



MWMN
MEDITERRANEAN
WOMEN MEDIATORS
NETWORK

LEADERSHIP IN MEDIATION: VISIBILITY, INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

FRANCESCA STERZI



The year 2020 symbolises a very important moment for gender issues and considerations on the steps made towards gender equality. Amid the tectonic changes the COVID-19 pandemic is igniting all over the world (and whose repercussions are being increasingly recognised as having a clear gendered nature),¹ this year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the ground-breaking UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security* (WPS).² This year is also notable for the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.³ In addition, only ten years are left for the ambitious achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030, the objective set by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 5.⁴ In such symbolically significant year, the

1 For some considerations of the gendered effects of COVID-19 outbreak see, for example: Clare Wenham, Julia Smith and Rosemary Morgan, “COVID-19: The Gendered Impacts of the Outbreak”, in *The Lancet*, Vol. 395, No. 10227 (14 March 2020), p. 846-848, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30526-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30526-2); Alexandra Villareal, “Coronavirus Pandemic Exacerbates Inequalities for Women, UN Warns”, in *The Guardian*, 11 April 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/un-coronavirus-pandemic-gender-inequalities-women>; Martha Henriques, “Why Covid-19 Is Different for Men and Women”, in *BBC Future*, 13 April 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200409-why-covid-19-is-different-for-men-and-women>. See also the report by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission: Zsuzsa Blaskó, Eleni Papadimitriou and Anna Rita Manca, “How Will the COVID-19 Crisis Affect Existing Gender Divides in Europe?”, in *JRC Science for Policy Reports*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2760/37511>.

2 UN Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security*, 31 October 2000, [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)).

3 United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action*, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform>.

4 For more references on SDG 5, see the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) website: *Goal 5*, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>. Notably, in 2019, the progress made towards the goal was summarised as follows: “While some indicators of gender equality are progressing, such as a significant decline in the prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage, the overall numbers continue to be high. Moreover, insufficient progress on structural issues at the root of gender inequality, such as legal



international community is taking stock of the progress and setbacks of the WPS Agenda. Despite the continuous commitment of the Council in re-establishing its consensus on the importance of a full implementation of the Agenda⁵ (as of June 2020, 84 National Action Plans for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 have been elaborated)⁶ and the undisputable advancements in this regard, it is clear that a lot still needs to be done. Challenges in implementing the WPS Agenda are found in different fields and contexts,⁷ but a substantial number of them pertain to the difficulty of recognising, increasing and harnessing women's agency in conflict prevention and peace processes. Although mediation has been recognised as pivotal in sustaining the peaceful settlement of disputes and it has been indicated as a strategic priority by UN Secretary-General António Guterres,⁸

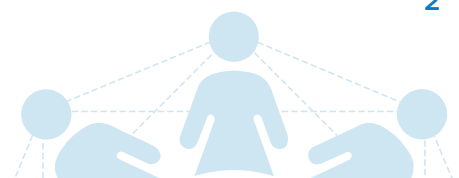
discrimination, unfair social norms and attitudes, decision-making on sexual and reproductive issues and low levels of political participation, are undermining the ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5". UN Secretary-General, *Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals* (E/2019/68), 8 May 2019, p. 11, <https://undocs.org/E/2019/68>.

5 The UN Security Council has adopted 10 resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS): UNSC resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). For more UN documents on the matter, see the Security Council Report website: *UN Documents for Women, Peace and Security*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/women-peace-and-security>. It should be noted here that the binding nature of UNSC resolutions requires the implementation of their provisions by all UN member states, UN system entities and parties to conflict, at the international and national level.

6 Notably, these 84 National Action Plans constitute only 44 per cent of UN member states. Moreover, out of these, "only 28 (33%) include an allocated budget for implementation". See the PeaceWomen website: *Member States*, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/26>.

