BUILDING PEACE FROM WITHIN

"Building Peace from Within: Supporting Insider Mediation for Sustainable Transformation of Conflict" is a two-year project funded by the European Union and implemented by Search for Common Ground (Search), Interpeace, and the Berghof Foundation to support national efforts for peace and stability in Burundi, Zimbabwe and Niger.

A closer look at the success rate of peace agreements reveals that most do not significantly include broader society sections in the decision-making process. The lack of such inclusion affects their sustainability over time.

Thus, in recent years, insider mediation has emerged as a process to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts by involving trusted local personalities, such as civic, social, religious, or political leaders, in national and international peace efforts. This approach relies on the influence, legitimacy, and knowledge of individuals who are an intrinsic part of the conflict context. As such, they are capable of engaging with disputing parties from across social divides beyond international and regional mediation actors’ reach.

By harnessing this vast potential of "insiders," including influential youth and women, our consortium leverages their valuable network and unique understanding of the context to mitigate locally generated conflicts and contribute to high-level mediation efforts.

NIGER

In the regions of Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Diffa, Search focuses primarily on young leaders who are willing and able to play a crucial role in peace and security. The project strengthens their capacities and creates partnerships with national and local peace infrastructures, including the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (HACP), regional councils, civil society organizations, and peace and mediation committees.

Building on existing peace structures, Search builds capacity and fosters collaboration between the various peace committees on security, land and resource management, reintegration of ex-combatants, and peaceful coexistence between host communities and displaced populations. With the support of the HACP, the peace committees then organize workshops to discuss these issues with their communities and define concrete actions to address them.
Our team also trains local mediators to support peace and community stabilization efforts. During this training, participants develop a toolkit for mediation, rumor management, and conflict transformation to effectively address conflict factors such as land and resource management, violent extremism, and migration. Thus equipped, the insider mediators carry out solidarity, mediation, and dialogue activities with communities to engage them in responding to existing conflicts.

**CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES**

In all three countries, the consortium builds on insider mediators’ capacities to create a community of practice across borders. Through reports and online discussions, the mediators identify strategies that work in the different countries and share best practices and experiences.

Besides, the consortium strengthens the inclusion of local mediators in peace processes by allowing them to work with their high-level EU and UN counterparts involved in conflict transformation. Creating a cross-border roster of 12 to 20 mediators from each country, already engaged in political processes, enables the EU and international structures to support their mediation efforts.

A final, two-day workshop will be held, bringing together the consortium partners, insider mediators, EU officials focusing on Niger, Zimbabwe, and Burundi, as well as other key stakeholders to foster cross-fertilisation and learning between the mediators. It will provide an opportunity for the insider mediators to assess the effectiveness of insider mediation mechanisms, present the roster, and connect local peacebuilding efforts to international ones.