic governance etc.?

---

34 For a list of values of peace processes, see Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) (2007). *A guide to mediation*. Geneva: HD, pp. 16–18.

CONSISTENCY WITH VALUES	Evaluation questions
General	- Is the outcome of mediation (e.g. a peace agreement) perceived as "just" by the parties and affected populations? - How did the mediator deal with diverse, possibly mutually exclusive values of the parties? - How did the mediator deal with asymmetries in power, skills and knowledge between the parties?
Power-based	- Did the use of power and manipulation collide with the values of the mediator? - Did the mediators compromise on normative issues in order to facilitate the conclusion of a peace agreement? - Was the mediation process voluntary for the parties?
Interest-based	- Was the mediator perceived as impartial and even-handed by the conflict parties and affected populations? If not, why? - Were the mediators transparent? Were the parties in the "driver's seat" during the negotiations at all times? - Was confidentiality maintained throughout the process?
Transformative	- Were the mediators cognisant of their own norms and values and ways in which they affect the process? - How did the values and norms of conflict parties change throughout and after the mediation process?

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluating peace mediation is not an easy task. Peace negotiations are complex processes, which are affected by a multitude of variables. It is extremely difficult to identify the exact contribution of mediators in such processes. Some mediation processes produce peace agreements, but many do not. This does not, however, necessarily mean that they have not been useful. They may have strengthened the capacity of previously inexperienced negotiators, changed the relationship between the parties, improved the humanitarian situation on the ground, or simply provided hope for people in conflict countries. With standard input-output approaches to evaluation, it is impossible to capture these nuances. There is also a concern that evaluations restrain mediators' flexibility and consume resources without being useful.

The aim of this paper was to mitigate, as far as possible, these concerns and dangers. Thus, it has suggested a comprehensive set of questions that allow for a structured assessment of a particular mediation process, while at the same time leaving sufficient leeway for evaluators to focus on the most important elements of each process. The idea is not to address all of these questions, as the relative importance of issues will vary case by case. Given that the basic structure of the framework follows a recent report by the OECD on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, this report can serve as a point of reference in subsequent discussions within the OECD about evaluating peace mediation.

Our hope is that donors and desk officers will use the proposed evaluation framework to assess whether the projects they monitor and fund have actually made a positive contribution. As the EU expands its role in peace mediation – as a donor, political supporter, or mediator itself – this paper may provide some guidance and highlight different aspects of mediation that the EU should take into consideration. The EU has great potential in pursuing the issue of evaluating peace mediation and would profit from taking into account the following four recommendations:

- Generally, the EU should strengthen quality control and accountability mechanisms of its mediation activities, while not restraining the necessary leeway that mediators require to be effective.

- Given the wealth of mediation experience among Member States, the EU should contribute to refining a framework for evaluating peace mediation, preferably within the OECD or other collaborative fora.

- Moreover, the EU should envisage carrying out a small number of pilot evaluations of past mediation activities based on the framework proposed in this paper. The results and lessons learnt from such evaluations will contribute to refining the existing methodology.

- Finally, the EU would be well-placed to organise follow-up events to discuss the challenges arising from the operationalisation of evaluation methodologies. For this purpose, the EU could convene a series of seminars with other organisations involved in mediation, such as the UN, the African Union, Switzerland, Norway and relevant NGOs.

Obviously, this paper cannot address many of the questions that arise from a consideration of evaluation in peace mediation. Most importantly, it does not provide guidance on *how* to conduct evaluations. There are a range of practical, logistical and ethical considerations in this regard, which have been discussed extensively elsewhere.[35] This paper is primarily conceived as a basis for discussion. Our hope is that it will provoke reactions from mediators, as well as development and peacebuilding evaluators. Their comments will undoubtedly enrich the framework. In the end, we hope this paper will contribute to strengthening peacemaking as an activity and mediation as a profession.

---

35 For a practical manual see, for example: European Commission, Directorate-General for the Budget (July 2004). *Evaluating EU Activities: A practical guide to Commission services*. Luxembourg: EU Publications Office; or for a more compact overview: OECD-DAC (2008). Op. cit. pp.35–40.

INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

THIS INITIATIVE IS FUNDED
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

PARTNERS

adelphi research

nederlands instituut voor internationale betrekkingen
netherlands institute of international relations
clingendael

CRISIS
MANAGEMENT
INITIATIVE
Building Bridges for Sustainable Security

ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ ELIAMEP
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗΣ & ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ
HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN & FOREIGN POLICY
20 XPONIA YEARS

EPLO
European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

FRIDE
FUNDACIÓN
PARA LAS RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES
Y EL DIÁLOGO EXTERIOR

International Alert.

international center for
TRANSITIONAL
JUSTICE

PDCI Partners
for Democratic
Change International

SAFERWORLD