7 A workshop entitled "Where Are the Women after Resolution 1325" hosted in December 2019 by the chair of UN Studies in Peace and Justice at Leiden University (<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2019/12/where-are-the-women-after-resolution-1325-understanding-women-in-the>) focussing on women as agents of peace across the five key stages of the peace process (conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict resolution and the post-conflict environment) identified six key areas to understand challenges to WPS Agenda implementation: a lack of prioritisation at senior levels in the UN; limitations on the capacity of UN agencies to promote the agenda; deficiencies and imbalances in gender training within national security institutions; the need to develop a gender focus on global initiatives such as the responsibility to protect (R2P) and the protection of civilians; limited vertical implementation between local and international levels; and the need to understand the impediments to the integration of WPS in wider human security issues. See Vanessa Newby, "Impediments to Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", in *The Strategist*, 12 June 2020, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/impediments-to-implementing-the-women-peace-and-security-agenda>.

8 See UN Secretary-General, *Report on UN Activities in Support of Mediation* (A/72/115), 27 June 2017, <https://undocs.org/A/72/115>.



the representation of women in high-level mediation remains significantly low.⁹ Indeed, despite women's large and successful involvement at the grassroots level of mediation, they generally lack adequate and corresponding representation at higher levels of peace-making.¹⁰ Against this background, investing in women mediators' leadership skills becomes necessary to sustain the efforts of networks to provide their members with visibility and career progression.¹¹

With these considerations in mind, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) has partnered with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and Durham University to offer a customised online course on "Leadership in Mediation: Visibility, Influence and Impact". The course, held from 22 to 26 June 2020 with a pre-course phase starting from 18 June, was moderated by Irene Fellin, Head of the MWMN Secretariat, and conducted by **Fleur Heyworth**, Director of the GCSP's executive education, dialogue and policy analysis on Gender and Inclusive Security, and Dr **Catherine Turner**, Associate Professor of International Law at Durham University, UK, and deputy director of the Durham Global Security Institute. Both speakers have a vast expertise in designing trainings on leadership for women and experience in advancing women's participation in mediation processes. Ms. Heyworth, working closely with the Geneva Leadership Alliance, a unique partnership between the Center for Creative Leadership and the GCSP, designs and facilitates courses on gender and leadership for women, and for all leaders to create more inclusive working environments. She is also responsible for the Secretariat of the International Gender Champions (IGC), hosted by GCSP. Dr Turner has published several academic and policy papers on the subject of advancing women in mediation and is the co-editor of the forthcoming volume *Rethinking Peace Mediation* (Bristol University Press). She also has extensive experience as a practitioner and trainer in mediation and good relations in Northern Ireland. The collaboration between Fleur Heyworth and Catherine Turner started in 2017 when they united their efforts to produce the Strategic Security Analysis *Women in Mediation: Connecting the Local and Global*.¹²

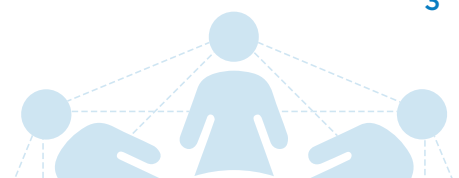
The course aimed at offering participants a learning and growing opportunity as individuals, as well as members of the Network, with the goal of understanding how

9 Catherine Turner, "Time to Celebrate the Unsung Women Heroes of Peace Mediation", in *Peacebuilding Deeply*, 22 August 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/peacebuilding/articles/2017/08/22/time-to-celebrate-the-unsung-women-heroes-of-peace-mediation>.

10 Ibid.

11 The role of networks in advancing women's participation in mediation has recently been recognised once again during a high-level side event on WPS commitment pledging held on 23 April 2019 and co-hosted by Germany, the UK and UN Women. See PeaceWomen, *Preparing for the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325: Pledge of Commitments on Women, Peace and Security*, 23 April 2019, <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/103512>.

12 Catherine Turner, "Women in Mediation: Connecting the Local and the Global", in *GCSP Strategic Security Analysis*, No. 5 (August 2017), <https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/women-mediationconnecting-local-and-global>.



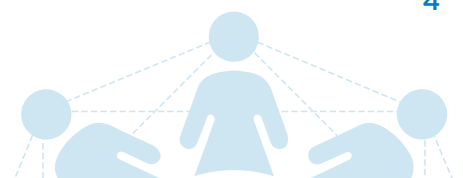
each mediator can contribute to making MWMN even more inclusive and effective. In particular, the course has been designed to support the group to develop a strategic vision for the Network and enhance members' self-awareness of their values, preferences and leadership style, and increase their ability to flex and adapt. Moreover, mediators had the opportunity to understand mediation and leadership as processes and consider their respective roles and contributions within both; as well as to increase understanding of key factors contributing to trust in mediation and leadership. Finally, participants could explore and practice effective communication and influencing skills, including responding to tensions and leading difficult conversations, articulating key messages, and giving and receiving feedback.

