

Commonwealth Youth Programme  
Diploma in Youth Development Work

## Module 10

# Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills

Commonwealth Secretariat  
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## The Commonwealth Youth Programme's Mission

CYP works to engage and empower young people (aged 15–29) to enhance their contribution to development. We do this in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.

Our mission is grounded within a rights-based approach, guided by the realities facing young people in the Commonwealth, and anchored in the belief that young people are:

- a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance,
- a catalyst for global consensus building, and
- an essential resource for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

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## Introduction

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Whenever two or more people interact, either as individuals or as part of a group, there is always potential for conflict. It is no different when you interact with young people in a work setting: the potential for conflict is present. It is important that you are aware of that potential so that you are able to identify a conflict situation and intervene appropriately to control it.

Workers dealing with young people are often confronted with difficult situations in which they may be asked to assist in resolving young people's problems and conflicts. These may be internal problems of relationships within a youth group, or relationships between young people and those in authority, or even conflict between yourself and the young people you are working with.

This module has been designed to help you understand the nature of conflict and its effects on people in a range of contexts, both at an individual and at a group level. We will also look at the processes involved in behaviour that occurs between different groups, called inter-group behaviour, and its potential impact on group members.

You will become familiar with techniques designed to facilitate the resolution of conflict, which will improve your ability to work effectively with and through conflict. Conflict can lead to both positive and negative outcomes, depending on how it is handled. Handled effectively, conflict can become the catalyst for new ideas and creative approaches for solving problems. It can also be the starting point for developing more positive relationships among the people that are party to a conflict.

Throughout the module, we will draw on practical examples from within the Commonwealth that illuminate the theory and practice of mediation and negotiation.

You are going to need examples of conflict to produce the assignments on which you will be assessed later on in the module. To do this, you might like to collect newspaper articles about current interpersonal, social and political conflict in your country or community. Other ways to collect material include listening to the radio, talking to your family or friends and observing incidents in your youth group – and making notes.

You need to practice the analytical skills you have been developing throughout the course by identifying the causes and consequences of conflict, working out what you might do as a youth development worker in ensuring the resolution or positive outcomes of conflicts and passing these skills on to others.

## Module learning outcomes

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Learning outcomes are statements telling you what knowledge and skills you should have when you have worked through the module.

### Knowledge

When you have worked through this module, you should be able to:

- identify examples of conflict in the region where you live, understand their origins and describe the course the conflicts have taken
- recognise the different approaches that have been used in resolving conflict, and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches
- apply the insights gained from studying conflict situations to the kinds of conflict that are encountered in youth development work
- outline the principles and practice of conflict resolution
- identify inter-group conflict and its underlying causes.

### Skills

When you have worked through this module, you should be able to:

- recognise the existence of pre-conflict and conflict situations when they are encountered in different youth and development settings
- apply the theory you have studied to the analysis of conflict situations and assist others to do the same
- employ negotiation and mediation skills in bringing together conflicting groups or individuals
- consider strategies to resolve conflict when agreement cannot be reached by consensus.

## About this module

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The module *Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills* is divided into four units:

### **Unit 1: What is conflict?**

In this unit you will learn about some of the key theories related to conflict and distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflict.

### **Unit 2: The conflict process**

This unit aims to increase your awareness of the sources of conflict and the conflict process. You will learn about the different ways that people deal with conflict.

### **Unit 3: Resolving conflict**

In this unit, you will learn about techniques designed to resolve conflict between individuals and within groups.

### **Unit 4: Inter-group conflict**

This unit examines conflict resolution in an inter-group context, and looks at methods for successfully managing inter-group relations.

Each unit will address one or more of the module learning outcomes.

This table shows which units cover the different module learning outcomes.

Module 10 Learning outcomes		1	2	3	4
<b>Knowledge</b>					
1	Identify examples of conflict in the region where you live, understand their origins and describe the course the conflicts have taken.	x	x	x	x
2	Recognise the different approaches that have been used in resolving conflict, and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.		x		
3	Apply the insights gained from studying conflict situations to the kinds of conflict that are encountered in youth development work.		x	x	
4	Outline the principles and practice of conflict resolution.		x	x	x
5	Identify inter-group conflict and its underlying causes.				x
<b>Skills</b>					
6	Recognise the existence of pre-conflict and conflict situations when they are encountered in different youth and development settings.	x	x	x	x
7	Apply the theory you have studied to the analysis of conflict situations and assist others to do the same.		x	x	x
8	Employ negotiation and mediation skills in bringing together conflicting groups or individuals.		x	x	x
9	Consider strategies to resolve conflict when agreement cannot be reached by consensus.		x	x	x

## Assessment

This module is divided into a number of units. Each unit will address some of the learning outcomes. You will be asked to complete various tasks so that you can demonstrate your competence in achieving the learning outcomes. The study guide will help you to succeed in your final assessment tasks.

### Methods

Your work in this module will be assessed in the following two ways:

- A report of about 2,000 words – outlined at the end of the module (worth 80 per cent of the final mark).
- A review of the learning journal you keep – see below (worth 20 per cent of the final mark).

The institution in which you are enrolled for this Diploma programme may decide to replace part of the final assignment with a written examination (worth 30 per cent of the final mark.)

**Note:** We recommend that you discuss the study and assessment requirements with your tutor before you begin work on the module. You may want to discuss such topics as:

- the learning activities you will undertake on your own
- the learning activities you will undertake as part of a group
- whether it is practical for you to do all of the activities
- the evidence you will produce to prove that you have met the learning outcomes – for example, learning journal entries, or activities that prepare for the final assignment
- how to relate the assignment topics to your own context
- when to submit learning journal entries and assignments, and when you will get feedback.

### Learning journal

Educational research has shown that keeping a learning journal is a valuable strategy to help your learning development. It makes use of the important faculty of reflecting on your learning, which supports you in developing a critical understanding of it. The journal is where you will record your thoughts and feelings as you are learning and where you will write your responses to the study guide activities. The journal is worth 20 per cent of the final assessment. Your responses to the self-help questions can also be recorded here if you wish, though you may use a separate notebook if that seems more useful.

For Module 4, Assignment 2 – The learning journal – requires you to produce the following material:

- 1 The notes and records from the activities included in each unit
- 2 At least 10 'reflective' entries that record reflections on your paid or unpaid face-to-face work with young people and/or other aspects of your work as a youth development worker (e.g., staff supervision, networking with other organisations). Each reflective entry should use the following format:
  - (a) Brief description of what happened and what you did
  - (b) Brief reflection on why it happened and why you took the action
  - (c) What ideas or theories explain (a) and (b)
  - (d) What would you do differently next time? What would you do in the same way next time? Why?

Again, we recommend you discuss the assessment requirements with your tutor before you begin, including how your learning journal will be assessed.

## Self-test

Take a few minutes to try this self-test. If you think you already have some of the knowledge or skills covered by this module and answer 'Yes' to most of these questions, you may be able to apply for credits from your learning institution. Talk to your tutor about this.

**Note:** This is not the full challenge test to be held by your learning institution for 'Recognition of Prior Learning'.

Put a tick in the appropriate box in answer to the following questions:

	Yes	No	More or less
Are you aware of conflict within the region where you live, and can you describe the origins and the course events have taken?			
Can you discuss different approaches that have been taken or advocated to resolve these conflicts, and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches?			
Can you explain how you would apply the lessons learned in these situations to the resolution of conflict that can be encountered in youth development work?			

	Yes	No	More or less
Can you discuss the principles and practice of conflict resolution?			
Can you describe inter-group conflict and its underlying causes?			
Have you ever assisted a group of young people to work successfully through a situation of conflict?			
Can you recognise conflict situations in a variety of settings?			
Can you assist others to apply conflict resolution theory?			
Can you describe and demonstrate the negotiation and mediation skills you used in that situation?			
Can you describe the theory of consensus?			
Have you ever designed a strategy to progress a conflict when a consensus cannot be reached by the parties to the conflict?			

## Learning tips

You may not have studied by distance education before. Here are some guidelines to help you.

### How long will it take?

It will probably take you a minimum of 70 hours to work through this study guide. The time should be spent on studying the module and the readings, doing the activities and self-help questions and completing the assessment tasks.

Note that units are not all the same length, so make sure you plan and pace your work to give yourself time to complete all of them.

## About the study guide

This study guide gives you a unit-by-unit guide to the module you are studying. Each unit includes information, case studies, activities, self-help questions and readings for you to complete. These are all designed to help you achieve the learning outcomes that are stated at the beginning of the module.

## Activities, self-help questions and case studies

The activities, self-help questions and case studies are part of a planned distance education programme. They will help you make your learning more active and effective, as you process and apply what you read. They will help you to engage with ideas and check your own understanding. It is vital that you take the time to complete them in the order that they occur in the study guide. Make sure you write full answers to the activities, or take notes of any discussions.

We recommend you write your answers in your learning journal and keep it with your study materials as a record of your work. You can refer to it whenever you need to remind yourself of what you have done. The activities may be reflective exercises designed to get you thinking about aspects of the subject matter, or they may be practical tasks to undertake on your own or with fellow students. Answers are not given for activities. A time is suggested for each activity (for example, 'about 20 minutes'). This is just a guide. It does not include the time you will need to spend on any discussions or research involved.

The self-help questions are usually more specific and require a brief written response. Answers to them are given at the end of each unit. If you wish, you may also record your answers to the self-help questions in your learning journal, or you may use a separate notebook.

The case studies give examples, often drawn from real life, to apply the concepts in the study guide. Often the case studies are used as the basis for an activity or self-help question.

## Readings

There is a section of Readings at the end of the study guide. These provide additional information or other viewpoints and relate to topics in the units. You are expected to read these.

There is a list of references at the end of each unit. This gives details about books that are referred to in the unit. It may give you ideas for further reading. You are not expected to read all the books on this list.

**Please note:** In a few cases full details of publications referred to in the module have not been provided, as we have been unable to confirm the details with the original authors.

There is a list of Further Reading at the end of each module. This includes books and articles referred to in the module and are



suggestions for those who wish to explore topics further. You are encouraged to read as widely as possible during and after the course, but you are not expected to read all the books on this list. Module 4 also provides a list of useful websites.

Although there is no set requirement, you should aim to do some follow-up reading to get alternative viewpoints and approaches. We suggest you discuss this with your tutor. What is available to you in libraries? Are there other books of particular interest to you or your region? Can you use alternative resources, such as newspapers and the internet?

## Unit summary

At the end of each unit there is a list of the main points. Use it to help you review your learning. Go back if you think you have not covered something properly.

## Icons

In the margins of the *Study Guide*, you will find these icons that tell you what to do:



### Self-help question

Answer the question. Suggested answers are provided at the end of each unit.



### Activity

Complete the activity. Activities are often used to encourage reflective learning and may involve a practical task. Answers are not provided.



### Reading

Read as suggested.



### Case study

Read these examples and complete any related self-help question or activity.

## Studying at a distance

There are many advantages to studying by distance education – a full set of learning materials is provided, and you study close to home in

your own community. You can also plan some of your study time to fit in with other commitments like work or family.

However, there are also challenges. Learning at a distance from your learning institution requires discipline and motivation. Here are some tips for studying at a distance.

- 1 **Plan** – Give priority to study sessions with your tutor and make sure you allow enough travel time to your meeting place. Make a study schedule and try to stick to it. Set specific days and times each week for study and keep them free of other activities. Make a note of the dates that your assessment pieces are due and plan for extra study time around those dates.
- 2 **Manage your time** – Set aside a reasonable amount of time each week for your study programme – but don't be too ambitious or you won't be able to keep up the pace. Work in productive blocks of time and include regular rests.
- 3 **Be organised** – Have your study materials organised in one place and keep your notes clearly labelled and sorted. Work through the topics in your study guide systematically and seek help for difficulties straight away. Never leave this until later.
- 4 **Find a good place to study** – Most people need order and quiet to study effectively, so try to find a suitable place to do your work – preferably somewhere where you can leave your study materials ready until next time.
- 5 **Ask for help if you need it** – This is the most vital part of studying at a distance. No matter what the difficulty is, seek help from your tutor or fellow students straight away.
- 6 **Don't give up** – If you miss deadlines for assessment pieces, speak to your tutor – together you can work out what to do. Talking to other students can also make a difference to your study progress. Seeking help when you need it is a key way of making sure you complete your studies – so don't give up!

## If you need help

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If you have any difficulties with your studies, contact your local learning centre or your tutor, who will be able to help you.

**Note:** You will find more detailed information about learner support from your learning institution.

*We wish you all the best with your studies.*

# Unit 1: What is conflict?

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## Unit introduction

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Welcome to Unit 1 *What is conflict?*

Conflict is intrinsic to social life. During the course of your activity as a youth worker, it is highly likely that you will be involved in conflict situations. Many of these situations will consist of relatively minor incidents: for example, an exhibition of bad manners by a young person who turns her back on you when you are giving instructions about where and when you will be meeting for a volleyball match. Sometimes, however, these situations will consist of much more serious matters: for example, confrontation with a member of a group who has been stealing from other members.

As you learn about the origins of conflict in this unit, we will compare and contrast the phenomenon of conflict from several different views:

- 1 functionalist
- 2 structuralist
- 3 human relations
- 4 interactionist.

We will attempt in particular to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflict.

## Unit learning outcomes

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When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the four views on conflict: functionalist, structuralist, human relations and interactionist
- differentiate between task and relationship conflict
- analyse a conflict situation, and determine the level of conflict and whether the conflict is functional or dysfunctional.

## Definitions of conflict

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Conflict is an inevitable social occurrence because human beings have widely varying needs, interests and viewpoints. One of the values of conflict is that it sharpens our awareness of whether or not we are committed to respecting the opinions of others and whether or not we have the skills to work through and resolve our differences with others.

At times, there will inevitably be areas of conflict between you and the young people you work with. There may also be conflict between:

- you and your work colleagues
- youth development practitioners and the agencies they work for
- the prevailing laws and what the young people you are leading feel compelled to do.

You may also face inner mental conflict that impacts on your work.

Conflict between and among groups is also very natural, given that groups tend to be in positions of rivalry over relatively scarce resources: land, wealth, jobs, territory, reproductive resources, etc. Before further exploring the concept of conflict between groups, let's agree on what a group is.

### Defining a group

A group is a social unit that:

- (i) consists of a number of individuals who, at a given time, stand in definite interdependent status and role relationships with one another,

and

- (ii) explicitly and implicitly possesses a set of values or norms regulating the behaviour of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group; thus shared attitudes, sentiments, aspirations and goals are related to, and implicit in, the common values or norms of the group (Hogg and Abrams, 2001).

There are various sociological perspectives of group conflict. Some commentators will accept that there is a situation of conflict only when there is open struggle such as fighting. Others require there to be only the existence of competing claims to scarce resources. The following definition of conflict illustrates this latter perspective:

“Conflict is...a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about.”

(Robbins et al, 1994, p. 565)

Conflict thus represents a clash of ideas, interests, values, behaviours or the competing needs of two or more individuals or groups (who are the 'parties' to a dispute). It is not always a win–lose struggle since most instances of conflict occur when individuals share the same goals and simply disagree over the means by which these goals can be achieved.

Regardless of the divergent perspectives of the concept of conflict, one of two common themes can be found in most situations:

- the conflict occurs around tasks
- the conflict occurs around relationships.

These common themes will help you to understand and deal with conflict in a youth development context. Because you will be working in teams, it is important to recognise the two types of conflict that affect team performance, based on the themes identified above:

- 1 **Task conflict:** This type of conflict concerns disagreements over the content of the tasks being carried out – for example, differences of opinion among the young people involved in a project on how best to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 2 **Relationship conflict:** This type of conflict concerns interpersonal hostility and tensions between individuals, rather than conflict over the task being carried out.

## Levels of conflict

Conflict occurs in many different spheres (ranging from the personal to the broad social and environmental) and at different levels. We can identify four levels of conflict:

- **Intra-personal:** conflicts that occur within the consciousness of an individual
- **Interpersonal:** conflicts that occur between two or more individuals (including family and friends)
- **Intra-group:** conflicts that occur within a particular group
- **Inter-group:** conflicts that occur between two or more groups (e.g. ethnic or religious groups).

Sometimes inter-group and intra-group conflicts can be manifested at the organisational, national and international levels due to political, social, economic and even environmental factors. For example, tribal conflicts can surface among government agencies over supposedly non-tribal issues when governments are formulating social policy in the national context rather than the local, tribal context.

## Perceiving conflict

Whether a conflict exists or not is normally an issue of whether or not it is perceived to exist. For a conflict to exist, the situation must be

perceived as a conflict by the people or parties who are involved. If no one is aware of a conflict, it is generally assumed that no conflict exists, though a key tenet of Marxist analysis is that the working classes are in structural conflict with the ruling classes in capitalist society, whether they know it or not.

In your practice, you should be wary of entering into conflict situations until you have fully ascertained whether the conflict has a real basis. Perceived conflicts may not be real. For example, you may have found yourself arguing with a friend and realised at the end of the argument that you were both saying the same thing in different terms. The initial perception of conflict may have been caused by difficulty in communicating your ideas to each other. This would sometimes appear to be the case when sects of the same religion are in conflict over matters of small differences in the interpretation of scripture, though sometimes these are very real conflicts of principle.

As Marxists have realised, many circumstances that could be described as situations of conflict do not become conflicts, because the parties involved do not perceive the conflict. For example, despite equal pay legislation and commitment to the International Labour Organization's convention on equal pay, there are many examples of women in Commonwealth countries who receive significantly less pay than men for doing equal work. In some situations, women have perceived this as a conflict and converted it into a real conflict in order to address the inequity, especially when influenced by radical feminism (see below). In other situations and in some industries, it remains a potential conflict situation, but not one perceived by the parties; hence it has not yet become an overt conflict situation.

## **Conflict behaviour**

Let's consider the example of resources: all resources are limited and therefore relatively scarce. People's needs (or wants) often exceed resource availability. This imbalance between the available resources and the needs (or wants) of the people often causes 'blocking' behaviour, with both parties trying to get more of the resources than the other side. The parties are likely then to be in opposition. When one party is perceived to block the access to the resources of another, a conflict will most probably result.

To identify a conflict situation one should assess whether the conflict is caused by an intentional act – that is, somebody does something on purpose – or whether the conflict is caused by an unintentional act – that is, somebody does something accidentally.

The question is then whether blocking behaviour is likely to be a conscious and intended action, or whether it might have occurred as a result of circumstances. For example, in many Commonwealth countries, the eldest son in a family traditionally inherits more resources from his parents than the other siblings. However, given the modern democratic context, does this suggest to the other siblings that the eldest son, in collusion with the parents, has deliberately



blocked their access to family resources? Today that might well put the eldest son in a formal conflict situation with his siblings, one that could end in court.



### Activity 1.1

(about 20 minutes)

This exercise is to help you develop your own understanding of conflict.

Reflect on a conflict situation in which you have been involved. For example, it could be conflict within a staff team, differences of opinion among youth workers, conflict between members of a youth group, etc. It can be at any level (intra-personal, interpersonal, intra-group or inter-group).

Discuss the conflict with your co-workers and/or your tutorial group or your peers and then make some notes about the nature and type of the conflict in your learning journal. Reflect on the following questions to guide your group discussion:

- How many people were involved?
- How did you feel (if you were personally involved)?
- Was the situation perceived as being one of conflict?
- Was it over scarcity of resources?

**Note:** Your responses to this activity will help you complete your final assignment.

We hope you enjoyed the discussion with your peers and that you were able to make good reflective notes in your learning journal. We will get back to this activity further on in this unit. Next, let's look at how we can view conflict within a social context.

## Views on conflict

Depending on what perspective we use to analyse society as a whole, we can look at social conflict through four different lenses:

- 1 functionalist
- 2 structuralist
- 3 human relations
- 4 interactionist.

In Module 2 *Young People and Society*, you learned about three perspectives to study society (functionalist, structuralist and interactionist), so the names of these views will be familiar to you.

The views on conflict are closely connected with these social perspectives, so now may be a good time for you to revise Unit 1 of Module 2 so that you have the key concepts behind each one of the perspectives in mind as you look at conflict.

## 1 Functionalist

The functionalist view of conflict is determined by the functionalist view of society (refer to Module 2 *Young People and Society*).

Functionalist thinkers argue that the prevailing forms of social behaviour and social structures in a given society have developed as natural, manageable developments of the way that society has evolved. Therefore, many social conflicts are functional for the problems that that particular society has to resolve. When you point to examples of caste or gender conflict, functionalists are usually able to say that there are underlying social changes that are making the existence of certain caste or gender relationships out of date. Therefore, these traditional relationships are dysfunctional for modern society. The caste and gender conflicts are therefore functional because they will help the society to adapt to the change.

Where repeated patterns of conflict occur and are eventually resolved, then those patterns of conflict function to ensure that the society goes on adjusting sensibly to change. Such are the conflicts between teenage children and their parents in capitalist societies, for example. In rapidly changing social systems like capitalist societies, teens are the ones who carry the seeds of social change, hence they are the first to make the inevitable adjustments that their elders often later accept. An example of this view on conflict in capitalist societies is the sexual freedom of young people compared with their elders. Eventually, as the conflict situation evolved, the whole society tended to become more sexually permissive.

Functionalists interpret the many forms of conflict that we observe in society as a natural part of the process of living together and resolving our social problems. Capitalist societies are based on competitive processes, so we inevitably see frequent struggles between workers and managers, women and men, the old and the young, those within the law and those outside the law. Functionalists argue that these struggles can be resolved by intelligent leadership and good management.

Over the years, the social structure has had to change in order to accommodate the new forces that are at work within societies, groups and individuals. Functionalists see this as a valuable response to changed conditions – unlike conflict theorists, who tend to see it as part of an ongoing social revolution. Functionalists point to societies like Vietnam, for example, which won its freedom fighting as a communist revolutionary society against the US capitalist superpower, in a war that many people described as an ideological struggle against world capitalism by poor people. Yet, today Vietnam

is developing as a very successful capitalist society, with America as one of its major partners.

As a youth leader you may find that there are some people or groups causing conflict that you can do nothing about. Functionalism says that their behaviour is dysfunctional for the society in which they are working, and/or it may be dysfunctional for them if they wish simply to achieve more social prestige or success than they are getting. Your skills may not be enough to deal with this, though social analysis will help: either human relations analysis and/or structural analysis will assist in examining the social class/ caste tensions. It may be that the conflict theorists are right, and that what you are facing is part of a revolutionary struggle to establish a new social order, based on very different lines. This may well be what is happening among some young Christians and some young Muslims.

## 2 Structuralist

The structural view of conflict starts from the idea that human societies progress and develop primarily through social conflict: the struggle between social factions who are basically hostile to each other, even though for long periods they may co-exist peacefully. Let's look at social conflict under the following three perspectives:

- Marxism
- capitalism
- radical feminism.

### Marxism

The main influence on structuralist conflict theorists is the work of Karl Marx, though the essential ideas have now become strongly influential in radical feminism, whose conclusions are very different from Marx's (see below). Marxists analyse societies, including the history of pre-capitalist societies, in terms of structural conflicts for control of the production and distribution of wealth in a society. Marxists say that this conflict may sometimes take the form of a religious struggle, but at base it is a political and economic struggle. This conflict is fought out also in the world of ideas or ideology, and each side will try to get control of the ideology of the mass of the people in order to gain power.

