Community Peacebuilding for Development

A Training Manual for Capacity Building of Community leaders and Local Government Officials

A Green Scenery Publication

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About Green Scenery

Green Scenery is a humanitarian, development, rights-based organization, without religious, political or governmental affiliation. Community-based programming is the basis of our operations.

Green Scenery was founded in 1989 as a voluntary organization by a small group of teachers at the Government Model Secondary School in Freetown. Its origin was routed in the growing concern of the teachers over the spate of deforestation of the capital and especially the Forest Reserves. This concern transformed into a concrete action when the teachers organized themselves and started targeting school children in secondary schools within their school's proximity on issues of environmental degradation and impact of forest depletion. It was from this humble beginning that Green scenery has been able to carve itself a niche for its current development approach. An approach based on Environmental Education and peacebuilding.

The organization is now a fully registered National Non-governmental Organization.

Our Vision: **An empowered and nationalistic Sierra Leonean people, working towards peace and development, with equitable access to the country's resources, equal access to facilities and opportunities, and upholding respect for human dignity.**

Our Mission: **Green Scenery strives to build capacities for positive attitude and behaviour change towards human rights, peace and development in and across communities in Sierra Leone through a process that empowers people and adds value to their lives by:**
1. Working in collaborative partnership with the relevant stakeholders;
2. Advocating for policy change;
3. Training and community empowerment initiatives;
5. Promoting the rights and interests of disadvantaged people.
Overall Goal
Empowering communities for sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

Organizational Objectives

To promote education and awareness on the country's environment in general and in particular the conservation of the country's biodiversity.

To promote the practice of human rights as it affects the socio-economic, political and developmental life of Sierra Leoneans as a means to access resources, facilities and opportunities.

Green Scenery will ensure that the voice of people are heard in policy discussions, and will itself influence policy in the interests of people at community and national levels on issues that fall within its strategic and program directions, as well as in issues on which Green Scenery and its partners have knowledge and experience.

To facilitate the build-up of the resource capacity of depressed communities and poor people by building and enhancing their knowledge base while equipping them with livelihood skills.

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Getting to know each other

Divide participants into two groups.

- Ask each participant to introduce himself/herself to her group. Consider name, organization, position and conflict issues in the work setting or community; also list two expectations. Members of the group listen actively and restate expectation of previous speaker
- Each person in the group introduces all the other members of the group starting with the facilitator himself and his expectations
- Share experiences of conflict in terms of taste, smell, sound, sight etc
- Record all the expectations on a flip chart and re4view the list after all the participants are introduced and proceed to clarify the programme.

Setting the Rules for Encouraging Constructive Peacebuilding

1. let us speak one at a time
2. raise your hand if you want to speak
3. let us give every one a chance to speak
4. mobile phones can be very irritating
5. do not interrupt others when they want to speak
6. no one is wrong in this training
7. don't pull others down in this training
8. learn to say "I don't understand"
9. whatever we say here is non attributable i.e. treated with confidentiality
10. let us commit ourselves to solving the problem by attacking the issue not the person
11. let us have fun together
12. let us be honest with ourselves
13. let us introduce what is new-fresh spirit
14. let us ask questions

Setting the Tone for Constructive Peacebuilding

We shall proceed with the training by undertaking the following exercises:

Exercise No. 1

1. divide participants into groups
2. give each group a balloon
3. blow up the balloon
4. introduce music and dance
5. let go some madness giving opportunity to groups with instructions to destroy balloons belonging to other groups. Do this with caution and closely monitor group activities

Exercise No. 2

1. Ask one participant to introduce a local song that is familiar.
2. Let participants sing the song awhile dancing around a small square 2m X 2m.
3. Let all participants attempt to enter the square at the same time

What are the lessons learnt from Ex. 1 and 2 above. Allow space for contributions and summarize lessons learnt thus:

- struggle to defend one's dignity
- every individual struggles to protect his/her dignity
- people struggle to win others with determination
- most people try to damage others to win or get what they want
- there needs to be cooperation to win

Reflection and Action Model of Learning

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Understand 2

3. Understand

Reflect 2

Plan 2

4. Plan

2. Reflect

Act 3

Act 2

1. Act
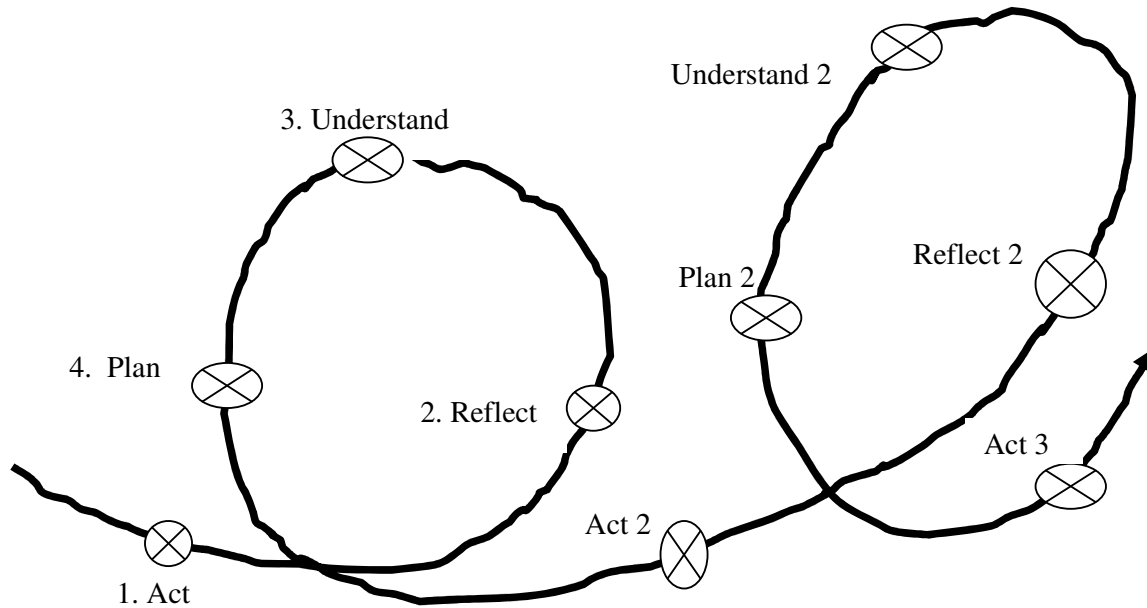
The approach that we use is called experiential learning. The learning process begins with a structured experience that aims at developing skills and awareness. Participants then have an opportunity to reflect on this experience, which helps them to identify their reactions, concerns and questions. A discussion usually follows, consolidating understanding - what could have been done differently, why certain things worked or didn't work, what the implications are for the future. This is a session involving asking questions by participants and reflecting on their situation described as critical consciousness in order to improve upon their condition. This understanding is then translated into a plan of action.

> **"If you feel that your contribution is like a drop in the ocean, be sure that your drop has started waves of change and hope."**
>
> *Celina del Felice*

About the Manual

This is a community based conflict training manual that addresses conflict and peacebuilding processes in communities. It emerges out of Green Scenery's attempt to promote peacebuilding in schools and local communities in Sierra Leone where violence has gripped a large segment of the youthful population particularly school children since the end of the brutal civil conflict in 2002.

Assumption of the Manual:

The rationale for this manual has been developed from the following key assumptions on current thinking and practice for understanding conflict, conflict analysis and response, and peacebuilding;
- Evidence based conflict analysis promotes sound community, school, national and international policies on conflict, peace and development.
- Understanding conflicts generates appropriate intervention strategies to resolve conflicts
- Understanding of approaches to constructive peacebuilding promotes lasting and sustainable peace in communities
- Monitoring of conflicts forms the basis of early warning and increases accurate projection of the future and potential for response planning
- Strategic planning and collective response design and mobilization are catalyzed when actors have substantial understanding of the conflict
- Understanding the processes of resolving conflicts to the satisfaction of parties and promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect for divergent views guarantees a sustainable outcome of the resolved conflict.

The Manual:

This manual provides facilitators with a step by step guide for building capacity for understanding conflict including its causes, conflict analysis and early response. It covers a four-day intensive training workshop. The manual provides detailed information and materials needed to facilitate the training. The structure and materials should be used as a guide and resource for developing capacity in this field. The participants needs and experience as well as the training context will determine how the manual may be adapted and facilitated.

The three day training workshop has been designed to accommodate up to 50 participants. It introduces participants to the theories and practice of conflict, kinds of conflict and levels and responses to conflict. It deals further with early warning and provides participants with opportunities to resolve conflict. Each training workshop has taken into account the nature of the participants and the social and political context in which people operate. The key lessons learned have been distilled into the design presented here.

The Training Workshop

The four-day training workshop has been designed to accommodate up to 50 participants. It introduces participants to the basic concept of the causes of conflicts, culture, principles and values in conflict, response to conflict, gender and conflict. And consequently, approaches to constructive peacebuilding including emotions in dealing with conflicts. Equally so, basic skills in mediation will be acquired leading to better skills and abilities to effectively design and implement early response and mobilization. The workshop has been field tested and run for over five years.

Goal:
The overall goal of the training manual is to build capacity for peacebuilding.

Objectives

By the end of the training participants will be able:
1. To discuss and define the multiple understandings and assumptions of conflict
2. To review current theories of the causes of conflict and consider how they impact the participant's contexts
3. To describe and conduct methods of conflict analysis and using constructive approaches in dealing with conflicts

4. To review frameworks of conflict monitoring and early warning and consider how they apply
5. To frame response planning and mobilization to participants contexts
6. To introduce participants to the methods of resolving conflicts
7. To assist participants understand basic mediation skills

Training Methodology and Approach

The approach used in the design and delivery of this training manual is participatory and experiential. It is based on the principles of adult learning i.e. people learn better when their experiences are valued in the learning process. The activities in this manual use a variety of techniques to involve participants. The facilitator is expected to guide the process of learning and not to become the provider of knowledge. Experiential learning within the group means that people have the opportunity to share knowledge and problems with others bearing on their inner experiences and work together to find solutions.

At the conclusion of the training exercise participants should ask, "What next?" The success of the experience will certainly be measured by how that question is answered and how the life of each participant has been affected by the experience.

The Facilitators

The manual has been designed to be delivered by one or two facilitators. It has its philosophical basis in participatory adult learning. The basic principle is that the learner is central to the learning process. The meaning they give their experience is what matters not what the facilitator says about the experience of the programme participants. Here, the facilitator is to help participants get as much as possible out of the interaction and make sure that the key concepts and ideas are communicated and understood by everyone. Facilitators are trained to adapt the programme and activities in response to needs and ideas generated during the workshop. Attempts are made to address gender issues both within the training context and the facilitation team. As much as possible the local community should be involved during the various stages of the training programme for obvious reasons.

This training is offering you to undertake on a journey of self discovery, and this programme requires you to create a diary or logbook for yourself. It is dedicated to you. It allows some time as we travel for reflection and moments for you to spend a short quiet time to record your thoughts, discovery and encounters in your logbook.

This training focuses on the individual and therefore, it may spark personal issues, which you may not want to share with others. You are free to record in your journal throughout the training, provided of course that we don't need all hands on deck. As we progress in our journey, many fluctuations in our environment are bound to occur. We may notice bright days, dark and foggy or a turbulent moment.

Use your diary or logbook to remind yourself of the tools you learnt, the thoughts you had or the realization that occurred to you as well as the commitments you have made. Keep the diary as a reminder of this journey and where possible use it as an album to traverse memory lane with friends.

General Training Materials:

Flip charts, newsprint or very large sheets of paper. Flip chart stands, marker pens, tape to stick paper to walls, and multi media projector. You may also need materials specific to the activity e.g. props for role play and local materials and pictures.

- *Peacebuilding is a process not an event:* It can be gradual or rapid depending on the nature of the conflict and the personalities. All these must be considered as goals and expectations are set.
- *Understanding the root causes of conflict is key to any intervention:* Beginning with an in depth assessment of all conflict situations is the strategy. It leads protagonists to look beyond their problems and see a future. Envisioning is the strategy that Green Scenery initiates as first entry in any conflict situation. We attempt to draw a link between causal factors and the dynamic processes of conflict. Also emphasized is the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of conflict and argue for a comprehensive appreciation of any conflict before proffering a response.
- *Reconciliation is at the heart of peacebuilding:* Peacebuilding is about repairing broken relationships. It includes empowering victims to work for the healing of their trauma, increasing the awareness of the perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions and facilitating communication amongst parties that will restore both their human dignity and relationships.
- *Inclusiveness in response by involving all actors and stakeholders:* There are many different actors, not only within the environment but outside. There are also instruments and systems that affect the peace of a relationship, community and society. Bringing all actors on board and planning the whole picture in mind is critical.
- *Keeping the process simple:* Conflicts already lead to confusion and a sense of bewilderment. When parties are helped to respond gradually in a less complicated fashion, it removes the fear that conflicts especially intractable conflicts are insurmountable.
- *Mutual respect and Accountability:* Respect for the dignity of any and every person irrespective of sexual, religious, or cultural orientation is the bedrock of human relationships. Peacebuilding is about demonstrating reverence and appreciation for our common humanity and living with our differences. Accountability refers to our programme beneficiaries of intervention which are the located in communities, and the nation.
- *Local ownership of peacebuilding processes:* Those who are directly or indirectly involved in a conflict situation are critical to peacebuilding efforts. Third party must ensure that they are empowered to make decisions and not making decisions for them. Our strategy in Green Scenery is to locate, empower, support and accompany local actors as they respond to conflicts in their communities.

VALUES INHERENT IN CONSTRUCTIVE PEACE BUILDING

Our training methodology is informed by a philosophy, which embraces five distinct but inter-related values. Experience has shown that to make statements about these values and expect them to be universally accepted, cognizance must to be taken of the particular challenges associated with each value statement and the fact that we come together with our own unique personal "conflict history".

We hope that, despite the challenges, participants will, through the training process, come to a point of wanting to embrace these values for themselves, if they do not already do so.

CONFLICT CAN HAVE POSITIVE VALUE
1.1 The Value

We believe that conflict can have positive value. If handled appropriately, It can often spark new growth, development and positive change in individual lives, inter-personal relations and broader contexts. Conflict itself is not necessarily negative or positive it is the manner with which it is dealt that can escalate or de-escalate the conflict, and impact negatively or positively on the parties involved and those around them.

The conflict itself contains the elements or sources of its resolution.
This means that we have to be willing and prepared to approach, engage and "grapple" with conflict in confident, constructive and creative ways to "mine the gold" in it.

It is only doing this that we can get to grips with the cause of the problem, and in so doing; find the starting points for possible solution. Even if two parties continue to disagree, dealing with the conflict in a respectful way, can

lead to greater understanding of the other's point of view, reduce tension and hostility, and keep the doors open for joint problem-solving in the future.

1. 2 the Challenges
The word "conflict" has negative associations for may people and is often equated with violence, aggression and other forms of abuse. Violent manifestations of conflict in homes, schools, communities, societies and international arenas, as well as in the news and entertainment media, are a daily reality for many people. Disrespect for others is played out in variety of ways ranging from abusive verbal and non-verbal communication behind front doors to the more visible manifestations at broader societal levels.
Sierra Leone has not without reason been referred to as one of the most violent places in the world. Our disregard for the rule of law is also adding oil to fire.

This presents peace educators with particularly difficult challenges and we need to be sensitive to these. We cannot just glibly say: "conflict is a good thing", or push for personal empowerment without taking cognizance of broader disempowering and impacting factors in people's past and present.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT IS POSITIVE
2.1.   The Value
When conflict is approached and worked through in a cooperative, peaceful, respectful and non-violent way – when needs and interests are aired, feelings acknowledged, and issues are put on the table – the stage is set for the conflicting parties to look for "realistic" or workable solutions and to move away afterwards feeling "intact" and "alright" about themselves, encouraged by the process and committed to making agreements work.

There is far more chance of effecting "win-win" results, i.e. coming up with solutions or deciding on steps where both parties emerge as winners, than of affecting "win-lose" or "lose-lose" result which involve a winner and loser, or two losers.

2.2   The Challenges
This value poses another challenge because so often in society today, aggressive behaviour is linked with positive self esteem, acceptable peer group norms and "tough guy" stereotyping. The entertainment media plays a key role in enhancing this connection. The peaceful way is seen as weak, "wishy-washy" and a kind of sell out. Many people don't know how to talk things through and stay rooted in fixed and familiar patterns. Peace educators have to find ways of getting across the idea that the peaceful ways is more challenging and skilled than the way of aggression and violence. Shouting abuse, bullying someone in the playground or picking up a knife doesn't require much skill or intelligence. We need to promote and encourage the acceptance of social norms that value the peaceful expression of needs, concerns and problems, and openly challenge those that do not.

VOLUNTARY RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT IS POSITIVE
3.1   The Value
Closely allied with the previous value is one advocating voluntary resolution of conflict. There is more likelihood of conflicting parties having a sense of ownership of their problem and its solution, and of wanting to affect a result that works, if they have chosen to resolve it themselves. This is an expression of personal power in a really positive sense.
Being in control of our own conflict resolution processes is particularly important, as people often feel powerless in the face of their conflicts. Helping people understand that they in fact, have the power to do something constructive about their conflicts, equipping them with skills to voluntarily express and resolve them, and helping them to build the confidence to put this into practice, contributes to building self-esteem and promotes the positive value of personal responsibility.

3.2 The Challenges

Voluntary resolution of conflict by the conflicting parties themselves is a far cry from many traditional discipline structures in which some authority or adult figure imposes a top-down decision, punishment or solution for those in conflict. This value presents a challenge to those in positions of authority, whose pattern this may be, or for whom this way of handling problem is seen as the quickest and easiest way. There may be no systems in place for alternative strategies.

This value also presents a challenge to people who do not feel able or confident enough to voluntarily engage in a conflict resolution process.

DIVERSITY HAS POSITIVE VALUE

4.1. The Value

while it is our humanness that binds us together, we are not like uniform matches in matchbox – with the same shapes, heights, colours, temperament etc. what a recipe for boredom that would be ! It is our uniqueness and individual differences that give life something of its essence, and it is these very differences that often play out in conflict situations, and cause them to escalate. We see things – even the same thing – differently; we hear things differently; we interpret things differently; we react differently.
We often have different needs and interests, and in many cases, we think that our way is the only way.

Constructive conflict resolution is about respect; taking off blinkers, airing, acknowledging and respecting our differences; and working with these differences in a positive way. Appreciating that diversity and difference of opinion is a positive value is a crucial step in getting to the source of the conflict, and establishing a basis for discussing workable solution. This openness to exploring what is perceived as a major source of disagreement can often lead conflicting parties to see that there are, in fact, commonalities in their interests, needs and concerns.

For whatever our society, culture or background, human life is often so similar in the deeper significance it holds and the issues it presents.

4.2 The Challenges

This value present a challenge to us as members of various social groups with their diversity of member age, gender, temperament, background, needs and values. It presents a challenge to us as members of heterogeneous communities and societies with their rich mix of ethnicities, languages, religions and cultures. And it presents a challenge to us as prompters of peace as we strive to inculcate in others, attitudes of tolerance and respect for those whose looks, ideas, briefs, behaviors and ways of talking are different from ours.