The course, which saw the participation of 13 mediators from Algeria, Andorra, Cyprus, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Turkey, was a combination of facilitator-led plenary sessions and group work, for a daily total of about 4 hours. It was held via Zoom and with the assistance of an online Trello board, which provided an interactive platform for mediators to find course materials, post their own contributions, report references and summarise conclusions of plenary sessions and group work. Mediators were assigned readings and audio-visual materials as well as personal and group tasks and were provided with a reflection journal for each session aimed at guiding them through the training journey.

The training has been a truly valuable opportunity for mediators to enhance their leadership skills and strengthen their participation in the Network. Irene Fellin, Fleur Heyworth and Catherine Turner designed it as a discovery and learning journey which, by stimulating mediators' self-awareness and reflection, guided them through a process of leadership and engagement development. During the pre-course phase (18–22 June), participants had the opportunity to access materials aimed at introducing the core topics of the course¹³ and to familiarise themselves with the Trello board. They were also invited to prepare their Social Identity Maps and to determine, through an online assessment tool, their Influence Style Indicator (ISI).

The course took off on Monday, 22 June 2020 (*Our Context and Objectives. Connecting through Our Social Identities*) with mediators reflecting on how to make the course an effective learning experience, including which behaviours would allow them to contribute to it. Among the objectives identified by mediators as benchmarks for defining success at the end of the course, there were: articulating clear goals for the Network

¹³ The following were suggested as pre-course readings: Catherine Turner, "Women in Mediation: Connecting the Local and the Global", cit.; Catherine Turner and Fleur Heyworth, "Advancing Inclusive Mediation Through the Lens of Leadership", in *GCSP Strategic Security Analysis*, No. 4 (March 2019), <https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/advancing-inclusivemediation-through-lens-leadership>; Catherine Turner, "Soft Ways of Doing Hard Things: Women Mediators and the Question of Gender in Mediation", in *Peacebuilding*, 16 October 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2019.1664369>; Fleur Heyworth, "Inspiring Women Leaders", in *GCSP Op-eds*, 18 September 2019, <https://www.gcsp.ch/global-insights/inspiring-women-leaders>; Catherine Turner, *WPS and Women Mediators* (podcast), 28 February 2020, <https://ulster.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=73dc9a21-e10e-4f18-9f48-ab6f00d1640e>.



and understanding the values each mediator can bring to it, while also making it more inclusive by building connections; overcoming frustrations around the barriers that prevent women's participation to mediation; and sharing their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of all the others. During group work, mediators shared and discussed their own Social Identity Maps, which they had previously prepared. Social Identity mapping relies on the identification and differentiation between given, chosen and core aspects of individual personality and life. Starting by acknowledging their mental schemes, and how experiences influence their vision of reality, mediators had the opportunity to introduce themselves, used the maps as a tool to explore similarities and differences and improve their self-awareness and connection. They then brought to the attention of the group an object or image representing the biggest barrier they face in their career as a mediator, such as: gender stereotypes (including viewing security as men's business and confining female mediators' competence within the perimeter of women's issues); access to decision-making circles; and invisibility and being perceived as lacking authority. The discussion was facilitated by an interactive map describing barriers to women mediators in accessing high-level mediation roles, developed by Dr Turner following a research project examining the experiences of women working as peace mediators in Northern Ireland in the period 1994–2004.¹⁴