In capitalist systems the basic conflict is between those who have the control of production and distribution of wealth (the bourgeoisie) and those who have to sell their ability to work to the capitalist system (the proletariat). You will probably be able to see this for yourself if you work with unemployed youth. They are likely to be unemployed because, in a world where capital is free to go wherever it wants, the people who have the money want to invest it where it creates most profit. Today that will be mainly in places such as China, where the costs of production are cheap but the economic infrastructure is developed. It's very difficult for working people to fight against this in

the global market because there are few barriers to rich people and corporations who want to put their money where it will earn most for them.

Let's look at one example: in the summer of 2006 Peugeot Cars (UK) decided to shut their major British factory so that they could concentrate production where their costs would be cheaper. The trade unions were unable to prevent this by discussion, so instead they called on the British public to stop buying new Peugeot cars, in order to put pressure on the company that way.



If you look at Reading 1 'Crushed by Well-Heeled Global Boots', which is an article by Michael Meacher in the UK *Times* of 8 June 2006, you will see the full nature of the problem.



## Activity 1.2

(about 15 minutes)

In your learning journal, write a paragraph saying why, in your opinion, the article you have read describes a conflict that is structural in nature. Don't forget to refer to the text in the article to justify your reflections.

On the wider stage, these conflicts are having an enormous effect on poor countries, particularly on the poorest groups. In the following case study, you can see how the underlying structural conflict was carried to European centres of power by activists from India and all over the developing world.



## Case study 1.1

### The Inter-Continental Caravan

In 1999 several hundred activists from India and other developing countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal and several countries in Latin America, came to Europe to protest against the greed of multinational companies and banks and the free market policies that are directly threatening the world's poorest people.

Under the aegis of the Inter-Continental Caravan, the activists launched their civil disobedience protest – a form of agitation favoured by Gandhi during the freedom struggle in India.

Those involved described it as the first time the poorest and the most disadvantaged people in the world had demonstrated en masse in the developed world against corporate greed and the unfair rules of international trade.

The activists took part in gatherings and actions in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.

## Radical feminism

Radical feminism – ‘radical’ here meaning looking at root causes rather than extremist – takes a structural conflict view of society, but in this case, the two social factions in conflict are women and men. The movement also points to the evidence for this struggle as the main human struggle throughout history. Radical feminists explain that, because men have usually come out on top as winners in this conflict, the achievements of women have been hidden by male historians. Just as the rich exploit the labour power of the working classes and label them as intellectually and socially inferior, so have men done this to women. Women’s labour in home-caring and family development is unpaid in financial terms and badly recognised in most societies, where men are usually in control. But this form of labour is crucial in maintaining living standards and, through the support of children, many of whom will be the organisers and leaders of the coming generations, women are the gender mainly responsible for overall social development. Women do the majority of the world’s work, but have much less wealth than men and own a very small proportion of the world’s property.

As a youth development worker you will most likely encounter these conflicts between the proletariat and the rich, and between women and men, in your practice. The conflict between women and men will be visible in how the work is organised, what the distribution of opportunities is between males and females, the nature of the gender relationships in groups and so on. It can be difficult to deal with because of social sensitivities and social norms, especially in societies where women are supposed to show modesty. But it does require at least partial resolution if you are to get the best out of your groups. If the feminists are right, women are the key to social progress. You will be able to help young women and men understand this concept, as you work with them to build up women’s skills and enormous potential.

## 3 Human relations

Human relations theorists have extended the ideas of functionalism by a sophisticated analysis of what managers and leaders need to do in order to manage conflict in human groups, as you have studied in Module 2 *Young People and Society*. As a youth development worker, you are being trained to mediate and manage: to recognise the signs of dysfunctional behaviour among your clients, to analyse the likely causes of it, and to make adjustments to the situation so that your group can pursue and meet its objectives satisfactorily. The reason behind this training philosophy comes from the ideas of functionalist administrators, who posit that conflict is the result of poor communication, narrow mindedness and lack of trust between people. The functionalist human relations view of conflict is consistent with the perspective of the local administrators who replaced the old colonialist authoritarianism in many Commonwealth countries.

The view that all conflict is the result of bad people management provides a clear framework for analysing the behaviour of people who create conflict, and for developing strategies to address that conflict. According to a functionalist human relations view, most conflict can be avoided if we direct our attention to identifying the causes of conflict and focus on programmes that help people to avoid future conflict.

Skilled leaders and managers can reduce and resolve local conflict to a useful extent, depending on the nature of the conflict. While, for example, you will be unable to resolve major issues of gender conflict by confronting the local gender issues sensitively in your group work and developing the right insights and skills in the young men and women you work with, you can develop their skills to effectively deal with these issues in the real world.

Recent research indicates that the human relations approach to conflict reduction does not necessarily lead to improved long-term relationships between groups or individuals. Often the conflicts are structural, as in the case of the Mau Mau struggle against the colonial seizures of traditional Kikuyu land holdings in Kenya. Not even bodies as powerful as the United Nations can resolve structural issues very easily and effectively, as the ethnic conflicts in Somalia show.

The human relations view on conflict maintains that many conflicts cannot be avoided, and therefore have to be faced up to and worked through. Moreover, this view sees conflict is an opportunity; it offers a challenge to personal growth and development, as well as a means of promoting change or social cohesion, clarifying an issue or finding a solution to a problem. To this end, we can say that conflict can be an honest confrontation that respects diversity, and creates environments where differences can be expressed non-aggressively.

Those who endured the kind of savage political conflicts that took place in Nazi Germany, in wartime China following the Japanese invasion, in Rwanda and in Darfur have undoubtedly found it extremely difficult to achieve any kind of resolution. And it seems almost insulting to view conflict through a human relations lens, as a means to resolving those post-conflict traumas that are so horrific. However, the social and psychological damage done by such trauma needs to be undone if that is possible.

Social healing is clearly demonstrated in the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, where people who have committed even the most horrendous of racist and political crimes are enabled to face their accusers in open court. With the prospect of amnesty and therefore without threat, they are enabled to acknowledge their guilt through a full confession, and to plead mitigation if there is any, while the evidence for and against them is made public. The end of the process is moral and public forgiveness. The alternative is a life of hiding, fear and reprisals, and bitterness and revenge. In the words of Tanya Glaser of the Conflict Research Consortium (at the University of Colorado, USA):

“Amnesty also suits the Commission’s philosophical approach to justice. Justice is achieved not by retribution, but by the restoration of community. Healing communities requires truth-telling, forgiveness, acceptance and trust.”

Conflict Research Consortium, 2006

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a visionary form of human relations conflict resolution at work. It has been proven as an immensely practical way of resolving one of the most horrific conflicts in human history, caused by the exploitation of native African labour by a ruthless elite and its doctrine of apartheid.



### Activity 1.3

(about 20 minutes)

Take some time to consider whether the underlying elements of the human relations approach might be employed in conflicts that you know about that currently lack resolution. In your learning journal, describe how an approach similar to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could be used to resolve the conflict you have identified. At the next opportunity, discuss your views with your peers or with your tutor.

Human relations theorists defend the position that conflict is a natural process in all relationships: individuals and groups have different values, interests, goals and needs, which more or less trigger conflicts. Given that it is inevitable, it should be accepted – though we need to learn how to deal with it. Conflict cannot be eliminated from human interaction, and there are times when conflict will benefit those who are a part of it. The following case study shows how the human relations view can work in practice. In this case study, Sir George Lepping skilfully converts a damaging conflict between himself and Nathaniel Waena into a public relations triumph, used to demonstrate how unified their party is and how it can readily cope with differences of principle.



## Case study 1.2

### Conflict as a tool

Everywhere in the world, conflict between politicians and/or community leaders is something we are constantly made aware of by the media. A closer look at the story below shows how politicians use conflict to achieve their goals and develop policy positions for their parties and countries. The key to electoral success for many political parties lies in their ability to:

- unite people who may hold conflicting views, under one set of principles
- use that tension to develop creative responses to problems.

A falling out between the leaders of the People's Alliance Party (PAP) parliamentary and party wings was solved in the Melanesian way, according to party President, Sir George Lepping. He confirmed to *The Solomons' Voice* that there had been some differences of opinion between himself and the parliamentary wing leader, Mr Nathaniel Waena, over their public statements on the resignation of the Prime Minister from his own party SINURP.

"I did not think our supporters were hearing a realistic view of the situation. MPs tend to go on the attack to other MPs, whereas the party has to look at issues within a wider context," said Sir George.

He says that after he received a letter from Mr Waena outlining the differences of opinion, he held an executive meeting followed by an evening function.

*"We shook hands and did it in a Melanesian way," he says. "Now we are stronger for it and have come together better to fight the coming election. The party is the entity, with appointments given at the wish of the party," he says. "I think we need to become more mature and admit to the need for discussion and dialogue instead of jumping up and down."*

Mr Waena says the matter was an internal one, venturing into the private concerns of the party, and should not attract too much attention. The PAP executive includes the party president, four vice-presidents and an executive of which the parliamentary wing leader is a member.

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## 4 Interactionist

The interactionist view on conflict has many similarities with the human relations view. Both rely on social interaction and relationships between groups and between individuals to perceive conflict.

The core of the interactionist view is that the processes of social interaction have a powerfully influential effect on the behaviour of the members of an interacting group. Where a group interacts over a period of time, this may be very influential in deciding members' long-term characteristics, such as the intelligence and skill of their interactive behaviour, their self-beliefs and so on. In managing groups, interactionists can very usefully encourage creative conflict on the basis that an over-friendly, cosy set of group relationships can be prone to stand still, becoming dull and unresponsive to the need for change. The interactionist approach encourages group leaders to preserve an ongoing undercurrent of conflict to ensure the group remains innovative, self-critical and self-developing so that individuals can increase their open-ended potential in a given situation. Module 1 *Learning Processes* talks about this potential at length.

Skilled teachers make use of the natural conflicts of views and opinions in groups in order to stimulate new thinking and to get their students searching underneath their opinions for evidence and logical argument. This can even be done in science classes, where students can be stimulated to explore and challenge each other over the reasons for the phenomena they are investigating. Knowing that people can build up their insights and skills themselves by these processes enables the teacher to teach in greater depth.



### Activity 1.4

(about 20 minutes)

Now that you have studied the four different views on conflict, explain your understanding of the similarities and differences between them.

Once you have reflected on these ways to look at social conflict, if possible discuss your views with a tutorial group or fellow students.

In your learning journal, write down the key aspects that surfaced in your discussions.

## Analysing conflict

There are many variations on the basic positions presented in the previous section. The variations in these views have their roots in different answers to the difficult question of whether conflict is inherent in human life or not. Those who think that it is inherent look for the causes of conflict either in the genetic structures of the human mind laid down by evolution or in the dynamics of social structure, whereas others look for the causes in the patterns of human interaction. Those who believe in random outburst theory refuse to accept that there are any causal patterns to conflict, as you can conclude from reading the following article.



Now read Reading 2: 'Theories to analyse conflict situations' at the end of this module. Reflect on your reading and complete the following activity.



### Activity 1.5

(about 20 minutes)

In your learning journal, briefly synthesise each of the theories described in the article by Dr Pramod Kumar that you have just read. In bullet format, make a list of what you think are the key characteristics of each one.

Before you can contribute to the resolution of conflict, it is necessary to:

- develop an understanding of conflict situations
- be aware of any theoretical perspectives to help you to construct a theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting conflict situations for yourself.



### Activity 1.6

(about 15 minutes)

- 1 Refer back to the conflict situation that you described in your learning journal in Activity 1.1. Based on what you have learned in this unit so far, try to apply any relevant aspect of the theories as the basis for interpreting that situation. Describe how you would go about it in your learning journal.
- 2 In your own words, write down in your learning journal your definition of conflict.

As you have learned, most conflict can be a danger or an opportunity; as such, it is inappropriate to say that all conflict is either good or bad. Whether a conflict is good or bad depends on the type of conflict and the way it is handled. In other words, one's attitude and reaction to most conflict makes it either constructive or destructive. In the next section we will look at the difference between functional conflict and dysfunctional conflict.

## Conflict in groups

The functionalist distinction between functional (good) and dysfunctional (bad) conflict is not exact. There is no set framework against which one can evaluate whether a level of conflict is acceptable or unacceptable, under all circumstances, to all people. For example, many people perceive violence differently in war and in peace. The so-called ANC 'terrorists' who fought against the tyranny of apartheid have become recognised as members of a liberation struggle in the post-apartheid world. Like the Viet Cong in Vietnam and others in liberation struggles, they are perceived as functional when they have achieved the success of eradicating unjust systems, and dysfunctional in the eyes of those who benefited from the unjust system that these people were struggling against.

While the interactionists believe conflict is an essential part of human relations, it doesn't necessarily follow that all conflict is good. If the conflict improves a group's performance in achieving its goals, then it is a functional, constructive form of conflict. If a conflict between members of a group hinders the achievement of goals, then this is destructive or dysfunctional conflict. But how can you tell if a conflict is valuable for the group?

### Group performance

The measure that differentiates functional from dysfunctional group conflict is group performance. As groups exist to achieve goals, the impact that a conflict has on the group – not the impact that it has on any individual member of the group – defines whether it is functional conflict.

To evaluate the impact of conflict on group behaviour, individuals' perceptions of whether the conflict was good or bad are therefore irrelevant. A group member may perceive an action as dysfunctional for her or him personally, but if the action contributes to the achievement of the group's goals, it is functional.

Now read the following case study and then answer the questions in the self-help section.



## Case study 1.3

### Handling conflict

A youth group in Apoteri decided to produce a pamphlet showing young people how to put on a condom, as part of a programme to promote safe sex practices among school children. It was funded by the Department of Health in Guyana. They wanted to use a very talented cartoonist who was in their group, and who had produced promotional materials for street kids on the same issue.

The group talked to the principals at the local high schools about the pamphlet, and gained their support to go ahead, on one condition. The principals requested that the group use another cartoonist as they felt the language and pictures in the previous materials were too controversial. After much discussion, the group agreed to the condition, and the initial cartoonist left the group after a huge argument.

Another artist was employed and the pamphlet was produced, and distributed throughout the schools. Feedback from the principals on the pamphlet was very positive. However, a year later, the number of school children with new STD cases recorded at the health services was the same as the previous year.



### Self-help question 1.1

(about 20 minutes)

Discuss the case study with your fellow students or a tutorial group and then make some notes in your learning journal to answer these questions.

- Do you think this is an example of functional or dysfunctional group conflict? What determines functionality in this case?
- How do you think the original cartoonist perceived the situation?
- Do you think the group handled this situation well?
- Do you think there were alternative ways of handling this situation? If so, describe the alternatives.
- How responsible is the youth group for the lack of change in behaviour of the school children in relation to safe sex?

*Compare your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.*

Well done! To continue applying the ideas you have learned, read the case study we present you next and then resolve Activity 1.7.



## Case study 1.4

### Moderating conflict

Trinamul Congress, which supports the BJP-led ruling coalition from outside government, refused to join the Government if it was not given an important Ministry like Railways. Railways, India's largest public sector employer, is now held by the SAMATA Party, another coalition partner.

Earlier, the BJP President, Mr Thackeray, had said that he could not annoy SAMATA to please Mamata. Mamata Banerjee, the Trinamul leader, continued to breathe fire over being rebuffed by the SAMATA Party and the BJP, on her demand for the Railways Ministry.

She turned down the mediation offer from the Defence Minister, a SAMATA Party leader. At Trivandrum, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said today he didn't see any threat to his minority government.

Asked to react to Mamata's rejection of his offer of talks, he declined to comment, but stated: 'We would like to have both Mamata and SAMATA'. In a subsequent development today, the Trinamul Congress stated that it would continue to support the ruling coalition from outside and would not join the Ministry. The issue is a closed chapter now.

From *The Indian Express*.



## Activity 1.7

(about 30 minutes)

Discuss Case study 1.4 with your tutorial group, co-workers or peers and then respond to the following questions in your learning journal.

- Who were the main parties involved in this conflict?
- Was it an inter or intra-group conflict? Explain your answer.
- What was the cause of the conflict?
- Do you think that this is a case of functional or dysfunctional conflict? Explain why.
- Were there any benefits gained as a result of this conflict? By whom?
- Were there any losses due to the conflict? By whom?
- Explain the conflict from each of the following views: functionalist, interactionist, human relations and structuralist.

Now review the concept of functional and dysfunctional conflict again, then resolve the following activity.



## Activity 1.8

(about 15 minutes)

Reflect again on the conflict situation that you chose to discuss in Activity 1.1 and then again in Activity 1.6.

In your learning journal, explain how this conflict is either functional or dysfunctional. If there are both functional and dysfunctional aspects, explain them.

## The conflict paradox

If we are to acknowledge and accept the interactionists' position that conflict is necessary for a group to achieve its goals, why are so many of us uncomfortable with conflict? The answer is that many societies in the Commonwealth are founded on the traditional functionalist view.

Tolerance of conflict is counter to many cultures in the Commonwealth, where home, school and religious institutions are generally the most influential during our childhood years when we are developing our attitudes. For the most part, these institutions have traditionally reinforced the importance of getting along with others and avoiding conflict.

Parents generally set the standards that they expect their children to observe and comply with. School systems reinforce this model of authority. Teachers provide education to children, have codes of conduct and set exams in which students are rewarded for getting their answers to agree with those that the teacher has determined are correct.

Most religious institutions have also supported anti-conflict values, emphasising peace, harmony and obedience to authority. For example, when the head of the Roman Catholic Church, or the Shankaracharya of the Hindus or the Imam of a Mosque speak officially on religious matters, they are generally held to be infallible by their congregation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this traditional perspective on conflict continues to receive wide support, although conflict is manifested daily in a most dangerous form. Others may be experiencing conflict at home, in their community or organisation, or maybe with the law.

As you will have seen in Module 6 *Commonwealth Values*, some organisations, like the Commonwealth, recognise this paradox and deal with it in the following way. On the one hand, members encourage creativity and functional conflict, while on the other hand they insist on continuity, consistency and commitment to common values. In the Commonwealth, open communication and expression of the diversity of views is actively encouraged but, at the same time, members support a consensual approach to decision-making. The special strength of the Commonwealth lies in the combination of the diversity of its members with their shared inheritance in language, culture and the rule of law. The Commonwealth way is to seek consensus through consultation and the sharing of experience.

## Unit summary

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The tensions among the different theories we have described are symptomatic of the division between the macro and micro levels of analysis and explanation characteristic of social science.

On the basis of this brief review of these theories, it may be concluded that a study of conflict behaviour needs to take into account the macro or social structural factors on the one hand, and the micro or behavioural and attitudinal factors on the other. Social conditions do have a significant impact on people, but it is their perceptions that make them see certain social conditions as undesirable or as being the underlying cause of their problems.

All these theories have strengths and weaknesses. Each theory also has a radically different implication for the types of intervention to resolve conflict. Each theory makes different assumptions about the parties to the conflict, and has different implications for the scope and effectiveness of the change expected to result from intervention. Improving the communication skills of young people and their parents may improve their relationships, but it will not have an impact on their economic situations, which may be a more significant factor in their situation of conflict.

Any attempt at resolving conflict that ignores one or the other of these factors fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of a conflict situation. Several dimensions of the problem need to be considered: structures, individual characteristics of the parties and social attitudes. A multi-faceted approach to problem-solving and conflict resolution is necessary to successful resolution.

In this unit you have covered the following main points:

- Definitions of conflict, including levels of conflict, how conflict is perceived and conflict behaviour
- Different views on conflict – functionalist, structuralist, human relations and interactionist
- Ways of analysing conflict in order to develop an understanding of conflict situations
- Conflict in groups
- The paradox that if conflict is necessary, why so many of us are uncomfortable with conflict.

To check on how you have done with your learning in this unit, look back at the learning outcomes and see if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to remind yourself of what you have learned and the reflective thoughts you noted down.



In Unit 2, we will move beyond the definitions and theories of conflict, to look at the conflict process from potential for conflict to the outcomes of conflict.

## Answer to self-help question

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### Self-help question 1.1

As mentioned in the text, it is often very hard to ascertain whether a conflict in a group has been functional or dysfunctional.

Obviously, the conflict in the case study has been dysfunctional personally for the original cartoonist. He missed out on a job he would obviously have liked to do.

The group did achieve its objective of producing a pamphlet on safe sex practice, so the conflict for the group was functional. But if the goal of the group was to have an impact on the safe sex practices of young people, and the production of a pamphlet was merely a vehicle for the information, it was dysfunctional because it didn't yield an effective result.

We have no indication from the case study as to whether the group attempted to address the concerns of the principals regarding the cartoonist. Maybe spending time addressing this at the beginning would have yielded a better solution. They could have kept the cartoonist, and the pamphlet might have been more successful. But maybe the problem wasn't the second cartoonist – maybe it was the key messages in the pamphlet.

Do you see what we mean? It isn't easy to analyse whether conflict is functional or dysfunctional.

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# Unit 2: The conflict process

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## Unit introduction

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Welcome to Unit 2 *The conflict process*. In this unit we will outline the conflict process and summarise the sources of conflict. We will also look at five styles or strategies that people use to handle conflict.

The common perception is that conflict is usually destructive. This is, however, a simplistic view, and we will examine both the benefits and disadvantages of conflict.

## Unit learning outcomes

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When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

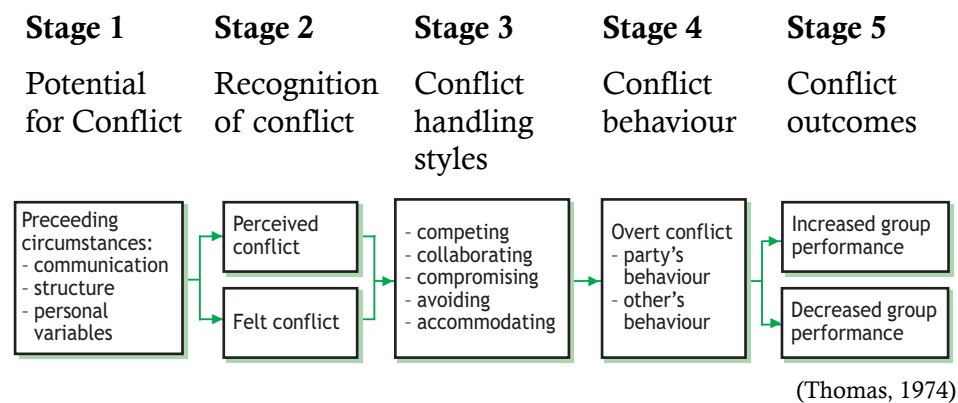
- describe the conflict process in your own words
- identify at least one characteristic of each of the five stages of the conflict process
- outline the five conflict handling styles and give examples of conflict situations where each style could be used effectively.

## The conflict process model

The conflict process can be modelled around five stages:

- 1 potential for conflict
- 2 recognition of conflict
- 3 conflict handling styles
- 4 conflict behaviour
- 5 conflict outcomes.

The following flowchart offers a representation of how these five stages relate to each other as well as what happens at each stage.



## The five stages

### Stage 1: Potential for conflict

The first stage in the conflict process is the presence of circumstances that have the potential for conflict – that is, a pre-conflict situation. The circumstances do not necessarily result in conflict, but at least one of these circumstances needs to be present if conflict is to occur. The sources of conflict can be categorised into three groups of issues where problems can arise:

- communication
- structure
- personal variables.



## Communication

While communication problems are clearly not the cause of all conflicts, they are the most frequently cited source of interpersonal conflict. Barriers to effective communication can include:

- the use of language that is incomprehensible to the receiver of the message
- the emotional states of the sender and receiver
- filtered or inadequate information from the sender
- selective hearing and perception by the receiver.

Good communication can make the effective resolution of conflict possible; poor communication can block people from collaborating and can perpetuate misunderstandings.