CREATING SYSTEMS WHERE THESE VALUES CAN BE ESTABLISHED AND ACTED UPON HAS POSITIVE VALUE.

1.1 The value

Setting up of systems that provide the space in which the other values can have practical applications. If we don't provide these frameworks, how can we expect these applications to happen?

Teaching people communication and conflict resolution skills, promoting respect for diversity, and developing systems that encourage them to express and resolve their disagreements peacefully and voluntarily, is key component for equipping them to take their place as confident, caring and responsible citizens of a democratic society.

The importance of peacebuilding starting at a young age and then being reinforced in all areas of our lives cannot be over emphasized.

Examples of the kind of systems we suggest include:

- Formulation of work philosophies which embrace the values of mutual respect and constructive conflict resolution
- Team meeting procedures in the work environment where problems and grievances can be aired in a safe, secure and respectful manner so that everyone has a place to speak and be heard.
- "Fighting Fair" Rules or "Conflict Resolution Steps" illustrated on posters, which are placed in strategic places.
- Infusion of peace education into formal training of staff
- Inclusion of conflict resolution training as a key component of life skills education
- Community Peacebuilders' programme in which groups of people are trained to assist their colleagues to resolve their own conflicts.

1.2.   The Challenges

The very idea of setting up systems poses its own challenges to many people. These have to do, inter alia, with the kind of time and other pressures under which many of us ourselves; our own lack of confidence or "know how", a sense that there will be no institutional support for such innovations.

We will do well to remember, however, that each one of us can make a difference – even if there is initial resistance from those around us. We all have roles to play as peace educators, peacemakers and peacebuilders. If this means us taking the initiative ourselves, and starting small, we must do it for this is where the long road of peacebuilding begins!

> **"As you press on for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence. If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in your struggle, unborn generations will be recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be endless reign of meaningless chaos."**   Martin Luther King, Jr.

Understanding Conflict

Assumptions about conflict

- As striking together
- Conflict is about differences
- Conflict is neutral and inevitable
- As friction and energy
- Conflict as danger and opportunity
- As moving up and down an escalator
- As something that we all know about
- As something that is culturally bound
- As a challenge for facilitators and training participants
- Conflict has no value until we add value to it. It can be either negative or positive.
- We function most effectively in conflict when we view it as normal and a sign of health.
- Conflict can be managed in creative, confident and Constructive ways
- Encouraging the expression of conflict is risky, but discouraging the expression of it is even riskier!

> "Conflict can be seen as a gift of energy,
>
> in which neither side loses nor a new dance is created"
>
> ***Thomas Crum***

Conflict Theories

1. **Human Needs Theory**
   The deprivation of individuals and communities access to the means of satisfying their basic human needs is behind all violent conflicts.

2. **Relational Theory**
   Conflict is a result of an interaction of different individual and/or groups with differing cultural orientations, values and interests. Conflict is at the heart of human relationships.

3. **Political Theory**
   The state is the sole context where various groups or individuals are competing to take advantage of others. They often believe that they will only gain access to the state when others are eliminated or disabled. Power is at the centre of all conflicts.

4. **Transformative Theory**
   Conflict is caused by systemic and structural injustice and inequality expressed by competing social, cultural, economic, religious and political frameworks. Transformative conflict is exacerbated by the tension between the demand for change and the resistance of the structures and institutions to the demand for change.

The conflict triangle

Conflict could be viewed as a triangle, with contradiction (C), attitude (A) and behaviour (B) at its vertices. Here, the contradiction refers to the underlying conflict situation, which includes the actual or perceived 'incompatibility of goals' between the conflict parties generated by a mis-match between social values and social structure. In a symmetric conflict, the contradiction is defined by the parties, their relationship and the conflict of interests inherent in the relationship. Attitude includes the parties perception and misperceptions but in violent conflicts, parties tend to develop demeaning stereotypes of each other, and attitudes are often influenced by emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. Attitudes include emotive (feelings), cognitive (belief) and conative (will) elements.
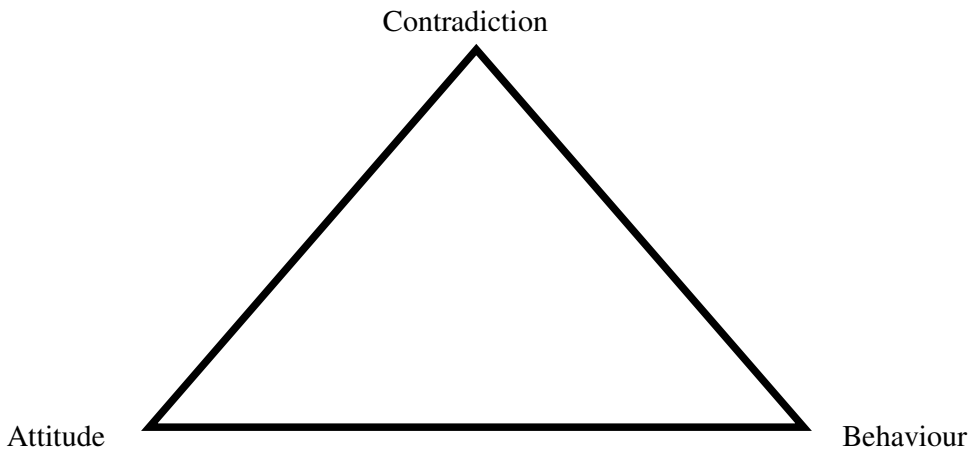
Diagram showing the conflict triangle

Behaviour which is the third component include cooperation or coercion, gestures signifying conciliation or hostility. Violent conflict behaviour is characterised by threats, coercion and destructive attacks.

It is argued that all three components have to be present together in a full conflict. A conflict structure without conflictual attitudes or behaviour is a latent (or structural) conflict. Conflict is seen as a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviour are constantly changing and influencing one another. As a conflict emerges, it becomes a conflict formation as parties interests come into conflict or the relationship they are in becomes oppressive. Conflict parties then organize around this structure to pursue their interests. They develop hostile attitudes and conflictual behaviour. As it does so, it may widen, drawing in other parties, deepen and spread, generating secondary conflicts within the main parties or among outsiders who get sucked in. This often considerably complicates the task of addressing the original, core conflict. Eventually, however, resolving the conflict must involve a set of dynamic change that involve a de-escalation of conflict behaviour, a change in attitudes, and transforming the relationships or clashing interests that are at the core of the conflict structure.

A related idea is the distinction between direct violence (children are murdered), structural violence (children die through poverty) and cultural violence (whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it). We end direct violence by changing conflict behaviours, structural violence by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence by changing attitudes.

Understanding Community Conflict

Exercise 1
In this section we try to elicit the meaning of conflict from the perspective of participants by the way it is viewed using their own local languages.

(Do a diagram here for entry of specific local language experiences)

What is Conflict?
Brainstorming Exercise

The session will begin with a brainstorming exercise aimed at assisting participants to understand the concept of conflict. It will highlight that conflict is an essential process in life, with both desirable and undesirable consequences. Engage the participants in a discussion by asking them the following questions:

1. What do you understand by conflict?
2. Participants are invited to think for about five minutes of as many words as possible that they associate with the word conflict
3. Ask the participants to each write down their response to the above question
4. Ask participants to each share their experiences

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5. Ask them to reflect on the responses and to comment on any commonalities if any in the words they have provided
6. Write down the responses on flip chart. The words should then be listed under the following categories:
7. Words with a negative connotation
8. Words with a positive connotation
9. Words that have a gender bias.

Notes for the Trainer. You will observe that most of the words that the participants will come up with will be in the negative. These may include words such as anger, hatred, tension, guilty, manipulated, controlled, scared, frightened, confused. Judged, misunderstood, war, violence. This will assist you by giving you an indication of the group's perception, understanding and experience with conflict. To further bring out the participants' experience with conflict, ask the participants to engage in the following exercise:

Group Exercise: Personal Reflection
Follow the brainstorming session with a group exercise. Divide the participants into groups of two.
Ask the participants to reflect on a personal experience with conflict they have intervened in on a personal level and within the work environment and to describe the emotions and feelings, attitude involved and note this down. Each participant should share their perception of conflict, how they define conflict in their language, how they handled the conflict, their fears and concerns.

Plenary Discussion
In plenary, ask the participants to share some of te words that have come out of the discussions. Ask the participants to identify similarities in the responses given during discussion. Are there any similarities with the responses given in the first exercise? Ask the participants to work together in plenary to develop a common definition of the concept of conflict guided by the outcome of the two previous exercises. You may note that participants will associate only with the negative aspects of conflict, the words may have cultural and gender connotations, social, political and economic aspects. You can conclude the session with the following definitions of conflict:

Some definitions

> The word conflict is derived from the latin word "configere"-meaning to strike together. This definition gives the perception that conflict is associated with confrontation. (Non Violent Transformation of Conflict: Mary E. King et al).
>
> "Conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have or think they have incompatible goals." (Working With Conflict: Simon Fisher et al)
>
> Conflict can be defined as a state of disharmony between persons for ideas, interests or values and relationship as well as for gathering and interpretation of information.
> It can come about from marginalization and exclusion of persons arising out of structural problems. It can be a process and state of being in which two or more social entities perceive that they posses mutually incompatible coals. Source: Green Scenery(2005)

Exercise in Plenary
Choose a number of pictures depicting different situations. In a brainstorming session, let the participants decide which one best represent conflict and why.
In plenary ask the following questions:
Most of the words used to describe conflict have negative connotations. Are there any positive aspects of conflict?
Do men and women hold different perceptions of conflict?
Are women and children affected differently by conflict?
Are conflict and violence one and the same thing?

Mini Lecture

Most of the responses given in the exercise depict conflict in the negative. This is not always the case. Though most people associate conflict with negative words, the perception is influenced by the environment, attitudes, experiences and beliefs. Depending on how it is handled, conflict can have positive aspects. Conflict is a natural and normal process which pervades every sector of people's lives-political, economic and social. Conflict is therefore an inevitable and essential feature of human relations between individuals and in societies. The challenge is thus not the elimination of conflict but how to effectively address it should it arise. Depending on how it is perceived or handled, it can either be violent and destructive or it can be a catalyst for individual or corporate change. If conflict is managed constructively for example through joint problem solving, negotiation, mediation or consensus building, it can be used to transform destructive aspects and lead to positive attitudinal change and perceptions.

Defining Conflict Transformation

"Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real life problems in human relationships." John Paul Lederach

The meaning and implications of this definition will be easier to understand if we imagine conflict transformation as a person on a journey, comprising of a head, heart, hands and legs.

Head: the head refers to the conceptual view of conflict-how we think about and therefore prepare to approach conflict. In the head we find the attitudes, perceptions, and orientations that we bring to creative conflict transformation. A transformational approach recognizes that conflict is a normal and continuous dynamic within human relationships. Moreover, conflict brings with it the potential for constructive change. Positive change does not always happen, of course. As we all know too well, many times conflict results in long standing cycles of hurt and destruction. But the key to transformation is a proactive bias toward seeing conflict as potential catalyst for growth.

Heart: the heart is the centre of life of the human body. Physically, it generates the pulse that sustains life. Figuratively, it is the centre of our emotions, intuitions, and spiritual life. This is the place from which we go out and to which we return for guidance, sustenance, and direction. The heart provides a starting and a returning point. Two ideas form such a centre for conflict transformation.

Human relationships: biologists and physicists tell us that life itself is found less in the physical substance of things than in the less visible connections and relationships between them. Similarly, in conflict transformation relationships are central. Like the heart in the body, conflicts flow from and return to relationships.

Relationships have visible dimensions, but they also have dimensions that are less visible. To encourage the positive potential inherent in conflict, we must concentrate on the less visible dimensions of relationships, rather than concentrating exclusives on the content and substance of the fighting that is often much more visible. The issues over which people fight are important and require creative response. However, relationships represent a web of connections that form the larger context, the human eco-system from which particular issues arise and are given life.

Conflict also creates life: through conflict we respond, innovate and change. Conflict can be understood as the motor for change, that which keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations and growth.

Hands: we refer to our hands as that part of the body capable of building things, able to touch, feel and affect the shape that things take. Hands bring us close to practice. When we say "hands on", we mean that we are close to where the work takes place. It explains how we can move from being destructive towards being constructive. This movement can only be done by cultivating the capacity to see, understand, and respond to the presenting issues in the context of relationships and ongoing change processes. What are the processes that the conflict itself has generated? How can these processes be altered, or other processes initiated, that will move the conflict in a constructive direction as an opportunity? A focus on process is key to conflict transformation.

Legs and feet: legs and feet represent the place where we touch the ground, where all our journeys hit the road. Like the hands, this is a point of action, where thought and heartbeat translate into response, direction and momentum. Conflict transformation will only be utopian if it is unable to be responsive to real life challenges, needs and realities. Conflict transformation suggests that a fundamental way to promote constructive change on all these levels is dialogue. Dialogue is essential to justice and peace on both an interpersonal and structural level. It is not the only mechanisms, but it is an essential one. We typically think of dialogue as direct interaction between people or groups. Conflict transformation

takes this view. Many of the skilled based mechanisms that are called upon to reduce violence are rooted in the communicative abilities to exchange ideas, common definitions to issues, and seek ways forward toward solutions. Dialogue is necessary for both creating and addressing social and public spheres where human institutions, structures, and patterns of relationships are constructed. Processes and spaces must be created so that people can engage and shape the structures that order their community life, broadly defined. Dialogue is needed to provide access to, a voice in, and constructive interaction with, the ways we formalize our relationships and in the ways our organizations and structures are built, respond and behave.

Brainstorming Exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to assess participants understanding of conflict and to highlight that it is not always a negative dynamic.

Question: Ask the participants to reflect and share on a positive aspect/development in their life that was a consequence of conflict. Close the exercise with the following:

Conflict performs a number of functions.
- Conflict helps establish and maintain the identity and independence of individuals, groups and societies. Conflicts help individuals assert their personal identity as distinct from the aspirations, beliefs and behaviour of others.
- Conflict can help build new relationships. Parties may, in the context of conflict and its resolution, discover common interests and then work to maintain an on going relationship.
- Conflict serve to establish and maintain group identities. Groups in conflict often create clearer parameters which assist the members of the group determine who is part of the group and who is not. Thus, conflict can help individuals understand and position them to take action to defend the interests of their group.
- Conflict enhance group cohesion through issue and belief clarification. Threats to a group usually lead to the mobilization of the energies of the members of the group and therefore to increased cohesion of th group.
- Conflict can create coalitions. As in the case with building relationships, parties in conflict can sometimes work together to form coalitions designed to achieve common goals or fight off common threats.
- Conflict creates or changes rules, norms, laws and institutions. Rules, norms, laws and institutions are changed or created through the raising of issues. The failure to express problems results in the maintaining of the status quo.

Conflict and Cultural Influences
Culture has been compared to the soil on which everything grows. In this sense it influences everything that grows from it. As it is passed on from generation to generation, it influences and impacts are also passed on. Cultural values and norms have an influence on how individuals and communities perceive and respond to conflict. Patriarchal societies provide some good examples of how beliefs and culture can impact perception and understanding of conflict in particular between men, women and children.

Conflict and Violence
Where conflict is not addressed constructively and is left to fester, it can escalate from tensions to open violence. Violence is not conflict. It is a manifestation of the destructive aspects of conflict. Violence takes many forms to include verbal abuse; economic exclusion; corruption and human rights abuses; and violence against women such as marital abuse and rape. Other issues such as attitudes, values, feelings and perceptions people have of certain situations and/or other group of people can contribute to violence. These factors often contribute towards shaping the way individuals or groups of people feel or relate to others. Examples would be entrenched patriarchal attitudes that discriminate against women; issues of sexual orientation that can discriminate against gays and lesbians; different religious beliefs such as Muslims and Christians; and cultures of different ethnic groups. Though not tangible, once they fall on fertile ground the seeds from these different views can germinate and nurtured to mature and breed violence. It is therefore essential to understand the distinctions between violence and conflict and to identify all possible causes as this can help to inform sustainable intervention.

Gender and Conflict

Men and women have different perceptions and also differ in the way they handle conflict. The environment, cultural beliefs such as entrenched patriarchal norms normally influence how men and women understand conflict in societies. Some women have described-exclusion, marginalization of women, oppression of women and inability to have a voice in society. The dynamics of conflict are also played out and affect men and women differently. It is essential to understand this as it influences and informs the various responses that need to be put in place to deal with the plight of women and other vulnerable groups such as children and young girls. The violent conflicts that have played out on the African continent have placed women in many different roles depending on the type and nature of conflict. Their roles have varied from being the most vulnerable of groups exposed in addition to the direct conflict to other indirect forms of violence such as rape, they have been uprooted from their homes to become either refugees or internally displaced persons thus exposing them to increased insecurities such as hunger and diseases. In other instances such as in the wards of liberation from colonial rule waged in some African countries such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique and in many civil wars in post cold war Africa such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, women have fought as combatants side by side men. In many cases, women and young girls have assumed the role of mother and the burden of bread winner as men are recruited and sometimes perish in the war. In analyzing and assessing appropriate responses for intervention during and in post conflict situation, these are some of the issues that should be taken into account.

Gender inequalities may fuel conflicts within communities emerging from conflict or may be part of the structural injustices that need to be addressed in order to build long term peace in a country. All these points highlight why gender analysis is an important part of peace building work.

Peace building programmes need to focus on the unique needs of men and women in the local setting, as well as their common needs, in order to help successfully revitalize the community and achieve long term and just peace. Including a gender analysis in identifying peace building activities and where and when to engage in peace building work will contribute to the comprehensiveness of the context analysis and ultimate success of programme activities.

Natural Resources and Conflict

The way and manner in which natural resources are used, exploited or distributed can be cause for conflict. Similarly, environmental degradation and or lack of access to natural resources like land, water and forest can be proximate causes of conflict. These factors in conjunction with other factors can also cause conflict.

Some examples of natural resources are land, water, fish, forests, and minerals like diamonds, Gold, Oil, and Titanium.

There are a number of theories pointing to natural resources and conflicts. The resource curse theory and the tragedy of the commons are two such theories.

Throughout Africa many cases of conflicts have arisen over natural resources spanning wide ecological zones. The conflict in Somalia for example that has torn that country apart and leaving it stateless is a continuation of a century – old movement from nomadic grazing zones of major Somali clans southward into agricultural areas, which have become overpopulated (Hutchsion 1999). Such incidents can lead to resource capture by powerful people, skewed distribution, or scarcity of resources or degradation due to sheer demographic pressure. The Rwanda genocide that claimed the lives of close to one million people has been attributed to severe competition between Hutus and Tutsis over declining farm holdings. In Rwanda, the average farm size declined from 2 to 0.7 hectare per family over a number of decades. This resource scarcity couple with the then political leadership zeal to exploit land scarcity for political advantages is widely believed to be the proximate cause of the armed conflict between the two groups, and the genocide (Bachler 1996).

