Culture and Religion in Mediation (CARIM)

Transforming conflicts with cultural and religious dimensions

A joint initiative of the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich and the Thematic Area of Religion, Politics and Conflicts of the Human Security Division, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Participants, Religion and Mediation Course. Photo: CSS, ETH Zurich

Supporting local peacebuilding in Chad. Photo: CSS, ETH Zurich

The program on "Culture and Religion in Mediation" (CARIM) aims to improve the way conflicts with religious dimensions are dealt with. It supports actors from conflict contexts, peace practitioners and policy makers to ensure that the role of religion in conflict is better understood and addressed.

Conflicts with religious dimensions pose a significant challenge to global peace and security. The number of such conflicts is increasing and they are also among the most difficult conflicts to resolve.

The CARIM program was created to develop and disseminate approaches to mediation that are mindful of the particular challenges that conflicts with religious dimensions pose. It offers new and more effective ways of addressing such conflicts.

Who we are

CARIM is a joint initiative of the Mediation Support Team of the Center for Security Studies ETH Zurich (CSS ETH Zurich) and the Thematic Area of Religion, Politics and Conflicts of the Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Profiles of our staff and their contact details can be found at *mediation-religion.ethz.ch*

Our approach

Our vision is to contribute to conflict transformation processes that lead to mutually acceptable outcomes and co-existence between actors with different worldviews.

Inspired by Linda Woodhead, CARIM understands religion as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that includes the way religion provides orientation to a community, shaping how a community envisages its place and action in political life. Religion may also refer to the ways people live their faiths, the stories they inherit and share, their spiritual experiences, the leaders that guide these communities, and the related institutions and power relations.

We promote a non-judgmental, culture- and gender-sensitive approach to the role of religion in conflict. CARIM understands mediation as a process that brings conflict actors together to reach a mutually acceptable outcome. It requires the consent of the parties, is supported by an impartial third party, and is guided by a shared vision.

What we do

Process Support
We offer direct support to local peace-builders, actors in conflict contexts and international third parties working on conflicts where there is an interplay between religion and politics. We support the design and facilitation of dialogue processes, conflict analysis, and strategy and program development. If you would like to explore how we could support you in your work, please write to us at the address below or contact one of our team members directly.

Research and Policy Outreach
Our outreach events sensitize policymakers and peace practitioners to the role of religion in conflict. Our publications provide practical guidance on addressing the religious and cultural dimensions of conflict. Publications include handbooks, case studies, and conceptual and methodological tools. Our complete list of publications can be found at *mediation-religion.ethz.ch.*

Capacity Building
We offer regular courses on religion and mediation. Our flagship Religion and Mediation Course (RMC) takes place every year in Switzerland. We also offer an annual course for UN staff and tailor-made courses and workshops to other international and local organizations. For more details on the RMC and how to apply see *rmc.ethz.ch.* If you are interested in a course tailored to your organization's specific needs, or would like support in designing your own course, we would be happy to discuss this with you.

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