Research has established that conflict can occur not only when there is too little communication taking place, but also when too much communication takes place. An increase in communication is functional up to a certain point. After that point an increase in communication becomes increasingly dysfunctional, with more potential for conflict. Both information overload and lack of information can cause conflict.

### **Communication channels**

The communication channel chosen by the sender can also cause friction when it is not the channel to which the receiver is accustomed. Many of the countries in the Commonwealth have an oral tradition, where history and culture are communicated to the next generation by word of mouth, sometimes in the form of myths or stories with a deeper moral or practical meaning. Unless you are accustomed to the style of oral transmission being used, there is always the possibility of not really hearing what is being said.

The same is also true of writing. Many cultures have a written tradition, where information is passed on through books and newspapers. But where this writing is taking place, and the traditions that have been built up in the writing medium, will determine how well you can decode what is being said. When you first look at social science writing, for example, you will probably be puzzled by what is being said. Then, when you get used to it, it becomes part of your thinking and no longer baffles you.

Preferred communication channels should, as far as possible, be employed to avoid causing friction. This issue was taken into consideration when developing the Diploma in Youth Development, as people's preferred communication channel affects their favoured learning style. To some extent, learning techniques appealing to a range of students have been built into the modules.

A major part of your role as a youth development worker is communicating with a wide range of people in a variety of different

circumstances, including young people, co-workers, government officials, parents, other members of the community, volunteers, journalists and teachers. Different groups will have somewhat different preferred modes of communication – ranging, for example, from informal and intimate when dealing with young people in your group to socially distant and formal when reporting to funding or management committees.

One of the skills youth workers need is to be clever at working out what is the best way to communicate with the different groups and individuals they meet. It is important to be able to adapt your communication style to each situation, particularly when there is a potential conflict situation. If you have completed Module 7 *Management Skills*, this would be a good time for you to review the section on managing communication in Unit 3.

In your workplace, try listening to and observing groups and individuals at work, and see what you can learn from those who are good at communication. It takes time to develop real skill.

Reading 3 at the end of the module will provide you with a resource for basic communication skills.



Read Reading 3: 'Directions – A training resource for workers with young people in New South Wales', by the NSW Department of Community Services.

It's a resource paper about:

- basic listening, questioning and feedback skills
- communication in conflict and crisis.

We hope you found the reading interesting. Now we suggest you engage in the role play activity that follows.



## Activity 2.1

(about 40 minutes)

### Role play

Work with two other people from your tutorial or peer group. Take turns acting out the following roles while you explore each of the scenarios described below:

- a youth development worker
- an observer
- the person who has the problem or who is causing the conflict.

### Scenarios:

- You need to remove a young person who is drunk and becoming violent at your fund-raising dance.
- You need to speak to a parent who is angry that you have provided information to her unmarried daughter about the planned parenthood association in town.
- You need to speak to a colleague who is not pulling her weight in conducting her share of the consultations with young people that you are jointly responsible for.
- You need to defuse, with the property manager from the town council, a conflict situation provoked by the damage done to the community hall by your youth group.
- You need to console a young person who wishes to continue her education but is unable to do so because of lack of available places.

### Discussion:

At the end of each scenario, the observer and the person with the problem should offer some constructive feedback to the youth worker on her/his communication skills, including listening, body language, questioning, feedback, reflecting. The youth worker needs to be debriefed on how s/he felt and how successful s/he thought her/his management was of the situation (including managing her/his own emotions). Write the results of the debriefing session in your learning journal.

## Structure

The word 'structure', as one of the groups of issues where conflict can arise, is used in the context of interpersonal relationships to describe, for example:

- an asymmetrical relationship between individuals (e.g., teacher and student, parent and child)
- important differences in power (e.g., the differences in social power between oneself and one's peers, the youth development worker and a young person)
- the roles and role-related activities that are assigned to people.

In a group context, the term is used to include:

- the size and organisation of the group, including definitions of roles and the authority allocated to each group member in a specific situation
- style of leadership
- range and compatibility of group members' goals (e.g., there is a potential for conflict if members of a netball team have vastly different goals in being part of the team, such as some wanting just to socialise and others to compete and win, particularly when the team is failing to perform in the league).

Groups within organisations, associations or communities have diverse goals. Within a youth organisation, some groups may be primarily interested in sporting activities – and would like, for example, to see the acquisition of a volleyball net. Other groups may be interested in conducting a fund-raising event to send a representative to a United Nations Youth Forum, and others may want to run training workshops on environmental issues.

This sort of diversity of goals between different groups in an organisation is potentially a major source of conflict. Due to limited resources, when one group achieves its goals it is likely to frustrate the other groups who have lost out in gaining the available resources. In addition, reward systems have been found to create conflict when one group member gains something at the expense of others. For example, the selection of one particular representative to the United Nations Youth Forum could cause friction in the group that has achieved that goal. Also, if one group is dependent on other groups to gain resources (the sports group needs everybody to participate in the fund-raising to get their equipment), the potential for conflict is increased.

Research shows that an authoritarian style of leadership, where the group leader has a great deal of control over other group members' behaviour and makes most of the decisions without consultation, increases latent conflict. However, other research shows that encouraging participation by group members in decision-making can also stimulate conflict.

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch researcher who has contributed a great deal to our understanding of the role of socio-cultural factors in the management of groups. Hofstede administered a survey to 116,000 employees with similar occupations in over fifty different national subsidiaries of the same multinational corporation. The questionnaire contained value statements that reflected four indices or dimensions along which the cultures of various countries differed. One of those dimensions was large/ small power distance (Hofstede 2001).

### **Power distance**

Large power distance describes a situation in which people accept that power is distributed unequally in organisations. Small power distance describes a situation in which people want power to be equally shared and will always require justification for any differences in power distribution. The former condition entails greater acceptance of hierarchy than the latter.

The following table shows the value of the index for thirteen Commonwealth countries in which Hofstede conducted research. The higher the number, the greater the tendency to large power distance.

Country	Power distance index
Australia	36
Britain	35
Canada	39
India	77
Jamaica	45
Malaysia	104
New Zealand	22
Pakistan	55
South Africa	49
Singapore	74
West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)	77

Strategies of group leadership that emphasise democratic consultation and decision-making with young people are more congruent with small power distance cultures than cultures with large power distance. This understanding can make a difference in the use of planning techniques for youth programmes. In spite of the aim to democratise youth work, this suggests that youth development workers in India and Malaysia may have to begin work with a group using rather more authoritarian methods than they would in Jamaica or New Zealand. Otherwise this could be a source of latent conflict. Of course, the aim of the Diploma is to increase democratic skills among young people, but you may have to do this more carefully and

slowly in some situations, depending on the cultural values of the communities.



## Self-help question 2.1

(about 20 minutes)

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has defined three main principles that underlie the practice of youth development work as enabling, ensuring and empowering young people.

- 1 Review the first section in Unit 1, Module 3 *Principles and Practice of Youth Development Work* and briefly explain these three principles.
- 2 Where do you think an organisation based on these principles would be on the Hofstede scale?
- 3 Where do you think your country would be on the Hofstede scale?
- 4 What challenges and opportunities does this present you with?

*Compare your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.*

## Personal variables

Obviously, within a particular cultural norm, each individual has a unique value system and personality characteristics that are an aspect of individual differences. Differences in both value systems and personality characteristics are significant potential sources of conflict within any group.

Read the following case study and then answer the questions in Activity 2.2.



## Case study 2.1

### Perception, reality and communication

Joseph thinks that the young women at the youth club should have a separate cricket competition, whereas Bernadette believes they should have mixed sex teams and one league.

Sithole believes the local media portray young people in a very negative fashion, but Celeste thinks that it reflects the reality of what is happening in their community.



## Activity 2.2

(about 15 minutes)

In your learning journal, write your answers to the following questions:

- 1 What are the different value systems suggested in the two situations described in the case study?
- 2 What sorts of conflict might they generate?

## Stage 2: Recognition of conflict

The kind of situations described in Stage 1 can generate feelings of disappointment, frustration or anger. But the circumstances described only lead to conflict when one (or more) of the parties identifies the grounds for conflict and is affected by it. The latent conflict in a situation must be perceived by the parties involved for conflict to develop. However, just because they perceive the source of conflict does not mean that this will affect them enough emotionally to cause them anxiety and provoke pre-conflict behaviour.

Referring back to Case study 2.1, debating the role of the media in their community may be a very enjoyable and important aspect of the interaction between Sithole and Celeste up to a point. It is only if they become emotionally aroused that the parties to a dispute experience distress, tension, frustration and then perhaps hostility.

It is at the end of this stage that the conflict tends to come out into the open: latent conflict becomes overt conflict. Overt conflict incorporates a wide range of antagonistic behaviours, both on micro and macro levels. For example:

- co-workers arguing about having a desk in their office, then coming to blows
- national strikes turning into riots
- disputes leading to wars between neighbouring countries.

This emphasises the point that conflicts have the potential to intensify, to escalate and to erupt into extreme violence when the conditions are appropriate. We have seen this in, for example, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Solomon Islands.

## Stage 3: Conflict handling styles

How do people deal with conflict? Which conflict handling styles or strategies are successful at defusing conflict? Which are inappropriate and unsuccessful? These styles or strategies are the bridge between people's perceptions and feelings, and their actual behaviour. Such strategies may result from conscious decisions that people make to handle a particular conflict in a certain way, and may result from their

training in conflict resolution. But they could also be intuitive strategies that may or may not be appropriate.

It is important to recognise that there is no one correct way to handle conflict: it depends on the specific conditions of the situation. Nevertheless, depending on the situation, a particular type of conflict management style is likely to be the most appropriate.

It is important to recognise that making a deliberate choice of conflict handling style is a distinct and necessary stage in successfully managing conflict. Before responding to the behaviour of the other protagonist/s in a conflict situation, you need first to hypothesise quickly about what their intentions are likely to be and to base your strategy on that analysis. Careful analysis is necessary because many conflicts are intensified by one party inferring the wrong intentions from the other party's actions. You need to remind yourself also that a person's behaviour does not always accurately reflect their intentions, particularly when emotions are running hot.

### Dimensions of conflict handling styles

Kenneth Thomas, in his book *Conflict and Negotiation Processes in Organisations*, developed a model with five conflict handling styles using two dimensions. These dimensions are:

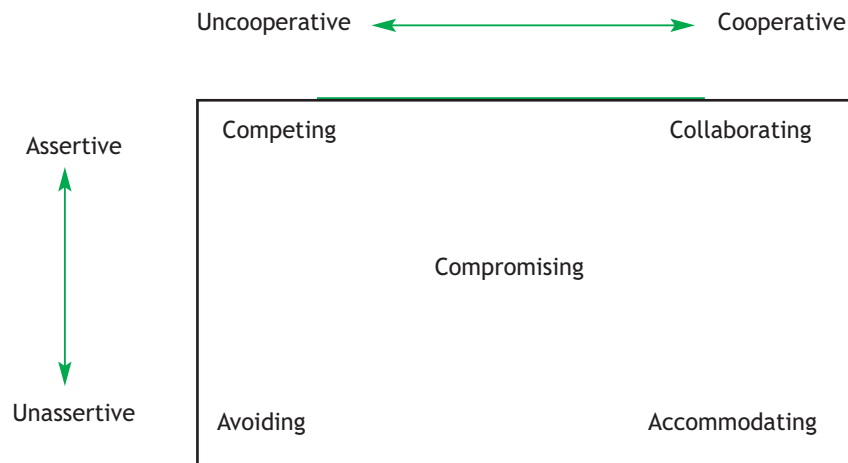
- 1 cooperativeness – the degree to which one party will attempt to satisfy the needs or wants of the other party involved in the conflict
- 2 assertiveness – the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy her or his own needs or wants.

The five conflict handling styles that can be used to resolve conflict include:

- competing
- collaborating
- compromising
- avoiding
- accommodating.

The following diagram represents how the conflict handling styles are situated in the spectrum of the cooperativeness and assertiveness dimensions. Analyse it carefully and note, for example, that an accommodating conflict handling style functions in the realms of the cooperative dimension.





### **Competing**

The aim is to win the conflict at all costs.

When one party strives strongly to satisfy their needs and shows a corresponding unwillingness to consider the needs of the other party, regardless of the consequences, it means they are competing. In these win-lose contests, a party will use all their resources to gain a victory in their favour.

For example, consider a situation in a workplace where there are frequent minor disputes among staff members about things like the layout of the office. In an attempt to resolve this conflict, the office manager requires that each staff member put forward a proposed office layout. In this situation, each member involved in the conflict will invest all their resources into producing a layout that will 'win' the conflict. This type of competition is an appropriate way to handle the conflict situation over the office layout.

This is an example where a competing approach to handling conflict is appropriate, without any arbitration. There is a conflict – a competition for something that will put involved people in a conflict situation. Each goes at it with all they have to solve this conflict and win. This is seen as appropriate and acceptable in some situations.

### **Collaborating**

Win/win – both parties strive for a solution that fully satisfies the needs and concerns of both.

When the parties to the conflict seek to explore their different perspectives and clarify differences, with a view to satisfying the concerns and needs of both parties, this is known as collaboration or confluence. In the process of clarifying differences, attention is devoted to developing and considering a full range of alternative solutions that may not have been canvassed initially by either party. This approach is considered by many behavioural scientists to be the best conflict handling style, and is certainly an important foundation to the conflict resolution process.

Marriage guidance counsellors, for example, use this tool in their work with couples experiencing marital conflict.

### **Compromising**

Both parties settle for a partial satisfaction of their needs, and give up something of value.

In compromising, no one party is the clear winner. Both parties intend to give something up and accept a solution that provides incomplete satisfaction of their needs.

Negotiations between employer bodies and workers' unions are an example of situations where a compromise may be required to reach a settlement on workers' conditions. (In these sorts of negotiations people often submit an 'ambit claim', where their starting position is actually in excess of their more serious demands – see Unit 3.)

### **Avoiding**

The desire of one of the parties to withdraw from the conflict is stronger than the desire to engage and resolve it, or to meet the needs of either oneself or the other party.

One or both parties recognise that a conflict exists but want to withdraw from the situation or to conceal their feelings about it.

For example, you may have two young women in your youth group who have fought over the same young man, and who now avoid each other, because he has chosen one of them. They have different sets of friends and rarely come at the same time. If withdrawal is not possible – for example, they may be in the same class for maths at school – the conflict may have to be recognised but suppressed in that environment.

### **Accommodating**

One party is willing to place the needs of the other party to the conflict above their own needs.

When one party to a conflict puts the needs of the other party above their own, and seeks to help their opponent meet their needs, this is known as accommodating. In this particular conflict situation, maintaining the relationship is more important to the self-sacrificing party than continuing the conflict to achieve a personal or group goal.

For example, there may be somebody in your group who is very worried about speaking out in a public forum. When one day they do, you may support them by not speaking out against them – even though you don't agree with their opinion – because you want to help them in overcoming their fear of public speaking.

Note that any of these styles may be appropriate to use in a given scenario. It depends, to a large extent, on the specific situation.



### Self-help question 2.2

(about 30 minutes)

From your own experience, briefly describe in what typical social or work situations you would favour each of the five conflict handling styles.

- competition
- compromise
- accommodation
- collaboration
- avoidance

Follow the example:

When both parties have equal power in a conflict situation, I would handle the conflict by using a compromise conflict handling strategy.

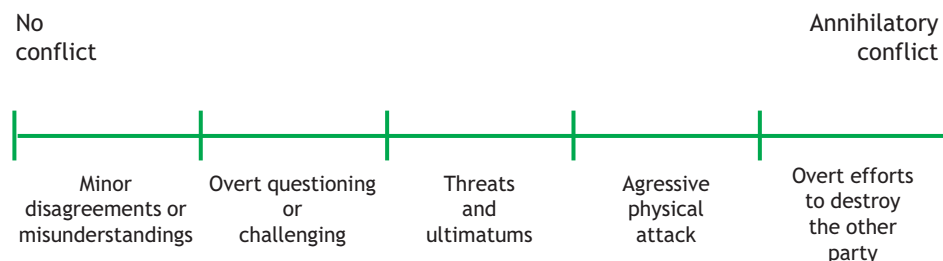
*Compare your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.*

### Stage 4: Conflict behaviour

When most people think and talk about conflict situations, they tend to focus on this fourth stage, because it is where conflict becomes visible. It is the first time that there is interaction between the parties after the conflict has been recognised.

Minor disagreements, challenging another person’s perspective or position, verbal attacks, threats, fighting and bloodshed are all types of conflict management style. They are overt manifestations of peoples’ attempts to implement their conflict management goals. But once embarked upon, these behaviours have a life of their own. They can heighten the conflict – as a result, for example, of inadequate communication of intentions – and may press the other party’s anger and hostility buttons.

Steven P. Robbins (1974) has developed a ‘Conflict Intensity Continuum’, which provides a way of visualising the development of conflict behaviour.



All conflicts exist somewhere along this scale. To the left of the scale, we have conflicts where the parties are self-possessed and controlled: for example, when a student questions his/her teacher.

Conflict intensifies as it moves to the right of the scale until it becomes highly destructive: for example, when students riot because their voices are not heard in their academic institutions; governments may use police or soldiers to curb the demonstration, property is damaged and peoples' lives may even be lost. The closer the conflict gets to the far right of the scale, the more likely it is that the conflict has become dysfunctional.



### Activity 2.3

(about 20 minutes)

Think of a situation of conflict - one either that you were involved in or that you have read or heard about - that you feel got out of control and became dysfunctional.

Was anything done to decrease the intensity of the conflict, to bring it back onto a more functional level? If so, what was done and who did it? What would you have done (if it was not you) to de-escalate the conflict?

Remember to write your thoughts in your learning journal.

You may have organised a face-to-face meeting of the two parties, or two members of opposing groups, away from the situation of conflict. You may have found additional means, so that there is no longer a conflict over scarce resources. You may have used your position of authority as a youth leader to help the opposing parties develop an alternative win/win solution.

All of these approaches are conflict management techniques or strategies, known as conflict resolution.

## Stage 5: Conflict outcomes

The consequences and end results of interaction between conflicting parties are many and varied. Sometimes these outcomes are functional: for example, the conflict has resulted in the group being more effective than it was before the conflict, or there may be an improved relationship between countries that are in conflict. This may, for example, have happened in the case of North Korea and its conflict with America, though it is possibly too early as yet to be certain. Sometimes the results are dysfunctional, as is the case when conflict results in armed struggle and subsequent civil terrorism, as in Iraq.

### Functional outcomes

Conflict is functional when it enriches the quality of decisions, when it stimulates people to look for new, more creative strategies, when it encourages an environment of self-evaluation and when it stimulates change. Conflict is positive when the views of the minority groups are encouraged and their opinions included in important decisions.

Conflict can stop stagnation and ensure that all aspects of an issue are covered in the decision-making process of a group, which makes for better decisions. On a macro level, conflict challenges the status quo and causes countries and political parties to reassess their policies and programmes in response to the needs of their people.

For example, Namibia is a multi-racial society that has made a smooth transition to democracy after many years of violent conflict. In 1993, three years after achieving independence, the country had already embarked on developing a national youth policy, years before many other countries in the Commonwealth that had not undergone such upheaval and turmoil were even thinking about it.

The former Director of the CYP Africa Centre, Dr Richard Mkandawire, interviewed the then Minister of Youth and Sport in Namibia, Ms Pendukeni Ithana, about the problems of implementing a national youth policy. You should now read the interview in Reading 4 at the end of this module. Once you have completed your reading, carry out the activity that follows.



Read Reading 4 'Namibia: Unravelling the Legacy' from the Commonwealth Youth Programme (1993).



## Activity 2.4

(about 20 minutes)

Discuss Reading 4 with your tutorial group or peer group and then make some notes in your learning journal in response to the following questions.

- How has your government responded to situations of conflict involving young people?
- Outline any legislation, policies or programmes that you are aware of that have been established in response to these situations.
- Do you think these are functional interventions? Why?

## Dysfunctional outcomes

The destructive consequences of conflict on interpersonal relationships or inter-group relationships are illustrated by the following story.



## Case study 2.2

### A meeting with the local council

‘You should have waited until we got there before you started telling them about your ideas. Because of you, all we got out of that was a promise that they would come and have a look at the poultry farm. You got all that money to do up the screen printing factory,’ said Uyen.

‘Look, it’s not my fault that your bus broke down,’ countered Lisa, ‘and anyway, you have to grab every opportunity to get what you want in this world.’

‘You could have talked about our ideas as well before we got there,’ replied Uyen. ‘Because of what you did we now have so-called best friends fighting with each other, and threatening to pull out of the youth group altogether. Nobody from our area is coming to the dance on Saturday night, and Seeta and Joseph have stopped speaking to me. Is that what you wanted?’

Lisa and Uyen were discussing the recent youth consultation with the local council. After several months of lobbying by their group, the local government agreed to hold a consultation with young people about the lack of employment opportunities in the area. Due to the lack of a large enough facility, not all members could attend, so the group went through an election process to select representatives to the consultation. They were careful to ensure that people living in both the rural part of the area and the town were represented on the

delegation to the meeting. Uyen and Lisa were elected as spokespeople for their respective areas. Prior to the meeting, the representatives held discussions with their members on the types of issues that they would like to see talked about, with possible assistance programmes the Council could initiate. Both the rural group and the town group developed discussion papers.

The day of the meeting came. The town group arrived first, as they live closest to the Council building. They were able to drink tea and informally chat to the Councillors about the area they live in, and began to discuss their suggested programmes. The bus bringing the young people who live out of town broke down, and they were half an hour late. The townies were all sitting in the best seats, closest to the Councillors, when the others arrived. The Mayor invited Lisa to make her presentation first. As the Councillors had already had time to discuss and think about the projects suggested for the town area, they were happy to commit some financial support to the screen-printing project. Uyen's presentation attracted a large number of questions and interest, but he was unable to gain any financial commitment from the Councillors at the meeting.

Since the consultation, the people from the rural area think that they are paying the price for Uyen's 'useless' presentation. Babar will no longer give him a lift home on the back of his bike. One of the people living out of town tore down and ripped up one of the screen-printed curtains in the community hall.



### Activity 2.5

(about 30 minutes)

Discuss the case study with your tutorial or peer group and then use the following questions to reflect on the issues addressed in the case study. Make some notes in your learning journal.

- 1 Whose viewpoint do you support - Uyen's or Lisa's? Why?
- 2 What are the causes of conflict in this situation?
- 3 What do you think of the way the Councillors handled the consultation? Did this contribute to the conflict?
- 4 What recommendations would you make to resolve or reduce the level of conflict in the youth group?

Unresolved conflict produces dissatisfaction that breaks down the links and relationships between members of the group, and it may eventually lead to the disintegration of the group. During that time, people's energies are diverted to in-fighting and gossiping rather than focused on achieving the objectives of the group itself.

This brings you to the end of Unit 2. It's time to for a consolidating activity that will help you to reflect on what you have learned.



## Activity 2.6

(about 30 minutes)

What are the components of the conflict process model? In your learning journal, describe an example that you have experienced of a conflict that proceeded or could have proceeded through the five stages.

**Note:** You may use the conflict situation you chose in Activity 1.1.



## Unit summary

In this unit, we analysed conflict in terms of the five stages of the conflict process model – potential, recognition, handling strategies, behaviour and outcomes.

The importance of effective conflict management in interpersonal relationships, and particularly within and between groups, is becoming increasingly recognised. In this context you learned that there are five conflict-handling styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating.

If we are to survive and prosper in today's world, we desperately need our young people to be skilled managers of conflict at all levels.

See how you have done with your learning by looking back at the learning outcomes for this unit and seeing if you can now do them. When you have done this, look through your learning journal to review what you have learned and the reflective thoughts you generated.