There is wide recognition that land and forest degradation result from individual and/or collective decisions as a response to changes in markets conditions, policies, and population growth. At the individual level response may take the form of changes in land use pattern, management practices, and investment. Community response may include changing the size of common resources (e.g. land), the rules of usage and how the resources can be transferred. Distribution of benefits (e.g. surface rent or DACDF) for common natural resources also serves as a response. Changes such as these in resource conditions influence productivity and livelihoods, which in turn influence people's response to these changes. Response can be diverse including by migrating, either in search of cultivable land in other rural areas or in search of income in urban areas. Mass human movements under conditions of weak governance could lead to violent conflict (Homer Dixon 1994, Dabelko and Dabelko 1999, Ejigu 2004).

Weak governance in relation to the state's incapacity to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantee of protection for groups leading to fears of physical insecurity (Lake and Rothchild 1996), under such fearful conditions, groups would tend to rely on their own capabilities. They invest in and prepare for violence hence making actual violence possible.

Natural Resources and Conflict
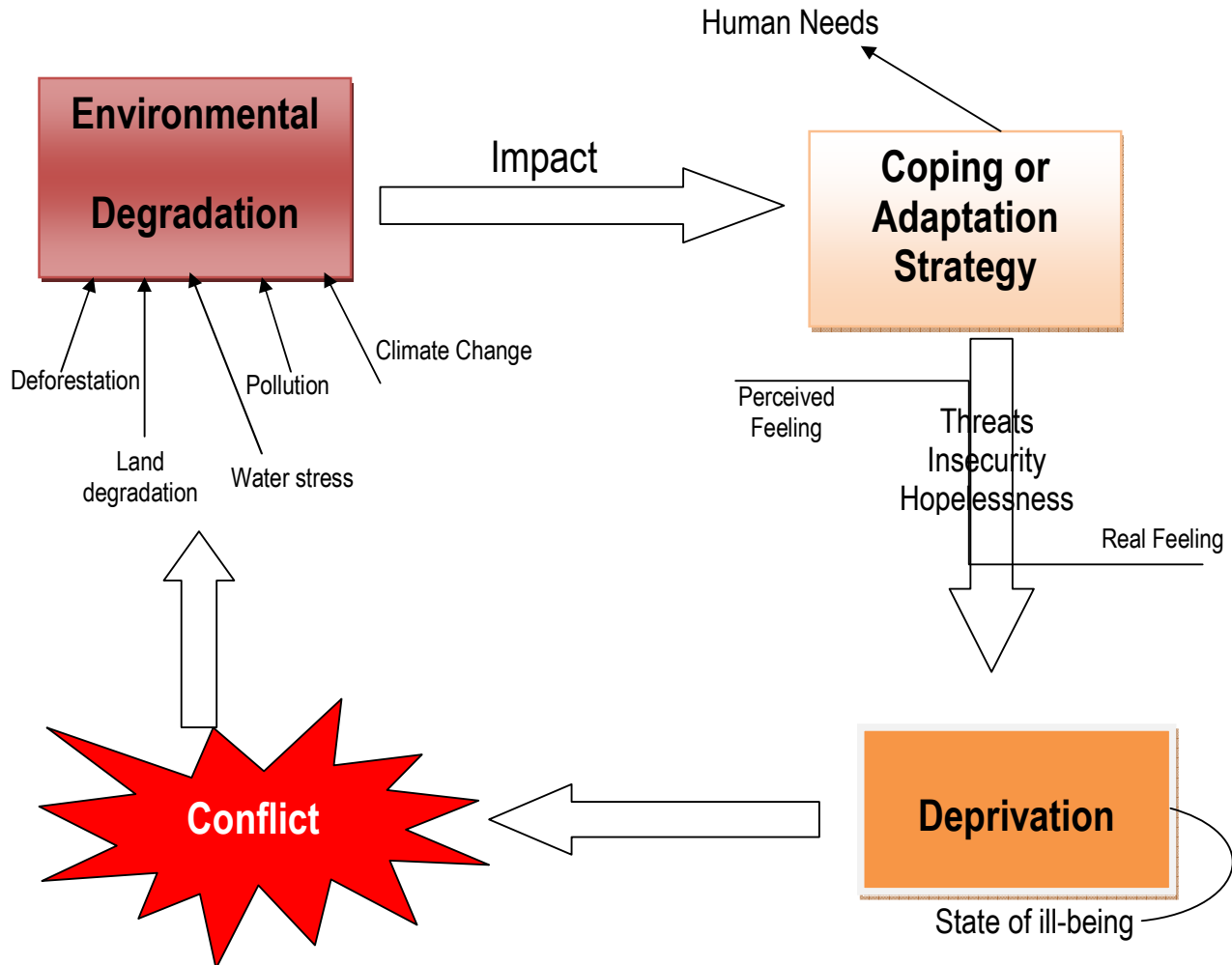
Schematic diagram linking environmental degradation and conflict by Joseph Rahall: 2009

Case Study

In the late 1980s, the construction of the Manantali Dam on the Bafing River tributary in Mali and Diama salt-intrusion barrage near mouth of the Senegal River sparked a war between Senegal and Mauritania. Anticipation of the new dam sharply increased land values along the river in areas where high-intensity agriculture would become feasible. The elites in Mauritania, mainly white Moors, re-wrote legislation governing land ownership, effectively abrogating the rights of black Africans to continue farming, herding and fishing along the Mauritanian riverbank .
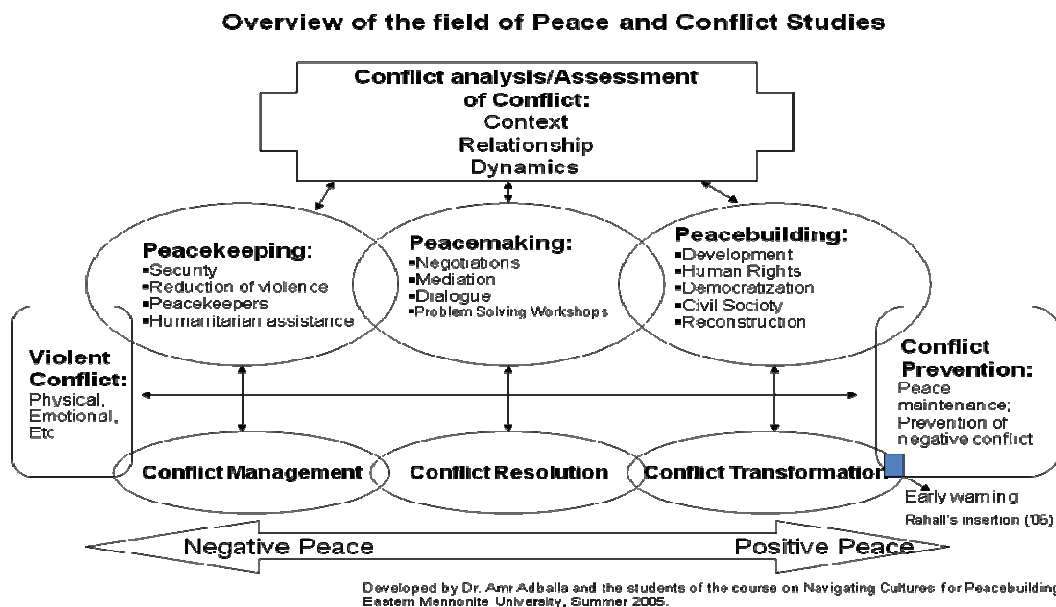
Brain storming:
Identify issues in the case study that are the proximate causes of conflict.
How would these issues lead to conflict?

Conflict and Peacebuilding
Peace should be understood as a process-which is more easily recognizable by its absence and people disagree on what is a peaceful society (Fisher et al). Peace is mostly understood as absence of violence (negative) where there has been violent conflict this includes process such as peace making which involves ending hostilities through agreements, diplomatic, political means. Positive peace builds onto initial phase of negative peace. This is not an event, but a process which seeks to restore relationships destroyed by violent conflict. In post conflict situations this entails restoration of relationships, establishment of justice, and the creation of just social systems that serve the needs of the population. Positive peace is critical in addressing the root causes of conflict such as injustice, economic inequalities, governance, human rights and establishing institutions of governance.
Finally, **peacebuilding: "Seeks to change the context so that inequality and injustice between groups and individuals are no longer embedded in structures, institutions, attitudes and processes, and so that mechanisms and societal norms are developed that allow for the expression of discord in constructive, non violent ways"**

Overview of the field of Peace and Conflict Studies

Developed by Dr. Amr Adballa and the students of the course on Navigating Cultures for Peacebuilding. Eastern Mennonite University, Summer 2005.

Dynamics and Levels of Conflict

Mini Lecture
Conflict is not a constant. It is a dynamic and like being in the process of development and dying. Each conflict goes through various levels and stages and assumes different characteristics at each stage of development. It can involve one or more individuals, communities, groups within a state and can also involve states. The pattern of each conflict is not systematic. It can develop from one stage either rapidly or over a long period of time from a non violent confrontation to open violence. It can de-escalate with cessation of hostilities and signing of peace agreements. Just when people think it is all over, it can break out into even more violent conflict. A number of countries on the African continent have experienced some of these conflict cycles. Countries such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire experiencing resumption of violent conflict following the cessation of hostilities, the signing of peace agreements and in some cases the holding of general elections. Each stage has its own dynamics and challenges that need to be understood to assist towards the identification of appropriate intervention methods.

Four levels of Conflict have been identified

Intra-personal conflict - these are the conversations and struggles that are play within our inner self which if handled well can lead to positive transformation and growth.

Interpersonal conflict - these are conflicts two or more people or groups

Intra-group conflict - this type involves members of the same groups getting involved with other members of the group.

Inter-group conflict - this occurs between large organized groups, communities and includes nations

Group Exercise

Ask participants to pick one of the types of conflict listed above. Give each participant time to reflect on the type of conflict chosen. For each category ask two participants to share their responses in plenary and where possible they should give examples. End the discussion by a summary linking their presentations with the types of conflict outlined.

Stages of Conflict

At least five phases in the cycle of conflict have been identified. The progression of conflict may follow the pattern outlined but there may be variations depeding on the circumstances.

Pre-conflict
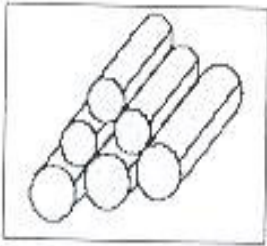
This is often referred to as the latent stage in a conflict. There are disagreements and tensions and conflicting interests but the conflict is not visible. This could also include structural challenges such as economic inequalities, poverty, gender inequities, poor governance, which are all below the surface. This stage has been referred by some as the stage where materials for the fire or ammunition to ignite the conflict is gathered.

Confrontation

The signs of visible conflict are there. This stage is characterized by low-level conflict and skirmishes an in some cases public demonstration. Relations between the parties are strained and polarised. Each side may be gathering resources including ammunition and allies.

Open Confrontation/crisis

Blazing fire

This is the stage of open conflict, the peak of conflict where violence is most intense. This stage is often characterized by protracted war with loss of lie n both sides. Communication has broken down. Ending situations of open violent conflict may require interventions of neutral parties.

Outcome

Smothering fire

In this stage, violence has abated. It may be through mediation outside parties or the warring parties may grow weary of fighting and decide to end the violence. While some pockets of the violence might remain, there general calm where there was violence. This may be followed by the signing of peace agreements taking ino account the grievances of the parties. It may be followed by the signing of peace agreements taking into account the grievances of the parties,

Post-conflict stage
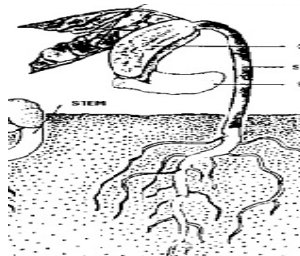
This is a fragile period following the signing of peace agreements. It is essential that the agreements seek to address the root causes of conflict. If this is not done, the foundation for future conflict is laid. It will only need small triggers for violence to break out. In this stage, states need to ensure that that governance is strengthened through the establishment of credible institutions of governance such as anti corruption commissions, human rights commissions and electoral commissions. Steps must be taken to address the structural causes of violence including equal participation of women and youths in these efforts.

Case Study
This will provide the participants an opportunity to discuss the various stages of conflict and the elements and challenges associate with each stage.

Angorra gained independence from colonial rule in 1975. Following this, general elections were held and one of the former liberation movements Movement for Peace of Angorra (MPA) won a landslide victory formed a government which proceeded to put in place rebuilding the war torn country and reconciling the various ethnic groups in the country. One of the biggest ethnic groups the Vagonis who lived in one of the oil rich provinces, with the most developed infrastructure in the whole

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> *country began to agitate for cessation. They felt that despite the development in their province, a lot more should have been done for them from the revenues of the oil. They argued that their ethnic group was the largest in the country and should be receiving more in terms of revenue from what they were currently receiving. Vagonis contended that if they become self governing, they would be in a position to better manage their resources.*
>
> *The new government, keen on reconciliation tried to negotiate with the Vagonis including offering some of the leaders position in government. The Vagonis, were adamant, they started stockpiling weapons preparing to fight the government if their demands were not met. The government tried to bring in mediators to intervene to avert the looming crisis. The Vagonis were insistent and the process collapsed. The government had no choice but to a small contingency from the army to maintain peace. This is what the Vagonis were waiting for, immediately they attacked some members of the army. Thereafter, the government send a full contingency to the province. Following minor skirmishes, the country was plunged into another civil war. As the Vagonis were able to continue engaging the government, they now had control of the oil which gave them a constant supply of sophisticated arms. The war vraged on for at least six years. The government was only able to defeat the Vagonis with the help of other governments. Following the cessation of hostilities, the government and the Vagonis signed the Machapa Peace Agreement (Noria Mahumba)*

Questions

After going through the facts with the participants, ask them to break into groups and to discuss the various conflict stages, highlighting the elements and challenges for each stage.

1. What roles can institutions such as Green Scenery, Local Government Council and Human Rights Commission play in the different stages?

Causes of Conflict

Mini Lecture

Conflict is a consequence of several factors including moral differences, injustice, human rights violations, unfulfilled human needs; unresolved prior differences, identity (the cultural, linguistic, social or ethnic characteristics of peoples- Fisher et. Al: Deng 2000). Analyzing the causes of conflict provides a deeper understanding of the conflict to assists in developing effective strategies for addressing conflicts. If only the symptoms which are what is often visible in conflict are addressed without tackling the deep seated causes of conflict, seeds of the next conflict are sown.

There are five broad categories of causes of conflict which may be useful in understanding conflict. These are:

- *Data or information conflicts:* These relate to the lack of information or miscommunication. Parties may have different perspectives concerning the facts in a situation, what information is relevant and how it should be interpreted.- This may be the case even where there are no basic incompatibilities. Unless they share information and clarify their perceptions, resolution is impossible.

- *Relationship conflict:.* These arise out of strained relationships between the parties and are characterized by strong emotions, poor communication, stereotyping and other forms of negative behaviour.

- *Value-based conflicts:* These conflicts arise from fundamental differences between parties in their perception of what is desirable or over ideological differences, especially in circumstances where a dominant ideology is imposed upon a group or a group is prevented from maintaining their value system.

- *Structural conflict:.* These are occasioned by unequal or unfair distribution of power and resources. Thus, a situation where an ethnic minority wields disproportionate power over majority groups in a country might spark conflict.

- *Interest-based conflict:* These conflicts involve real or perceived competition over interests, or perceptions of fairness or trust. They could also be disputes concerning the manner in which a particular situation is to be resolved or who controls some position, role or resources.

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Group Case Study

Note for Trainer
Introduce the case study to the participants. Divide them into small groups. Ask each participant to identify and discuss the causes of conflict from the case study and divide these into the following categories. political, social, economic and cultural.

Follow this with discussion in plenary and list the causes of conflict highlithed during the discussions.

Since the 1850s, the Bell Oil Company has been extracting oil in Ogoniland in the Nini Delta region of Niniland. While the corporation has claimed that it had improved the lives of the people by investing in local communities, a World Bank report suggested that the impact of these initiatives had been minimal. The building of canals and roads to service the oil industry precipitated some of the most extensive environmental degradation in the region. The road blocked streams and flood palings, creating swtagnant ponds of water and flooding fields. Reckless oil exploration by the corporation destroyed the limited agricultural land as well as vast areas of aquatic habitat and fish stocks. The company deposited toxic wastes into the local environment and waterways but no measures were put in place to prevent the wastes from spilling into villages. The resulting water, soil and air contamination cause severe health problems such as skin infections, gastro internal and respiratory ailments, higher cancer rates and neurological and reproductive complications. Both the subsistence farming and fishing upon which the people traditional depended were adversely affected. In the early 1990s. Kenoro and others founded the Movement for Change for the Ogoland (MCO) People to advocate for the rights of Ogoland people, including increased autonomy to enable the Ogoland people gain control over their natural resources, environment and culture; a fair share of the proceeds of oil extraction; and remediation of environmental change to Ogo lands.   The continued marginalization of the local communities led to social unrest and the arrest of Kenoro and eight others by the military government of General Sasa in 1992. They were imprisoned for several months without trial.

In January 1993, (MCO) organized peaceful rallies in four different centres of about 300,000 Ogoland People estimated at 530,000. Following the shooting, by the military, of unarmed peasant farmers who had gathered to prevent a private contractor hired by Shell from bulldozing their crops in April that year and the resulting tensions, Bell suspended operations in the Ogoland region, while the military government sent in its military to occupy the region. The military crackdown that followed resulted in numerous atrocities against the local communities including killings and destruction of food supplies.

Sasa was arrested and accused of incitement to following the death of four Ogoland leaders. Although he denied the charges, he was detained for over a year before being found guilty and sentenced to death by a special military tribunal. The trial was criticised by human rights organizations. Later, Sasa and eight other Ogoland activists were executed by the military government.

Conflict Analysis
Conflict analysis is important to provide a deeper understanding of the background and history of the conflict, the underlying causes of the conflict, the parties to the conflict and their interests. This provides those seeking to develop strategies for intervention with relevant information for appropriate interventions. Conflict analysis is an indispensable pre-condition for successful management and resolution of conflict. Conflict analysis gives a clear picture of a particular conflict at a particular moment, the origins, the nature, the dynamics and the possibilities for strategic interventions. Conflict analysis is not a once off event but is an on going process guided by the dynamics of each particular conflict. There are a number of tools that have evolved for analyzing conflict.

Conflict Mapping
This presents conflict as a graph outlining the parties involved, their relationship in relation to each other and in relation to the main issues. It provides an opportunity for the conflicting parties to understand each other and their roles. This answers a number of questions:
1. Parties to the conflict
2. Who is involved in the conflict?

3. What are the primary, secondary stakeholder and interested party/parties?
4. What is the nature of relationship between all the paries involved and which ones have stronger relationships? (These are defined in terms of primary, secondary and other parties involved). Primary stakeholders are those who are directly involved and are the investors in the conflict; secondary stakeholders are not directly in the conflict but are directly affected by the consequences/outcome of the conflict. This is what distinguishes from secondary stakeholder.
5. Who are the other parties involved?
6. You can also map other issues such as the main areas of contention (is it resources? Interests? Values and cultural beliefs) This can also highlight the root causes of the conflict.

