NEGOTIATION TRAINING AS A CONFLICT RESOLUTION INSTRUMENT

During peace talks, success and failure at the negotiation table are largely determined by the negotiation skills of the representatives of conflicting groups or the facilitation skills and expertise of the mediator. Yet in conflict resolution the importance of the stakeholders’ negotiation and mediation capacity in achieving a successful outcome is often underestimated. Enhancing the negotiation skills and knowledge of parties involved in peace processes can greatly increase the chances of success.

The Clingendael Institute sees the need for negotiation training support as part of the larger international conflict resolution toolkit and has therefore, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, taken the initiative to provide negotiation training for:

1. Representatives of groups in conflict
2. Mediators

The goal of the initiative is to strengthen the capabilities of participants in peace and mediation processes. To do so, Clingendael aims:

- To enhance the quality and competences of mediators and representatives of groups in conflict taking part in negotiation processes;
- To contribute to conflict resolution capacities locally and regionally;
- To support peace initiatives of international and regional organisations.

The Clingendael Institute cooperates with international organisations and partner institutions to identify groups in conflict in need and demand of training, thereby increasing the chances for peace and complementing existing efforts. This means that the training courses are:

**Demand driven**
- In order to contribute to conflict resolution where it is most relevant and needed, the courses will be provided to representatives and mediators in need of and willing to receive training as identified by international organisations;

**Flexible**
- Clingendael has the capacity and flexibility to quickly respond to specific training requests from mediators, parties in a conflict and international and regional organisations involved in a peace process;

**Tailor-made**
- The training needs will determine the type and focus of each course, taking into account the different stakeholders, topics under discussion and regional context. The timing, length and location of the training will be determined depending on the needs.
1 TRAINING FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS IN CONFLICT

Large scale, multi-issue, multi-party and politically sensitive negotiations are a highly specialised form of bargaining. In conflict situations many of the parties in negotiations are not experienced in strategic political negotiations, in working from a mandate or in setting clear priorities for the negotiations. Even admitting that the other side is a valid negotiating party is in many cases a step too far. In addition, the skills-set of for example a military leader is not necessarily the same as of a successful negotiator.

The training sessions of Clingendael provide a toolkit to groups in conflict to make conscious choices during the negotiations and to avoid pitfalls of the inexperienced negotiator, all to enlarge the possibility of durable peace.

2 TRAINING FOR MEDIATORS

In addition to providing training to representatives of groups in conflict taking part in negotiation processes, Clingendael strongly believes that it is also important to train actors and individuals mediating these processes. Mediation is a facilitation of a negotiation process. What drives the negotiator, who are the negotiators representing, what are the mandates of the parties at the table, what are the pressures the negotiators are under, what are the group dynamics at the table and what role does the mediator play?

These are just some of the questions that will be addressed in the training sessions of Clingendael for mediators. It is paramount that those who facilitate fully understand negotiation processes and the behaviour of negotiators. In order to strive for a successful outcome of peace processes, training mediators in negotiation skills and processes is of crucial importance.

EXPERTISE CLINGENDAEL ACADEMY

The Clingendael Academy is the training department of the Clingendael Institute and holds a unique position in negotiations training. In 25 years, it has provided over 1,500 negotiation courses in more than 100 countries, with participants from over 150 countries. Participants were diplomats of all levels, military and police officers, government officials, the private sector, NGOs, politicians, mediators and other conflict specialists, etc.

The Academy’s training methodology contributes to its unique character as it offers a mix of process approach, behaviour analysis and emphasis on the political context. The methodology is based on the research of Clingendael’s Processes of International Negotiation (PIN) Programme and tried, tested and adjusted throughout years of practice. Clingendael staff has trained many groups in conflict, e.g. groups from Sudan and South Sudan, Palestinian Territories and Israel, Moldova and Transnistria and most recently different groups involved in the struggle in Syria, including the Syrian National Coalition (SOC) in preparation for the Geneva II peace talks.

Contact
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