In the next unit, we look at strategies to support effective conflict resolution.

## Answers to self-help questions

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### Self-help question 2.1

- 1 The principle of enabling is about creating conditions that help young people to become more independent rather than relying on others to do things for them.

The principle of ensuring promotes the core Commonwealth values and principles (democracy, liberty, justice and equity) because these give a sense of meaning and moral and social purpose to the ways in which young people can use their skills and knowledge.

The principle of empowering encourages young people to think about democratic principles and practices and to have the insight and skills to influence the decisions that affect them and their communities.

- 2 It would be at the low end of the Hofstede scale, indicating a small power distance and a participatory approach.
- 3 If your country's government is authoritarian, with little power given to the people and where questioning is not tolerated, it would be rated high on the Hofstede scale. If your country encourages participation in decision-making, has fair elections and a free press and tolerates freedom of speech etc, it would be rated low on the Hofstede scale.
- 4 Youth work that is based on the three principles of enabling, ensuring and empowering encourages young people to act on their own behalf and on their own terms, rather than relying on other people and professionals to do things for them. It aims to create a situation where young people can play an assertive and constructive part in the decision-making that affects them at all levels of society.

In countries that tend towards a large power distance, this may be a little more challenging than in countries that accept a higher degree of questioning from subordinates and young people. The opportunities for youth workers include working at all levels of society towards the empowerment and participation of young people in the decision-making processes of the country. The challenge is to try and do this in ways that ensure progress can be made without alienating or threatening the 'establishment', which might cause a backlash and lost ground.

### Self-help question 2.2

*Competition* – when quick decisive action is vital; on important issues that are vital to the group's welfare or survival and where unpopular actions need to be implemented.

*Collaboration* – to merge insights from people with diverse perspectives; to gain commitment from parties to a solution by incorporating concerns into a consensus; to work through feelings that have damaged a relationship that is important to you.

*Compromise* – when both parties have equal power and mutually exclusive goals; to achieve expedient solutions in a limited timeframe.

*Avoidance* – when an issue is trivial and more important things need to be decided; when you feel you might be wrong about something and want to go away and gather more information before you put up an argument; or if you feel peoples' tempers and emotions are clouding their perspective, you might want to avoid conflict.

*Accommodation* – when an issue is more important to the other party than to you and you want to maintain cooperation to resolve other matters; to minimise your losses when you know you are outmatched!

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# Unit 3: Resolving conflict

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## Unit introduction

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Welcome to Unit 3 *Resolving conflict*. In this unit we will explore techniques designed to facilitate the resolution of conflict at both an individual and a group level.

We will also contrast distributive and integrative bargaining, and discuss the role of negotiation and mediation (or third party negotiations) in bringing conflicting groups or individuals together.

## Unit learning outcomes

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When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- apply both distributive and integrative bargaining skills in resolving interpersonal conflict, taking into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of using one over the other
- describe the principles and practice of conflict resolution
- discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the basic negotiation processes in third party conflict resolution
- employ negotiation and mediation skills in bringing together conflicting groups or individuals
- devise strategies towards functional resolution of conflict when agreement cannot be reached by consensus.

## Dealing with conflict

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There are basically three approaches to dealing with the conflicts we face in any social situation:

- 1 **Conflict prevention:** this is a process by which individuals and groups select from a wide range of actions, interventions, programmes, activities, mechanisms and procedures that can be used to prevent destructive and potentially violent conflict. These may be used at any stage prior to conflict taking place.
- 2 **Conflict transformation:** this is a process by which a conflict is changed in a creative way to become a constructive and functional process.
- 3 **Conflict resolution:** this is a process of finding a long-lasting solution to a conflict, by using the situation to address each party's interests to the extent where both sides are satisfied with the outcome.

Researchers at the University of Melbourne argue that if we accept that a conflict situation may also create new opportunities, then we should conceptualise conflict resolution as being not only about fixing things, but also about finding and capitalising on constructive options inherent in the situation. Nevertheless, because in the context of your practice as a youth development worker you will be encouraged either to avoid or resolve conflicts, the sections that follow will focus mainly on ways in which to do this.

Very often conflict transformation and conflict resolution work in harmony with conflict prevention. As the United Nations notes, while prevention entails maintaining peace before a possible incident of violence by correctly interpreting and acting on early warning signs, conflict transformation involves managing an existing situation of violence so that it turns into constructive dialogue. Sometimes, you may find the terms 'conflict transformation' and 'conflict resolution' used interchangeably in peace literature: they are, after all, both based on similar elements of trust building and reconstruction in their modes of application (United Nations, 2002).

As mentioned in the introduction of this Unit, we will be focusing on techniques to be employed in the process of conflict resolution.



## Ending conflict

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in *Conflict Management, Negotiation and Mediation Skills* (1998), argues that there are only three basic approaches to ending conflicts:

- 1 **The use of power** – the ‘might is right’ approach, which is so familiar to us all that it ends up widely regarded as legitimate, is an approach that rarely produces outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.
- 2 **The application of rights or standards** – the use of legislation and the law courts to moderate the force of power-based decision-making is grounded in the moral principle that a decision should always be made on the merits of a particular situation rather than on the relative power of the participants. This is the main reason why, in democratic systems, there is supposed to be a separation of powers between the law givers and the state, since the state may come under the control of a particularly powerful group at any one time. Any parties involved in conflict should always have a guarantee that the law, not the people in charge, should decide what happens to them. In practice of course, the state often attempts to manipulate the boundaries of the law to give itself more power. This appears to be happening in the case of the USA and its actions in imprisoning without trial in Guantánamo Bay people that the Government claims may be terrorists. This position has been attacked powerfully within the USA itself as well as world wide. Of course, the authority of the court is usually backed up by the power of the state.

The law courts have been the major forum for this kind of decision-making, but many social groups and communities have well-defined standards that moderate the behaviour of both the powerful and the not so powerful in the community. Examples include the Catholic Church and Islamic groups, both of which have shown that they have the power to control tyrannical and lawless elements within their areas of influence: the Catholic Church in Central America and an Islamic group in Somalia that beat the corrupt and powerful local war lords in 2006 and brought relative calm to the capital city.

- 3 **Agreement** – conflicting parties get together to work something out by finding an option that is mutually agreeable. These outcomes tend to be functional, because the parties themselves have contributed their perspectives to the process and can see the benefits of carrying out the decision. It is only recently that these types of decisions have become a formal option for conflict resolution. Over the last twenty years or so, we have seen the growth in negotiation and mediation programmes (facilitated by

a third party) to support the joint decision-making process. One example is that of Bosnia, where extremely serious ethnic conflict, of several centuries' standing, broke out into war following the break up of Yugoslavia. The war was ended by armed NATO intervention, but peace was negotiated with the support of a number of UN mediators.

Joint decisions are not the only outcome of conflict resolution. Unfortunately, they are not even the most common outcome of conflicts. However, such decisions yield the most valuable outcomes in resolving conflict in a functional manner.

## **What is negotiation?**

We tend to think on a macro level when we consider conflict – unions negotiating with management, or student unions in conflict with university administration and teachers. In reality, negotiation pervades our daily interactions with friends, family, at the market, and in our dealings with institutions in our communities.

Negotiation involves managing a conflict of interests. It refers to that process of bargaining between two or more parties to reach a solution that is mutually acceptable.

## **Bargaining strategies**

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Within the negotiation process, we can highlight two contrasting strategies – distributive bargaining and integrative bargaining.

### **Distributive bargaining**

Whether it is an individual bargaining for the use of her/his time in a personal relationship or for a fair price in business where both the buyer and seller will be content, or a union of workers fighting for a wage increase for clothes-makers in a poor country, distributive bargaining is a part of our daily lives. See an example of distributive bargaining in the following case study about Kara and Simeon as they attempt to 'negotiate' a business deal.



## Case study 3.1

### Distributive bargaining

Kara works in a kiosk in Iringa, Tanzania, which she started with a group of young women with funds received from the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). In addition to selling popcorn, ice, soup and their specialty – home-made jam and peanut butter sandwiches – they also sell embroidered tablecloths and pillow cases. Simeon, who works for a department store in Dodoma, contacts Kara and offers to buy a large consignment of pillow cases.

Kara and the other women are very excited about the order, but there is one issue that causes a great deal of conflict in their group. Simeon has offered them a price that is way below the price they normally charge for the pillow cases. Kara argues that the bulk order makes up for the difference. Razaan acknowledges her point, but indicates they should still not take the order unless the price goes up by a couple of shillings for each pillow case.

After a lengthy negotiation process within the group, Kara goes back to Simeon, saying that they will accept the order but only at an increased price. Simeon comes back with another price that is above his initial offer, but below the price the group had agreed on.

And so this sort of negotiating process continues until you come to an agreement. Distributive bargaining operates under what are known as zero-sum conditions, which refer to situations in which a gain is offset by an equal loss. This type of bargaining is also often referred to as win-lose bargaining. In the case study you have read, there is a finite amount of a resource. Any gain that Kara makes is at Simeon's expense. Any gain that Simeon makes is at the expense of the group. So one party will always 'lose'.

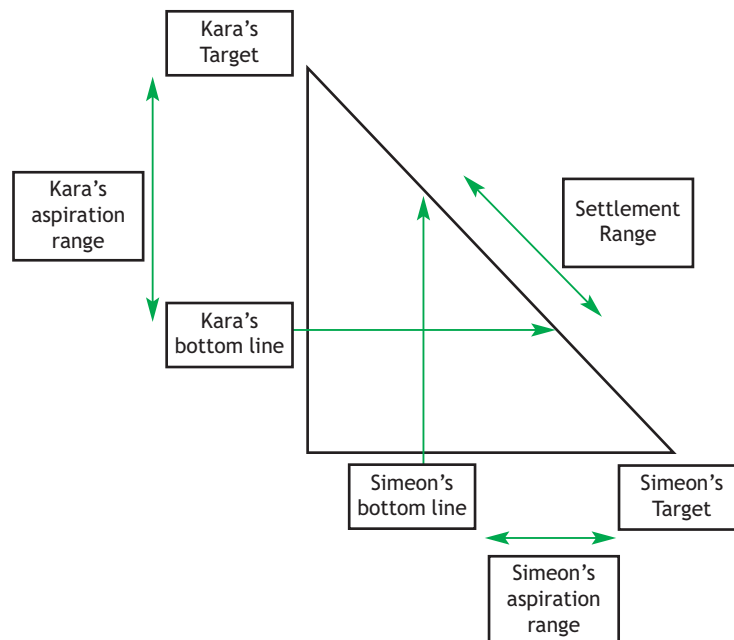
Essentially, distributive bargaining is negotiating over who gets what proportion of a fixed resource, such as an amount of money. The two parties assume that there is not enough to be shared around equally, therefore each party has to bargain aggressively, and has to treat the other party as an opponent from whom you must gain as much as you can. Your bargaining power is dependent on the information you have about the other party, the clarity of your own goals, the limits within which you can safely bargain and the possibility of any alternatives.

Within a distributive bargaining strategy, unions often present an 'ambit claim' in negotiations with management about wages and working conditions. This means that the union delegates present a high claim for wages, not anticipating that they will be successful in achieving that level of benefits, but hoping that a high target starting point will ensure that they make some gains above their bottom line

(their lowest limit). The bottom line is the point at which they would break off negotiations rather than accept a settlement.

### The settlement range in distributive bargaining

The following diagram illustrates Kara and Simeon's bargaining process. It has been adapted from a model developed by Kenneth Thomas (1993).



Notice that the settlement range for Kara and Simeon is determined by their bottom line. A settlement will not be possible outside of what both consider their bottom line, regardless of their targets.



#### Self-help question 3.1

(about 20 minutes)

If you were Simeon, what tactics would you use to get Kara to agree to your price?

*Compare your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.*

## Integrative bargaining

Let's continue with our story about Simeon and Kara.



### Case study 3.2

#### Integrative bargaining

A few years down the line, after a very successful business partnership, Kara rings Simeon to ask him for his monthly order. He orders 100 pillow cases. Kara goes back to the group with the order. However, Razaan will not agree to the group making the pillow cases – Simeon still has not paid them for last month's order.

Kara calls Simeon, who tells her that he has had a very expensive month: he has had to pay for his sister's wedding and do some repairs to the shop. Kara and Simeon discuss their options. They agree that Simeon will pay 12.5 per cent of his debt to the group every month until he has paid off the amount he owes them. Kara talks to Razaan, who agrees to the strategy.

This is an example of integrative bargaining, where one can negotiate a win-win solution to a problem. It is based on the premise that both parties to the conflict believe that there is more than one solution to a problem. More importantly, in integrative bargaining the particular goals of the parties are not mutually exclusive, meaning that if one party pursues their goals, it does not necessarily preclude the other from achieving theirs. Integrative bargaining produces more long-lasting, harmonious relationships.



### Self-help question 3.2

In terms of inter-group relationships, which approach to bargaining do you think is preferable? Why do you think this? And why do you think we do not see more integrative bargaining in conflict resolution?

*Compare your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.*

Now that you have learned about negotiations and bargaining strategies, you are ready to engage in a role-playing activity. Get together with some of your peers and enjoy the following activity.



### Activity 3.1

(about 45 minutes)

Role play each of the following scenarios in your tutorial group or with your peers. When you have rehearsed the role plays in this way, you can then use them with a group of young people that you work with for role play and discussion of bargaining strategies.

- 1 You are a member of a honey producing co-operative. You would like a local store to sell your honey. What would you say to convince the store owner?
- 2 Several customers have asked you to open your store earlier. Others want you to stay open later. How would you keep all your customers happy (and, of course, buying from your store)?
- 3 A young man, whom you do not know, offers to watch your shop after closing hours to protect it from vandals. He says other businesses pay him for this service. What would you do?
- 4 The Health Inspector says you must close down. What can you do?
- 5 You ran out of products after customers waited for a long time. They are angry and say they will buy from another shop. What would you do?
- 6 You have an idea for a new product that may not be easily accepted in your community. How would you promote it?
- 7 A local merchant with a truck buys vegetables from you and your neighbours and sells them in a nearby town. You think that he is not paying enough. How would you approach this situation?

Make sure you write notes in your learning journal describing the approaches you would follow to handle all these situations. Don't forget to include the comments you got from your peers during the role-playing activities, including a brief description of how you reached consensus in determining what was the best approach to use in each scenario.

It is worth noting that the processes of distributive and integrative bargaining may be constrained by a number of issues. Chief among these are gender differences, cultural differences and personality traits.

## Negotiation skills

Even though we may have been negotiating outcomes throughout our daily lives, this experience has not necessarily turned us into effective negotiators, because we may not have properly developed the specific skills needed. However, if we want to deal effectively with conflicts, we will have to take action to improve our negotiating skills. Reading 5 at the end of this module offers principles of negotiation that will allow you to develop some of these skills. Read it now.



Reading 5 'Six Principles of Negotiation' from ACCORD (1998) *Conflict Management, Negotiation and Mediation Skills*, University of Durban-Westville.



### Activity 3.2

(about 15 minutes)

In your learning journal write down the six principles of negotiation that are addressed in Reading 5, along with a brief description of each principle.

In *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution*, Dudley Weeks (1992) has developed an eight-step process for effective negotiations in interpersonal relationships:

- 1 **Invite a partnership atmosphere** – Create an atmosphere in which the feeling is that the parties in conflict are really partners in solving a problem. This is a very important step in the conflict resolution process. It is more likely that mutual agreement will be reached when you have given careful consideration to creating this sort of atmosphere. Think about preparing the setting and yourself, the timing and location of the meeting, and the exact wording of the opening statements to create the right mood as you engage in conflict resolution.
- 2 **Clarify perceptions** – Clarify the perceptions of everybody involved in the conflict. You can't solve a problem if you don't know exactly what it is about. Also, avoid stereotyping the other party and really hear what they say. Properly recognise the other party's needs and respect their values even if you don't agree with them. Try to empathise with their position. In particular, clear up any misconceptions early on in the discussion.
- 3 **Focus on individual and shared needs** – Expand on the needs you and the other party have in common. Realise that you need one another in order to successfully resolve the conflict. Make one of your aims meeting the other person's needs. When you take the time to look, you will recognise that you often share needs in common.

- 4 **Develop shared positive power** – Try to think in terms of power with each other rather than power over the other person. When parties in conflict have this outlook, they can encourage each other to use shared positive power. This gives an ultimate advantage to all involved, because each person's positive energy is being drawn on for a worthwhile solution.
- 5 **Focus on the present and future and learn from the past** – Don't dwell on negative past conflicts or you won't be able to deal positively with each other in the present or the future. Try to understand what happened in the past, rather than ignoring it, and avoid repeating the same mistakes again.
- 6 **Generate options** – Beware of preconceived answers, look for common ground and make sure the options explored are workable for all the parties involved. Set any disagreements to one side and focus first on the options that seem most workable. Finally, bypass the options that won't work for all the people involved. This avoids spin-off conflicts.
- 7 **Develop and agree on 'doables'** – Doables are specific actions that have a good chance of being successful. They are ideas that have the best chance of success, strategies that do not promote unfair advantages on either side. Doables are founded on sharing the ideas and information that come from all the parties involved; they are therefore actions that meet shared needs.
- 8 **Develop mutual benefit proposals and agreements** – Mutual benefit agreements should give you lasting solutions to specific conflicts and are the culmination of an effective negotiation process. These agreements are not the end but the beginning of an improved relationship in which differences can be dealt with in a more functional way.





### Activity 3.3

(about 60 minutes)

Identify a current problem that you are facing in your workplace, at home or in your community. Discuss with your peers a strategy for dealing with the problem using approaches from what you have read and from Week's eight-step process. Record the strategy agreed to with your peers in your learning journal.

This means you are now ready to implement your strategy in attempting to resolve the conflict you are part of. Good luck! Remember that it is important to choose a problem for which you have responsibility. Don't forget to record the outcomes of implementing your strategy.

After you have engaged in the conflict resolution activity, reflect on the following questions and write notes in your learning journal with your answers.

- How effective was your conflict resolution? Evaluate your outcomes against your problem-solving plan.
- Did everything go according to the plan?
- What worked? What didn't work?
- How would you modify your approach if you were to come up against this situation in the future?

**Note:** You wish to continue using the situation from Activity 1.1

## Factors of successful negotiations

There are several factors that contribute to successful negotiations. These are:

- experience
- demands and concessions
- precedents
- personality traits.

### Experience

As negotiators gain more experience, research shows that they:

- are better listeners and ask more questions
- focus their arguments more directly
- are less defensive
- have learnt to avoid emotive words and phrases that can irritate other negotiators.

## Demands and concessions

Research suggests that consistently high demands and low concessions by one party will lead to the same behaviour by the opposing party. Therefore, we can expect competitive bargaining from one party to generate competitive bargaining in the other party.

Research has not, however, shown that low demands and high concessions (accommodating behaviour) necessarily generate the same in an opposing party, although it is likely to soften the competitive stance. Based on the research, Robbins et al (1994) suggest that negotiators should commence by bargaining with a small concession and then reciprocate their opponents' concessions.

## Precedents

You are rarely in a position of conducting a negotiation with someone that you do not know, and therefore have usually witnessed a history of past interactions and practices that they bring to the bargaining table.

We looked previously at the most appropriate conflict handling style for a given situation, but people often resort to their preferred style to manage their conflicts, even though it may not be the most appropriate for that particular issue. So, before entering into a negotiation, they will probably use the same style again, and that will probably reflect their bargaining standards. If you know them, this gives you an advantage in that you can work for a cooperative solution knowing the limits likely to be present.

## Personality traits

Although one might be tempted to think that personality traits are a good indicator of preferred bargaining technique – for example, that high risk takers are more likely to be aggressive bargainers – there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case. This finding indicates that you should focus on the issues in each bargaining episode, not on your opponent's psychology and her/his personal characteristics. Reading 6 presents some reflections on conflict and achieving peace in the context of development. Enjoy!



Read Reading 6 'Overview of conflict, conflict resolution and peace in relation to development' by Dr C.M. Namafe, School of Education, University of Zambia.

## Third party negotiations

Up until this point in the unit, we have been looking at bargaining in terms of direct negotiations between parties. When individuals or groups reach a deadlock and are unable to continue, so that a conflict remains unresolved, they may involve a third party in the process.

There are four basic negotiation processes that involve third parties:

- mediation
- arbitration
- conciliation
- consultation.

### Mediation

Mediation involves the intervention of an acceptable and impartial third party who facilitates the negotiation of a solution by using (1) reasoning, (2) persuasion and (3) suggestions for alternatives. The mediator has no formal, binding authority in a dispute or negotiation. Mediation works best in situations where the conflict has not escalated too far, and where both parties are committed to bargaining and actually resolving the conflict.

### Functions of mediators

Before engaging in mediation during the conflict resolution process, and before the mediation session, mediators are responsible for:

- 1 gathering information and data
- 2 getting the parties to the negotiating table
- 3 analysing the conflict
- 4 facilitating consciousness raising of the parties
- 5 arranging a venue for the session
- 6 setting up the physical environment appropriate for mediation.

### Steps of mediation

The process of mediation typically includes three steps:

- orientation
- gathering information on what the parties want
- managing interaction.

### **Orientation**

During the orientation step, mediators should:

- introduce the parties if they do not already know each other
- establish and insist on ground rules and explain the mediation process, including the objectives of the session
- explain the role of the mediators – particularly their lack of power to decide on a binding solution, and stress that they are there to facilitate the development of the parties' own bases for agreement.

### **Gather information on what the parties want**

During the gathering information step, mediators should:

- encourage each party to explain the relevant facts and feelings from their perspective (story-telling)
- promote good communication by encouraging active listening and by asking open-ended questions.

### **Managing interaction**

During the managing interaction step, mediators should:

- assist the parties to identify the nature of the problem/s as well as their own needs and interests
- guide the generation of options or a range of solutions
- encourage understanding and explain the role of venting and of silence
- assist in identifying common ground
- consider alternatives if there is no agreement.

### **Mediation – a cost effective approach**

The overall effectiveness of mediated negotiations is fairly impressive, as shown by the following excerpt from *Negotiation Journal*, a publication of the Harvard Program on Negotiation.



## Case study 3.3

### Advantages of mediation

#### *More disputes should go to mediation, researchers find*

by Lauren Frank

Mediation holds time and cost advantages over arbitration and yields a higher level of satisfaction for participants, according to a survey evaluating the two approaches to alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The technique also proved useful for resolving a wide variety of conflicts, said authors of the recently completed study.

Based on a mail survey sent to clients of five major ADR service providers nationwide, 'ADR in the Private Sector' examined 449 cases dealing with contract, construction, personal injury, property damage and environmental disputes that arose in Los Angeles, Dallas, Seattle, New York, Florida and San Francisco.

Results showed that mediation led to settlements in 78 per cent of the cases studied. More specifically: voluntary mediation cases, where the parties chose mediation, reported a settlement rate of 79 per cent, while involuntary cases, those where mediation was stipulated either by the court or a contract clause, settled 76 per cent of the time.

And mediation cases took considerably less time to settle. The median time span for mediated cases (from initial conference to the final resolution) was one day, while arbitration cases, from commencement of the hearing to issuance of the award, took a median of 60 days.

Moreover, mediated cases engendered more satisfaction than those sent to arbitration, the researchers said. Parties reported more satisfaction with the outcomes and implementation of mediation, as well as with the fairness of the neutrality in mediated cases and the fairness of the process itself.

However, reservations about mediation have been expressed by women's organisations, who argue that it may not be the best solution when there is unequal bargaining power between the two parties – something that is often the case in family disputes, especially where violence is involved.