Christopher Moore`s Circle of Conflict

This model diagnoses and assigns the underlying causes, root causes or "drivers" of conflict following one of the categories:

- Values (belief systems, right and wrong, good and evil and just and unjust)
- Relationships (negative past experiences, stereotypes, poor or failed communications)
- External factors (factors unrelated to the substance of the dispute)
- Data (lack of information, too much information)
- Structures (limited physical resources, authority issues, geographical constraints and organizational structures)

The model offers suggestions for working with each other of these drivers and directs practitioners towards data, structure and interests as the focus of resolution. "Interests" refer to an individual's needs, hopes and fears.

This approach enables the intervener to determine the cause of conflict, to identify which sector is primary and assess whether the cause of conflict is a real incompatibility of interests or merely perceived differences between the parties. These insights can be used to inform interventions strategies that are likely to be more successful than approaches that are exclusively based on trail and error.

Figure 1. The Circle of Conflict

Circle of Conflict
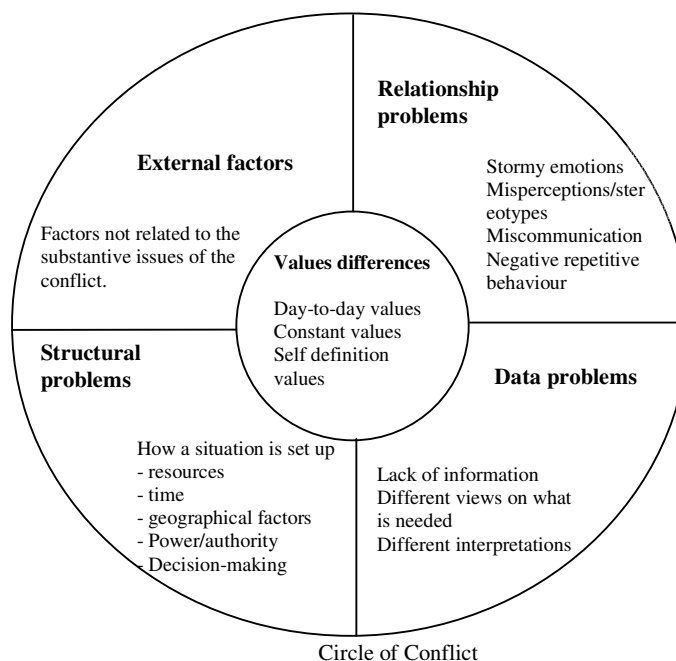
Conflict Tree: Other tools for analysis include the conflict tree. In this case, conflict is likened to a tree with the different parts-the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves and fruit representing the various aspects and dynamics of conflict.

The Who of Conflict

Using the metaphor of a tree, we can identify the root causes of conflict under the soil, the core problems as the trunk and the main support of the tree, and the effects of conflict as the many branches and leaves of the tree. What are the root causes, core issues and effects of the conflict?
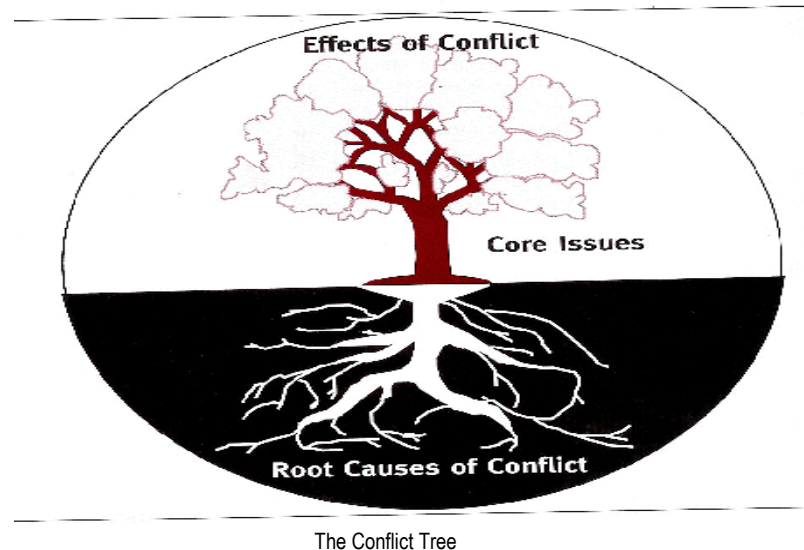
The Conflict Tree

Trainer likened conflict to a tree with three main parts or elements: Roots, Trunk and Branches as above:

The Roots: The area underground represents the roots. These are some of the causes of the conflict which cannot be seen by the naked eye such as the structural or institutional challenges (economic exclusion, poor governance practices, corruption, and human rights abuses**.**

The Roots are the structural or causal factors. Although they are the invisible contents of the tree, the roots are the anchor and source of life for the tree. Examples of root causes are injustice, poverty, economic deprivation, ignorance, ethnic prejudice and intolerance, corruption, poor governance practices, human rights abuses both at state and chieftaincy levels. If the soil is good and water is provided, these roots will produce a sturdy tree. Just as all roots left in a soil do not necessarily produce a tree, roots of conflicts only provide potentials for conflict. Other contributing factors like good soil, a gardener, etc. will be needed to produce the *Conflict Tree*.

The Trunk is the largest visible part of the tree and gives the onlooker a good view of what type of tree this is. It is where all of the roots have converged. It is difficult to distinguish the link of the trunk to a particular string of the roots. The trunk gives onlookers some clue about the name and nature of the tree. However, the tendency to associate conflict only to the visible core problem can be deceptive since this is just a converged expression of many roots with particular differences. As a convergence of the roots, the trunk comprises dimensions of the conflict. Depending on who is analyzing the conflict and from what vantage point the analyst who is conducting the study may emphasize a particular dimension of the conflict over the others. This is the core problem/issues for example and appropriation in Zimbabwe. The branches, the leaves and fruit. This represents the effects, the consequences of the conflict which are influenced by what is represented by the trunk
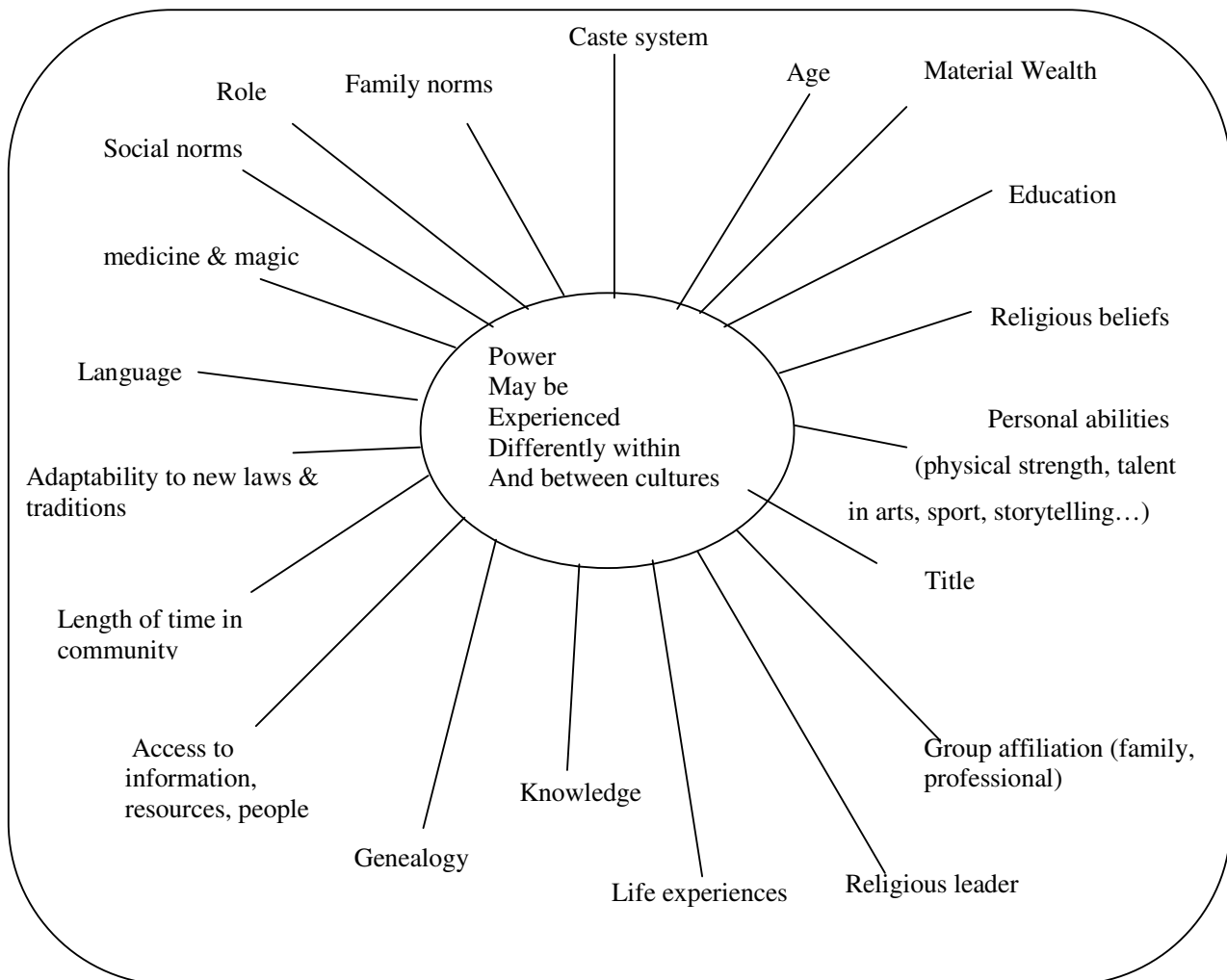
The Branches, leaves and fruits are the multitude of smaller conflicts or dimensions of the conflict emerging out of the trunk. They are sometimes referred to as effects of the conflict. For example, conflicts between ex-combatants and their communities, the rise in prostitution, family conflicts emerging out of long years of separation, chieftaincy

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disputes as a result of two or more chiefs being appointed by the different authority who occupied the communities during the civil war, land disputes as a result of lands being sold by different so-called owners during the civil war, etc are all branches from the Conflict Tree in Sierra Leone.

Over an extended period of time the effects or fruits of a particular conflict can fall into the fertile soil, germinate and develop another tree separate from the original tree. Once this has happened one may need to address problems associated with the new tree outside of the earlier one. Sometimes the old tree is even dead and gone but the new tree grows in strength. This is one complexity of conflict.

POWER

Power shifts with our perceptions. it means different things to different people at different times in different contexts. Power may be defined by traditional customs or by social rulers. Power is also defined by our perception of what it is and who holds it. People perceived to have power may actually not (from their perceptive) have the power they are perceived to have. In a new country, the children of migrants who learn the local language more quickly than their parents may actually have more 'power' in doing the shopping, helping the family to receive medical attention, and communicating with authorities. Some workers may not be seen to have power within the hierarchy of their organizations and yet important operations of their organizations depend on their support. The perception of power often shifts with the person who is doing the perceiving.

Caste system

Role   Family norms   Age   Material Wealth

Social norms

Education

medicine & magic

Religious beliefs

Language

Power May be Experienced Differently within And between cultures

Personal abilities (physical strength, talent in arts, sport, storytelling…)

Adaptability to new laws & traditions

Title

Length of time in community

Access to information, resources, people

Knowledge

Group affiliation (family, professional)

Genealogy

Life experiences   Religious leader

Three Faces of Power

The term power is ambiguous. On the one hand, it means the power to command, order, enforce-coercive or 'hard-power'- threat power. On the other, it means the power to induce cooperation, to legitimize, to inspire - persuasive or 'soft-power' power. Hard power has always been important in violent conflict, but soft power may be more important in conflicts managed peacefully.

Threat power would mean 'do what I want or I will do what you don't want'. Two forms of soft power are hereby distinguished. One is 'exchange power' associated with bargaining and the compromising approach, 'do what I want and I will do what you want' and' integrative power' associated with persuasion and transformative long-term problem solving, 'together we can do something that is better for both of us'. Conflict 'resolvers' try to shift emphasis away from the use of threat power and towards the use of exchange and integrative power.

Third parties such as politicians and governments may use all these forms of power. In terms of third party intervention, it is helpful to distinguish between powerful mediators, or 'mediators with muscle', who bring their power resources to bear, and powerless mediators, whose role is confined to communication and facilitation (otherwise who use the exchange or integrative power).

Track I diplomacy involves official governmental representatives, who may use good offices, mediation, and sticks and carrots to seek or force an outcome, typically along the win-lose or 'bargaining 'line. Track II diplomacy, in contrast involves unofficial mediators who do not have carrots or sticks.

THIRD PARTY

Arbitration

PARTY A   negotiation   PARTY B

Mediation

THIRD PARTY
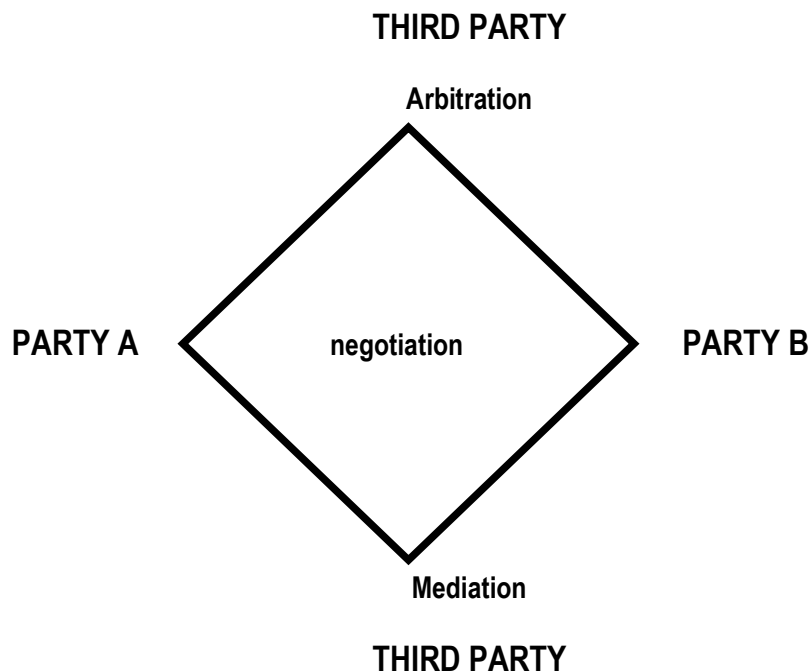
Note:
Coercive
1. Enforcement
2. Non-forcible coercion
3. Mediation with muscle

They work with parties or their constituencies to facilitate agreements, encouraging the parties to see their predicament as lying along the lose-lose to win-win line and to find mutually satisfactory outcomes.

Non-coercive
1. Pure mediation
2. Conciliation/problem-solving
3. Good offices

> **"Ultimate power is the ability to produce the results you desire most and create value for others in the process."**
>
> Harold Robbins

Responding to Conflict.

Notes for the Trainer
Ask the participants to pair up. They should take turns to share on how each of them handles conflict situations in their lives. Ask the participants to draw simple images of this. Ask their various experiences in plenary. Follow this with a discussion in plenary on the different conflict management styles. There are here broadly six steps to managing conflict: collaboration, compromise, competition, accommodation and avoidance.

Typical individual/group behaviour patterns
Our response is what we do when a conflict occurs, i.e. the point of taking "action". Our response can be broadly categorized as "fight", "flight" or "flow" responses.

**FLIGHT**: e.g. Ignoring, denying or withdrawing; Not confronting the problem:
"Band-aiding". Complaining to someone else; Giving-in; Making jokes; Crying; Running away.

FIGHT: Put up resistance. Strive to have your own way. Persecute or trick opponent to have an advantage. Advocating "power over" approach.

FLOW: e.g. Trying to sort it out constructively; Agreeing to talk about it. Focusing on the relationship; Attacking the problem rather than the person;
Advocating a "power with" rather than a "power over" or "power under" approach.

<u>**The Win-Win concept**</u>
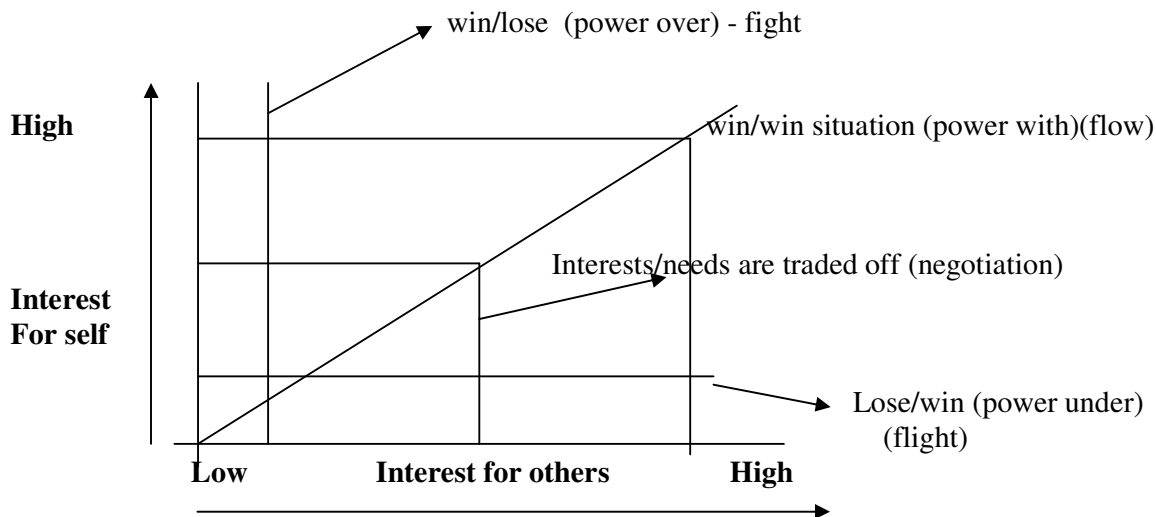
Conflict Handling Styles and Outcomes

Collaboration: These are specialized skills for conflict management. This style seeks to approach conflict in a constructive manner. The issues are dealt with openly and with a mind to achieve fairness. Issues of the parties concerned are given equal importance and maintaining relationships is paramount. This process ensures that the interest of the parties are met.

Compromise: Compromisers have an interest in maintaining relationships. They bargain for their interest aware that they cannot everything they would like. They are prepared to give up on some things if the other party is willing to do the same. They are willing for both parties to have some and goals satisfied.

Competition: People in this group are only interested in what is good for them alone. They believe that they should be at the forefront while the rest make the most of what they have. In every instance, they want to win all costs.

Accommodation
The main characteristic of people in this group is that they are keen on maintaining the status quo. Their needs and interests are sacrificed to accommodate those of others. They emphasize developing and maintaining relationships at all costs.

Avoidance
People who adopt this method avoid conflict by separating themselves from potentially conflictual situations.

