



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MEDIATION

"Fostering a culture of peace among ethnic and religious groups"

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U.S. 501 (c) (3) tax exempt public charity, nonprofit and non-governmental organization in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

MEDIATION ACADEMY

Specialized Mediation Training The Mediation of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts

Mediation Project

Mediation Case Study (Sample case developed by Wasye' Musyoni, Spring 2017)

Proposed Case Study: A Case of Honor

What Happened? Historical Background to the Conflict

A case of honor is a conflict between two work colleagues. Abdurashid and Nasir work for an international organization operating in one of the regions of Somalia. Both of them are of Somali origin though from different clans.

Abdurashid is the Office Team Leader while Nassir is the Finance Manager in the same office. Nasir had been with the organization for about 15 years and was one of the staff members who originally established the current office. Abdurashid joined the organization recently.

Abdurashid's arrival in the office coincided with some operational changes which included the upgrading of the financial systems. Nasir was unable to work with the new system because he is not good with computers. So Abdurashid made some changes in the office and transferred Nasir to the position of Program Officer, and advertised the job of the Finance Manager. Nasir claimed that the new system was introduced as a way to get rid of him since

Abdulrashid knew he was from a rival clan. Abdulrashid on the other hand claimed that he had nothing to do with the introduction of the new financial system as this was introduced from the organization's head office.

Before the introduction of the new financial system, money to the office was transferred using the Hawala system (an alternative money remittance 'transfer' which exists outside traditional banking system) to the Finance Manager. This made the position very powerful as the rest of the staff had to go through the Finance Manager to get money for their activities.

As is often in Somalia, a person's position in an organization and especially at a leadership level is meant to be an honor to their clan. They are expected to 'fight' for their clan's interests in the allocation of resources and services from their place of work. This means that they have to ensure that their clansmen are contracted as service providers; that most of their organization's resources including relief food go to their clan and they ensure that their clans' men/women are also given employment opportunities in their areas of influence.

Having been changed from a Finance Manager to a program role thus meant that not only did Nasir lose his position of power but this was also viewed as a 'demotion' by his clan as the new position removed him from the office management team. Emboldened by his clan, Nasir refused the new position and also refused to hand over the finance office, while threatening to paralyze the organization's operations in the area.

Both have now been requested by the Regional Human Resource Manager to report to the Regional Office in Nairobi to discuss the matter.

Each Other's Stories – How Each Person Understands the Situation and Why

Abdulrashid's Story - *Nasir and his clan are the problem.*

Position: *Nasir should hand over the keys and documents of the finance office and accept the position of program officer or resign.*

Interests:

Security: The previous manual system which included the Hawala money transfer system put the office at risk. The Finance Manager kept a lot of money both at the office and at his reach. This became more threatening after the area we are based in fell under the control of militia groups who insist that organizations working in the area should pay them ‘taxes’. And who knows of the liquid cash being kept in the office. The new system is good as payments can now be made online and we do not have to keep a lot of cash in the office, helping to minimize the risk of attack by the militias.

Since joining the organization, I asked Nasir to learn the new finance system, but he has been unwilling and therefore unable to operate with the new system.

Organizational Needs: Our organization rolled out the new financial system globally and expects all field offices to use the system with no exception. As the office manager, I am here to ensure that this is followed in our office. I have advertised for a new Finance Manager who can use the new system but I have also offered Nasir a new position as a program officer so he does not lose his job. But he has refused.

Job Security: I left my family in Kenya. My children are in school and my family lives in a rented house. They have only me to depend on. Failure to ensure that our office follows the instructions from the head office would mean that I lose my job. I am not willing to jeopardize my family’s wellbeing because one man refuses to learn and is threatening to paralyze our operations.

Psychological Needs: Nasir’s clan has been threatening me that if he loses his position they will ensure that I too lose my job. My clan has come to my support and there is a danger that if this matter is not sorted out there will be clan conflict and I will be blamed for causing it. I also took this position with the promise that I will ensure that the office transitions to the new financial

system. I cannot go back to my word as this is an issue of honor.

Nasir's Story - *Abdulrashid wants to give my job to his clan's man*

Position: I will not accept the new position being offered to me. It is a demotion. I have been in this organization longer than Abdulrashid. I helped establish the office and I should be excused from using the new system as I cannot learn to use computers in my old age!

Interests:

Psychological Needs: Being the Finance Manager in an international organization and handling a lot of cash has not only made me but also my clan to be respected in this area. People will look down upon me when they hear that I cannot learn the new system, and this will bring dishonor to our clan. People may also say that I was demoted because I was misappropriating the organization's money, and this will bring shame to me, my family, and my clan.

Job Security: My youngest son has just gone for further studies abroad. He depends on me to pay his school needs. I cannot afford to be without a job now. I only have a few years before I retire, and I cannot get another job at my age.

Organizational Needs: I am the one who negotiated with my clan which is dominant here to allow this organization to set up an office here. Abdulrashid should know that if the organization is to continue to operate here they must allow me to continue working as the Finance Manager...using the old system.