### Arbitration

Arbitration involves the intervention of a third party who has formal, binding authority to dictate an agreement in a dispute or negotiation. The authority of the arbitrator varies according to guidelines established by the negotiators or by the requirements of the law. The major advantage that arbitration has over mediation is that it always concludes with a settlement. However, it is not guaranteed that both

parties will come out of arbitration feeling they have a win/win resolution.

## **Conciliation**

Conciliation involves a trusted third party who provides an informal communication link in an attempt to establish a friendly relationship between two parties involved in a dispute or negotiation.

## **Consultation**

Consultation involves employing a neutral third party, with known expertise and skill in conflict resolution, who uses skilled communication techniques, and is able to investigate and analyse matters relevant to the dispute. In this manner, this third party is able to facilitate a creative approach to solving the remaining problems.

## **Consolidating the process**

You have now learned about resolving conflict by using direct negotiation between conflicting parties as well as by using third parties. Both strategies can be employed to resolve issues in a functional way. Traditionally, parties attempt to resolve conflict directly and, when faced with an impasse, resort to bringing in a third party. However, this is not a rule.

Spend some time next to read an article that consolidates the conflict resolution process within the context of youth.



Turn to the end of the module and read Reading 7 'Youth groups, conflict prevention, management and resolution', by Yinka Aganga-Williams, Senior Programme Officer, Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre.

## Practicing conflict resolution skills

The following activity is a role play that will allow you to practice the skills you have been learning in this module. Read the instructions carefully, and if you have any questions, seek the assistance of your tutor. Have fun!



### Activity 3.4

(about 1 hour)

#### Biagudia logging exercise

The Biagudia logging exercise is a role play that simulates a conflict situation and is something you can undertake with your youth group, other youth workers or students in your tutorial group. You can do this activity even if you only have one person representing each of the four groups in the exercise.

You will be facilitating the process, so it will also be a good opportunity for you to practise your group work skills! We have provided only a skeleton story - please feel free to add to it or adapt it so that it is relevant to the group you are working with.

#### Facilitator instructions:

- 1 Have the participants break into four groups (traditional land owners, young people in the community, government officials and loggers).
- 2 Hand out printed role instructions (given below), one for each group, and say: 'After you read your roles, spend about 15 minutes discussing your course of action with your colleagues. You may meet with any other player after that time. You are advised to pick a spokesperson to undertake the negotiations, but you may wish to undertake the negotiation as a group. I am available to perform the role of mediator if you decide it would be useful to use one. After approximately half an hour, you will need to negotiate your desired outcomes with the other groups'.
3. Whether they pick you to be the official mediator or not, you will need to manage the negotiations by setting time limits, ensuring people understand the exercise, keeping the group task-focused, etc.

#### Role instructions:

- Group 1 - Traditional landowners

You are the traditional owners of the remaining forest in

Biagudia. You are primarily interested in making a profit and are intending to sell your logs to the highest bidder.

- Group 2 - Young people in the community

You are concerned that your parents are selling off the assets of the community, without thinking about the environment and the long-term impact that selling off non-replaceable resources will have on you and your children.

- Group 3 - Government officials

You're keen to see a deal go ahead with the traditional land owners in Biagudia. The logging company has promised to build roads, bridges, permanent housing and a school in the village as part of the deal, which you do not have the money to do at the moment. But you have heard rumours that this company has not always kept its promises.

- Group 4 - Loggers

There are fewer and fewer sources for you to get your tropical timber stock these days, so you're very keen to get the logs from Biagudia. Maybe it's time to start thinking more seriously about sustainable development and replanting.

Possible debriefing questions:

- 1 Had all the groups developed a plan and established their preferred positions prior to commencing negotiations? If not, why not?
- 2 What was the trust level like - intra-group and inter-group? Were people withholding information from each other? Did stereotyping play a role in the way that you dealt with one another? Would you work with each other again?
- 3 How creative was the solution?
- 4 Did you ascertain at the beginning of the exercise if all your goals were mutually exclusive - or did you immediately fall into competition mode?
- 5 Did you spend most of your time trying to work out how to get the better of all the other groups?
- 6 And how did it feel being the mediator and/or facilitator? Did you use any of Weeks' eight steps to create a positive framework for negotiation?

Make notes in your learning journal in response to the debriefing questions. Also, keep notes about your experience as a mediator and the implementation of the role play activity. You will find them useful to reflect on as you prepare to write your final assignment for this module.



Before you complete your studying of this unit, complete the following activity that will allow you to reflect on all the content you have learned about conflict resolution. Good luck!



### Activity 3.5

In your learning journal, describe five conflict resolution techniques and highlight at least two strengths and two weaknesses of each. Reflect again on the conflict situation from Activity 1.1.

What conflict resolution strategies were used in this situation? Describe the outcomes in your learning journal.

If no conflict resolution strategies were used, what strategies would you use if this situation occurred again?

## Unit Summary

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In this unit, we discussed the principles and practice of conflict resolution. We looked at approaches to dealing with conflict, including negotiation. In studying negotiation, you learned that there are two key bargaining strategies:

- distributive bargaining
- integrative bargaining.

Additionally, you learned that effective interpersonal negotiations follow an eight-step process:

- 1 invite a partnership atmosphere
- 2 clarify perceptions
- 3 focus on individual and shared needs
- 4 develop shared positive power
- 5 focus on the present and future and learn from the past
- 6 generate options
- 7 develop and agree on doables
- 8 develop mutual benefit proposal and agreements.

You also learned about conflict resolution involving the use of a third party and that there are four basic negotiation strategies that can be used in this context:

- 1 mediation
- 2 arbitration
- 3 conciliation
- 4 consultation.

Through a range of activities and case studies, you spent time reading about and practicing negotiation and mediation skills in bringing conflicting groups or individuals together.

We hope you have enjoyed your study and found it useful.

Before moving on to the next unit, make sure that you have successfully learned about conflict resolution. Look back at the learning outcomes for this unit and see if you can now do them. Then, look through your learning journal to review the reflective thoughts you generated.

The next unit is the last one in this module. It will cover inter-group relationships and how to manage conflict between groups.

## Answers to self-help questions

### Self-help question 3.1

Possible strategies include persuading Kara of her unrealistic target price (there are many other pillow cases that are cheaper) and the advisability of accepting your price before you offer the contract to someone else; arguing that your target price is fair (you know the wholesale price of pillowcases); and attempting to get Kara to feel emotionally generous towards you: business has not been good recently and you will not be able to afford her price and stay in business.

### Self-help question 3.2

Integrative bargaining is a good foundation for long-term relationships. Both parties leave the table feeling successful and that they have communicated well with the other party. Both have taken each other's interests to heart, and will probably be happy to work together again in the future.

Distributive bargaining, on the other hand, can leave one party feeling like a loser, which tends to build animosity. Distributive bargaining may be a good strategy for buying a second-hand car, or in situations where you will never see your opponent again, but it is not productive for on-going relationships.

Even so, it is very difficult to create the conditions that are necessary for integrative bargaining to take place. Both parties need to be open with their information, honest about their aspirations and concerns, able to listen and remain sensitive to the needs of the other party, trust each other and be prepared to seek alternative options. These conditions do not always exist in groups, and it takes awareness on the part of group leaders to create an environment in which this type of negotiation can flourish.

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# Unit 4: Inter-group conflict

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## Unit introduction

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Welcome to Unit 4 *Inter-group conflict*. So far, most of the concepts and activities in this module have focused on intra-group and interpersonal conflict. In this unit we consider the processes involved in behaviour that occurs at a macro level between different groups: inter-group behaviour.

Inter-group conflict is a constant in human affairs. This unit offers a conceptual framework for understanding certain aspects of such conflict and explores strategies for diagnosing and managing different conflict situations. Of course, some of the strategies we discussed in the earlier units are also appropriate for dealing with conflict in inter-group relations.

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## Unit learning outcomes

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When you have worked through this unit, you should be able to:

- identify inter-group conflict and its underlying causes
- discuss strategies to resolve a conflict when inter-group agreement cannot be reached by consensus
- distinguish between the various forms of intervention used to resolve inter-group conflicts.

## Inter-group relations

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Inter-group relations are interactive relationships between two or more social groups and their respective members. Whenever individuals belonging to an identifiable social group interact collectively and individually with another group, we have an instance of inter-group relations.

Inter-group relations tend to exhibit a certain range of identifiable characteristics, as highlighted by Muzafer Sherif, cited in Hogg and Abrams (2001). They stress one main point in inter-group relations: that inter-group behaviour is more often than not group-competitive, where members behave in ways aimed at gaining or maintaining a relative advantage for their group over other groups. The authors also cite Summer, who observed that each group *nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities and looks with contempt on outsiders* (p. 65). These inter-group characteristics are the ideal basis for the creation of conflict.

## Conflict among groups

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Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, rich and poor, governing political parties and their oppositions, women and men, young people and the police are all examples of interacting sets of groups that have a potential for conflict, as they may have very divergent goals.

Considering inter-group behaviour as characterised by Hogg and Abrams in citing Summer above, the relationship between these groups may often be oppositional. This influences the quality of life and behavioural characteristics of the people involved in these groups.

Conflict among groups can come from many sources and take many different guises. As the young are usually the ones who suffer most during violent conflicts, it is important that you are aware of the bases for such conflicts. There are several overarching factors that, in various combinations, give rise to conflicts at various levels. The factors that can originate inter-group conflict can be broadly categorised as:

- political
- social and cultural
- economic
- geopolitical.

These categories overlap, of course, and also work together to create or to intensify conflicts. Let's look at each one of them in more detail.



## Political

Political factors can have an enormous influence on inter-group conflict. Lack of democracy (as a basic human right) and political instability are two conditions that provoke and intensify conflicts around the world. For example, in Sierra Leone the violation of human rights led to a civil war, characterised by savage and brutal armed conflict, lasting more than 40 years. This conflict started from a situation of political inequity, exploitation of the masses by a military dictatorship, lack of government accountability and anti-democratic government. The situation worsened in 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), from near the border with Liberia, started an armed insurrection to overthrow the government.

When the rebels succeeded in overthrowing the government, this did not solve the problems of the people of Sierra Leone. In fact, the war escalated. Other factors – such as inequitable distribution of resources, poverty, the lack of primary health care and high levels of illiteracy and unemployment – helped to fuel continued dissatisfaction and revolt. In all, more than 200,000 people were killed and countless others were maimed and mutilated, with thousands of mainly young people enduring the effects of rape and extreme distress (United Nations, 2002). Large numbers of the population were displaced and much of the country's already feeble infrastructure was destroyed.

One of the most hopeful things to have emerged from the Sierra Leone tragedy is the degree to which the resolution of the conflict has been used creatively to develop the position of women and young people as the keystone for the development of the whole society. It is one of the best examples available of the ways in which conflict resolution processes can be used positively as a major development strategy. The recommendations of the May 2001 National Consultation for post-conflict reconstruction begins with the 'Vision of the Women of Sierra Leone' (Baksh-Soodeen and Etchart, 2002). The women's vision is a possible model for a civilised twenty-first century society. Women were able to take the lead in the Consultation's recommendations because they had been among the foremost groups attempting to resolve the crisis in the country.

It's also important to note that this conflict could not have been resolved without the willingness of the international community to insist on the necessary conditions for its resolution and to be prepared to support this by armed intervention if and where necessary. However, that display of force was never used to compel any ethnic or social group into submission. The conflict seems to have been resolved based on mediation and consultation, in an attempt to build relationships among all groups and their members.

## Social and cultural

Social and cultural factors also greatly influence conflict among groups. This problem is evident in various countries where two dominant groups live in separate communities, especially when one is an indigenous group. Let's take the example of Guyana. This is a society whose potential development has been limited because of the lack of ethnic integration and socialisation and hence the exacerbation of serious ethnic insecurities. For example, during national elections, there is a prevailing ideology that claims that only members of one's own ethnic grouping can adequately address the concerns of one's social class. Consequently, for more than a decade there has been civil unrest along racial lines after elections.

Ethnic insecurities are worsened by the economic realities of the country, in which one particular ethnic group dominates business and enterprise, while another ethnic group to a large extent constitutes the civil service. Additionally, politicians tend to exploit ethnicity for their own purposes. Generally, the ethnic conflict in this Commonwealth country can be linked to both historical and institutional factors. It may be useful, in the light of this, to recall that patterns of cultural discrimination resulted in ethnic insecurities and ultimately genocide in Burundi and Rwanda.

Another social factor that creates conflict is related to gender. All over the world gender differences and inequalities give rise to conflicts and should therefore be among the first things to consider in any conflict situation. You may recall that in Module 5 *Gender and Development*, we stated that gender dimensions transcend discussions about differences in sex to raise important issues about the manner in which young women and men are treated by society, within specific socio-economic, cultural and political contexts. In many rural societies in the Commonwealth, for example, men are consulted and participate in the decision-making processes regarding development of their communities, while women are often simply ignored, even though they may be the ones who will be most affected by the outcomes of the decisions. Moreover, in many parts of the Commonwealth women live under repressive conditions and are the subject of special forms of human rights abuse, including violence, sexual abuse and other gender-based crimes.

The social and cultural disparities between groups can cause serious dysfunctional conflicts among them.

## Economic

The current global economic system is a major cause of growing dissatisfaction and tensions, which have led to both violent and non-violent conflicts at both the national and international levels due to the widening gap between the rich and the poor. One of the most glaring examples is Nigeria, a country that has been receiving considerable attention from conservationists, human rights groups and fair trade advocates. You may recall the trial and hanging of

environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Ogoni tribe, following their intended peaceful struggle with the then ruling military regime over the exploitation and proceeds of the oil industry in the traditional territory of the Ogoni. This conflict in Nigeria is extremely complex of course, with roots in the colonial manipulation of tribal territory and a result of a combination of historical, economic, social and political factors.

Another disturbing example of economic factors creating conflict is sub-Saharan Africa's huge debt burdens. These are the products of debts incurred by the colonisers, ill-advised borrowing from the international banks during the period of the international oil crisis in the 1970s and 1980s, compounded by IMF/ World Bank policies (particularly structural adjustment) that have worsened conditions in the areas of health, education and other social services. According to a report by UNIDO (2004), absolute poverty rose in the region from 42 per cent in 1981 to 47 per cent in 2001, when countries were following the advice of rich country specialists on the development of their countries.

Many local communities have been pushed into conflicts as a result of their livelihoods being threatened by conservation projects such as protected areas or ecotourism or by development projects such as large scale drainage and irrigation projects. Such conflicts arise because people are displaced or are dispossessed of their traditional rights to the use of natural resources and their only sources of income, without any viable alternative being offered – as, for example, in the privatisation of water in Bolivia and Tanzania. The concerns of the people, individually or as members of a group, are frequently ignored during project planning processes. In Module 8 *Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation*, you can learn more about local participation in project planning and implementation.

## Geo-political

Because the world's resources are shrinking in terms of their capacity to meet growing demand, conflict between nation states due to scarcity of resources is gaining increasing attention. Very often geo-political conflicts are related to disagreements over land: border issues are usually about border assets – for example, marine resources within claimed Exclusive Economic Zones.

A current Commonwealth example is the Guyana-Venezuela border issue involving Venezuela's 1788 claim to over 75 per cent of the land area of Guyana. In the Note of Recognition of the Independence of Guyana on 26 May 1966, Venezuela stated:

“Venezuela recognises as territory of the new State the one which is located on the east of the right bank of the Essequibo River, and reiterates before the new State, and before the international community, that it expressly reserves its rights of territorial sovereignty over all the zone located on the west bank of the above-mentioned river. Therefore, the Guyana-Essequibo

territory over which Venezuela expressly reserves its sovereign rights, limits on the east by the new State of Guyana, through the middle line of the Essequibo River, beginning from its source and on to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean.”

Venezuelan maps, produced since 1970, show the entire area from the eastern bank of the Essequibo, including the islands in the river, as Venezuelan territory. On some maps, the western Essequibo region is called the ‘Zone of Reclamation’. Currently, the United Nations is acting as arbitrator and is in the process of finding a final solution to this ongoing conflict.

Although these factors are discussed here at the macro level, we can observe similar sources of conflict at both national and community levels. Yinka Aganga-Williams, in her 1998 article on *Youth, Conflict and Peace* (Reading 7), identifies seven potential sources of conflict that are specific to youth groups. The first of these hints at geo-political issues:

- competition for scarce resources (economic or social)
- differences in goals
- differences in perception and values
- disagreements in role requirements
- nature of work activities
- individual approaches
- internalised conflicts.

You may want to read the article now to get the full details on each of these sources of conflict among youth groups.



Turn to Reading 7 ‘Youth Groups, Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution’ by Yinka Aganga-Williams, Senior Programme Officer, Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre.

## Impact of conflict on group dynamics

The impact of conflict on group dynamics, both intra-group and inter-group, is dramatic. Inter-group conflict that is not addressed tends to reappear, and each time it does the situation becomes susceptible to rapid escalation. Within a group, conflict with another group tends to increase solidarity and compliance with group norms, following the group's policy line. A good example of this type of group behaviour is seen in political parties just before elections.

“This is noticeable in the immediate period preceding a national election. Intra-party debate over policy positions is diminished. A united front is presented to the public. Between groups, conflict is characterised by an increased propensity to negatively stereotype the other group's members, an emphasis on differences between the two groups, and decreased direct communication that results in an increased likelihood of misunderstanding of intentions.”

(Brown, 1991)

This combination creates a vicious cycle of defensive aggression and defensive counter-aggression by the other group, until it is counteracted by external factors.

### Power imbalance

More often than not, power and status inequalities are the most critical problems of inter-group relations. The low-power group is more vulnerable, so it censors communication that might invoke retribution from a high-power group, such as on dissatisfaction with working conditions. As a result, the high-power group remains ignorant of information considered sensitive by the low-power group, which in turn experiences frustration and relative deprivation as a result of their own group discipline. Such a situation is particularly true in cases where there is intense competition over scarce resources, and can be best described as a self-reproducing cycle of fear and ignorance. This is the sort of case you might meet in a non-unionised factory, where workers lack the formal structure and legitimacy of a trade union to enable them to voice their grievances without hostility.

The long-term outcomes of this cycle of fear and ignorance are either a heightened feeling of being oppressed (a very destructive form of too little conflict) or scattered outbreaks of violence and guerrilla tactics, as individuals lose any feeling of social and personal commitment to the workplace.

### Overt and covert inter-group conflict

The extent to which potential conflict among groups becomes overt varies. As mentioned in previous units, cases of conflict between unions and employer bodies are usually transparent. In Unit 1, Case

study 1.1 – The Inter-Continental Caravan presents a good example of a transparent inter-group conflict.

The conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples has usually been very obvious in places like Australia, Fiji Islands, New Zealand and South Africa. Sometimes it is less explicit but has still been a real factor – as, for example, the presence of immigrant Irish workers in the heavy industries of England and Wales in the inter-war and post war years.

Gender conflict is often less obvious but still real enough: for example, when the legitimate upward mobility of women is interpreted by men as the ‘colonising’ of professions such as school teaching.

## **Social roles, power distribution and history**

Inter-group relations also differ depending on the defining characteristics of the groups and their relationship. The roles of government and opposition are functionally defined as essential components of the democratic process, so conflict is organised and structured in a systematic way. The government has been elected to implement its policies, and the opposition is there to create functional conflict by questioning the government’s position and exerting political pressure so that as much as possible of its own policy position can be incorporated into any new legislation, giving it political authority.

Because trade unions are usually formally constituted, there is a legal structure and a pattern of behaviour that can generally be relied on to resolve problems. This was not the case with the year-long Miners’ Strike in 1984 against the policies of pit closure by the right-wing Thatcher Government in the UK. The strike was not immediately resolved because the Government was determined to reconstruct the British economy. The distribution of power is of course critical to the union/ employer type of conflict, and the Thatcher Government’s political activists provoked the strike in order to use it as an excuse to lessen the power of the unions. Five years earlier the country had been close to serious economic trouble, which was exacerbated by chaotic political conditions produced by numerous public sector strikes. Eventually, the Government won the struggle, but only by using the army, the police and the civil and criminal judicial systems to force the miners back to work.

## **Societal differences**

Conflict between groups that involves societal differences may be even more complicated. Divisions that are grounded in societal history are likely to be reinforced by a network of social mechanisms (political, economic, educational) that institutionalise the differences. Societal differences do not necessarily imply power differences between the groups, but very frequently the effect of

institutionalisation is to enshrine the dominance of one group over another.

In the following reading, the conflict occurs not only at an inter-group level – between the wider society and young, displaced people – but also at an intra-group level, between the younger and older generations within communities.



Take some time now to read Reading 8 ‘Community Response to Law and Order Problems’ by Lynn Giddings.



### Activity 4.1

(about 45 minutes)

After reading the article, discuss the following questions with your peers. Then write the answers and any notes in your learning journal.

- 1 Briefly describe the conflict situation:
  - a) Who are the conflicting parties?
  - b) What has caused the conflict situation?
  - c) How have the parties dealt with the conflict? (Explain the conflict handling styles of each party, and the behaviours and conflict outcomes.)
- 2 Briefly outline the two approaches to conflict resolution that are described in the reading.
- 3 Comment on the effectiveness of each.
- 4 Reflecting on your own practice, what conflict resolution strategies might you use in such a situation?

## Managing conflict among groups

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There are many aspects to managing conflict among groups:

- diagnosing the conflict
- intervention
- changing attitudes
- changing behaviours
- changing structures
- managing power differences
- managing societal differences
- encouraging participation.

### Diagnosing the conflict

In medicine, accurate diagnosis is essential to assisting patients to regain their health. It is also crucially important in conflict management, but is often neglected or not done well. In situations where conflict has remained covert for a long period of time, it is often very intense when it does surface. The need for immediate resolution may be overwhelming, but if the conflict is poorly understood, the intervention is unlikely to provide a long-lasting solution.

Diagnosis of the conflict by a third party starts with asking:

- 1 At what level is the source of the conflict – intra-personal, interpersonal, inter-group, intra-group?
- 2 What relationship should the third party have with the two parties?
- 3 What is the optimum state of relations among the parties needed to achieve the goals of the relationship?

### Intervention

If a manager/mediator understands the following, s/he is more likely to develop an intervention that is appropriate to resolving conflict among groups:

- the contribution of the different levels of relationship to the conflict
- the impact of her/his own personal biases in the situation
- the seriousness of the conflict – is an intervention really necessary?

Intervention intended to make a conflict functional rather than dysfunctional usually involves trying to develop strategies to reduce



the conflict. Sometimes, however, as mentioned earlier in the module, it is necessary to stimulate more conflict to bring about positive change. In these situations, the role of the catalyst is to intervene in the rigid, ongoing conflict process that is produced by the mixture of attitudes, behaviour and social structure. Interventions often start by impacting on one key aspect of the conflicting behaviours.

In the 1984 Miners' Strike mentioned above, the tactic of the National Union of Mineworkers was to use 'flying pickets', groups of skilled strikers who drove from one location to the next supporting local mineworkers. The Thatcher Government made this process illegal, thus making it easy for the police to reduce picketing to a manageable process. However, long-term change usually needs to address all aspects of the conflict: attitudes, behaviours and structures. Eventually the Government created an unwilling but workable peace with the mineworkers that allowed it to gradually reduce the industry so that it became profitable in the global economy.

## Changing attitudes

Changing attitudes involves influencing the ways in which the parties perceive the conflict situation. Altering the way groups perceive the differences or similarities between them may impact on the way they relate to each other. For example, traditional hostilities between Muslims and Hindus in Maharashtra, India, were suspended when a mixed group of migrant workers came into conflict with local workers, causing them to coalesce into a unified group. Sharing a common goal, the achievement of which required co-operation between these two religious groups normally in conflict, reduced their own escalating conflict.