Problem-solving
Problem solvers are constantly thinking (out of the box) creatively and expanding their boundaries of thinking. Problem solving encourages individuals in conflict to jointly define the conflict, issues and to determine the steps to take. It is often used in small groups to think analytically, solve the problem and rebuild relationships.

Many tools are available to help individuals be aware of the way they act in conflict. For peacebuilding, knowing how you react to conflict and communicate with people is very important. The diagram below includes conflict handling styles which you can use with participants.
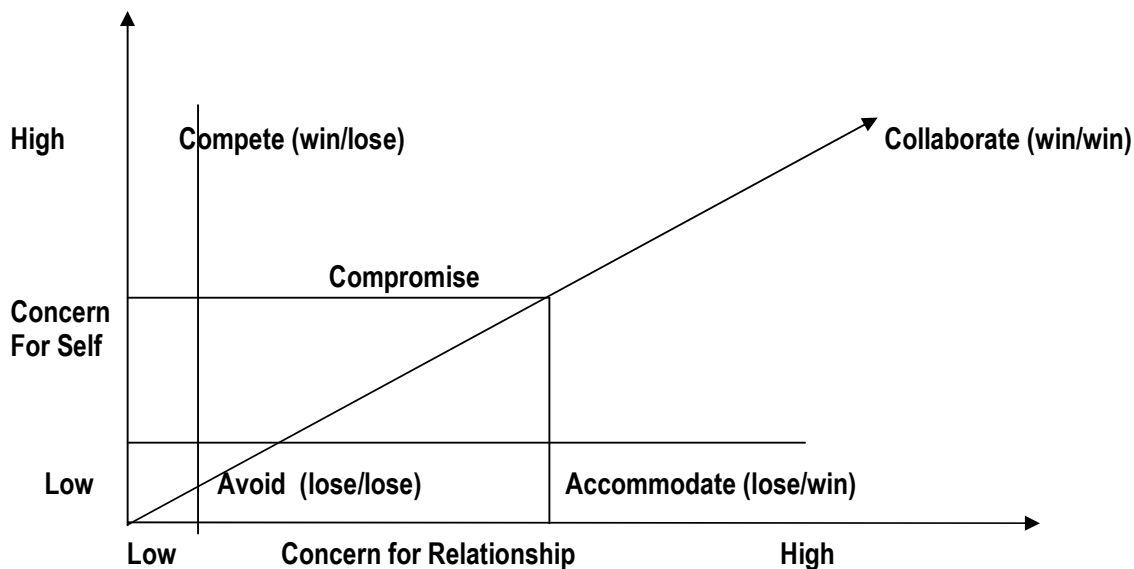
(This diagram was first developed by Wilmot and Hoecker in *interpersonal conflict*)

Case Study
Notes for the Trainer

Conflict mapping can be quite complex. The case study gives the participants opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and practising conflict mapping

1. The participants should get into groups and draw their own diagrams of conflict mapping. In the groups, they should identify some of the elements of conflict, each party-placing onto the diagram the different parties involved in conflict, different agendas and mandates, appropriate intervention mechanisms and at what stages one could intervene and how.
2. The participants should analyze the conflict using one of the tools discussed clearly outlining the different stages in conflict cycles.

Nafar consists of desert and grasslands. While its inhabitants are mostly muslims, they divide themselves into two identity groups: Arabs and Africans. The former tend to be nomads while the latter are usually farmers. The two groups have traditionally competed over land but their conflicts have been successfully resolved by tribal councils.

In the 1980s, the Arab dominated main government replaced the tribal councils with government programmes which tended to favour Arabs in their dispute with Africans. Around the same period, Nafar suffered a severe drought. This led to increased disputes over resources, which against the backdrop of the absence of a legitimate dispute resolution system, culminated into violent conflict and polarization of the two groups. Subsequently, a small group of African farmers calling themselves the Main Liberation Army appalled by the government's pro Arab prejudice attacked the local airport and killed some government soldiers. The government responded by sponsoring the jackhammers to quell the rebellion. The jackhammers rode through Nafar killing with impunity, raping women, burning children alive and destroying villages and food supplies. Their victims fled to neighbouring states and the conflict escalated into war. The jackhammers were reported to have profited immensely from the conflict. Despite these atrocities, the Main government has been reluctant to address the crisis and have repeatedly objected to any external intervention except for a small and African Union Peacekeeping force.

Traditionally, the nomads and the farmers have depended on each other for survival. The nomads relied on the farmer's land and water and the farmers relied on the nomads herds to fertilize their land and transport their crops to markets. However, since the outbreak of hostilities, neither group can see a path to reconciliation.

Source: this case study is adapted from Cate Malek The Dafur Region of Sudan http://www.beyondintractibility.org/case _studies/darur.jsp?nid510(accessed03/10/06)

3. The how of conflict identifies the factors that escalate or continue the conflict, and the factors that transform or resolve the conflict. Which factors escalate the conflict? Which factors promote peace? Some factors supporting continuation or escalation may include groups exploiting natural resources for their own profit under cover of war and violence, political differences, poverty or history of previous violence between groups. Factors supporting transformation or resolution may include peace processes, community development efforts in war affected regions, trading relationships (e.g. local markets) that continue across divided communities during times of war, or groups working actively to encourage tolerance and peace.

Factors escalating Conflict: Previous Violence, Poverty, Political Differences, Exploitation of Resources

Factors Promoting Peace: Peace processes, Community Development Projects, Trade Relationships, Community Peace Groups

Exercises: the who, what and how of conflict
1. Who? Identify a conflict familiar to you
Who is involved in the conflict? How do they interact with each other? Where is the conflict centered? Which people or groups have strong positive relationship with each other?
2. What? Using the metaphor of a tree, we can identify the root causes of conflict under the soil, the core problems as the trunk and main support of the tree, and the effects of conflict as the branches and leaves of the tree.
What are the root causes, core issues and effects of the conflict?
3. How? The how of conflict identifies the factors that escalate or continue the conflict, and the factors that transform or resolve the conflict. Which factors escalate the conflict? What factors promote peace? Some factors supporting continuation or escalation may include groups exploiting natural resources, poverty, or history of previous violence between groups. Do you agree?
Discuss conflict transform nation projects that you know about in your locality.
4. Use 3 P framework to analyze conflict.
An analysis of the different types of conflict the parties are engaged in helps the intervener determine strategies for effective handling of the disputes.

The Conflict Cycle

BELIEFS ABOUT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONFLICT

CONFLICT OCCURS

RESPONSE (What we do when conflict occurs)

CONSEQUENCE (What happens then)
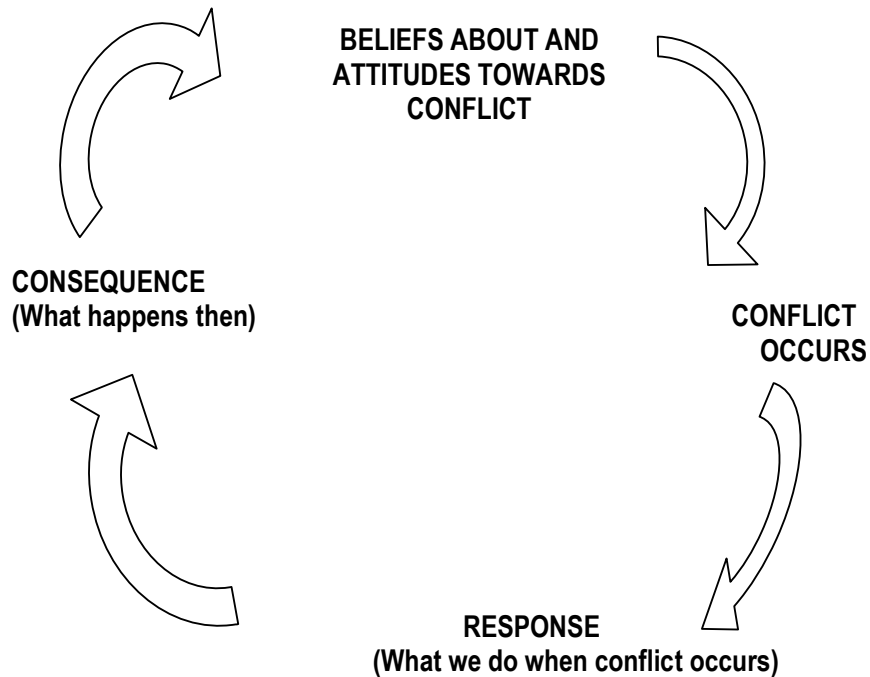
for example: shout; Get visibly anger; Use the
"silent" treatment; Try to sort it out constructively; Agree to
talk it through; Get defensive; pretend nothing's wrong; Withdraw, etc.

1. BELIEFS ABOUT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONFLICT

Our beliefs about and attitudes towards conflict affect how we react and respond when a conflict occurs.

- Where do these beliefs and attitudes come from?

- What kind of messages about conflict have you received?

- Write one example of negative and positive messages.

2. RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

Our response is what we do when a conflict occurs, i.e. the point of taking "action". Our response can be broadly categorized as "fight", "flight" or "flow" responses.

These responses are usually based on what we believe about conflict and our attitudes towards it. We often react with the same behaviour pattern regardless of the nature of the conflict.

- How do you respond to conflict in a situation that involves?
(a) You and your Boss

    (b) You and your friend/partner

    © You and your child

3. CONSEQUENCE OF THE RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

Our response to a conflict situation leads to a consequence. This may be positive or negative for us and those around us. If, for example, we pretend that nothing is wrong, the consequence might be frustration or hurt feelings. If we shout, swear and lose our tempers, the conflict could get worse, i.e. escalate. These are negative consequences.

If we agree to talk about the problem without "losing our cool" "getting at" the other person, this could de-escalate the conflict, open the way for a constructive solution, and leave us with good feelings about ourselves. These are positive consequences.

- What kind of consequence do you usually experience as a result of your responses to conflict in:

(a) You and your Head of Department

(b) You and your friend/partner

© You and your son/daughter

- Are you happy with this? If not, why?

_____

_____

4. INFLUENCE OF THE CONSEQUENCE

The consequence of our responses to conflict often strengthens our beliefs about and attitudes towards conflict, i.e. it reinforces them. This means that the pattern of behaviour will be perpetuated. It can, however, also challenge them and this could lead to a change in our belief about conflict. Either way, the consequence will influence our beliefs or attitudes hence our Cycles can be positive or negative.

- How would you describe your conflict cycle?

_____

5.   POINT OF CHANGE

If we would like to change our **Conflict Cycle** from one that we see as negative and develop one that is more positive, we need to focus on changing our response. This requires gaining knowledge and understanding of appropriate skills and strategies, a willingness to take the risk and try these out and making a commitment to practice, practice and practice. Obviously this means that we need to have an attitude of openness, and want to do things differently. We also need to be prepared to reflect on the consequences of new responses for both ourselves and others with whom we interact.

Here is a short case

Mbalu, and her husband, Santigie often argue about disciplining their children Mbalu, is very firm in her approach while, Santigie is somewhat relaxed. Santigie feels that Mbalu nags too much and at the end of a long day he really just wants to relax. Mbalu feels that Santigie spoils the children and not support her when she is trying to teach them a lesson.

Group Exercise

Notes for the trainer
Divide the participants into small groups. Ask each group to draw their own conflict tree indicating what each part of the tree represent. They should be guided by the discussions they have had so far on conflict to do this exercise. Ask them to present their drawing in plenary for discussion.

De-brief

Discuss the different trees presented by the participants. Take time to explain to the participants what the various parts of the tree represent:

The roots
The trunk
Branches and fruits

The How of Conflict
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Listening Skills for Mediators

Goals:
- To create a supportive environment that help relax parties and focus on the issues.
- To develop rapport and trust with both parties.
- To convey empathy and respect for each person.
- To be able to summarize concisely the essence of each party's view.
- To be able to reflect facts, feelings, needs and intention (paraphrase).

How to achieve these:
- Be attentive
- Be alert and non-distracted
- Be interested in the needs of the other person, and let them know you care about what is said.
- Be a non-judgmental, non-criticising "sounding board".

Don't:
- Use stock phrases such as "It's not so bad", "Don't be upset", "You're making a mountain out of a molehill", "just calm down".
- Get emotionally hooked – angry, upset, argumentative. Don't let your values/biases interfere with what you understand is being said.
- Rehearse in your own head.
- Jump to conclusions or judgements.
- Interrogate or give advice.

> **"Listening is a form of accepting."**
>
> *Stella Terrill Mann*
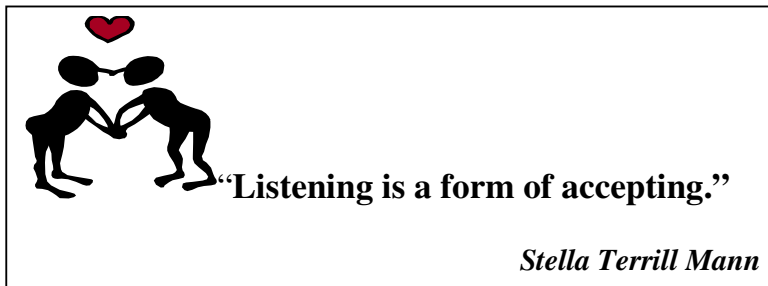
How to Listen Effectively

❑ **Use affirming non-verbal behaviour:**
- appropriate eye contact
- nodding the head appropriately
- use encouraging facial expressions, gestures
- body oriented toward the speaker (head, arms, legs)
- positive tone of voice

Some researchers say that 80% of communication is body language, i.e. what we do with our bodies, faces, eyes, and tone of voice as we are speaking. Therefore mediators must think critically about how to use body language in such a way that the message comes through: *"I am eager to hear and understand you".*

❑ **Give acknowledgement:** *"yeah", "ugh hunh", "I see".*
❑ **Give encouragement:** *"Tell me more" or "I'd like to hear about it"*
❑ Mak**e brief notes** on your pad to keep track, but don't bury yourself in them!
❑ **Summarise** the basic viewpoints of the speaker. A summary is a concise restatement of the key points and can be used to focus each party's statement in terms of issues and solvable problems, rather than personalities.
❑ **Paraphrase** or restate in your own words…(See note on paraphrasing)

Paraphrasing

What is paraphrasing?

Restating what the speaker has said in your own words.

How to paraphrase:
1. **Focus on the speaker**
   - "You felt…", "you're saying..," "you believe…"
   - Not – "I know exactly how you feel. I've been in situations like that myself."

2. **A paraphrase has three components**
   - **Restate facts:** "Your wife locked you out of the house."
   - **Reflect feelings**: body language and tone of voice will cue you to feelings: "And you feel discouraged about things getting any better."
   - **Reflect intentions**: " But you would really like to sort things out with her."

3. A paraphrase contains no judgement or evaluation but **describes empathetically**

   - "so you believe very strongly that…"
   - 'you were very unhappy when he…"
   - "You felt quiet angry with your neighbour in that situation…"
   - "The way you see it then…"
   - "If I'm understanding you correctly, you…"

4. **Act like a mirror not a parrot**. Paraphrase mirrors the meaning of the speaker's words but does not merely parrot the speaker, e.g.:
   Speaker: "I resented it deeply when I found out they had gone behind my back to the boss."
   Why can't they come and talk with me, and give me a chance to sort things out with them?"
   Paraphrase: "you were quite hurt that they didn't come directly to you to resolve things". **Not:** "you resented it deeply that they went behind your back to the boss.
   You wish they had given you a chance to sort things out with them."

   5. A paraphrase **should always be shorter than the speaker's own statement**

Why paraphrase?
- To communicateour understanding to others
- To move the conversation todeeper levels
- To slow down the conversation between the parties
- To "launder" vicious or insulting statements

The use of "I" message

The mediator needs to encourage the parties to use "I" message in order to:
- Lower defences
- Enhance understanding

What is an "I" message?

- ❑ "I" MESSAGE enable us to express our wants, needs and feelings in a non-threatening way.
- ❑ "I" MESSAGE are about flow – not fight or flight. They help us to hold our ground without treating the other person as an opponent.

"I" MESSAGE are structured in a special way:
- ❑ The Action   when…
- ❑ The Response   I feel…
- ❑ The Reasons/Effects   Because…
- ❑ The Preferred Outcome   And what I would Like….

I messages are improved with practice, practice and more practice!

> **"Words are a form of action capable of influencing change."**
> *Ingrid Bengis*

The Action
When calls for an objective description of the action or situation causing the problem. It must be free of emotive words or subjective interpretation.

E.g.   "when I hear someone shouting at me" rather than
" when you rant and rave at me"
E.g.   "when there are papers left on my desk " rather than
"when you leave your junk all over my desk"

The Response
People don't always know how we feel unless we tell them. Our responses can prompt others to reconsider their behaviour in positive ways, as long as we haven't attacked them in the process. They are less likely to get defensive when we say:

E.g.   "**I** feel frustrated" instead of
"**you** drive me up the wall" or "you drive me crazy…"

The Reasons
Giving reasons informs the other person further about the effect a problem is having on us. This encourages understanding and co-operation.

The Preferred Outcome
The perfect "I" message is free of demands. We explain our side of things and what we would like to see happen, but we leave it open.

Language often reflects the perceptions that people have about the situation or about one another. Careful attention to what people say often provides mediators with clues about crucial misperceptions. Such misperceptions can include:

1.   Generalising:

Statement	**Mediator's Response**
"He always comes in late…"	*"when does he come in late?"*
	"What is he late for?"
"No-one cares how I feel"	*"Who doesn't care?"*
	"In what way don't they care?"

2.   Unspecified noun/verb:

Statement	**Mediator's Response**
"I just don't like that sort of thing"	*"Tell us what you dislike"*
"He just bugs me"	*"In what way does he bug you?"*
	"When does he bug you?"
"He never co-operates with me"	*"Co-operate in what?"*
	"When doesn't he co-operate with you?

3.   **Speaking for others:**

Statement	**Mediator's Response**
"I happen to know that no-one around here can on with him either	*"speaking from your own get experience with Mr. Brown tell us more about what* you're

1. Identifying interests/ needs or positions
Goal: **To identify the real interest or need behind positions or "pet" solutions, e.g.: dad and son are arguing about the keys to the car.**

Dad: "I don't want to hear another word about it. You can't have the car."

Son: "But Dad, I've got to have the car."

The positions are: you can't have the car/I must have the car.

The interests are: dad needs the car between 6 and 8, and dad needs re-assurance that son is not going drinking with friends. Son promised to provide transportation for two friends to go to a movie at 9.

Strategy: **Ignore positions and try to get information regarding the underlying interests or needs, e.g. to father: "Help me understand why you don't want to turn over the keys of the car." To son: "Tell us why you need the car."**

Exercise:

- Divide participants into three groups. One group is to define position in a conflict situation. The group may choose to role-play what they mean by position. The second group should describe interest using an example from a conflict situation. The third group should do that for need. Note these may not necessarily be accurate but you would have an appreciation of the participants understanding of the concept.

