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## Master of Societal Conflicts and Interventions (MoSCI)

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The Master of Societal Conflicts and Interventions (MoSCI) programme, which is offered by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, deals with major conflicts between groups where the conflict is of a societal or a destructive or potentially violent nature. The focus is therefore on long-term, deep-rooted conflicts that may be local, regional, national or inter-governmental.

At best, traditional approaches to societal conflict management, e.g. harsher punishment, use of power, isolation and repression, seem to have only short-term effects. At worst, they seem to have an escalating effect on conflicts. As a consequence, institutions, enterprises and organisations face a requirement to act on the basis of reasons and obligations such as human rights, social responsibility, sustainability and mutual acceptance.

Article 33 of the UN Charter urges that *"The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice"*.

The MoSCI programme is based on the desire to revive Article 33 of the UN Charter at the micro level as well as at the macro level as one way of establishing sustainable peace through the building of trust, understanding and creative changes. Actors and stakeholders in this process include governments, political parties, economic actors, traditional leaders and ordinary citizens.

The primary focus of the MoSCI programme is group conflicts, and the programme only deals with interpersonal conflicts if they are related or due to conflicts of the above nature.

*"Results are determined not by superficial ability but by the consistency of the actors in their efforts and by the validity of their ideals. Those who are called to be teachers or leaders may profit from intelligence, but can only justify their position by integrity."*

Dag Hammarskjöld

## Objects and qualifications

Internationally oriented enterprises and organisations as well as public authorities are currently required to act in an increasingly complex world where the boundaries between the national and international as well as the public and private worlds are blurring. In this situation there is a need for well-educated professionals who can handle this complexity, who are able to think holistically and who have interdisciplinary qualifications.

The MoSCI programme is interdisciplinary and its focus is on both theoretical and practical skills. The object of the programme is to enable the participants to acquire the necessary qualifications by integrating existing subject disciplines and methods so as to provide an overall understanding of conflicts, the development of conflicts and the possibility of intervention.

The MoSCI programme qualifies the participants to provide institutions, enterprises and organisations with advice on how to address specific situations of conflict and how to intervene, i.e. by initiating, implementing and evaluating constructive processes of conflict resolution and change.

*The combination of specific, previously acquired core skills and practical professional experience supplemented with a coherent interdisciplinary competence profile from MoSCI will be very attractive to a wide range of employers.*

By connecting the individual level with the societal and international levels the programme aims to provide the participants with an overall understanding of the causes of societal conflicts and the possibilities of intervention. To justify their choices, the participants will be required to constantly consider the ethical aspects of and reflect on possible long-term consequences.

By combining theory, reflection and training, the programme aims to enable the participants:

- **to** understand and analyse on a qualified theoretical basis the societal, economic, political, cultural and psychological causes of conflict at the local, global as well as the intergovernmental and intragovernmental level;
- **to** identify, assess and select the possible forms of intervention that may contribute to solving societal conflicts and to constructive societal change;
- **to** use dialogue, negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills and to assess the relevance in relation to specific conflicts and their nature;
- **to** take into account conditions that are necessary for the implementation of agreements made, etc.;
- **to** offer advice to clients, employees, colleagues, managers, users and organisations on how best to solve societal conflicts;
- **to** plan and intervene in societal conflicts;

- **to** use dialogue and other conflict-management methods as a management tool;
- **to** work scientifically with an empirical issue and to present it orally and in writing;
- **to** define and use evaluation criteria to assess the ethics, usefulness, anchorage and sustainability of intervention in a conflict;
- **to** take action in conflicts and crises based on increasing personal qualifications and insight;

## Design and progression

The MoSCI programme is designed according to a holistic and cyclical understanding of societal conflicts and the causes, development, management and prevention of such conflicts.

The main theoretical subject areas of the programme are social psychology, political science, economy and law with supporting disciplines in the areas of culture, anthropology, history and religion. Furthermore, the programme includes conflict-management competence and practical negotiation and facilitation skills in the form of dialogue and mediation.

*Our vision is to help the participants explore their own visions for a future world where conflicts are managed in a way that shows more respect for human rights and to develop their ability to implement these visions.*

The course progression is based on three themes and a specialisation course corresponding to one module of one semester's duration each.

