

AT A GLANCE

MEDIATION FOR STABILITY

EVIDENCE & LESSONS FROM DERIS WANAAG-SUPPORTED PEACE INITIATIVES

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1. CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Deris Wanaag was a three-year UK and Dutch-funded project (2023–2026) strengthening peace, security, and community resilience across the Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia borderlands.

Inter-communal conflict remains a persistent driver of insecurity across these borderlands. Competition over land, grazing resources and political representation frequently escalates to violence. The proliferation of violent extremist groups and grievances relating to state security responses exacerbate conflict dynamics, disrupting livelihoods, displacing communities, and weakening trust between clans and state authorities.

Recognising the need for locally driven solutions, Deris Wanaag supported mediation and reconciliation initiatives implemented by community partners across conflict-affected border areas. Initiatives focussed on facilitating dialogue between conflicting communities, strengthening cooperation between community and state actors, and building local systems capable of preventing future violence.

Evaluations tested if these interventions contributed towards building stability; findings suggested that inclusive mediation processes can play an important role in reducing tensions and strengthening community resilience in conflict-affected regions.

2. PROJECT REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Mediation activities brought together community members, traditional leaders, women, youth, religious leaders, local authorities, and security actors to engage in structured dialogue processes.

An intersectional approach was taken to participation, with elders, youth leaders, women's representatives, political leaders, religious figures, and persons with disabilities all involved. This inclusive participation helped ensure that mediation processes reflected community priorities and strengthened ownership of reconciliation outcomes.



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IMPACT AT A GLANCE

506

community members engaged in dialogue processes in Mandera North

416

participants involved in cross-border reconciliation activities between Kenya and Ethiopia

180

participants engaged in mediation initiatives addressing clan conflict in Garissa

4

community peace committees established to support local conflict mediation

3. EVIDENCE OF CHANGE



REDUCTION IN INTER-COMMUNITY TENSIONS

Dialogue processes helped reduce tensions between previously conflicting communities by providing safe spaces to discuss grievances and negotiate solutions. In Garissa, mediation efforts resulted in peace declarations between clans and a cessation of hostilities. Communities reported improved relationships and increased willingness to cooperate across clan lines.



RESTORATION OF DAILY ECONOMIC & SOCIAL LIFE

Following mediation processes, communities reported the reopening of markets, restoration of transport routes, and resumption of normal economic activities.

“Widespread peace has been achieved since you came and engaged the very people in conflict. Goods and services are now marketed without hindrance.”

— Youth Leader, Garissa, Kenya

Communities also reported improved mobility and increased interaction between previously divided groups.



STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Deris Wanaag supported the creation and strengthening of community peace committees responsible for monitoring tensions and mediating disputes. These structures provide communities with mechanisms to address conflicts before they escalate into violence.

Cross-border ceasefire monitoring committees also strengthened early warning systems and improved cooperation between cross-border stakeholders.



GREATER INCLUSION IN PEACE RESOLUTION PROCESSES

Dialogue initiatives created opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups to participate in conflict resolution processes.

“We are tired of burying our brothers. Let this be the last time.”

— Participant during cross-border dialogue, Banisa

These contributions broadened discussions and strengthened the legitimacy of mediation outcomes.

4. SO....WHAT WORKS IN MEDIATION?

KEY LESSONS INCLUDED:

1

Locally Led Dialogue

Mediation processes are most effective when communities lead discussions and shape solutions. Local ownership strengthens trust and increases the likelihood that peace agreements will be respected. Nevertheless, peace agreements require continued follow-up by local actors to ensure commitments translate into long-term behavioural and institutional change.

2

Inclusive Participation

Engaging women, youth, religious leaders, and marginalized groups improves the quality of dialogue and ensures that peace agreements reflect community realities - strengthening both the legitimacy and sustainability of mediation outcomes.

3

Engagement with Local Authorities - including across borders

The participation of local administrators, security actors, and political leaders strengthens the credibility of mediation processes and increases the likelihood that agreements will translate into practical actions. Given the transnational nature of many conflicts, peacebuilding initiatives should continue strengthening cooperation between communities and authorities across borders.

4

Community Peace Structures

Establishing peace committees and monitoring mechanisms enables communities to address emerging disputes quickly and prevent escalation.

5

Link Peacebuilding to Livelihood Opportunities

Communities are more likely to sustain peace efforts when they see tangible improvements in livelihoods and economic opportunities.



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**CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION
CULMINATED IN A JOINT SECURITY
FRAMEWORK AND A REPORTED 40%
DECLINE IN CONFLICT INCIDENTS.**

5.CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL STABILITY

Mediation initiatives supported by Deris Wanaag have contributed to broader stability across conflict-affected border regions. By supporting inclusive dialogue, strengthening community peace structures, and facilitating cross-border cooperation, these initiatives have helped establish locally owned mechanisms for mediation and conflict prevention.

Communities involved in dialogue processes reported reduced violence and improved relationships between clans. In several areas, mediation helped restore communication channels between communities and local authorities.

Cross-border dialogue initiatives strengthened cooperation between communities in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, enabling stakeholders to address shared challenges such as resource competition, administrative disputes, and cross-border mobility.

The establishment of ceasefire monitoring committees and peace committees also strengthened early warning systems and community capacity for conflict prevention. These developments have contributed to a shift toward **dialogue-based approaches to conflict resolution and stronger cross-border collaboration.**