- Each group reports to the larger group and open a discussion around the concept. Ask the larger group to assess each presentation: what is missing, what new thing has been learned about the concept?

Need

Interest

Position

- Divide participants into three groups. One group is to define position in a conflict situation. The group may choose to role-play what they mean by position. The second group should describe interest using an example from a conflict situation. The third group should do that for need. Note these may not necessarily be accurate but you would have an appreciation of the participants understanding of the concept.

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Position, interest and needs can also be further analyzed using the onion model. The inside of the onion is the need; the layer after the inside is the interest. The outer layer is position. In conflict you often hear the position. It is when you go closer to peal of that layer that you are exposed to the interest and when you go even closer to the need.

Note that analyzing position, interest, and need are always difficult to do in conflict monitoring workshops. Positions are the stance a party takes in a conflict situation. Position is always a show of power or the expression of inner feeling. It is not necessarily what the person wants but he or she believes that by having the position satisfied the interest and ned would be met. In most cases positions may be met but interest and needs may still be lacking. Position is the limited means by which we believe our interest could be served.

Examples of Position:

"We do not want Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone.
"You will not marry into that ethnic group as long as I am your father"
"I rather die than join wonde"
"Joe Nyanga must leave our village"
"Gobi will dance at any time the youths decide"

Interest: Is that urge or satisfaction we hope to get through the position we take. Interest is however more close to the need. It is the satisfier of our need. There may be more satisfiers to a need. Our interest for taking the position on Sankoh is certainly for revenge, to have more control over the resources of our community, to allay fear that they could attack us again, etc.

Need on the other hand is that which we cannot do without. We cannot live without our needs being met. There are several interests that could satisfy a need just as there were several positions that could satisfy an interest. Needs are common to all of us. For example, the need for food, for security, for sense of belonging, for love, for identity, for freedom, etc. We all have these needs. If we consider our needs we would see that all parties to a conflict situation have the same needs. We can then explore how each thing the needs could be satisfied (interest).

What we need to do is to get parties to move out of their positions and to be ale to determine their needs in order to bring a solution to the problem.

2. Generate options

Goal: **To avoid polarised arguments by developing a range of ideas for solution before beginning debate on hem.**

Strategy: **"Let's first of all try to think about ways to solve this problem. We'll discuss them in a few minutes, but for now I just want to hear a range of possibilities." Often it takes persistence to get parties to come up with ideas other than their own pet solutions. Stress that listing ideas does not mean that all are acceptable. List on flip chart/board.**

3. Evaluate options

Goal: **To engage the parties jointly in critiquing the possibilities for solution. They are doing this together, jointly critiquing each solution rather than arguing with each other**

Strategy: **"Let's take a look at each of these possibilities now. What would be the strengths and weakness of this first possibility?" or, "how would this first possibility affect each of you**

4. Choose solution

Goal: **To negotiate a solution acceptable to both parties.**

Strategy: " **Let's hear from each of you now. Given the ideas we've looked at how do you propose we resolve this problem?' meeting separately with the two parties can be effective. Sometimes it is necessary for the mediator to propose solutions: "what if…"**

Focusing on Interests

Understanding Position Vs Interests

1. **Positions:** If people are in conflict they naturally think and talk in positions. positions are statements or demands framed as solutions, e.g.: *I am not moving! You cannot tell me what to do!"*

2. **Interests:** Beneath all position lie the interests of the parties. Interests extend beyond positions and encompass such things as needs, concerns, expectations and hopes.

3. **The role of the mediator** is to direct the focus of parties away from positions and explore interests. Focusing on interests can help parties to move away from competition to co-operation.

   a. Strategies for Exploring Interests

   . Reframe locked-in positions as interests, **e.**g. *"I am not moving! Becomes "you don't perceive your presence to be a disturbance and therefore don't want to move."*

   . Ask why a particular demand is being made, to draw out underlying interests, e.g. *"Help me understand why you view this as so important."*

   . Point out similar interests, e.g. *"As community leaders you are both concerned with…"*

   . General options, e.g. *"what do you think can be done to solve this problem?"*

Action:

. In the following conflict situations:

a) What are the possible interests Underlying the position being taken?

b) What are possible solutions to the conflict?

Situation 1: A group of parishioners in a Church is calling for the resignation of their pastor who was recently discovered having an affair.

Situation 2: A company has announced it intends to shut down a plant owing to major financial losses over the past years.

Methods of Conflict Resolution

1. Force

Power or violence is used to resolve differences

2. Adjudication/ Litigation

Judge/magistrate imposes decision after hearing legal argument from both sides

3. Arbitration

Neutral 3rd party imposes decision after hearing both points of view

4. Mediation

Neutral 3rd party helps parties resolve differences themselves

5. Conciliation

3rd party acts as "go-between" for parties to meet and resolve differences

6. Facilitation

Neutral 3rd party helps to improve communication between parties, usually in a meeting

7. Negotiation

Parties meet (usually without the help of 3rd party) to resolve differences

Introduction to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Concepts and Practice

1. Understanding the Concept of ADR

Brainstorming Exercises

People often have misconception of what ADR is. This section provides opportunity for participants to reflect on what the principle of ADR is and what it stands for. Open the discussion with a brainstorming exercise to assess the group's understanding of ADR. Ask the group the following questions:
- What is your understanding of ADR?
- What is the general perception or understanding of ADR in your work place or community?
- How is ADR used in your country or in your society if at all?
- How do you perceive ADR as a tool for conflict management and conflict resolution in your community?

Group Exercise

Following feed back from the brainstorming exercise, divide the participants into small groups. Have each group answer the following questions:
- For me alternative dispute resolution is……….
- In my country for example in Sierra Leone, ADR means………..
- Allow the group members to share their own understanding of ADR within this group and through a rapporteur discuss their country's perception of ADR

Plenary Discussion
Discuss the group work in plenary. The differences in the responses will draw out the common threads in the perception of what ADR is generally among the group. You can then introduce the group to the formal definitions of ADR.

Questions

- In plenary ask the group the advantages and disadvantages of ADR in comparison to formal justice processes?
- In cases where resources are limited and where formal litigation is expensive for most people, can ADR be a cheaper and effective alternative?
- Can ADR be a substitute for formal judicial processes?

Mini Lecture

ADR is not a new concept. The resolving of disputes and conflict through diplomacy, compromise and conciliation, negotiation and plain talking is a craft that has been around for centuries. In its traditional forms, it has been practised in various forms throughout many traditional systems as a means of dispute resolution for centuries. Its importance as an emerging tool for dispute resolution cannot be overemphasised. Certainly, in most of Africa, it has been a premier way of dispute resolution in communities. In fact, it is often said of ADR that the western world took what was an ancient African practice of dispute resolution repackaged, remodelled and renamed it ADR, and sent the package back to Africa. It is however, at the onset of the 21st century that the business world and various other sectors of life is waking up to appreciate the real value of trying to resolving disputes and conflict in this way, rather than adopt an adversarial approach through the court system. Increasingly, a clear signal is being given to litigants of al kinds and their advisers that the settling of disputes through the courts should be the last resort, and that ADR techniques should be used at the earliest opportunity. All practitioners of conflict resolution and peacebuilding or dispute settlement should have a working knowledge of what is meant by ADR and have a basic grasp of the methodologies for the application of this process. These methods that have been tried and tested over centauries need to be further explored to adapt them to deal with the complex conflicts on the African continent to complement the conventional legal processes that have been adopted in the last few decades.

ADR may be defined as a range of procedures that serve as alternative to litigation through the courts, for the resolution of disputes, generally involving the intercession and assistance of a neutral and impartial third party. As

ADR has developed, a number of different techniques have evolved for administering the process. Although these may appear sometimes to overlap, they are essentially different in their own capacity. Because the process is without prejudice, the parties do not lose control of the process as contrasted with what happens when court proceedings are commenced and proceed to judgment. The purpose of ADR is usually to achieve a binding settlement but a distinction ought to be made between process that create binding obligations as in some cases of arbitration and case involving negotiation, mediation and facilitation whose obligations are non binding. As the world begins to wake up to the realization that there are other methods to resolve disputes, ADR should be embraced as a viable alternative to dispute resolution.- It is generally accepted that it is more beneficial for parties to resolve their differences by negotiated agreement rather than through contentious proceedings. Some of the advantages of ADR are listed below:

Advantages of ADR	Disadvantages
Simpler and more flexible in a manner that litigation cannot	ADR has fewer evidentiary procedural protection
ADR is always settlement geared.	ADR has no legal precedent to strengthen one's own case
It saves time, costs and delay	
It reduces stress and enhances personal satisfaction of the parties	
ADR is perceived as being more straightforward, less stressful, less public and far cheaper than court proceedings	Depending on the process chosen, the decision in ADR processes for instance mediation, negotiation are not legally binding
Where ADR mechanisms are effective, ADR can increase access to justice for the marginalized	
ADR increases flexibility and control of the parties in the procedures followed, in the interest considered, and in the remedies provided	
Parties to ADR tend to arrive at settlements that are more creative, satisfactory and lasting than those imposed by the court	
Because ADRTA is consensual processes which is essentially driven by the parties rather than by their lawyers, parties are liable to retain control over the outcome	

Mediation as an Alternative Dispute Resolution Process

Mini Lecture: Mediation

Mediation is the most common type of ADR. It is a facilitative process in which disputing parties engage the assistance of an impartial third party as mediator to help them try to arrive at an agreed resolution of their dispute. The mediator facilitates communication between the parties to promote settlement of the dispute and to assist the parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement through non legal and non violent means. Mediators as neutral third parties do not have any authority to make any decision for the parties. Because of the neutral role they play, they are not liable for anything done or omitted in the discharge or purported discharge of his/her duty, unless the act or omission complained of is shown to have done in bad faith. This immunity extends to an employee or to an agent of the mediator. This is however not applicable where the conduct of the mediator in the course of the proceedings is criminal. Where mediation is successful, there is no loser. Instead, the contending parties can become partners in workable settlements. Mediation is particularly useful in situations where access to justice in the formal courts is expensive for the ordinary citizen, and in cases where a country is embroiled in internal strife and there is need to meet the interests of all parties involved to pave the way for durable peace

Where do mediation meetings take place?

- The venue where mediation takes place should always be neutral. This will give the parties confidence to talk, to open up and give information and to trust that the means they have chosen will help them come up with solutions to their dispute.
- There should be separate and private rooms available-for long hours if necessary. The room should be conducive and comfortable.
- There should be appropriate sitting plans (the actors sit in a triangle).

When mediation is successful

If mediation is successful, the mediation officer prepares minutes of the settlement and other documents that may be required such as letters of assurances for signatures at meetings. Both parties sign the settlement (release and MOU) which is immediately confirmed by a letter. In some cases the terms of the settlement may not be finished within a stated time but can be finished at a future date. However, notice of this to the mediator before hand and the other party informed would keep the process on form.

Qualities of a good mediator/facilitator

The main goal of a mediator should be to achieve the 7 Ps.

1. **POWER**
   It is often thought that intervenors should be "high-powered" people, who could use their power towards a settlement of conflict between parties. It is true that there are certain types of power which may be used by intervenors. Some intervenors speak with authority, because of the wisdom which they are seen to display. Other intervenors may bring resources to a conflict that make up for the losses which parties expect to incur should they make compromises to reach a settlement. The least useful form of power is the threat of physical, or other punishment, should parties not come to an agreement. Such power is likely only to be effective in the extremely short term.

2. **PATIENCE**
   Conflicts and the attempts to settle or resolve them may be extremely drawn out affairs. The same is true of the negotiation process. The intervenors should not expect to get quick results. A settlement is not normally achieved in a first meeting, for instance. A good-looking settlement should never be rushed into. No one should go into mediation if they know they are not patient and are easily exasperated.

3. **PROCESS**

Intervenor generally makes use of tried and trusted processes. Good intervention process is far more important than any personal skills which the mediator may have. It is vital therefore that the intervenors familiarize himself or herself with intervention processes, and stick with these in practice.

4. **PUNCTUALITY**

Part of the effectiveness of conflict resolution lies in the timing of the attempt. Many intervenors believe that too early an attempt at resolving or settling a conflict is likely to fail. The reasoning behind the position is that parties are most likely to want to settle when they are both hurting. It is therefore felt that a good mediator will have a feel for the moment when the conflict is "ripe for solution". This position seems cynical, and has to be set against the costs to the parties of battling it out the point of "ripeness", as well as the impact on the conflict of relationships which suffers as a result of on going conflictual behaviour. Damaged relationships are likely to give rise to on going cycles of conflict beyond a settlement arrived at due to the pain of the parties at a given moment.

5. **PARTY RATIONALITY**

It is important for the mediator to believe that conflicting parties are serious and rational regarding their positions and stated interests. The mediators should also never attempt to debate the merits of their arguments with the parties.

6. **PERCEPTIVENESS**

Perceptiveness or the ability to listen well is a most important attribute in the intervenor. It is important for the mediator or facilitator to pick up a great amount of information from the parties around the table. Typically, this information would not simply be in the form of facts being verbalized, but would also be in the form of non-verbal signals, such as silence, gestures and body language.

7. **PRIDE, OR THE LACK OF IT**

Related to the belief in the rationality of parties mentioned above, is the issue of humility of the intervenor. The intervenor should not be acting to boost his or her own reputation, and should probably not seek credit for successful conflict interventions. It is important for the durability of agreements, that parties be given credit for their own solutions. They will therefore also tend to take responsibility for these. Humility will also facilitate the ability of the mediator to listen well, and not to engage the parties in debate.

A Recap on Listening Skills for mediators
- Be attentive
- Be alert and non-distracted
- Be interested in the needs of the other person, and let them know you care about what is said.
- Be a non-judgmental, non-criticising "sounding board".

Don't:
- Use stock phrases such as "It's not so bad", "Don't be upset", "You're making a mountain out of a molehill", "just calm down".
- Get emotionally hooked – angry, upset, and argumentative. Don't let your values/biases interfere with what you understand is being said.
- Rehearse in your own head.
- Jump to conclusions or judgements.
- Interrogate or give advice.

Advantages of Mediation
1. It is not expensive
2. It is time saving
3. It is voluntary
4. It is speedy. It helps in processing of complaints
5. It is structured, controlled and less stressful

6. It helps both sides understand each other differently
7. It is informal
8. Confidentiality is maintained

Key Points of Mediation

Pre-mediation

1) The parties must agree that the issue, matter or case will be mediated upon. This may be done by one party writing to the other stating that the dispute be referred to an individual or an institution to assist with the resolution of the dispute.
2) This request may be lodged with an ADR centre, a church, a family elder, an opinion leader, chief or third party who will then invite the other party
3) The parties will agree that the matter be mediated upon. Once this agreement is made, the first step is to appoint a mediator.
4) If possible, submission to mediation may be in writing or other forms of communication. The communication where feasible should be confirmed in writing or other concrete means.
5) Mediation proceedings commence when the other party accepts the invitation.
6) The chosen mediator will then have a meeting with both sides and their lawyers (if there are any) with a view to agreeing the mediation procedures.
7) After an oral communication between the parties, they will agree on the terms of the mediation and sign a mediation agreement.
8) Mediation does not have a set format and will usually follow the style and experience of the mediator. However, typically, certain formats or processes will be followed.
9) Mediation is intended to be short.
10) It is attended by both parties and their legal representatives if any.
11) The parties retain power and are not directly influenced by the mediator in decision making.
12) As part of the pre-mediation process, the mediator may require the parties to submit and exchange statements.

Mediation Stages

Group Discussion

In small groups ask the parties to discuss the stages of a mediation process and add their inputs on what in their view and experience a typical mediation should comprise of. Have a plenary discussion.

A Look at the Stages of Mediation
1. **Introduction Stage**
   - Greeting/seating/ introductions. This an opportunity top break the ice
   - The mediator addresses both parties and i) reminds them of the aim of the mediation so as to achieve a voluntary negotiated settlement. ii) Outlines his/her role as a neutral facilitator not adjudicator to build confidence in the parties that both their interests are a priority to him/her. iii) Outline the possible procedures: such as joint sessions and private sessions iv) Outlines the ground rules: voluntary process, confidentiality will be maintained, no prejudice, respect for each other's position and speaking times. v) check if the parties have authority to settle the matter.
     The mediator is in full control of this stage.

2. **Story-telling Stage**
   - A's perspective and mediator summary
   - B's perspective and mediator summary
   - Clarify and list issues.

3. **Problem-solving Stage**
   - Work through one issue at a time:
   - Ask each party to describe this issue

- Summaries each party's comments in terms of interest (i.e. their underlying concerns or needs, as opposed to their position or demand)
- Invite each party to brainstorm solutions
- If necessary, get ideas going with" what if…"
- Caucus (meet separately with each) as a last resort

Look for opportunities to:
- Suggest that they speak directly to each other (coach direct dialogue)
- Highlight commonalities
- Acknowledge hurt, anger, frustration
- Highlight progress made

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4. Agreement Stage

Mediators summarize agreement to the parties:
- Make sure specifics are addressed – who, what and when?
- Agree on how to handle any further problems that arise
- Ask each party to state their intent to support agreement
- Have agreement written out and signed

Mediation Process

1. The mediation session will usually begin with an initial joint session with the parties. At this session the parties and the mediator will be introduced.
2. The parties have to indicate that they consent to the mediation process and the choice of mediators
3. Typically, the mediator will invite a short statement as to why a party considers that their case is morally in the right, or a short resume of the merits of the case.
4. The opening statement should be made without interruption from the other side
5. It is advisable to obtain a statement of confidentiality, impartiality and neutrality
6. The opening session may also include a statement of commitment to obtaining settlement if possible, and a commendation of the willingness of the parties to cooperate and seek a peaceful solution to their problem
7. The mediator will define mediation, give a description of the process and explain his role in the process.
8. The mediator may then ask clarification questions and sometimes even seek a short response from both sides
9. The most important work is done in caucus. To facilitate this, the mediator should spend time with each side/group separately. The mediator must explain the concept of caucus. These sessions are confidential.
10. The mediator must try to find creative solutions based on the mediator's own experience including for example if it is a debt, stage payments, discounts on future business, apologies, reparations or revised business terms, if applicable.
11. The mediator should obtain permission from both sides to disclose each other's side of thinking to the other.
12. During the course of the mediation the mediator should reconvene the parties as often as possible with a view to summarizing progress and discussing common grounds.
13. At this joint session, each party should describe how they view the dispute, their understanding of the issues, their interests and preferred outcomes.
14. The mediator should meet the parties in caucus to explore in confidence the options for resolution and to agree on the issues to be resolved.
15. When sufficient common ground for agreement has been established a joint session will be arranged to narrow the differences between the parties, to emphasis the process made and to formulate the offers for agreement.
16. If the mediation is successful, the parties will seek to agree and to sign a settlement agreement immediately.

Settlement

1. If the parties reach a settlement, the terms may be drafted with the assistance of a mediator. Once it is reduced to a final written agreement and signed by parties, it becomes legally binding.
2. The parties may through appropriate judicial processes have the agreement entered as a consent judgement.
3. If the parties fail to reach a settlement on all or any of the issues they may opt to submit the issues to another suitable process.