Educating people about group dynamics and inter-group conflict may also help people to reduce their unintended contributions to increasing a conflict. When they study attitude-changing strategies, this helps parties who are in potential conflict to understand and explain to themselves the positive relations between themselves and the other groups.

## Changing behaviours

Changing their destructive behaviours requires groups to study and consciously adopt actual strategies that enable them to act more positively: they need to focus on the actual modes of behaviour in which they act currently and work on improving them until they become more constructive. This can be achieved by:

- **Changing intra-group behaviour** – when a group is preoccupied with resolving internal differences, its energy for fighting with other groups may be diminished. When the group has resolved its internal differences, it may become more prone to re-engaging in conflict with other groups, and hence need behaviour modification strategies at that point.

- **Training group members in conflict management/ resolution skills** – when there is too much conflict, training in problem-solving or communication skills may benefit group members by developing conflict management expertise.
- **Third party management of inter-group behaviour** – mediators skilled in behaviour management, trusted by both sides, can reduce the escalation of conflict.

To better understand issues around changing group behaviour to allow for effective conflict resolution, read the following articles.



Read Reading 9, which is in two parts: 'Formal and Informal Actions for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution' by Charles Namafe, School of Education, University of Zambia and 'Formal and Informal Action in Dealing with Conflicts' by Razaan Bailey, Trainer, Future Links, South Africa.



### Activity 4.2

(about 15 minutes)

In your learning journal, outline the aspects for managing conflict that are referred to in Reading 9. Give examples of conflict situations you are aware of that could use some of the conflict management strategies described in the article.

## Changing structures

Changing structures means modifying the communication and social infrastructural relations between groups, at least those that affect long-term relations between groups. An example is the relationship between the Muslim asylum-seekers from Indian Jammu/ Kashmir who seek refuge among Pakistani Kashmiris in Muzaffarabad and the Neelam Valley. The asylum seekers are small business people, teachers, mullahs and farmers who have lost all their possessions in the fighting in Kashmir. While the local people are in principle very favourable to them, conflicts arise because the newcomers need homes and education for their children and the opportunity to work and start small businesses, which puts them into rivalry with local people. Moreover, because of the conflict in Jammu Kashmir some of them join mujahideen groups, which attracts Indian Army retaliation through shelling of the villages and towns near the line of control. The shelling is feared by local people.

The structural interventions needed to deal with this conflict require large investments of time and resources – both human and capital – from bodies such as the UN. These interventions tend to take much longer to be effective than attitudinal or behavioural interventions. However, they are more likely to produce long-term change. In this case, part of the problem is resolved by asylum seekers maintaining local farms throughout Pakistani Kashmir that had been left unfarmed by families when the younger people left to work in

Canada, the Middle East and the UK. They also bring technical expertise in the area of education and health and offer valuable new resources. But all that has to be structurally analysed and managed to be effective.

## Managing power differences

Managing conflict where there are power differences between the parties is difficult. There is a potential for extremely dysfunctional outcomes in a situation of conflict between a very powerful group and a low-power group. As mentioned earlier, the relationship is sometimes characterised by poor communication, resulting from fear on the part of the low-power group and ignorance on the part of the high-power group. This can result in extreme oppression caused by there being too little overt conflict, or unexpected incidents of violence caused by too much suppressed conflict. Both groups will have a preference for minimising conflict, but because the inter-group problems are not addressed, the low-power group will eventually be forced to adopt high profile strategies to get their voices heard. These strategies are likely to be dysfunctional for both groups and may involve violence.

This has become an issue in a number of British schools in lower class areas of the country, where many pupils undoubtedly sense that the odds are against them achieving very much educationally and, therefore, having any real opportunity for permanent jobs and full family lives, given the effects of the global economy on the British employment situation and housing. This seems to result in failure to accept school discipline as well as in challenges to teachers, frequently ill-mannered and sometimes violent. The state has developed a policy of identifying very skilled and successful head teachers who are assigned to difficult schools to resolve the conflicts that are evident and to develop new working relationships between pupils and teaching and administrative staff.

In managing conflict between high- and low-power groups, it is important that the power differential is made transparent in some way and acknowledged in negotiations, or there will be barriers to the flow of information between the groups. Brown (1991) advocates that interventions must be preceded by some balancing of the psychological odds, so that both groups feel able to communicate without risking too much. While it is not often possible to change the power differential, a mediator may reduce the fear in the minds of the low-power group and may be able to educate the high-power group. This is what the best head teachers are able to do. Failure to do this on a city scale has resulted in some major cities being divided into two groups – the affluent living behind high gates and fences and protected by police and army, and the poverty stricken living in slums and protected from the police by gangsters. On occasions, this may erupt into savage class warfare. The case of São Paulo in Brazil several years ago is particularly revealing. Unfortunately, the

unevenness of development of the global economy may well be making conflicts like São Paulo more likely.

## **Managing societal differences**

The case of Sao Paolo and some British lower class schools show that societal differences that result from systemic discrimination inevitably affect inter-group relations. People bring their mindsets, their prejudices and their stereotypes to the group, and the group must deal with these issues if it is to achieve its goals. Differences that involve histories of exploitation – such as blacks by whites and women by men – are the most difficult to deal with.

Successful resolution of conflicts of this nature again involves acknowledging the power differential and actively balancing the odds in some way, as the Africanisation programmes in post-colonial African countries have attempted to do. Society's institutions, such as education and the law, have in many cases reinforced those differences. External pressure may be required to get any access for some people to essential public services. For example, equal employment opportunity legislation is needed to get women into certain sectors of the workforce, or special assistance programmes are required to ensure that disadvantaged young people have access to education and training. Counter institutions, such as affirmative action agencies, can be established to attempt to dismantle systemic discrimination gradually. This has been a major issue in South Africa, which is attempting to undo the years of damage done to black and coloured people under apartheid.

## **Encouraging participation**

In the following reading, we re-visit a recurring theme – the importance of encouraging participation. For example, in the Solomon Islands, where ethnic conflict and violence have affected women and children most, women formed a group called Women for Peace (WFP) that actively supports and encourages women's initiatives at all levels, with a view to finding a peaceful solution between the two militant groups.

As Kofi Annan pointed out at a WFP meeting on 20 September 2002:

“We must make greater use of women's potential in this area, and bring more women to the negotiating table and into decision-making positions. We must action the understanding that women's full participation in preventing and resolving conflicts is essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in the twenty-first century.”

The participation of women in conflict resolution processes has been called for by the UN in Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security – which called for the full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security – as well as by the Commonwealth Plan of Action for

Gender Equality 2005–2015, endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government.

Likewise, young people must be allowed to participate not only in peace processes, but also in the general decision-making processes concerning issues affecting different aspects of their lives. This is critical for the prevention of violent conflict, as emphasised in the reading that follows.



Look now at Reading 10 ‘Good Governance and Students’ Leadership in Tertiary Institutions in Africa’ by Carlson Anyangwe, School of Law, University of Zambia.



### Activity 4.3

(about 20 minutes)

Think about your own situation and experiences, then write two paragraphs on how participation may be employed as an appropriate method for identifying differences and resolving conflicts. Having written your answer in your learning journal, have a discussion about the issues raised with your colleagues or co-workers.

Before concluding your study of this unit, complete the following research activity.



### Activity 4.4

(about 1 hour)

This activity will require you to do some research - for example, through visiting the library, reading the newspaper, going to talk to people in your community, etc.

In your learning journal:

- 1 Identify two conflicting groups in your community that you believe are locked into a pattern of dysfunctional conflict. Describe the conflicting groups. What is the socio-economic status of the two groups? What is the nature of the conflict, and how has it manifested itself? (Explain the conflict process that has occurred.)
- 2 How do the members of each group perceive the situation? How do they justify their acts in this situation of conflict?
3. What strategies would you use as a mediator to try and change the attitudes of the protagonists?

**Note:** You may continue using the example of conflict that you chose in Activity 1.1 or work with another example.

## Unit summary

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In this unit, we have explored the following issues:

- inter-group relations can be characterised by too much or too little conflict
- effective management of inter-group conflict requires understanding and appropriate action
- action includes influencing attitudes and changing behaviours and structures
- power differences between groups can promote fear and ignorance, which can result in reduced communication between the two, with the potential for oppression or violent outbursts
- institutionalised societal differences may further complicate relationships between groups: legislation and the establishment of counter institutions may reduce the pressures created in inter-group relations by systemic discrimination.

This concludes your study of Module 10. Well done! Before moving on to working on your final assignment, make sure that you have learned the key concepts in this unit. Look back at the learning outcomes and see if you can now do them. Then, look through your learning journal to review the reflective entries you generated and the issues that were relevant to your learning process.

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## Module summary

In this module – *Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills* – you have learned about the nature of conflict and its effects on people in different contexts, both at an individual and at a group level. You have studied:

- the nature of conflict from several different perspectives – functionalist, interactionist, structuralist and human relations
- a model of the conflict process and the five stages of the process – the potential for conflict, recognition of conflict, conflict handling styles, conflict behaviour and conflict outcomes
- techniques designed to help the resolution of conflict at both an individual and a group level, which will enable you to work more effectively with and through conflict – these include distributive and integrative bargaining and negotiation and mediation
- the processes of conflict at a macro level between different groups – inter-group behaviour – with a framework for understanding such conflict and strategies for diagnosing and managing such situations.

You have also seen how conflict can become the starting point for new ideas and more positive relationships.

If you have successfully completed this module, you should now be able to:

- identify examples of conflict within the region where you live, and understand their origins and the course they have taken
- recognise the different approaches that have been used in resolving conflict, and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches
- apply the insights gained from studying conflict situations to the kinds of conflicts that are encountered in youth development work
- outline the principles and practice of conflict resolution
- identify inter-group conflict and its underlying causes
- recognise the existence of pre-conflict and conflict situations when they are encountered in different youth and development settings
- apply the theory you have studied to the analysis of conflict situations and assist others to do the same
- employ negotiation and mediation skills in bringing together conflicting groups or individuals

- consider strategies to resolve conflict when agreement cannot be reached by consensus.

We hope that your learning from this module and the knowledge and techniques you have gained will help you as a youth development worker. When you are confronted with conflict situations – within the groups you work with, between young people and authority, between yourself and the young people you work with – we hope that you will now be able to take action to resolve the conflict. Now you will need to apply your learning to complete your assignment for this module. Good luck.

## Glossary

Below is a list of words that are frequently used in discussions about conflict resolution. You may have come across them before, perhaps in a different context, but because they are used to mean specific things in conflict resolution, they are defined here. Some are also defined in the text, but it's useful to have an easily accessible list that you can refer to whenever you need to.

advocate	Someone who speaks in favour of, or pleads for, another person or cause.
arbitration	Involves the intervention of a third party to a dispute, who has formal binding authority to dictate an agreement in a negotiation.
catalyst	A thing, process or person that provokes change.
consensus	A decision-making process in which all parties involved openly agree to the final decision. It does not mean that everybody is completely satisfied with every aspect of the decision, but rather that the decision is acceptable to everybody because no-one feels that her or his most important or valued needs have been ignored.
conciliation	Involves a trusted third party who provides an informal communication link to reconcile two parties and promote conflict resolution in a dispute or negotiation.
divergent	Tendency to generate a variety of different solutions when analysing a problem.
dysfunctional	Anything that prevents a person or a group from achieving their goals.
empathy	The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.
emotive	Tending to excite emotion or arouse feelings.
functional	That which serves in a conflict situation to enable the parties in a dispute to achieve their goals.
functionalist	Theory that society is essentially nearly as effective as it could be and that all conflict that does not re-establish its essential harmony is harmful and must be avoided.
humanist	Theory that the key to all social problems lies in the knowledge and conduct of the people

	involved, and that conflict is a natural and inevitable process in any group or relationship.
interactionist	Theory that communicative processes are an essential and influential part of group interaction, and that conflict is not only a positive force in a group but also necessary for a group to perform effectively.
inter-group behaviour	The behaviour that occurs between different groups.
intervention	The strategy developed to prevent or modify the results of a conflict between two or more people.
intra-group behaviour	The behaviour that occurs between members within a group.
mediation	Intervention of an acceptable and impartial third party who facilitates the negotiation of a solution by using reasoning, persuasion and suggestions for alternatives but who has no formal binding authority in a dispute.
negotiate	Confer with others to bring about agreement or compromise.
party	One of the two sides in a dispute or conflict.
semantic	Relating to meaning in language.
structuralist	Theory of conflict in terms of the social structures that underpin it.

## Further reading

This is a list of some of the books and articles referred to in the module and suggestions for exploring topics further. You are encouraged to read as widely as possible during and after the course.

We suggest you discuss follow-up reading with your tutor. What is available to you in libraries? Are there other books of particular interest to you or your region? Can you use alternative resources like newspapers and the internet?

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For more information on the Sierra Leone conflict described in Unit 4, see: <http://www.un.org/youth> or Pemagi, J. (2002) 'The Challenge to Democracy in Sierra Leone' in Baksh-Soodeen, R. and Etchart, L. (eds) *Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone National Consultation Freetown, Sierra Leone, 21–24 May 2001*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.



# Assignments

Your work in this module will be assessed through the two assignments outlined below:

- 1 A report of about 2,000 words (worth 80 per cent of the final mark).
- 2 A review of the learning journal you keep (worth 20 per cent of the final mark).

The institution in which you are enrolled for this Diploma programme may decide to replace part of the final assignment with a written examination (worth 30 per cent of the final mark.)

**Note:** make sure you discuss the assessment requirements with your tutor so that you are clear about what you are expected to do and when, and any particular requirements in your institution.

## Assignment 1

This assignment counts towards your final assessment in this module and is worth 80 per cent of the final mark. You should discuss with your tutor the exact requirement for your institution.

Write a **2,000 word** report about a conflict of which you have detailed knowledge. This knowledge need not be first hand – it could be gained from reading, research or talking to the people directly involved.

The report should describe the conflict and analyse its root causes and its consequences, utilising the ideas studied during your work on this module.

It should also critically assess the role youth development work might play in helping to resolve the conflict, and it should outline strategies to resolve it.

## Assignment 2

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This assignment counts towards your final assessment in this module and is worth 20 per cent of the final mark. You should discuss with your tutor the exact requirement for your institution.

The assignment takes the form of your learning journal, which contains the notes and records from the activities included in each unit.

# Readings

The readings in this section will help you develop your understanding of Module 10 Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills. The reading numbers, their titles and author(s) and the unit in which they appear are listed below.

- 1 'Crushed by Well-Heeled Global Boots' by Michael Meacher (Unit 1)..... 124
- 2 'Theories to Analyse Conflict Situations' by Dr Pramod Kumar (Unit 1)..... 127
- 3 'Directions – A Training Resource for Workers with Young People in New South Wales' by the NSW Department of Community Services (Unit 2) ..... 143
- 4 'Namibia: Unravelling the Legacy' from *In Common* (Unit 2)..... 148
- 5 'Six Principles of Negotiation' by ACCORD (Unit 3)..... 152
- 6 'Overview of Conflict. Conflict Resolution and Peace in Relation to Development' by Dr C. M. Namafe (Unit 3) ..... 155
- 7 'Youth Groups, Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution' by Yinka Aganga-Williams (Unit 4)..... 161
- 8 'Community Response to Law and Order Problems' by Lynn Giddings (Unit 4)..... 172
- 9 'Formal and Informal Actions for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution' by Charles Namafe (part 1); and 'Formal and Informal Action in Dealing with Conflicts' by Razaan Bailey (part 2) (Unit 4) ..... 198
- 10 'Democracy, Good Governance and Students' Leadership in Tertiary Institutions in Africa' by Carlson Anyangwe (Unit 4) ..... 201

## Reading 1: Crushed by well-heeled global boots

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By Michael Meacher, Labour MP for Oldham West and Royton

### **The poorest countries need tariff walls to protect them from international competition**

‘Embracing globalisation,’ according to Gordon Brown in his CBI speech on Monday night, ‘is the best way to growth, jobs and prosperity.’ Looking at the facts, however, might prompt a rather different response: is globalisation, once thought unstoppable, actually now in decline?

Politically, the acrimonious collapse of the Hong Kong World Trade Organization negotiations in December, the stranding of the so-called Doha development round, and the increasing resistance to the Washington Consensus by which the international financial institutions have dominated the last century, all suggest the first stirrings of a shift to a new world order. This is also reflected in the downturn of global foreign direct investment, which fell 41 per cent in 2001, 13 per cent in 2002 and another 12 per cent in 2003.

There are other uncomfortable facts. First, a system that has given unprecedented power to today’s private global capitalists to scour the world for the highest profit return has led to a drastic hollowing out of the manufacturing base of the US-UK economies. This has led to a current account deficit in the US now approaching 7 per cent of GDP and to net foreign debt of over \$4 trillion, a colossal 40 per cent of US GDP and still rising. This is unsustainable. In the UK we are losing 130,000 manufacturing jobs a year. Thirty years ago only a fifth of manufactured goods sold in the UK were made abroad; today it is 60 per cent and rising. No economy can survive on the service sector and high tech alone.

The conventional answer is to move up-market to counter the sucking-out of manufacturing jobs to China and other fast-developing countries. But this won’t work either. While information technology and call-centre jobs were the first to move to Asia, the trend is now spreading to areas long thought to be safe from outsourcing, such as financial services, legal services and even the media. The unpalatable fact is that China and India are already competing both with very low wages and in high tech as well.

The Chinese share of GDP devoted to research and development is growing 10 per cent a year, while Europe’s is virtually stagnant (0.02 per cent). That’s why in the US, as in the UK, there has been no net job creation in high-productivity sectors. The jobs created are in lower-paid public and private services that cannot be traded internationally. But the average pay in many of them – retail sales,

customer services, cashiers – is below the poverty line for a family of four.

Secondly, the global economy has not improved economic performance. Since 1980 world GDP has grown only slightly more than half as fast as it did in the period before 1980. And in some respects its impacts have been quite malign.

Joseph Stiglitz, as chief economist at the World Bank, identified the uncontrolled flow of 'hot money' as the main culprit of the East Asian tiger economy crisis of 1997–98, since footloose capital so often generates instability. The same instability of a global economy operating to a single set of monetary criteria lies behind the recurrent crises in Mexico, Argentina, South Korea, Indonesia and Brazil.

For the poorer developing countries the impact has been stark. The share of global income of the poorest fifth of the world has actually halved since 1960 to a paltry 1.1 per cent today. World inequality has grown drastically. The richest 20 countries now have 125 times higher GDP per head than the 20 poorest countries.

The main reason for this impoverishment is that a global economy has locked developing countries into the role of primary producer of basic commodities, forced to open up their markets to transnational competition that they cannot resist as the price of receiving the investment that they cannot do without. What is needed is the right for the poorest countries to erect tariff walls to protect their infant industries, at least until they are strong enough to meet the full force of international competition.

The key is to be allowed to tailor economic policies to domestic needs – which is why for example Vietnam, subject for decades to a US trade embargo, has had a growth rate five times higher than Mexico fully plugged into the world economy via NAFTA. But this is precisely what a globalisation run by the transnational corporations in their own interests will never permit.

Even, therefore, on the economic front the case for globalisation, at least in its current form, is clearly not made. But there is a darker side too which cannot be ignored. That is the global drug trade, the global trafficking of women and minorities, the more rapid transmission of Aids, diseases such as malaria, TB and perhaps avian flu, increasing migrant flows, and above all the relentless intensification of climate change. None of these was caused by globalisation per se, but it has exacerbated all of them.

The global economy is here to stay. But today's, monopolised by international capital for its own interests, is not serving us well. A new model could achieve a fairer shift of power and opportunity to losers in the South, and entrench all economic activity within the limits of sustainability.

Nor is this a mere pipedream. The resistance to reinforcing the status quo at the WTO conferences at Seattle, Cancún and Hong Kong, and the emergence of a group of 21 vanguard developing countries to lead

the opposition, suggests there is a powerful constituency for real change.

## Reading 2: Theories to Analyse Conflict Situations

By Dr. Pramod Kumar, Institute for Development and Communication, Chandigarh  
1998, for the Commonwealth Secretariat.

### **Ethological theories – Konrad Lorenz, Desmond Morris and Robert Ardrey**

Attempts have been made to understand social evils in terms of the allegedly innate nastiness in human nature. Ethologists propose that human destructive impulses are genetically endowed and thus linked to the same innate predisposition in animals, particularly to animal aggression.

#### **Basic features**

Studies of animals in their habitats have led ethologists like Conrad Lorenz to conclude that the aggressive drive in animals is innate in the same manner as are the instincts of hunger, sex and fear, and that it has a value in the processes of natural selection. In spite of all our cultural achievements and our marked capacity to reason, 'human behaviour', Lorenz points out, is also subject to all the laws prevailing in all phylogenetically adapted instinctive behaviour.<sup>1</sup> To summarise the ethological and ethnological theories proposed by Lorenz, Morris and Ardrey, briefly and simplistically, they argue that there is ample evidence to show that our animal ancestors were instinctively violent beings, and that this has had a value in the survival of our species, therefore it has become built into our genetic inheritance. We have a range of possible behavioural responses, one of which is animal aggression, and we switch these on as the situation requires.

If the ethologists are right, then resolving conflicts in which animal aggressive energies have been activated requires us to defuse these energies as a matter of urgency. In the animal world the basic techniques range from 'fight' turning to 'flight' (when animals run away) to 'submission', when they use a behaviour pattern that reduces the aggressive drive in the creature with more effective aggression, such as dropping the head.

These behaviours do work in a lot of human interaction, from showing that you are not going to attack by opening or dropping your hands, to the symbolic method of using words that indicate you are prepared, at least for the moment, to negotiate on the attacker's terms.

### **Psychoanalytic theories – Sigmund Freud**

The propensity of human beings to be violent is explained here in terms of instincts.

## Basic features

The Freudian analysis, observed Grimshaw, is likely to see social violence more generally as the acting out of sexual traumas suffered in infancy, or as the sublimation of sexual impulses of adults rather than as direct competition for sex as a commodity.<sup>2</sup>

Freud described the nature of the human being in terms of flows of energy, the basic drive being what he called the 'Id', the instinctual energy that seeks to survive and reproduce (Eros), then die (Thanatos). Because the human being has to survive in a world with others, then this instinctual energy system rapidly becomes overlaid by a monitoring and checking system, a sort of 'reality' system which channels the flows of instinctual energy in such a way that we can control them (the Ego). Gradually, as we grow up, both these systems become overlaid by a third system (the Super-Ego) which is a type of ethical, language-based system that allows us to monitor our behaviour in terms of broader moral principles, the sort that give us a guilty conscience when we know that we have offended against our species in some way. These systems are always potentially in contention with each other, and the aim should be to balance them, not allowing any of them to have too much control.

Where the Ego is undeveloped, this allows the aggressive force of the Id to drive our behaviour, which therefore becomes hard to control, something we see in toddlers of about two years of age, where the instinctual survival and goal driven energy is blocked. When this happens, Freudian theory suggests that it is extremely difficult to resolve conflict by negotiation. Some psychotic conditions are described in terms of an undeveloped Ego control system, whereby the psychotic behaviour bears no relationship to the reality of the situation. This may lead those with such a condition to be unable to respond even to the most friendly of circumstances. This may not of course result in conflict, but where it does, submission techniques may work to defuse the force of the Id, but we have then not to assume that it won't be aroused again very easily, as the Ego system is so weak, so we must monitor and control the situation very carefully. Youth workers dealing with young people using strong psycho-active drugs may well experience something like this, in that LSD, for example, can liberate powerful, seemingly instinctual, energies.