The interdisciplinary design of the modules reflects the integration of different scientific subject disciplines necessary to achieve the objective of the programme.

Module 1 – **Causes of Societal Conflicts**

Module 2 – **Intervention in Societal Conflicts**

Module 3 – **Implementation and Societal Change**

Module 4 – **Philosophy of Science and**

**Methodology and a Master's Project.** This

module consists of a Philosophy of Science and Methodology submodule, and a 6-week theory-based project course in relation to a field intervention. The Master's Project is subsequently completed on the basis of the project course.

The students must arrange for access to a relevant institution/organisation where they can test theory in practice or they must organise 6 weeks of field work examining a societal conflict in practice and subsequently designing an intervention.

*Communication and negotiation skills and understanding of conflicts combined with knowledge of human rights are essential if enterprises, institutions and organisations are to take action in today's globalised world.*

## Courses and learning

The MoSCI courses are based on two fundamental views: Firstly, that theory and practice are interconnected and mutually beneficial, and that the interaction between theory and practice promotes the learning process of individual students. In addition to comprehensive theoretical studies, the programme therefore includes various practical exercises and training.

Secondly, that all conflicts, including international conflicts, involve individuals and that the way individuals manage conflicts consequently determines how major conflicts evolve. The relation between conflicts at the individual and international level therefore implies that the MoSCI programme deals with an understanding of conflicts specific to major conflicts as well as the

understanding of conflicts at the individual level, including at the individual student level.

Throughout the course of the programme, emphasis will be attached to integrating the subject-matter in the participants' working life. Problem areas from the participants' working life will be included in teaching and training, and theory will be related to the participants' own experience on an ongoing basis. Each participant must therefore be willing to work with the conflicts in which they are professionally and personally involved and to use their own practice and reality in relation to theory, their own development and the rest of the team.

The MoSCI programme combines the newest theory with practical training and reflection individually and in groups.

The MoSCI courses are conducted by highly qualified teachers and researchers from a number of countries. A coordinator will be present during all courses to ensure cohesion and progression between the various programme elements. Teaching methods will alternate between presentations, discussion, reflection, training and feedback. Between sessions, the students will continue working on relevant problems in an electronic learning environment.

### Workload

The Master's programme corresponds to 60 ECTS according to the European Credit Transfer System. It is organised as a 2-year part-time programme with a total of 12 teaching sessions of 5 days' duration each (3 sessions per semester). The sessions start Sunday morning and end Thursday at 4 pm. The sessions will take place in Denmark as residential courses. Between the sessions, the students are expected to continue working on the subjects in an electronic learning environment.

**Target group**

The MoSCI programme is aimed at adults engaged in active employment (senior professionals) who deal with destructive or potentially destructive conflicts in their professional activities.

The students will typically be people who work professionally with conflicts and processes of change at several levels in an internationally oriented environment, e.g. employees and managers in organisations and institutions such as the armed forces, the police, international diplomacy, international businesses with activities in areas characterised by complexity and conflict, national and international relief and development organisations and other CSOs, supranational organisations/institutions, trade-union employees, central government employees or employees in other parts of the public sector involved in international cooperation.

**Dates of courses, etc.**

As far as possible, the dates of the residential courses allow for various religious festivals.

1st Semester, Autumn 2010 – Module I:

- Session I: 12 -16/9
- Session II: 24 - 28/10
- Session III: 5 - 9/12

2nd Semester, Spring 2011 - Module II:

- Session IV: 16/1- 20/1
- Session V: 20/3 - 24/3
- Session VI: 29/5 - 2/6

3rd Semester, Autumn 2011 - Module III:

- Session VII: 4/9-8/9
- Session VIII: 23/10-27/10
- Session IX: 4/12-8/12

4th Semester, Spring 2012 - Module IV:

- Session X: 15/1-19/1

- Project course: 1/2 - 11/3
- Session XI: 15/4 - 19/4
- Submission of Master's project: 1/6
- Session XII: 17/6 - 21/6

**Where (location):**

All residential courses take place in Denmark at the Sankt Helene Conference Centre which is located north of Copenhagen in a scenic area close to the sea.

All students will be put up in single rooms with bath and toilet.