Role Play One:

Fatima, a nine year old girl, her elder brothers and her parents live in Zam Zam, a country that provides for freedom of religion and children's rights in its constitution. Her family is a middle class one which though living in the capital city has maintained ties with the village life and culture under which her mother Mama Joy and her father were brought up. Since coming to the city, mama Joy has embraced Christianity which she introduced to Fatima. Trouble in the home begins when Fatima reaches 12, the traditional prescribed age for circumcision. On discussing this her father and mother are involved in a heated argument with the father insisting that she has to undergo the rites. The father and her brothers argue that it is for her own good that she will not find a husband and that she will become an outcast. Her mother argues that there is no need for her to go through with it, that though she herself was circumcised, she did not know better then and now because her eyes have been opened, she does not see the need for her daughter to go through with this, and that it is Fatima`s right to be consulted on this. She argues that she is not entirely opposed to it, she appreciated the teaching and counsel that goes with the ceremony but is aginst the physical operation-she does not want her daughter through what she went through. Fatima does not want to have it performed on herself but her father remains adamant and threatens to take her to her aunt Maria who has agreed to assist in this. Her aunt belongs to one of the secret societies that take girls through the initiation ceremony insists that it is part of their traditional heritage and if it ever becomes public that she has not been circumcised, she will be branded a prostitute and will never be married. Her mother advises her to run off to seek refuge at a local NGO Women Transformation Network (WTN) that has been advocating for laws to regulate circumcision of girls in the country. WTN approaches approaches the local human rights commission to assist in the matter. The human rights commission has approached Fatima'sbfat6her and mother to mediate over this with the hope of reaching an amicable solution.

The participants should break into two groups:
Find within each group two members of the human rights commission, a representative of WTN, Fatima's father, Fatima's mother, a leader from the traditional structures, Fatima and Fatima's aunt (Maria) who come together to seek resolution of the dispute.

Case Studies

There are two compelling reasons for the use of the case study methodology when conducting conflict transformation skill training. The first relates to concerns regarding the imposition on Africa of concepts and methodologies that are foreign; the second reason for the use of case study methodology addresses the way in which adults learn best. In an important chapter on conflict transformation training in a cross cultural setting, John Paul Lederach coined the phrase "elicitive training". In doing so he relied heavily on the thinking of the well known Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire.

A key prerequisite for presenting a case study is that both the facilitator and participants must have sufficient understanding of it before the training starts, if not the training is heading for disaster. Case Study teaching presented at this training captures the following key assumptions:

- People being trained are themselves the best sources of expertise regarding what they need to learn. In fact, the needs of learners invariably shape the production of knowledge. Put differently, few adults would take trouble to learn anything about something they do not have a speedy need for.
- The main expectation that adult learners have of a trainer is to structure an effective learning environment and process that will assist their reflection on their own experiences. They want to articulate their insight and from there, explore alternative possibilities against the reality that is known to them.
- Knowledge is not transferred from someone who knows a lot to those who know little but is rather created through the interaction that takes place in a carefully facilitated process.
- Implicit indigenous knowledge about ways of being and doing in a particular context is a valued resource for creating and sustaining appropriate conflict intervention models.

In the preparation and presentation of the case studies below, the first step taken is to clarify training objectives and determine appropriateness of the case study using for the audience:

- Conflict analysis: The case structure with its presentation of facts, dilemmas, main characters or parties interacting with each other and the open ended story line with no solution is a valuable method to help learners analyze complex situations. The methodology is particularly useful to enhance the skill of empathy. Empathy refers to the ability to acquire an "inside" understanding of the needs and fears that drive the behaviour of a person or party. The ability to develop empathy with the whole spectrum of actors in a conflict is a key peacemaking skill. The case study methodology encourages empathy because it seeks to understand each party's position "from inside out."
- Designing an Intervention Process: It is an assumption of conflict transformation theory and practice that the process of addressing conflict is at least as important as the outcome or settlement of the conflict. Process matters critically because it is infused with so much of the psycho-social need for respect and participation. A vital skill for peacekeepers is the ability to design a peace process, popularly referred to was a "road map to peace". Such a road map has to be sensitive to the complex needs, fears and interest of all parties. More importantly, the road map has to hold out a vision of peace, to capture the dreams and aspirations that people have for justice and stability. A case study provides an excellent opportunity for participants to try their hand at designing such "roadmaps". Again the case study ensures that it is not an exercise in the abstract, but an engagement with complex reality.
- Skills training: The case approach can be applied to enhance the skills base of aspirant and experienced peacemakers, where these are communication skills, dealing with anger or other strong emotions, facilitation, mediation or negotiation skills. By using the narrative of the case, role plays or simulation exercise can be construed that provide opportunities to practice these skills-again with the benefit of close affinity.

A minimum of two hours will be allocated to each of the six case studies identified in this training for local government officials in Bo and Makeni. In some of the case studies, the names and places and actors have been changed for the purpose of confidentiality.

In all, three case studies, appropriately titled have been identified including:

1. Celebration day crisis
2. Judicial Murder
3. The Best of Times and The Worst of Times

Case1: Akinbolanle Akinteye

Celebration day crisis

The first part of this two-part case focuses on the origins of a conflict that occurs in Asako, a large rural town in Nigeria. An annual community fund-raising event is threatened with cancellation as a result of an unresolved dispute concerning chieftancy in the area. The six quarters - each with its own chief -that make up the community of Asako, are soon embroiled in a conflict that damages community relations that previously were peaceful. Bola, who has recently returned home from studying in the capital, attempts to use his conflict resolution skills to intervene to resolve the conflict quickly and constructively in order to save the Celebration Day from ruin. He joins up with other members of the Stimulus Wits of Aro Club, a local development and peace-building club, to try and accomplish this, but time seems to be against them right from the start.

The case is divided into two parts. Case A describes the dilemma faced by Bola and his colleagues. Case B is an account of the "road map" they followed to bring peace to the community.

Bola had been away from Asako for several years, studying at the University of Lagos. Now he had returned home to attend the fifth Asako Day Celebrations and thus felt a deep sense of disappointment when he learned that the celebrations might be cancelled. Celebration Day was an innovation that had been recently introduced as an annual event and had quickly spread to most local communities in Nigeria. Many local communities had concluded that the government could not cope with their many needs because of dwindling national economic resources. They therefore felt it was imperative to generate development at the grassroots level. Celebration Day was thus primarily a community event aimed at raising funds for local community projects.

The possible cancellation of the celebrations would be a blow to the planned extension of the Comprehensive Hospital in Asako, which depended on money raised by the celebrations, as indeed did the building of the township stadium. Numerous development projects had been accomplished through money raised at previous celebrations and people were looking forward to more such events. Celebration Day had also become a time for people to renew old friendships and even make new ones. It was something of which members of the community, including Bola, felt proud.

Shortly after returning home, Bola had attended a planning meeting for the celebrations. As a young man, he had sat at the back of the room during the third and final meeting of the Asako Progress Union (APU). As he had looked around the room, Bola had realised just how few young people were present. Like him, most had moved from this rural farming community. Those present had been mostly either retirees or teachers working in the town. The meeting had been held to determine the amount of "We feel the Paramount Ruler has used his influence to concentrate development in his section of the town."

Bola recalled with dismay Chief Meeri's unexpected and powerful announcement at the meeting: "Whoever finds delight in playing on the back of a lion will one day find himself in its mouth. Do not expect any contribution from Aso, Jade, Lumo, Gaye and Peeti towards the celebration of Asako Day Anniversary (the other local name for Celebration Day in Asako). Either we change the name of this town to Ilupeju, or these five quarters go their own way!"

Chief Meeri was the ruler of the Jade quarter. His speech had abruptly ended the main discussion at the meeting. Immediately after Chief Meeri's speech, Chief Egbe of Gaye had also threatened: "Should you continue with the planning of the Asako Day Anniversary without

resolving this issue, we will invite the police to arrest members of the APU Executive Committee and disrupt the celebrations."

The Financial Secretary, who was a signatory to the APU bank account and the Aso chief's son, had dropped the files he had been carrying and had left the meeting with the dissenting chiefs. He had also taken with him the money contributed that day towards the preparations, and the APU's cheque-book.

Bola had returned home disappointed and frustrated. In Lagos he had acquired skills in conflict resolution and was certain that a way out of the impasse could be found. He remembered Deacon Leke's suggestion at the meeting: "This issue is best referred to the Council of Patrons."

Leke was a community leader from the Asako quarter. He was also the secretary to Chief Olori, the Paramount Ruler of Asako and a close associate of the President of the APU. Bola had initially felt a sense of relief at this suggestion, thinking that it could be a solution. But he realised immediately that there was a complication – most of the people involved in the conflict were chiefs and were themselves members of the Council of Patrons.

Bola still believed, however, that something could be done to save the situation. He decided to raise his concerns at the Stimulus Wits of Aro Club, of which he was a member. There was a meeting that evening. The club was one of the few in the town whose membership cut across all six quarters. The club's goals were to promote sustainable development, peace and understanding in Aro Land, a province in Oyo State comprising seven major towns, with Asako being the largest. Inhabitants of all the towns spoke the same language and followed the same cultural traditions. Bola discovered that most of the club members were as concerned as he was about the possible cancellation of Celebration Day. They agreed to urgently hold a meeting with Chief Baala, the president of the APU.

Chief Baala lived in Asako quarters. At the meeting with the club members, he revealed that he was disturbed by the new development: "I do not know why someone would bring up this type of issue at this level of preparation. There are only a few days left before the Celebration Day and we need to conclude preparations for the events to be held at Asako. We need people's money to do this. Now suddenly this new development!" He wondered aloud despondently why this was happening during his tenure as APU President and admitted that he had no clear idea of what to do next to resolve the situation.

Bola's mind turned to the moonlight tales of his childhood. His father had told him and his brothers fascinating stories about how the six communities in Asako had come about. In the past, people in the area had lived in five small but close settlements – Gaye, Lumo, Peeti, Jade and Aso. However, in the 1870s the Dahomey War waged by the powerful warriors of the Kingdom of Benin had threatened the small communities in Yorubaland. To protect themselves from being captured and taken into slavery, the people of these five small communities had formed an alliance with the nearby Asako people who had built for themselves a settlement with a formidable army to fight the war.

After the war had ended, the five communities had remained with Asako and had lived harmoniously with one another for more than a hundred years. The Chief of Asako had become the Paramount Ruler after the amalgamation, and the five smaller settlements had become quarters under Asako, with each having its own chief. The entire Asako community now boasted a population of well over 156 000 people, with the Asako quarter comprising about 35 percent of the population.

Bola learned that tension between the communities had arisen in 1993 when the government had given cars to and increased the salaries of "first class" traditional rulers in Oyo State. The Paramount Ruler of Asako, Chief Olori, had been one such beneficiary, which had triggered demands from the chiefs of the other quarters for similar recognition. They had demanded that the paramountcy, which had historically been granted to Chief Olori, be rotated among all the six traditional rulers in Asako. They had also demanded that the name Asako be changed to Ilupeju (meaning "confederation of towns"), arguing that the entire community should not be forced to bear the name of just one quarter. Members of the five other quarters had supported their chiefs in their demands and had additionally demanded that their rulers, who were "minor" chiefs, be included in the Oyo State Traditional Council of Chiefs, a forum for major paramount rulers.

These issues had been raised formally in 1995 by a resolution passed by the entire Asako community. The resolution demanding the status and salary upgrading of the five "unrecognised chiefs" was put to the state government, which agreed to it in December 1996. This had eased tensions among the six quarters over the chieftancy issue and apparently restored relationships. However, the government edict noted that state law required that the name of the town remain the same and that a minor chief could not preside over a traditional paramount chief in a meeting. The entire community had at the time decided they would no longer raise the issue of rotation of the paramount chieftancy. On the surface, it had thus appeared that the edict had resolved the issue and that people had moved on. However, Bola suspected that not everyone had been satisfied with the government's resolution.

Members of the Stimulus Wits of Aro Club held another meeting, at which they generated several options to resolve the impasse around Celebration Day and related issues. They first sought meetings with the six traditional rulers in their different domains and members approached their different chiefs in this regard. However, the ruler of Peeti was the only one who granted them an audience.

He addressed them thus: "I want to let you know that the people of Peeti are not a party to this problem. We will not boycott the Celebration Day. The Paramount Ruler is our leader. However, we want the government to extend some benefits to us as well. I think you should see Chief Olagoke Omos. He can speak to the other quarters because he is the only one they respect and listen
to."

Chief Olagoke Omos, who resided in the Lumo quarter, was a leader elected by the entire Asako community. He was a businessman in Ibadan and commanded wide respect among the people of Asako. The suggestion made by the ruler of Peeti immediately ruled out the club members' hope for a quick resolution to the conflict, which they felt was needed as the celebrations were only four days away. The current suggestion was likely to take up more time - which they did not have. The group quickly arranged to meet Chief Olagoke. He informed them that he had already held consultations with all the parties concerned, which had unfortunately yielded no positive results.

Chief Olagoke recounted some of the speeches of the chiefs at the special meeting he had held to discuss the issue, which showed the different positions still held on the matter. Chief Meeri, from the Jade quarter, had been firm: "I do not intend to make a speech. However, we feel the Paramount Ruler has used his influence to concentrate development in his section of the town. This is not acceptable to us. This is a problem the Paramount Ruler has caused. In Yorubaland there is an adage: 'A virus that thinks it is killing the host is also killing itself.' When the host dies, the virus will not survive. Our chiefs are also interested in the local government chairmanship of the traditional rulers. We cannot accept the permanent chairmanship of the

Paramount Ruler. We have decided that there is no going back on our demand and will not listen to persuasion from anyone!"

Chief Olojo had spoken differently: "We have no problem with this issue. It is very simple to resolve. We will not sell our birthright. We want to be in harmony with people, most especially when it is clear that some people are fighting for their own selfish interests. The holy book makes it clear that one should do away with whatever will disturb you from serving your God. Whoever will prevent peace from reigning in Asako will have to leave. Those people who think the name 'Asako' does not suit them should consider establishing a town elsewhere and call it Ilupeju. Their names will go down in the book of history as founders of a rebellious community!"

Chief Olagoke also informed them that he had immediately invited some religious leaders to intervene in the matter after the aborted meeting held at his house. Again the result had been disappointing. He urged the club members to think of other ways to resolve the problem, as they seemed to have a broad membership and could bring about a positive outcome to the dilemma.

According to one of the club's members from Lumo quarters, the Lumo people were complaining about the conduct of the Paramount Ruler, Chief Olori, who had refused to approve the selection of the present chiefs of Gaye and Aso, even after the government had ordered him to support the selection. Before a chief could be installed in a quarter in Asako, the Paramount Ruler had to approve the selection made by a group of "kingmakers" from the specific quarter in question. In both instances, Chief Olori had refused to approve selections made by the kingmakers. He had expressed a view that those selected were not the rightful candidates. This had generated rancour between him, the kingmakers and the government. Finally, the government had given directives that the candidates should be installed without the Paramount Ruler's approval. Bola also learnt that a splinter Celebration Day Preparatory organisation, the Ilupeju Progress Union, had been formed.

Rumours began circulating that Chief Olojo and the people of his quarter were going ahead with plans for Celebration Day, which would also serve to mark the 20-year coronation anniversary of Chief Olori as the Paramount Ruler. The Ilupeju agitators responded by warning that the Celebration Day would occur "over our dead bodies".

Bola learned that Alhaji Alawiye, a former local government chairman from the Lumo quarter, seemed to have taken a neutral stance on the issue. He had made several discreet attempts at peacemaking, one of which was to initiate a peace committee, but his efforts thus far had failed. Bola believed that the Ilupeju agitators were refusing to work with Alawiye because they viewed him as a traitor to their cause. On the other hand, the people of the Asako quarter were also cautious of him, believing him to be a spy for the Ilupeju agitators.

The Stimulus Wits Club set an emergency meeting for the next day. The Celebration Day was just two days away. Bola racked his brain for a feasible strategy to suggest to the other members. He remembered meeting with members of Dream Works, a Lagos-based nongovernmental organisation which ran conflict management programmes to empower people with skills to resolve their conflicts constructively. This group might possibly be an appropriate organisation to facilitate a process for the resolution of the conflict.   However, Bola was assailed by uncertainty. Was it already too late at this stage for any meaningful intervention by the non-governmental organisation? Was there anything else he and the other club members could do on their own if external intervention was not possible?

CASE 2: Shedrack Best

Judicial murder

In 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), were hanged by the military government of Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP members had been instrumental in trying to ease the plight of the Ogoni people, who, as an ethnic minority in the oil-rich region of the Niger Delta, felt that they were being denied economic, land, political and environmental rights. Shell (Nigeria) had since 1958 exploited oil in the region.

The Ogoni's perception was that Shell had little respect for the environment. They attributed their impoverishment to a large extent to the environmental degradation of their region. As the tension surrounding Saro Wiwa's death mounts, Emmanuel Ubani, Secretary of MOSOP, reflects on the development of the conflict over the years and agonizes over the most appropriate way forward.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. Emmanuel Ubani, Secretary of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), was sitting in his living room in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital. This state in the heart of the Niger Delta was home to the Ogonis and other ethnic minorities in Nigeria. Emmanuel was reflecting on the situation in Ogoniland.

The state-owned local media had carried uninteresting headlines of the day, focusing on what government officials were doing. The Vice-Chairman of the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), John Abagi, had visited him the previous night to discuss the situation. They had both wondered whether the military government would confirm or lift the death sentences passed by a special tribunal on their fellow Ogoni leaders. Emmanuel turned on the television to the CNN news channel in time to hear the reporter announce: "The President of MOSOP, Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with eight others, has been secretly hanged by the Nigerian government."

Emmanuel yelled to his wife in shock: "They will never get away with this! The Ogoni struggle cannot be shot down by soldiers! The struggle continues until the last Ogoni man drops dead!" Emmanuel knew immediately that the repercussions of the hangings would be much wider than the government-Ogoni conflict. There would be widespread international condemnation of the Nigerian government. The leaders of the Commonwealth were meeting in New Zealand and discussion of the hangings would definitely be on their agenda. The Nigerian government would have to brace itself for suspension from the Commonwealth.

The news reporter also quoted the British Prime Minister as saying: "This is judicial murder. I see no basis for Nigeria to remain in the Commonwealth." News analysts speculated that the Americans would threaten more sanctions against Nigeria. The Commonwealth, which had previously condemned Nigeria's military rule, would probably push ahead for the setting of a deadline for the restoration of democracy to guarantee future human rights in the country. Ogonis and their sympathisers would certainly enter a state of mourning. Emmanuel was certain that tensions would rise to even higher levels in the oil-rich Niger Delta, which was largely inhabited by ethnic minorities with deep grievances of deprivation at the hands of the larger ethnic groups. Pro-democracy movements would also capitalize on the hangings to publicize their campaigns.