## Critique

Many scholars have sought to rebut the arguments which have been offered for the innateness of violence in human behaviour. Hannah Arendt maintains that violence need not be either beastly or irrational. Conceding that violence often erupts from rage, she points out that it is possible to create conditions which are so dehumanising that people become animal-like. She cites examples of concentration camps, famines, tortures, etc., as instances of such dehumanising conditions. To quote Hannah Arendt:



“Violence is neither beastly nor irrational – whether we understand these terms in the ordinary language of the humanist or in accordance with scientific theories... that violence often springs from rage is commonplace, and rage can indeed be irrational and pathological, but so can every other human affect. It is no doubt possible to create conditions under which men are dehumanised – such as concentration camps, torture, famine – but this does not mean that they become animal-like; and under such conditions, not rage and violence, but their conspicuous absence is the clearest sign of dehumanisation. Rage is by no means an automatic reaction to misery and suffering as such; no one reacts with rage to an incurable disease or to an earthquake or, for that matter, to social conditions that seem to be unchangeable”.<sup>3</sup>

A report submitted to the US National Commission on Violence has pointed out that ‘neither genetic nor non-genetic abnormalities specifically determine violent behaviour’.<sup>4</sup> Etzioni observes that some researchers have found that intra-species violence is less frequent among animals than among human beings.<sup>5</sup> It has been observed that ethological theories tend to obliterate the crucial differences between human beings and animals in order to extrapolate the results of the studies on animals and apply them to human beings. Ashley Montagu has rightly pointed out that:

“Those who speak of innate aggression in man appear to be lacking in any understanding of the uniqueness of man’s evolutionary history. Unacquainted with the facts or else undeterred by them, they insist on fitting whatever facts they are acquainted with into their theories. In so doing, they commit the most awful excesses. But, as is well known, nothing succeeds like excess. Lorenz’s assumptions and interpretations are typical.”<sup>6</sup>

The violence that human beings indulge in among themselves is far more brutal than animal violence within any particular species. The sociologist George Herbert Mead stresses the crucial point that we are symbol users. When we use violence our modes of doing so are rooted in our interpretations of the threats posed by particular socio-cultural contexts rather than being merely innate patterns of aggression. When we look at the violence perpetrated by both Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, it is a response to people’s interpretations of their historical experience of violence against them, and their interpretations of the dangers that now face them. The practicalities of the situation might well have required some aggression but they also required that people should resolve the conflict before everyone got hurt. Within their limitations this is what animals would have done. What both groups did was not like any kind of animal behaviour, though the willingness to strike out at anything posing an immediate threat does bear a resemblance to animal patterns of behaviour. The latent conflict here lies in the increasing poverty of states in Africa, due to global conditions, and the struggle between

rival tribes over rapidly diminishing resources, all of which is overlaid by a particular history and particular social conditions. Reports from Rwanda showed that people were highly aware of this, though expressed it also in terms of the traditional animosities.

In animals, aggression appears to consist of a structured pattern of behaviour, one routine among many, switched on by particular circumstances. It occurs very much more frequently among some species, such as the Siamese Fighting Fish, than others, and this is linked to the niches in which species live. The propensity for aggression among humans may well have some similar genetic basis, but the expression of this is profoundly affected by culture and by language and other symbolic forms of representation. This means that it is possible both to intensify and to reduce feelings of violence and aggression by symbolic means such as language. This is why strategies of conflict resolution make such extensive use of discussion and linguistic reconstruction of situations.

## **Frustration aggression theory – John Dollard, Leonard Berkowitz**

Some behavioural psychologists, in contrast with psychoanalysts and ethologists, focus their attention on the dynamics of an individual's interaction with her environment rather than on the instinctual characteristics of the human personality. If ethologists and psychoanalysis consider conflict tendencies to be innate, the behavioural psychological theories, in general, consider them to be responses triggered by environmental stimuli.

### **Basic features**

Aggression, including violence, can be regarded as an emotional response to frustration. The underlying assumption of this theory is that frustration provides the basic stimulus for feelings of anger, which are channelled into aggressive behaviour. Frustration is defined in terms of 'Thwarting of, or interference in, the attainment of goals, aspirations or expectations. Aggression is a behaviour designed to injure physically or otherwise those towards whom it is directed.'<sup>7</sup>

### **Critique**

However, there are others who suggest that aggression may not simply be the outcome of frustration. A frustrated individual may indulge in fantasies or he may start believing in supernatural powers but does not necessarily turn aggressive. Klineberg observes that aggression may be due to a desire or need for social approval or self-assertion rather than due to frustration.

Stanley Milgram, in his various accounts of his 'shock-generator experiments' points out that aggression could also be a function of obedience. His studies suggest that sometimes human beings engage in aggressive behaviour of the sort that characterised the behaviour of

concentration camp guards in Nazi Germany, out of a desire to serve those whom they believe to be in authority rather than because of frustration.<sup>8</sup> This places Milgram in the domain of social psychology rather than psychology.

## Social psychologists – Eric Fromm, Ted Gurr

While psychologists<sup>9</sup> tend to look for attitudes and behavioural patterns located in an individual for the explanation of social conflict and violence, they differ from psychoanalysis and psychologists in their emphasis on structural features of society, embedded in social interaction, owing to which socialisation into prejudice takes place. Social psychologists share with them their emphasis on an individual's psychological attitudes, which may be responsible for social conflict, tensions and violence. They differ from them in that they show how these attitudes are intrinsic elements of the fabric of social life.

### Basic features

Eric Fromm takes into consideration both the factors, i.e. the individual's need to live and the features of social structures. To quote Fromm:

“Human nature is neither a biologically fixed and innate sum total of drives nor is it a lifeless shadow of cultural patterns to which it adapts itself smoothly; it is the product of human evolution, but it also has certain inherent mechanisms and laws. There are certain factors in man's nature, which are fixed and unchangeable; the necessity to satisfy the physiologically conditioned drives and the necessity to avoid isolation and moral aloneness.”<sup>10</sup>

He describes a number of behaviour patterns which apparently have been developed as a solution to the sense of isolation and powerlessness. One such mode of adjustment is masochism: an individual can avoid the isolation of taking responsibility for her actions by surrendering the individual self to some higher authority in the name of love or loyalty. Another method or way of adjustment is sadism, in which one's resentments are released upon persons too weak to defend themselves. 'Both masochistic and sadistic strivings,' observes Fromm, 'tend to help the individual to escape his unbearable feelings of aloneness and powerlessness.'<sup>11</sup> This happens when sadism and masochism appear in a combination of sado-masochism. Such an individual surrenders himself to the more powerful whole outside of himself, displacing his resentment on to those below him. He finds the escape he requires, and a means of venting his frustration.

## Relative deprivation – Ted Gurr

Ted Robert Gurr in his book, *Why Men Rebel*, uses both psychological and societal variables to study conditions which may lead to conflict

situations. Discontent arising from 'Relative deprivation' is the basic instigating condition for participants in collective violence.<sup>12</sup> Gurr defines relative deprivation as:

“... a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which, people believe, they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions (value positions), they think they are capable of getting and keeping.”<sup>13</sup>

Gurr defines values as the desired events, objects and conditions for which men strive. He described three categories of values:

- (i) **Welfare:** Welfare values contribute directly to physical well-being and self-realisation.
- (ii) **Power:** Power values determine the extent to which men can influence the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference by others in their own actions.
- (iii) **Interpersonal:** Interpersonal values are psychological satisfactions, seeking non-authoritative interaction with other individuals or groups.<sup>14</sup>

Three of the many possible distinct patterns of deprivation have been suggested by Gurr:

- (i) **Decremental:** Group-value expectations remain relatively constant, but value capabilities are perceived to decline.
- (ii) **Aspirational:** Capabilities remain relatively static, whereas expectations increase.
- (iii) **Progressive deprivation:** A substantial and simultaneous increase in expectations and a decrease in capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

Gurr observes:

“... the intensity and scope of relative deprivation and magnitude of violence are undimensional. Theoretically and empirically, one can conceive of degrees or quantities of each in any polity. The forms for violence, however, are attributes that do not form a simple dimension. A society may experience riots but not revolution; revolution, but not coups d'etat; coups d'etat, but not riots.”<sup>16</sup>

There are authors who have used the term 'deprivation' to represent the impetus to conflict. Davies suggests that '*revolution is most likely to take place when a prolonged period of rising expectations and rising gratification is followed by a short period of sharp reversal during which an intolerable gap develops between expectation and gratification*'.<sup>17</sup> This formulation is better known as 'progressive deprivation'. The formulations of Davies and Gurr are only elaborations and reformulations of the ideas of De-Tocqueville and others, who suggested that revolutions were

perpetrated during periods of relative prosperity and improvement.<sup>18</sup>

## Critique

Conflict behaviour must be understood as adaptive and learned behaviour, which is not emphasised by 'relative deprivation theory'.<sup>19</sup> What the critics of the theory have somehow ignored is that social perception itself is a learnt behaviour. Gurr rightly points out that it is not miseries but the perception of miseries which leads to conflict. Nevertheless, Gurr adds the qualification that the inhibitions and norms of a society may not permit the members to act violently.<sup>20</sup> The qualification makes Gurr's theory infallible and therefore implausible. Even if there are disparities and miseries, they may or may not be perceived, and even if they are perceived, the person may or may not act, because he may have been inhibited. Therefore, it is only retrospectively that his indulgence in conflict behaviour may be interpreted in terms of his perception of relative deprivation. At the micro level, the theory cannot be verified.

Nieburg has also pointed out that the relative deprivation theory fails to explain the behaviour of those who lead the revolutions. The leaders of a revolution may or may not be relatively deprived. Quite often, the movements for total reorganisation and restructuring of society have been advocated by people who have not experienced relative deprivation and frustration in the sense Gurr understands them. These leaders may have been dissatisfied with the existing situation. They may have even been exasperated by the status quo. Even if we call it frustration, it is not exactly the same as frustration due to relative deprivation. The latter is incremental. If someone sees his neighbour's salary going up or his having a television, etc. and consequently experiences frustration, such a frustration has nothing to do with the visionary idea of creating a new society.

The relative deprivation theory has also been accused of taking an anti-historical stance by certain critics.<sup>21</sup> Bayard Rustin has argued that what needs to be understood is not the minds of individuals who participate in a conflict situation, but the precise historical conditions which make it possible for these particular individuals with their particular standpoints and attitudes to form a conflict situation and give a specific character to it.<sup>22</sup> Ralph Dharendorf observes that it is the task of sociology to derive understanding of conflicts from the specific social structures and not to relegate these conflicts to psychological variables or descriptive historical ones or chance.<sup>23</sup>

The relative deprivation theory as propounded by Gurr and some variations presented by Davies, De-Tocqueville and others concentrate on value capabilities of the system and the individual, but neglect the roots of conflict among different classes which determine the pattern of regime coercion and dissident violence which constitutes the bulk of political violence.<sup>24</sup>

These theorists fail to compensate for their lack of historical perspective, inability to deal quantitatively with value expectations at the micro level and the inadequacy of their account of the nature of leadership in situations of conflict.

## **Structural theories – Johan Galtung, Alien Grimshaw, Ivo K Feierabend, Arnold S Feldman, Samuel Huntington**

A recognition of the weaknesses of the socio-psychological theories has led some social scientists to look for the causes of conflict in the structural dislocations or disequilibrium in a society.

### **Structural disequilibrium**

#### **Basic features**

Galtung is of the opinion that persons, groups or nations, resort to conflict behaviour as a possible way out of frustration if they are experiencing rank disequilibrium. To quote Galtung:

“It may, for instance, stand for high on power, low on income, high on occupation, high on education, low on ancestry (for individuals or groups) or high on military power, low on income per capita, high on industrialisation, high on educational level, low on past glory (for nations). This is an unstable configuration in a society, as compared to the stable one in which some groups are high and some others are low on each of the criteria of power, education, income etc.”<sup>25</sup>

Here also the emphasis is on frustration, though the cause is argued to be social and structural.

Alien Grimshaw, arguing in the same strain, points out that social conflict and social violence should be understood in terms of social conditions, for the likelihood of violence is greater in a society which is unstable. To quote Grimshaw:

“Super ordinate/ subordinate relationships, in which the parties are classified by social categories, are fundamentally unstable, and social violence is likely to occur when such an accommodative structure loses its viability. Accommodative structures can lose their viability in a number of analytically separable but theoretically integrated ways. There may be real or perceived changes in the distribution of power: (i) when super ordinate groups lose their vitality (as in Pareto’s ‘circulation of elites’); (ii) when subordinated groups gain in power, either through internal growth and organisation or through outside assistance; (iii) when subordinated groups come to realise latent power they already possess. There may be a decline even in the regime itself. This can occur: (i) when those previously accorded legitimacy are perceived as having abused their power, (ii) when

new perspectives on legitimacy are introduced to a social system, partly from outside.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus Grimshaw emphasises the point that sources of social conflict and social violence lie in differential access to power in the structure of a society. For him, social conflict occurs when individual members of society do not perceive the power structure as legitimate.

### Critique

Grimshaw does not raise the basic questions regarding the grounds on which the accommodative structures lose their viability and vitality. Nor does he examine in detail the factors which bring about changes in the perception of the people regarding the legitimacy of the power structure.

## Feierabend and Nesvold

Another variation of the social structural theories is to be found in Feierabend and Nesvold.

### Basic features

These authors adopt two basic propositions from the frustration-aggression theory. They hold that: (i) systematic frustration instigates violent political behaviour (ii) systematic frustration may stem from specific characteristics of social change. They define systematic frustration in terms of the formation rather than the existence of social wants, and maintain that the higher the social want formation in any given society and the lower the social want satisfaction, the greater the systematic frustration and the greater the impulse to political instability.<sup>27</sup> According to them, the frustration index is shown by a ratio of combined coded scores on satisfaction indices which include the per capita GNP, caloric intake, telephones, physicians, newspapers, radio divided by a country’s coded literacy rate or urbanisation score. They believe that the notion of systematic frustration makes the concept applicable to the analysis of aggregate conflict behaviour within the social system. Feierabend holds that new wants are created by modernisation and a gap between wants and their satisfaction results in systematic frustration. They advance four general hypotheses for empirical investigation:

- a) systematic frustration at any given time is a function of the discrepancy between present social aspirations and expectations on the one hand, and social achievements on the other;
- b) present estimates (i.e. expectations of future frustrations or satisfaction) determine the level of present frustrations or satisfaction;
- c) uncertainties in social expectations (i.e. whether the future will bring disaster or salvation) in themselves increase the sense of systematic frustration;

- d) conflicting aspirations and expectations provide another source of systematic frustration. According to them systematic frustration is more evident in transitional societies.

### Critique

It is difficult to measure 'systematic frustration'. '*In its generality*', according to Khan '*it is ambiguous and in its specificity it is neatly academic – sort of a "laboratory formula" that cannot be tested at the industrial level*'.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the general notion seems sensible and applicable to some situations.

## Huntington

A similar approach to the study of transitional societies is adopted by Huntington.

### Basic features

The causes of violent conflict and instability are analysed on the basis of the process of political change and social development in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in rapid social change and the rapid mobilisation of new groups into politics, coupled with the slow development of political institutions. For him conflict is the result of a lag in the development of viable political institutions, on the one hand, and socio-economic changes, on the other. Huntington argues that politicisation of the masses, urbanisation, literacy, mass media, all expose the traditional man to new forms of life. The gap between the increasing aspirations, expectations and the capabilities of fulfilling them lead to frustration. This is what Huntington calls the gap hypothesis.<sup>29</sup>

### Critique

The major criticism against Huntington's gap hypothesis is that it does not give adequate attention to types of violence endemic in feudal, tribal and in developed industrialised societies. It has also been pointed out by some authors that the hypothesis that the poor are too poor for politics and protest runs counter to the experience of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc.<sup>30</sup>

Feierabend and Nesvold also state that an extensive, rapid and abrupt change moves people physically into a new environment and exposes them to new ideas, and casts them in new and unfamiliar roles, thus creating 'collective bewilderment' which, in turn, strains the psyche of the individual and creates the crisis in the social order.<sup>31</sup> The roles of urbanisation and migration in creating a violent situation have, however, not been settled. Even Huntington states in the latter part of his book that slum-dwellers and rural migrants are likely to support the government and count the blessings arising from their conditions having been improved. Only after a generation or two would they shed their rural passivity and aspire to vertical mobility. To quote Huntington:



“Slum-dwellers in their natural concern for immediate benefits in food, jobs and housing, which can only be secured by working through rather than against the existing system ... The first generation of slum-dwellers imports into the slum traditional rural attitudes of social difference and political passivity. Their children grow up in an urban environment and absorb the goals and aspirations of the city. While the parents are content with the geographical mobility, the children demand vertical mobility.”<sup>32</sup>

In the Third World countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the processes of urbanisation and modernisation are linked with the phenomenon of colonialism which brought in new political and economic values and institutions into traditional societies. The gap that Huntington speaks of may be responsible for the eruption of conflict, but the more important issue is to understand the causes of the gap itself, for in order to eradicate violence and to resolve conflict, one would have to change the conditions which are responsible for this gap. The role of ideology in congregating, articulating and activating the people for change, upsurge and revolt, is also underplayed or mentioned in a pejorative way.<sup>33</sup>

The major weakness of this type of social structural theory is that these theories overemphasise the deterministic role of social factors in the shaping of conflict situations and do not give adequate consideration to the interplay of social and psychological factors. The social structural theories fail in particular to account for the divergent perceptions of people towards their conditions, which plays an important role in conflict behaviour.

## Random outburst theory – Gary T. Marx, L. W. Milbrath

The theory which denies any significance to patterns of conflict is usually labelled as ‘random outburst theory’, for it views conflict as merely a chance occurrence or as having its basis in people deliberately conspiring to create conflict.<sup>34</sup>

### Basic features

Sears and McConhay have summarised the theory in the form of the following, what they claim to be ‘testable’ propositions:

- 1 Conspiracy: a particular act of violence is often triggered by small conspiratorial groups such as Black Muslims or communists.
- 2 Social contagion: most rioters become involved simply through social contagion, either through their proximity to other rioters or through watching a riot on television.
- 3 Youthful male animal spirits: most rioters are young males, letting off their exuberance and rebelliousness, just as young males always have done, from the time of Alcibiades’, when

youths were accused of defacing temples, to the modern day 'panty raids'.

- 4 'Post facto' rationalisation: post-riot interpretations of violence as a protest or as based on legitimate grievances, are simply rationalisations of behaviour engaged in for the far more mundane reasons just mentioned.
- 5 Undifferentiated hostility: the correlations between grievance levels and riot participation merely reflect the rioters' blanket hostility and rebelliousness against all forms of authority rather than a discriminating response to specific legitimate grievances.
- 6 Lack of sophistication: rioters' lack of faith in conventional mechanisms of grievance redress tends to reflect their ignorance of these mechanisms rather than any major faults in the mechanisms themselves.<sup>35</sup>

### Critique

Sears and McConhay have pointed out that none of the above six propositions have been empirically confirmed. On the basis of their study, they have offered a detailed critique of the theory and shown its untenability.

Not only is 'random outburst theory' limited to consideration of manifest conflict but Sears and McConhay also point out that most of the human actions, whether individual or collective, spontaneous or organised, are usually performed in response to the exigencies of social situations as viewed by the agents, in order to fulfil certain goals and interests that they have.

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- 13 Ibid., p. 24.
- 14 Ibid., p. 24. Gurr's analysis of values implicitly assumes a hedonistic and utilitarian approach. Those who do not share this view of values and maintain that 'valuable' need not necessarily mean 'useful' but 'intrinsically worthwhile', may find difficulties in accepting Gurr's approach.
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These theories and concepts appear more as an extension of individual psychology to social levels, assuming a constancy of stimuli and responses in these otherwise two different categories, i.e. the individual as a unit and society as a collectivity.

The J-curve principle of Davies has validity in certain specific socio-political situations. But it appears wanting in its universal applicability. Cross-national case studies of revolutions would refute some of the basic premises of the principle. It does help to explain the occurrence of coups d'état, particularly in the Latin American context, but is inadequate in explaining revolutionary outbreaks proper.

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## Reading 3: Directions – A Training Resource for Workers With Young People in New South Wales

By the NSW Department of Community Services.

### Basic listening, questioning and feedback skills

These broad communication skill areas can be broken down into attending, paraphrasing, summarising, clarifying, questioning, reflecting and giving feedback.

#### Attending

Involves:

- use of eye contact
- noting non-verbal messages
- being aware of posture of those involved
- noticing gestures
- listening for verbal behaviour
- focusing on relevant material
- paying close attention
- remaining open minded
- not interrupting.

#### Paraphrasing and summarising

Paraphrasing involves re-telling what has just been said in a different way but retaining the same amount of content. Summarising involves giving a much briefer account of what has been said to the worker.

Both can help because they:

- 1 test the worker's understanding of information
- 2 confirm or deny the accuracy of the information
- 3 can expose or clarify double messages (the worker must both pick up messages and give them in the paraphrase)
- 4 can re-state complex problems in a simpler way, using fewer words.

#### Clarification

When a worker seeks clarification they can:

- make vague messages clear
- say they don't understand and ask for a repeat of the information.

## Questioning

Should not be an interrogation, and leads to further exploration. Initially it is usually better to ask how, what, when rather than why questions.

It can be either open-ended (allowing the young person to describe issues they think are important), or closed-ended (providing detailed information, e.g. how often). It should not be used too frequently if the person is really involved in telling their story, as it interrupts the flow of information.

## Reflecting

This can involve paraphrasing and summarising and be used to:

- break through rambling
- pick out highlights
- give the person feedback that the worker is really listening and is involved
- tie behaviours, experiences and feelings together and finish up a conversation.

## Feedback

Is used to let others know that you understand them or that you know that they have certain feelings. Feedback involves the use of statements in the following way:

- state the problem or observation (fact)
- express your feelings about it (feeling)
- ask for the desired action (action)
- give the reasons why they should do it (purpose).

### ***Guidelines for giving feedback***

- select the right time and place
- be sure the receiver is ready
- comment on facts, not your interpretations of their intentions
- be specific
- focus on one thing at a time
- give feedback as soon as possible after the event
- request their co-operation
- focus on what can be changed
- be helpful
- encourage feedback yourself.



No matter how good a worker is at using these skills, they will appear false and mechanical unless accompanied by a genuine interest in and concern for the person seeking help.

In the professional jargon this is called empathy or the ability to understand and feel where the other person is coming from. It is sometimes easy for workers to forget what it costs others emotionally to seek help and to admit to a problem that they feel they are having difficulty with.

### Communication in conflict and crisis

There are some basic communication principles of which workers must be aware and practise, if they are to handle in an appropriate fashion situations of conflict or crisis. Communication involves much more than words, and even remaining silent can have an effect upon another person through the influence of non-verbal cues.

Thus, the worker's role in their communication is to choose the appropriate mix of verbal and non-verbal means of communication (channels) at the right time, in order to communicate most meaningfully to the person at their current level of distress. The following are some guidelines for choosing the right mix of communication channels.

#### **Verbal channels**

In an escalating situation the worker should use simple, non-abstract words in a clear and concrete way. During a crisis intervention situation, sentences used should be limited to no more than five words, and the words used should be limited to five letters or less. Two particularly useful verbal techniques for defusing situations are those of *by-pass* and *broken record*.

By-pass involves the worker acknowledging the other person's statement in a non-defensive manner, without reflecting emotion and without responding to any abusive or insulting language. The worker then goes on and says in a controlled manner what they wish to say. It is difficult for a person to maintain a feeling of high emotion for long when there is no emotion being returned for their own emotions to feed on. To be effective, by-pass must never sound flippant or like a put down or an attempt to avoid the issue.