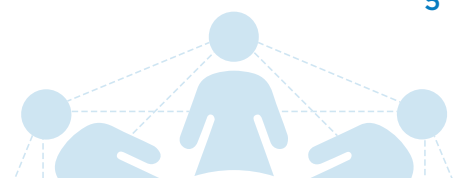
The second day (*Processes and Roles with Mediation and Leadership*) focused on processes and roles within mediation and leadership. The changing nature of conflicts, with the involvement of an increasing number of actors and stakeholders, has required an evolution of mediation processes. If in the past mediation could have been defined as the negotiation between opposing armed factions, it now requires the conciliation of often contrasting, contradictory, composite interests and needs of very diverse state and non-state actors, public and private entities, and social groups. The concept of “multi-track diplomacy” well exemplifies the necessity of operating on multiple levels (from global arenas to local realities) and within multiple scopes now required to effectively prevent and manage contemporary conflicts. As noted by Dr Turner in her publication *Women's Leadership for Peace: Towards a Model of Multi-Track Leadership*:

while women are significantly under-represented in “track one” official mediation, they are better represented in “track two” unofficial processes, and over-represented at grass roots, or “track three,” level mediation. It is clear that women bear the burden of mitigating the effects of violence in their own local communities. Yet even the way we talk about tracks implies hierarchy. The “hard” security approaches of track one are elevated over the “soft” peacebuilding work that happens at the track three level.¹⁵

It is therefore necessary to invest in women's leadership in all tracks, recognising the fundamental role played by mediation processes within the scope of “track three”. Against

14 Catherine Turner, *That's Beyond You: Barriers to Women in Mediation*, Durham Global Security Institute, 2019.

15 Catherine Turner, “Women's Leadership for Peace: Towards a Model of Multi-Track Leadership”, in *IPI Global Observatory*, 18 October 2019, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/?p=19798>.



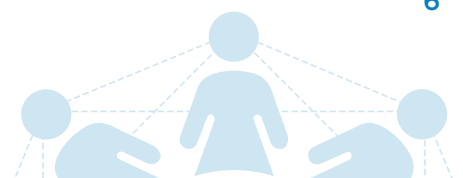
this background, mediators analysed and discussed their positioning and roles within each track, and how they contribute to peace and security with their work. A map was created to provide the immediate visualisation of each participant's position and contribution. During the afternoon session, mediators focussed on the identification of future goals for MWMN starting by articulating what they perceive as being its most significant functions, including support, expertise, connection, advocacy and research. Mediators identified the following as being priority goals for the Network: seek accreditation by international institutions and relevant fora; create communication channels between different tracks of mediation while mainstreaming a gender-sensitive approach; develop a series of research papers on lessons learned/good practices and support individual research initiatives on women and mediation in a comparative perspective; and continue investing in podcast/webinar/blog entry series on the model of the work done by the Cyprus antenna and enrich the newsletter with opportunities for collaboration between national antennas. In general terms, each mediator reflected upon her potential contribution to these collective goals.

On the third day (*Building Trust and Influence*), the group first focussed on which skills and values women bring to mediation. Using Dr Turner's publication "'Soft Ways of Doing Hard Things': Women Mediators and the Question of Leadership in Mediation"¹⁶ as reference, mediators were invited to think about how their values interact with core principles of mediation (consent, impartiality, confidentiality, inclusivity, norms). Each mediator shared with the rest of the group the values she applies in mediation and how these contribute to the effectiveness of her action, as well as the impact that behaving in accordance with those values (being authentic) has. Trainers also asked mediators to think about the way they build trust in their professional relations. During group work, participants identified relevant stakeholders (global, regional, national and local) for their mediation activity and reflected upon the modalities and tools to build a mutually beneficial relation. The second part of the plenary session was dedicated to strengthening mediators' influence capacity by starting from identifying *who* they try to influence to gain visibility, *how* they are doing it, and *what* are the barriers they are encountering. Building upon this, the group went on to analyse and discuss the results of the assessment of each mediator's Influence Style Indicator.¹⁷ The latter aims at determining an individual's preferred style as he or she influences others, identifying the dominant and under-utilised influence styles, as well as others' preferred styles. Participants thus discovered whether their dominant influence style is asserting, inspiring, bridging, negotiating or rationalising,¹⁸ and in which

16 Catherine Turner, "'Soft Ways of Doing Hard Things': Women Mediators and the Question of Gender in Mediation", cit.

17 For a general overview on influencing styles, see Chris Musselwhite and Tammie Plouffe, "What's Your Influencing Style?", in *Harvard Business Review*, 13 January 2012, <https://hbr.org/2012/01/whats-your-influencing-style>.

