

MADHAWA PALIHAPITIYA

Madhawa "Mads" Palihapitiya is a conflict resolution practitioner from Sri Lanka. He is engaged in high-risk mediation and conflict/violence prevention efforts involving the two warring parties of Sri Lanka. He managed a British-funded Conflict Early Warning and Response Program for the volatile Eastern Province of Sri Lanka from 2003 through 2006, preventing numerous documented cases of direct violence. Madhawa is currently the Associate Director at the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. His interest in theater and the arts dates back to his undergraduate thesis, where he researched the contribution made by pro-war literature on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. He holds a Master's degree in Coexistence and Conflict from Brandeis University.

Mads conducted a state-wide needs assessment at the MOPC to identify consensus-based solutions for resolving destructive municipal conflicts in Massachusetts. This study was commissioned in Outside Section 204 of the FY2015 Massachusetts State Budget and involved conducting ten statewide focus groups, a statewide survey, and interviews with municipal officials and key municipal and regional stakeholders to identify results-based needs.

Additionally, with the support of a five-year grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) titled Training of Leaders on Religious and National Coexistence, Mads is assisting the Interfaith Mediation Center in Kaduna, Nigeria and the University of Massachusetts, Boston in establishing a unique Third Generation Citizen-Based Conflict Early Warning System for Northern Nigeria, a region that has seen a spike in religious violence between Muslims and Christians.

Madhawa Palihapitiya began a discussion to collaborate with Sri Lanka's most outstanding female opera musician Gayathri Khemadasaon on an opera piece called "Phoolan Devi."

[Listen to some of "Phoolan Devi" on Vimeo.](#)