**Fees:**

The programme fee is DKK 140,000 (€ 19,000), excluding expenses for books and travel. A limited number of grants will be offered to students in special need of financial aid. For further information, please contact the MoSCI programme.

**Admission**

No more than 26 students will be admitted for study commencement in September 2010.

To be qualified for admission, applicants must have either an academic bachelor's degree or other professional training equivalent to a bachelor's degree. In addition to their qualifying education, applicants must have minimum 2 years' professional work experience.

Admission to the Master's programme is also contingent on the assessment of an applicant's individual motivation (maximum 2 pages). The assessment attaches importance to the applicant's academic qualifications, the relevance of the applicant's professional work experience and the applicant's writing skills.

As the courses are in English, access to the Master's programme also presupposes

documentation of sufficient English language proficiency.

The student intake aims for as diverse a mix of students as possible in terms of profession, age, sex, religion, ethnicity, education, culture, nationality, etc.

**Closing date:**

Applications for admission to the MoSCI programme must be delivered to the University of Copenhagen, the Faculty of Law, on Monday, 1 March 2010 at the latest.

Considering the application and notifying the applicant may take up to 2 months.

In case not enough qualified participants are found during the first selection round, a new closing date for application will be set for Friday, 14 May 2010.

**Programme management and responsible organisation**

The Master of Societal Conflicts and Interventions (MoSCI) programme is a unique study programme at a high academic and international level. The programme has a steering committee consisting of prominent professionals from four different faculties at the University of Copenhagen and is based at the Faculty of Law.

In addition to the steering committee, the staff of lecturers is made up of highly qualified practitioners and theorists from several disciplines in Denmark and abroad. Vibeke Vindeløv, Professor, Doctor of

Laws, is responsible for the content of the programme.

**Contact**

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## Assumptions and definitions

The programme is based on certain assumptions about conflict, intervention and constructive societal change where conflict is understood as disagreements between persons or groups that lead to tensions among the parties involved. A conflict may thus comprise both a matter of dispute and a relation.

**Conflict is a condition of life.** It is a product of normal human behaviour. Conflicts may bring about opportunities and development, or fear, stagnation and destruction. The way conflicts are managed is decisive in determining whether they become destructive or constructive.

**Conflicts are best resolved by the parties involved,** but they may need assistance. Such assistance may take many forms, from actual mediation over facilitation and facilitated dialogue to implementation of mediating processes in the form of common, meaningful projects.

### Intervention - mediation and dialogue process

Whilst mediation is a third party-assisted way of communication between conflicting parties with a view to getting them to discuss problems and reaching an agreement, the dialogue process is an open-ended way of communication between various stakeholders that may be led by an outside facilitator in order to bridge communities, share perspectives and explore long-term solutions. Dialogue processes can prepare the ground for a more constructive and less time-consuming mediation. At the same time, mediation can be used to establish an environment in which dialogue can proceed at a later stage.

Dialogue processes may be evolved and facilitated by credible international, intergovernmental and regional or local organisations, personalities or non-governmental actors who are able to generate trust and who have the necessary instruments, knowledge and experience in the field. Some successful examples of dialogue have been facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mauritania on the Millennium Development Goals 2004-2005, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in the Nepal Constitutional Process in 2004 and the Danish Police Force in Iraq.

**Constructive social change is seen as** an inclusive term that may presuppose Capacity Building, Corporate Social Responsibility, etc., and it is considered to include initiatives by different sectors of the community to empower the parties involved and helping them build a more sustainable society. The term is based on the assumption that everyone has inviolable worth without distinction of any kind such as race, sex, religion, status, etc., that human rights shall apply equally to everyone, and that the object of social change is to ensure that everyone's basic needs are taken seriously and into account. This presupposes the (further) development of the understanding of mutual relations and interdependence.

**Interdisciplinarity** is considered to be crucial to the study programme in terms of both academic content and the mix of students, as complex conflicts can never be solved by one sector alone and therefore presupposes understanding of and the will to cooperate with other sectors.

**Management** is a condition for the implementation of projects. To have sufficient clout, managers must act in accordance with their own values combined with rational considerations. For the purposes of the programme, management thus includes both management of others and self-management.