18 These are described as follows: "Asserting: You advocate by debate, insisting your ideas are heard and challenging the ideas of others; Inspiring: You advocate by presenting a sense of shared purpose and exciting



percentage the other styles are present. The group further discussed the positive and negative aspects of each influence style and how to apply them according to the context.

On day four (*Leading Tensions*), trainers asked mediators to critically think about how their values and behaviours affect their work. In particular, mediators identified which subjects, situations and personality traits tend to act as stress triggers and to challenge the effectiveness of their action. Building upon the contents of a dedicated webinar,¹⁹ trainers shared various techniques to recognise and manage stress triggers in order to strengthen personal resilience. After that, trainers illustrated how the Polarity Map can be an extremely valuable tool to stimulate a different approach in managing differences, contrasts and contradictions within mediation processes.²⁰ The Polarity Map approach aims at moving away from “either/or” thinking to “both/and” thinking by leveraging strategic polarities (such as: paradoxes, wicked problems, chronic tensions, dilemmas, dualities, dichotomies) to reach a greater purpose. By examining the often-contrasting interests and forces involved in mediation processes as examples of persisting polarities and by putting them in relation to those characterising leadership, mediators learned how to apply the Polarity Map to their own activities. Finally, trainers shared some advice on how to provide and receive feedback in an effective, constructive manner.

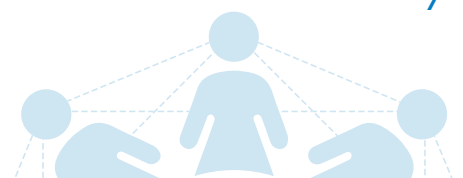
On the last day of the course, after a quick recap of the whole week, mediators provided and received feedback and identified personal commitments to themselves and the group, as well as future collective goals for the Network. Among the latter are: increase the Network’s visibility and outreach capacity; map new stakeholders and create synergies at different levels; strengthen national antennas and build further connections with other members of the Global Alliance. All mediators have also renewed their pledge to those values that they found as being at the core of the MWMN: responsibility, commitment, connection and passion.

All participating mediators have expressed appreciation for the course’s content and structure, noting the good combination between individual, group and plenary sessions, which also allowed them to link their own personal considerations and experiences to theoretical aspects. Although the COVID-19 pandemic forced the organisers to reshape the course in virtual form, mediators found it to be very stimulating and engaging and have particularly appreciated the trainers’ great expertise and commitment to build an open and inclusive learning environment. Preparatory materials and references were deemed

possibilities; Bridging: You advocate by connecting, building relationships and coalitions; Negotiating: You advocate through comparisons, concessions and trade-offs to reach outcomes that satisfy your greater interest; Rationalising: You advocate by offering logic, rational reasons and data”. See Psysoft website: *Influence Style Indicator*, <https://www.psysoft.com/influence-style-indicator>.

19 See GCSP, *Crisis, Recovery & Transformation: Resilience Through Crisis* (webinar), 3 June 2020, <https://www.gcsp.ch/digital-hub/webinar-crisis-recovery-transformation-resilience-through-crisis>.

20 For more references on polarity maps and polarity thinking see the Polarity Partnerships website: <https://www.polaritypartnerships.com>.



very useful and helped the group to immediately dive into the topics. The Trello board proved itself to be a useful reference for the development of the course and provides a platform for members of MWMN to continue interacting. The focus on increasing each mediator's self-awareness, also through social identity mapping, was deemed very valuable. Similarly, the Polarity Map really helped mediators in acquiring a different mindset in relation to the management of differences. All participating mediators said that they would recommend the course to other Network members.

The MWMN Secretariat is committed to continue offering learning and training opportunities to the members of the Network, whose dedication to peace efforts and will to put experience, skills and passion at the service of mediation is constantly confirmed.

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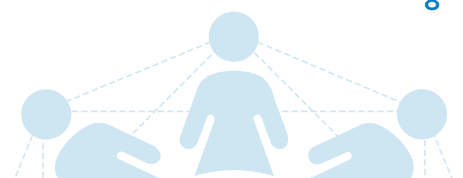
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