A few hours later, Emmanuel was even more furious when he heard the Nigerian Foreign Minister on CNN responding independently to reporters' questions about the hangings: "These men were murderers. They could not be thought of as community leaders fighting anyone's cause. How can we be accused of abusing human rights when we sentence to death people

who kill others, prominent Ogoni citizens for that matter? Besides, this is an internal matter and we shall entertain no external interference!"

Emmanuel shook his head in exasperation. Even though the Foreign Minister had not known about the executions until the CNN reporters had questioned him, he had vehemently defended the executions. Emmanuel wondered if people around the world watching the CNN news reports about the hangings had any idea about the conflict taking place in Ogoniland. His tribesmen, over 500 000 Ogonis, were an ethnic minority in the Niger Delta, which generated most of Nigeria's onshore oil wealth.

Most Ogonis were not themselves oil workers but fishermen, hunters and rural agriculturists who lived in the rain forests and along the creeks of the Niger River. For a long time, people in the area had complained about frequent oil spillages and assorted forms of environmental pollution perpetrated by Shell (Nigeria) and other companies exploring for oil in the region. In addition, the Ogonis felt deeply neglected and deprived. Even though millions of barrels of oil had been carted out of their land since 1958, they remained poor and the region underdeveloped. Many Ogonis believed that ethnic groups from the north of the country with political power and a few southern collaborators were the primary beneficiaries of Nigerian oil.

Emmanuel cast his mind back to the days when the Ogonis had established MOSOP in 1992. The organisation was a forum for Ogonis from all over the world to mobilise for a fairer deal from the oil companies and government. Within a year, MOSOP had gained wide-ranging support among the Ogoni people, including women, youths, professionals, farmers and chiefs. The organisation had demanded compensation from Shell (Nigeria) and the government for the pollution to the air, fresh water, creeks and farmlands as a result of spillage, gas-flaring and the destruction of forests in the region.

The executive committee of MOSOP, of which Emmanuel was a member, had articulated MOSOP's position in The Ogoni Bill of Rights, which it had presented to the military government in 1993. The government had reacted to the bill with contempt, and in return MOSOP had stepped up its local and international campaigns. In the process, oil production in Ogoniland had been disrupted, coming to a complete halt at the end of 1993. This had upset the government, which had seen the campaign as a bad precedent that could "infect" other oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. Emmanuel still felt pained when he remembered how MOSOP, with its laudable objectives, was banned by the government. He had interpreted the banning as a short-sighted military response to a conflict that could easily have been constructively resolved.

The previous evening, Abagi had reminded Emmanuel of Saro-Wiwa's words: "There is genocide taking place in Ogoniland. They want to exterminate us." Saro-Wiwa's plea had been clear: "All we want is a political confederation of ethnic groups in which Ogoni resources come under the control of Ogonis. We also want more Ogonis appointed to top government positions in the government federation. Only the Ogonis understand the magnitude of environmental degradation, and we alone can protect and renew our lands. We have the oil. How can we rely on other people to help us out of conditions they do not understand?"

Emmanuel was now faced with the burden of having to step into the shoes of his executed colleague to hold together the campaign. Many dissident Ogoni leaders would now probably flee the country in fear of further retribution by the government. He contacted Abagi for an emergency meeting to deal with the crisis the hangings had plunged the country into.

Emmanuel stated his position clearly: "We understand that this conflict is costing all the parties involved huge sums daily. It is costing Shell US$3 million weekly as a result of a 20 percent loss in international sales. Even with the hanging of our leaders, we Ogonis will not give up our

struggle! Shell will not return to Ogoniland without paying compensation for all the years they have been destroying our environment!"

Abagi voiced his belief that the Managing Director of Shell (Nigeria), Alan Forest, understood the magnitude of this conflict quite well. He knows the cost of interrupting business in Ogoniland and has shown great concern about the dwindling image of his company as a result of this conflict."

Emmanuel reflected on Forest's recent response in the local newspaper to accusations that his company had been behind the trial and secret hanging of the Ogoni leaders: "This problem is between the Ogoni people and the Nigerian government. It is our policy not to interfere with the domestic policy of any country in which we work. We are here for business only. We have nothing to do with the hanging of these men, and we couldn't possibly interfere with the decisions of government."

Forest had adamantly declared that his company had not polluted Ogoniland: "We use less than three percent of the total land for our pipes, flow stations, rigs and other installations. How can we be accused of polluting the land?" Emmanuel recalled a meeting in which Forest had met with the Director of the National Council for Inter-Governmental Relations, Professor Onazi Adakole. Even though he knew that the Council was a government department and likely to be viewed with suspicion by Ogonis,

Forest had expressed hope that the Council might be able to initiate dialogue between the parties. In the meeting, Forest had voiced his suspicion that Ogoni youths were being motivated to join MOSOP's campaign by promises from their leaders for a share of the compensation expected from Shell.

However, Forest had emphasised that his company could not negotiate with the Ogoni people: "We have no problems paying compensation and royalties to the Ogonis, except that government regulations do not permit us to do this. We must pay directly to the government."

Abagi informed Emmanuel that he suspected that the most embarrassed actor in the tragic executions was the Nigerian government. Relevant government officials were already painfully explaining and defending their position. The Minister of Justice, disturbed by severe criticisms of the justice system and blamed by many for stage-managing the trial of the MOSOP leaders, insisted that the trials had been transparent and fair: "Tribunals are a global phenomenon. There is nothing wrong with trying these men outside the normal courts. These people over whom you are
criticising us were murderers with an intense passion for violence. They were found guilty, and no Nigerian is above the laws of the land."

Abagi was sceptical that the Justice Minister's explanation would sway criticism away from the government. Emmanuel and Abagi knew that the Ogonis were not all united in the struggle against the government. News reports indicated that the Ministry of Justice had the support of some of the Ogonis where the hangings were concerned. In 1993, Ogoni leaders had disagreed on the issue of boycotting the general elections. Emmanuel recalled that the executive committee led by Saro-Wiwa had come to power over various disagreements regarding strategies for MOSOP campaigns. The disagreements had involved Saro-Wiwa supporters and more moderate Ogonis, who had been nicknamed "vultures" by the "radicals" for allegedly being pro-government. Shortly after these disagreements, four prominent moderate Ogonis had been murdered by unknown persons late in 1993. The government had suspected the Saro-Wiwa group of MOSOP leaders of the murders and of trying to eliminate the opposition in Ogoniland.

Following the military tribunal and hanging of Saro-Wiwa and the other leaders accused of the murders, the media interviewed Sunday Debega, the brother of one of the four Ogoni moderates murdered in 1993.

Sunday expressed his anger at the criticisms aimed at the Nigerian government: "We are all human. Should the lives of some Ogonis be considered more important than that of others? How about the four people murdered by 'unknown persons'? I am personally delighted that justice has been done at last."

In another news report, however, Sunday expressed concern that the killings had once again raised critical questions in Nigeria, and probably internationally, about the use of military tribunals to try civil cases. He feared that the hangings would be interpreted as a strategy by military officials to eliminate opposition rather than understood as the application of justice for his brother's murder. He pointed out that the absence of the right of Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni leaders to appeal their sentences at the time they had been found guilty of the murders had been a flaw in the tribunal justice system. It was now deflecting local and international attention away from the four Ogonis who had been murdered in 1993. Sunday argued that people might perhaps agree that this was indeed judicial murder but demanded to know how justice could be obtained for his murdered brother.

Emmanuel and Abagi knew that Adakole, the professor heading the National Council for Inter-Governmental Relations, had tried to broker peace among the government, Shell (Nigeria) and the Ogoni community.

Adakole had made his opinion public: "This conflict is unhealthy for the government, Shell and the Ogonis. We have to get them talking." Emmanuel had therefore been devastated when the professor's peace initiative was cut down by what he perceived as unwillingness by the government to proceed with negotiations. He had regretted that the Council was a government department and believed that Adakole might have succeeded if the government had not interfered.

Late that evening, Emmanuel reflected on his dilemma. His position remained steady - "no compensation, no oil production in Ogoniland!" Unfortunately, the government appeared to be no less resolute in its own position - it would just not talk to the Ogonis on this issue. To make matters worse, Colonel Femi Babalola, the military officer assigned to maintain security and ensure the return of oil production in Ogoniland "by any means" was reported in the media to have remarked: "If these Ogonis think they can take the government for a ride, I will deal with them decisively. I am a soldier, and I am experienced enough to know 20 different ways to kill a man! I can assure you that these people will regret their decision to halt oil production! We are not only in government, we are also in power!"

Emmanuel had been discreetly informed by a friend that Shell (Nigeria) was differently inclined and that Forest had made a statement to staff that "we shall continue to talk with the Ogoni people. We believe that it is in our collective interest to resolve this issue by dialogue". Emmanuel turned to Abagi and asked emotionally: "As a banned cultural movement seeking justice and peace, what do we do now? What is the fate of my colleagues in exile? What of those still awaiting trial? Who gains from this conflict after all?"

CASE 3: Vincent Bosman

The best of times and the worst of times

Zakes Nkohla, Chairperson of the Extension 6 Housing Committee, is faced with a difficult situation. The much-awaited housing project in the volatile informal settlement in which he lives has come to a premature halt. A dispute between the building contractor, the local council and the community grows increasingly tense. Winter is approaching and the residents are desperate for houses. The building contractor fears for his life and refuses to enter the area. The National Minister of Housing has made it clear that if the matter is not settled soon, he will withdraw the funds allocated for the housing project and re-allocate it to development projects in other areas. Zakes meets with the Housing Committee in an urgent attempt to find a way to resolve the dispute before it is too late.

Zakes Nkohla felt a cold heaviness descend on him as he looked at the piece of land before him. Broad tarred streets criss-crossed it like a grid of snakes basking in the last rays of the sun. The streetlights, etched against the skyline, looked like people with raised fists punching the air in defiant power salutes. They reminded him that his community was about to explode at any moment. The community of 400 households had suffered through cold and wet winters for the past 15 years in "temporary" shelters. Then news of the housing project had arrived, causing great excitement among the residents.

Zakes remembered the words of community members when they had elected him Chairperson of the Housing Committee of Extension 63: "Comrade Zakes, before the skies cry and the mountains grow a long white beard like madala (an old man), our wives and children will be in real houses!" He recalled how the children, who comprised more than half the population of Extension 6, had run out in front of the bulldozers singing and ululating when construction began on the first street. Now the streets appeared as empty as the many promises that had haunted the community for the past ten years.

Zakes had felt proud when his community had elected him Chairperson of the Housing Committee a year-and-a-half ago. He had really thought that things would be different. Sadly, the only thing different was the solitary house breaking the flatness of the land. It was the only house that had been built in all that time. Zakes felt frustrated and angry. To him, the lone house symbolised his personal failure to deliver on the expectations of his community. Even his own family was still out in the cold.

In post-apartheid South Africa, housing was a major political and developmental issue. Faced with huge backlogs, the new government had to make good on their election promise to provide houses for all. As part of a strategy to enhance local ownership and participation, local Housing Committees were established across the country to represent the interests of prospective home-owners.

Only one family had moved into the new house - the only completed house of the 400 that had been promised. Two other structures stood at roof-height, six at window-height, and 11 with only the foundations laid. Almost at the outset, James Smith, the local building contractor with a small company, had terminated work on the structures. Zakes wondered worriedly what could be done to get the project on track again. He was worried because if building did not resume soon, the Housing Committee would lose the government grants of R17 000 per house allocated for building. This was the community's last opportunity for permanent government supported housing. He just had to make this project work.

Zakes cast his mind back to the sequence of events that had led to this point. In July 1998, six months after tenders for the civil works and construction of the houses had first been submitted,

it was announced that the Roads and Engineering Company (RCEC) had won the contract to service the plots and construct roads at Extension 6. Smith had been awarded the building contract. Two days later, a meeting involving all the beneficiaries had been held at the local civic centre. The Mayor, Mr Njobe, Pieter van Niekerk, a Director of RCEC, Smith, Zakes and all the other members of the Housing Committee had been present. At the meeting, there had been a sense of excitement and expectation in the air.

After the formalities had been conducted and a passionate rendition of the national anthem sung, both Van Niekerk and Smith had addressed the gathering. Van Niekerk had explained that his company would service the plots by preparing the sites for construction of houses, and would construct the roads.

When Smith had the opportunity to speak, there was a loud cheer from the crowd. He had said: "This will be your last winter out in the cold!" He had emphasised that he would use only local labour and employ jobless members of the community to do the work. "I will create employment opportunities and empower you to build your own houses," he had concluded. The community had applauded wildly as he sat down.

By the end of August 1998, the first family had moved into their house. However, the community's excitement had begun to dampen as frustration grew among the local labourers who claimed that Smith had not yet paid them for the work they had done on the houses. Smith had managed to convince them that he would pay them as soon as the local municipality paid him for building each house. This explanation had temporarily calmed the labourers and other community members.

In September that same year, the municipality had held another meeting with the community. Only Van Niekerk had been invited to the meeting. The municipality later admitted that it had been an oversight on their part not to have invited Smith. At the meeting, Van Niekerk had informed the community that the roads had been completed and that the municipality, which had held the funds for the houses in trust and managed the contracts, had paid RCEC in full. He further informed them that the cost for the work he had done amounted to R10 000 per plot, inclusive of servicing the building sites and constructing the roads. Zakes had thanked the municipality for their contribution and commitment to deliver the houses to the community.

Mr Njobe, the Mayor, had then explained that the amount paid to Van Niekerk had been taken from their initial government grant of R17 000 for the building of each house. That in effect meant that only R7 000 remained for the erection of a dwelling or structure. The beneficiaries had been very upset at this news. They had accused the Mayor and the local councillor of theft and fraud.

Eventually, the meeting had turned to chaos and the police had been called to escort the Mayor, the local councillor and Van Niekerk out of In terms of government policy, all first-time home-owners without the ability to finance their own housing receive a government subsidy of R17 000. The infrastructural development of new housing schemes, however, was also financed from the same source, which often led to misunderstanding and anger because it effectively reduced the subsidy per housing unit.

The following day, members of the Housing Committee had met and taken a decision to demand from the municipality the full amount of R17 000 with which to build the houses. They had agreed that it was the duty of the municipality to provide streets and that it was not the responsibility of the home-owners to pay for this from money made available to them for housing. The members had further decided that Smith should pay all the labourers the money still owing to them, and that his promises to "pay them next week" was no longer acceptable.

Smith had responded by advising the Housing Committee that since the community members were building their own houses, they should themselves approach the municipality to reclaim the R10 000 it had paid RCEC from the building fund. Smith had claimed that he himself was still waiting to be paid by the municipality for the labour and materials he had spent on work completed thus far.

The following day, the Housing Committee had convened an emergency meeting with Smith. The members had accused Smith of having cheated the community as he had already received money for the completed house but had not paid any of the labourers. A committee member had even threatened Smith and eventually Zakes had had to intervene. Smith had been forced to leave the meeting.

Smith had immediately called the Mayor and had informed him about the meeting. He had blamed the Mayor for the breakdown in relations between the community and himself. He had also pointed out that the money due to him by the local municipality had still not been paid to him in full. As a local builder with a small company, he depended on the local municipality to pay out the money in phases as the project developed, as he did not have access to bridging finance and therefore needed this money to proceed with the building of the houses.

He had also expressed concern for his continued safety in Extension 6, as some community members were threatening to kill him if he failed to complete the houses before the onset of winter. This demand was impossible to meet as there were 400 houses to complete, a task made all the more difficult now that the community had withdrawn their support to him. Smith had further complained that members of the community were far too demanding and did not want to contribute towards the labour requirements. He was providing them with job opportunities, but at the end of the day it was their own houses they were building.

Smith had accused the municipality of reneging on its contract. When he had applied for the tender to build the houses, he had understood that the total grant of R17 000 per house would be available. Now that it had come to his knowledge that there was only R7 000 available per unit, he felt that the municipality was setting him up for failure. He had been very upset, as his life was now in danger. He would never be able to meet the expectations of the community on the available budget.

He would be forced to scale down the houses, which would mean new plans and further costs that he was not willing to carry. This would increase the delay, as it would take time for the municipality to approve any new plans. The municipality had responded by advising him to read the contract he had signed. Smith had responded that he operated on the basis of trust - to him the contract was just a piece of paper, which only showed that he had been tricked by the municipality.

Three weeks later, Smith had received a letter from the municipality informing him that he was in danger of losing the contract, and that the municipality would sue him for breach of contract if he did not resume the work and meet the agreed deadlines. The letter informed him that the municipality had the power to reallocate the contract and sue him for any damages and losses incurred in the process. Smith had been extremely upset. He had set up a meeting with the Town Clerk, the Mayor and the Councillor for Extension 6, at the Mayor's office.

When he had arrived at the meeting, he had found a placard demonstration led by Zakes waiting for him outside the municipal offices. The demonstrators had demanded the resignation of the councillor who had just bought a new car two days before. They had accused the councillor of having used their money for his personal use and demanded that he return it to pay the labourers still waiting for the money owed to them for their work on the building project. They had demanded that Smith pay the outstanding money he had "stolen" from the workers.

The Mayor had instructed the Town Clerk to call the police to control the crowd. Chaos had ensued and the doors of the building had been locked. There had been a complete breakdown in communication and eventually the crowd had dispersed, promising that worse was to come. The following day, the media had carried front-page news about the protest meeting.

And now Zakes was very worried. Winter was drawing closer, the atmosphere in the community was volatile and the housing project had come to a standstill. His interventions since the protest action seemed to have led nowhere. He had called a meeting with the Housing Committee to share his concerns with the other members. He had showed them a copy of a letter sent to the Mayor, which the Mayor had passed on to Zakes.

It was a direct communication from the National Minister of Housing to the Mayor regarding the housing conlict at Extension 6. The directive from the Minister was clear: "After receiving various enquiries from the newspapers, I hereby request you to immediately attend to the dispute over the housing project at Extension 6. It is you as the local authority that must secure the project to completion. You asked for development tenders and awarded the tender to Mr J. Smith. It can therefore not be left to the civics and community committees to decide who must continue with the development of the housing project. Your Municipality must make the decisions in this regard. If you are unhappy with Mr J. Smith, his services should be terminated immediately and the Provincial Housing Board accordingly informed. This province cannot afford to allow 'gatekeepers' to delay projects and create more pressures for local development.

The Provincial Government is currently experiencing a shortage of funds for housing projects. Failure to complete the Extension 6 project would mean wastage of funds that could have been used more fruitfully for other projects. This financial loss will be due to the delays caused by your municipality.   You are hereby notified to furnish me, within 21 days of receipt of this letter, with a comprehensive report stipulating your strategy to resolve the crisis at hand. If I am not satisfied with the report, funding for this project will immediately be withdrawn. The Extension 6 housing project will then be placed indeterminately on a list for future funding.

Your efficient co-operation on this matter will be appreciated." "Members of the Housing Committee," began Zakes after a heavy silence had settled on the group following the reading of the letter. "I think we should urge the Mayor to call in an independent mediator to help salvage the project and meet the Minister's demands. It is time we admitted that in this matter of our homes, we are now caught in the best of times and the worst of times. Maybe it is only an outsider that can help us now."