The broken record technique is simply that of repeating the basic message that needs to be communicated until the other person responds to the message. The reason for doing this is to get that person's mind operating again at a reasonably rational level. At first the person's conscious mind may not register the message but it will lodge in the subconscious level, especially where used in conjunction with the by-pass technique.

By-pass aims to set the emotions aside in order to allow the broken record technique to have its effect. When such techniques are used, workers must show great self-control and not become upset or

diverted from their task. Also their tone of voice and body language must match their spoken message or these techniques could backfire and make the situation worse.

Such techniques obviously should not be used or continued if they are likely to further irritate the other person.

### ***Non-verbal level***

A calming or limit-setting style of voice tone, speed and inflection should be chosen to defuse situations of conflict. Speaking in a slow, controlled fashion, without raising the voice is best. At times lowering the volume of the voice may be an appropriate response.

### ***Personal space***

The other person should be allowed to define what is comfortable personal space for them in a public and private situation. Both the worker and the other person should not feel trapped or cornered in a contact situation. This trapped feeling can be both a physical and emotional reality.

### ***Touch***

Touch can have a powerful calming and healing effect. However, when applied at the wrong time, it can be misinterpreted by the other person as a threat. Victims of previous physical or sexual abuse may react negatively to any attempt at close physical contact.

## **Communication during conflict**

The greatest resource in any confrontation is the worker's mind willing the body to be outwardly calm and then inwardly so. Self-control must come before situation control. In a situation of confrontation it is normal for a worker to tense their muscles ready for a *fight or flight* response as the situation develops. Therefore, the worker must consciously question and control what is happening physically and talk themselves into a state of calmness. With this self-talk, the worker needs constantly to be monitoring crucial aspects of their non-verbal behaviour: stance and posture, distance, eye contact, breathing, voice modulation and clarity.

Alongside this self-monitoring, the worker must then behave in certain ways and use verbal and non-verbal approaches appropriate to the situation. These can include:

- dealing with the here and now, not being sidetracked or paralysed
- make the unknown the known, try and relieve fear and anxiety
- commenting on the other's behaviour not their motivation
- set limits on the other's behaviour in a positive way
- get a commitment from the other to act

- offer a face-saving way out, aim for a win/win alliance
- acknowledge the importance of the problem to the other
- within reason allow the other person to express their emotions.

Note: In situations of conflict or crisis, the worker's ability to think clearly and speak convincingly is often impaired as the body readies itself for fight or flight. The same decline in reasoning and speaking ability is experienced by others in the conflict. So don't expect of others what you yourself are finding difficult to do.

## Reading 4: Namibia: Unravelling the Legacy

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An interview by the former Director of the CYP Africa Centre, Dr Richard Mkandawire, of the then Namibian Minister of Youth and Sport (MYS), Mrs. Pendukeni Ithana, *In Common*, Issue 11, 1993.

**CYP: Honourable Minister, Namibia has been independent for just over three years and the country has already embarked on a National Youth Policy. What prompted you to formulate it?**

MYS: I have personally realised that, in as much as the Government may have realised the problems faced by youth in Namibia, there are always more pressing issues that are given priority. Resources devoted to addressing youth problems are, therefore, always too little to make any meaningful impact.

Formulating a youth policy is the first step in committing the Government towards helping its youth to overcome some of the preventable societal problems. Such a policy, if supported and accepted by the Government, could be used as one of the guiding documents during planning, programming and project formulations by government and non-government institutions.

**CYP: What are the specific problems facing youth in Namibia?**

MYS: Namibia became independent at a time when the world economy was going through a recession. This had a direct bearing on our economy as it depends heavily on export earnings from raw materials, which consequently led to the retrenchment of workers and unemployment. The unemployment problem was further aggravated by the demobilised fighters from both PLAN (SWAPO) and conscripted Namibians who fought on the side of South Africa.

In addition, the Bantu Education that accompanied the heinous system of apartheid did not give young Namibians the education necessary for survival. The Ministry of Youth and Sport was therefore created, a year after Independence, in 1991 as a response to the problem of unemployment.

Illiteracy among young people under the age of 23 stands at 65 per cent, and is a major contributory factor to unemployment. Naturally, a population that is less educated is more susceptible to adopting unhealthy habits. The dangers of HIV/AIDS, STDs and teenage pregnancies among young people are just some of the problems the Ministry is addressing. Alcohol and drugs have also penetrated our society due to idleness and frustration

caused by unemployment, which in turn increases the crime rate and anti-social behaviour.

**CYP: What programmes and strategies have you got in place to address these specific problems?**

MYS: One major battle won here is the finalisation of the National Youth Policy, which outlines the areas of concern to youth and methods of addressing them. The Ministry is now in a better position to formulate programmes and projects to meet these needs, which are:

- education and training;
- health-related concerns
- creating employment opportunities.

A centre for training youth in the various trades will shortly be operative. The training to be carried out will complement the training of the Ministries of Education and Culture and Labour and Manpower Development, with the only difference being the age of our trainees limited to that of 30 and below. The curriculum is otherwise the same.

The issues of HIV/AIDS, STDs and teenage pregnancies are receiving the undivided attention of this Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The question of employment is a sticky one in the sense that, for young people to start small-scale enterprises, they definitely need the initial capital. The financial institutions demand what young people cannot produce, i.e. the collateral. There is, therefore, no easy solution and many proposals are still on the table for consideration. The idea of creating a youth revolving fund seems to be gaining favour, but still, the question of management of the fund is problematic. Similar projects in other countries have not been successful. Nevertheless, we are determined to try our luck.

**CYP: Honourable Minister, Namibia is a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society which has made a smooth transition to democracy. Are there any special problems you are facing in the implementation of youth programmes as a result of the multi-racial and multi-ethnic character of the Namibian society?**

MYS: The problem of Namibia is not so much the question of race or ethnicity, but the legacy left behind due to the prolonged practice of apartheid and divide-and-rule. The problems facing Namibian youth are predominantly economically oriented, resulting in unemployment, delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, where the majority of young people affected are the black youth.

Although blacks were divided according to ethnicity, no one group was spared from the system of apartheid and racial discrimination. As a result of this policy, a large proportion of black children are uneducated, unskilled and unemployed. On the other hand, there is not a single white unemployed youth in Namibia. All of them have without exception passed the 'matric' and the majority have finished their university or technical studies, or are attending school. It is natural, therefore, that the clients of this Ministry are predominantly black, not by design, but due to the facts I have already mentioned above.

The smooth transition made to democracy is forged through political acceptance of each side's point of view. Economic democracy will still have to come when the majority of our people have equal access to resources for the empowerment of the blacks, in particular, who have been economically downtrodden for decades.

**CYP: Are there any lessons that post-apartheid South Africa can learn from Namibia's experience?**

MYS: Each country has its own peculiar problems and therefore the approach in solving such problems may differ. However, Namibia and South Africa have so much in common in terms of the colonial systems and its off-shoots of apartheid and racial discrimination. Namibia has successfully restored peace after years of violent conflict. This is one aspect for which I feel proud of my country's achievement. It is unfortunate, however, that the situation in South Africa may not be resolved through a similar way. As that situation resolves itself, areas of common interest where Namibia has succeeded will obviously be identified, but, in the current situation, it is difficult for me to pin-point those lessons I can term as 'successful', for South Africa to learn from.

**CYP: I understand your Ministry is in the process of undertaking research on a profile of the Namibian youth. What prompted you to undertake this type of research?**

MYS: The main reason for such research is that it will assist the Ministry in planning youth activities. There is no comprehensive information on youth in Namibia, thus it is difficult for planners and managers to effectively plan for the future. The Ministry is currently undertaking research to gather data in the areas of:

- total number of youth between the ages of 15–30
- employed youth
- unemployed youth
- skills training needs

- literacy levels
- health related data, and
- needs assessment.

This research will also highlight areas to be focused on. The data will be used in the Youth Information Centres by all those interested in youth matters, as well as providing the regions with baseline information in their own areas, regions and districts.

**CYP: Thank you very much, Honourable Minister.**

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## Reading 5: Six Principles of Negotiation

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By ACCORD, 1998, Conflict Management, Negotiation and Mediation Skills,  
University of Durban-Westville.

Effective negotiation is often simply considered common sense or intuition. Some have even said that good negotiators are born, not educated. Furthermore, we have all had a whole lifetime of negotiating experience, so many think that practice makes perfect. Unfortunately experience does not translate directly into ability. The fact that I play tennis every day does not make me a great tennis player. Negotiating is a skill like playing tennis. You may have natural talent but unless you study the process, and practise the correct methods, you will be unable to use your negotiating ability to its best effect.

Six principles serve as a theoretical framework for understanding negotiating practice. These principles are not intended to describe how negotiators negotiate; they are intended to help you develop the best negotiating skills possible.

### **Divide people problems from merits, and work on each separately and simultaneously**

People problems may include:

- emotions – anger, fear, bitterness, vengeance, distrust, worry
- miscommunication – not talking, not listening, misunderstanding
- misperception – different role expectations, cultural variations and ideas of fairness.

**Do:** resolve people problems by improving the working relationship among the participants.

**Don't:** threaten the relationship between people to achieve a substantive point.

### **Give up a substantive point in order to buy a better relationship**

A good working relationship may have a significant and positive effect on how the participants define a fair outcome and how easily such an outcome is achieved. Inversely, serious problems in relationships can poison an otherwise satisfactory deal.

### **Focus on interests, not positions**

Interests are the basic needs, wants or values held by a party within a disputing situation – the 'whys' for the positions developed.

Bargaining from positions concentrates attention on possible solutions without expressly acknowledging the interest or needs of



the parties. The terms of any resulting agreement are often dependent on the relative willingness of parties to concede. But it is difficult to concede once you have established a position and argued for its reasonableness. Positional bargaining rewards those who are more stubborn, less willing to listen and less concerned with a good working relationship.

Interests are less tangible and specific than positions, and they are more flexible subjects for a bargaining situation. Parties frequently have not analysed their interests, needs and values in detail and are therefore more open to identifying and defining them.

### **Invent options for mutual gain**

Use shared understanding of the basic interests of both sides to generate options which will satisfy those interests to the maximum extent possible. Separate the act of brainstorming options from the process of evaluating the options which result. Judgement inhibits creativity, and creativity is the foundation for truly integrative solutions.

### **Search for criteria for evaluation**

Criteria is plural. For each issue within a negotiation, there is usually more than one relevant criterion or standard by which to judge the fairness or wisdom of various options. In addition, in each negotiation there are normally different issues. Brainstorm criteria in the same way as options, leaving evaluation until after generating the list of possible standards to apply.

### **Know the Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)**

An alternative is different from an option: the option is one possible solution for agreement; an alternative is a possible course of action if an agreement is not reached e.g. possible court action.

Analyse carefully the benefits and cost of the best alternative. Develop an evaluation of this alternative in a way that is consistent with, and therefore comparable to, the evaluation of the benefits and costs associated with a negotiated agreement.

Use the BATNA as a bottom line or reservation price. It is an excellent standard for judging whether a proposed option is an acceptable solution. Your BATNA is a dynamic factor in a negotiation. Work on improving the consequences of resorting to the BATNA at the same time as you focus on interests, options and criteria for the negotiation. Improving the BATNA increases your bargaining power and in some cases adds to the other side's motivation to arrive at a negotiated agreement.

Analyse your bargaining power carefully. Bargaining power is often understood as the power to hurt the other side ('If you don't agree

with these conditions, I will not only foreclose but also see to it that you can't get credit anywhere else.')

## Reading 6: Overview of Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace in Relation to Development

By Dr. C.M. Namafe, School of Education, University of Zambia. Chapter 1 in *Youth, Conflict and Peace*, Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre, 1998, Commonwealth Secretariat.

### Introduction

Like any concept, the word 'conflict' has almost as many definitions as the number of people trying to define it. This situation in itself presents part of the problem to development. The multi-dimensional character of conflict has continued to trouble scholars, policy makers and researchers in their attempt to scientifically define it.

Some of the key words often used to understand conflict are that it is **pervasive**, **everlasting** and **inevitable**. Conflict is said to be pervasive because it occurs at all levels of the environment. It is believed to be everlasting in the sense that it is permanent and almost as old as humanity itself, when this is historically understood in the form of, say, the creation story in the Bible or, indeed, Noah's flood story. Finally, conflict is thought to be inevitable, partly because this is thought to be an essential ingredient of being alive as a human. But, as Bonta (1996) argues, conflict understood in these three underlined terms is ideological and not given.

Most definitions of conflict include elements of struggle, strife or collision. The struggle could, for instance, be over values, territories, power or scarce resources in which the aims of the group or individuals involved would be to gain and, at the same time, to neutralise, injure or eliminate opponents. The basic requirements for a conflict are actors, incompatibilities (issues) and actions.

Conflict may be categorised into three main types, that is, conflict occurring in the natural, social or the personal environment. These three conflict types are interacting and interdependent and should not be seen as separate or competing. Moreover, conflict occurs at the global, regional, national, familial or personal levels. The historical origin of conflict is linked directly to the fragmentation of traditional kinship society in ancient Greece and Rome (Nisbet 1974).

Conflict may be contextualised as being merely one of the many subsidiary concepts of the 'enemy' idea.

### Overview of conflict resolution

It will be wrong to assume that the very words of conflict resolution necessarily imply that conflict is universally considered to be a problem that needs resolution, after which a stable peace will reign. This assumption is wrong partly because some people actually consider conflict, or its violent form, to be positively necessary for

conflict resolution. In other words, violence is one way of resolving conflicts.

Conflict resolution can be understood as a process that involves one or several of the following four strategies:

- a) Shifting actors, issues and actions away from a focus on incompatibility towards compatibility.
- b) Minimising destructive action and changing the conflict from a violent to a non-violent type.
- c) Solving the basic incompatibilities as they are understood by the parties in order that the parties (actors) voluntarily express satisfaction with the outcome.
- d) Transforming entire conflict formations and relationships between parties from ones of conflict to ones of peace.

Conflict resolution usually entails four principal phases:

- (a) Conflict development.
- (b) Settlement process.
- (c) Agreement.
- (d) Post-agreement.

Some scholars maintain that the implementation of agreement must fit somewhere in the above stages. Conflict resolution skills and techniques will differ depending on the scale of conflict as well as on whether the conflict occurs in the natural, social or personal environment.

## **Overview on peace**

Over the years, there has been a slight shift from concern over the issue of peace and war to that of peace and development. Despite this intellectual shift, the chief problem in peace studies continues to be that of war.

One statement summarises Western thinking on war, violence and power. This is that 'in the beginning was Machiavelli'. The importance of this statement lies in the point that it describes one of the origins of the contemporary interest in peace, namely, a continuous battle with Machiavelli and his legacy in the study of war and peace. In this battle, however, the weapons are pens and paper, the strategies involve methods and interpretation and the goal is to find a common truth.

Although the ideas of Machiavelli (an Italian Renaissance personality) do appear earlier in Greek and Roman writings, an interest in the issue of peace partly arose as a criticism of Machiavelli's ideas. Therefore, an understanding of peace must first deal with the ideas of Machiavelli. Six basic issues from Machiavelli are fundamental for peace thinking and these are as follows:

- a) Violence is Omnipresent and Inevitable. 'If I do not use violence, somebody else will', Machiavelli writes. There is no avoiding war, it can only be postponed to the advantage of others.
- b) Violence is instrumental for successfully ruling people.
- c) In politics, violence is the ultimate source of power. As a result, military matters are more important than other political questions. In fact, for Machiavelli, politics was as much an extension of military practice as the latter was, in different circumstances, an extension of politics. Thus, for Kabila in Zaire, democratic politics was as much an extension of his military practice as the latter, by some other means, is an extension of democracy. War and politics are two sides of the same coin.
- d) Conflicts are resolved through power and violence. This is because the victory of one is the defeat of the other. Only one can be the ruler, the others are his/her subjects.
- e) The state and the government are the primary actors of importance. In other words, the state is the legitimate employer of violence (e.g. the Police, Army, Intelligence and soon).
- f) The state is independent, vis-a-vis other states. This situation is the foundation of the concept of 'sovereignty' and the so-called 'national interest'. Violence is the central issue of peace. In this sense, one understanding of peace differentiates between 'negative peace' and 'positive peace'. The former refers to the absence of violence, war, weapons or conflict. The latter means the presence of co-operation, justice or conflict resolution. Almost every culture or person has his or her own definition of peace.

## Conflict, conflict resolution and peace in relation to development

Who has ever talked to elderly men or women in the African villages concerning their opinion on change: is the world moving from a good to a better situation, or from a good to a worse state of affairs? In other words, in developmental terms, are young men and women inheriting a world which is getting better or worse?

One elderly woman I talked to, in response to the above question, categorically said, that young men and women are living in a world that is changing from good to bad. In her opinion, the world is deteriorating in quality because:

- It is moving towards destruction.
- Morals are changing for the worse.
- The economic situation was too harsh for her.
- Academic standards in institutions of learning were falling.
- Her daily diet was getting worse.

- AIDS/HIV was leading to destruction.
- The negative impact of war was everywhere.

It is important to accept that the world is ever-changing. And the root source of transformation in today's world is the concept of enemy. The enemy idea is a central influence in the political history of the world.

Most people today confuse development with change (i.e. transformation). In this regard, many cultures globally seem to admire the West and to want to attain the type of development the West has reached.

But, rather than developing, many so-called Third World countries and communities are changing from one situation to something else. Thus, community A could be said to be more or less changed from its former situation than community B only when a particular standard is used. Such a yardstick, for now, is taken to be the Western culture. For instance, Cameroonians can claim to be more or less changed than, say, Kenyans only when measured against the Western cultural yardstick of, amongst other things, industrial infrastructure, road and rail network, schooling or the adoption of democracy/ religion. In this sense, the Western culture, through the central concept of the enemy, is changing other cultures to itself rather than developing them.

Arguably, we can never talk of development, but change, when:

- (a) in politics, battles (wars) are raging between different political parties set within the so-called democracy;
- (b) in the economic sphere, the prescription for economic ills from the Western world are medicines that actually kill other people (e.g. Structural Adjustment Programmes leading to retrenchments, liquidations, redundancies and the accompanying suffering of the majority);
- (c) in the field of entertainment, many of the Western-derived films or videos depict killings, shootings and fights among people; within sports, violence such as in boxing, karate or wrestling is perceived to be a form of entertainment;
- (d) in the field of security, actual bloody battles, fuelled by Western-made military hardware, are wiping out whole families, displacing communities and massacring others, as in Iraq, Angola, Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, etc.;
- (e) in the religious sphere, religious wars between different religious denominations (e.g. Christian versus Moslem, Believer versus Pagan, Protestant versus Catholic etc) are raging. The use of terms like Victory Ministries, Holy War, Crusade, Jihad, etc. all depict enemy conditions of some kind;

- (f) in the legal sphere, battles for opposing sides are manifested in attacks (prosecutor) and defences (lawyers) and the punishing of the defeated to sub-human conditions of prison, remand and so on;
- (g) in the field of medicine or health, new diseases allegedly meant to wipe out a proportion of humanity are reportedly manufactured from laboratories (e.g. AIDS/HIV, biological warfare, etc.).

It is evidently clear, therefore, that much of the world is experiencing an unpleasant type of change. This change, and not development, is one that favours or serves a few at the expense of the suffering or dying many. In practice, it is the enemy idea which, on the one hand, is associated with concepts such as suffering, calamity, sacrifice, unemployment, underdevelopment, Third World, poverty, and vulnerability as well as victory, happiness, wealth, Developed World, on the other hand.

## Conclusion

This begs the question of what, therefore, is development? Participants will debate and try to formulate their own responses to this question. Suffice to alert participants to the pivotal place of the 'enemy vision' in issues of conflict, conflict resolution, peace and development.

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## Participants' concerns

How do you solve a problem when the other party does not want to?

### Participants' opinions:

- Forget about it.
- Understand them and give them time before you address the problem.
- Use a mediator, preferably a mutual friend.
- Find out if the issue is just as contentious with the other person. It may not be an issue with them after all.

Conflict resolution is not about being right or wrong. It is resolving the conflict. Participants saw conflict as being positive if it meets the following criteria:

- When it brings out sound understanding.
- If it is part of the decision-making process.
- If it results in positive social change.
- If it shows the need for change.

The Marxist concept of conflict is that progress in societies comes about as a result of conflict. Progress in labour and industrial relations has been achieved through conflict. It is through antagonistic interactions that progress can be achieved. The bourgeois and proletariat classes are by nature in conflict. People therefore, will always have conflicts depending on which way one looks at it.

Participants observed that sometimes a dual approach to conflict may be adopted: negotiation is used first, and, if it fails, violence is deployed as a last resort.



# Reading 7: Youth Groups, Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

By Yinka Aganga-Williams, Senior Programme Officer, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre. Chapter 2 in *Youth, Conflict and Peace*, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre, 1998, Commonwealth Secretariat.

## 1 Introduction

Conflict has been defined as a social situation in which a minimum of two parties strive at the same moment in time to get hold of the same set of scarce resources. In this definition, scarcity is the key to understanding conflict. But scarcity does not work alone to generate conflict. There are three other basic requirements that work together with scarcity to produce conflict: namely *actors*, *issues* and *actions*. For any conflict to become manifest, there have to be actors or parties.

Although social actors need issues of contention if conflict is to occur, it is not necessary that all parties consciously perceive the issue as contentious. It is sufficient for one party to recognise the issue in order to have conflict. Issues may fall into material and non-material categories. Border disputes, control of water resources and distribution of wealth, for example, may fall into the former category while issues of language, ideology and so on belong to the latter realm.

Conflict only becomes manifest when there is organised behaviour on the part of the actors to achieve their goals. Often such actions are buttressed by attitudes to issues that are uncompromising. The above situation is applicable to youth organisations, and issues of conflict in organisations can fall in both categories mentioned above. Although conflict does take place at the interpersonal level, focus on conflict resolution studies has laid emphasis on collective entities such as states, social groups and organisations.

## 2 The youth and conflict

Because of their disproportionate share of the global population, young people everywhere are often caught up in conflict situations both as participants and victims. As citizens of their respective nations, they have rights to the basic needs of life, which unfortunately most developing nations in Africa can no longer provide. With the global economic recession and the crippling foreign debts of many developing nations, millions of young people become recipients of the resultant poverty of their nations. They are caught up in problems of hunger, unemployment, drugs/ substance abuse, reproductive health, environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS, to mention a few. In many parts of the world where there are armed conflicts, the energetic potentials of young men and women are also exploited as they are forcibly conscripted into armies, often without a

voice or choice and without any participation in the decision-making that led to the conflict. They are, while the strife lasts, deprived of opportunities to pursue education and a normal transition from adolescence to adulthood under a conducive environment.

Young people, particularly women, also fill the ranks of wandering refugees fleeing from conflict. Long after the conflicts have been over, they continue to suffer the aftermath as economies devastated by wars are unable to deliver health, education, employment services and other forms of social services.

This scenario thus leaves many youth in situations of conflict both as individuals and as members of communities. Such grim situations make it impossible for young women and men to be indifferent to conflicts within their communities and the larger society. Hence, resolving these conflicts both with the individual youth and groups of youth becomes the responsibilities of all stakeholders in youth development.

As young people the application of the strategies mentioned in this paper in mediating conflicts becomes a tool. A successful conflict resolution approach would be one that is multi-faceted; one that ensures that all stakeholders and those that are victims are involved. Very often it is the victims who seek to establish the peace process, but solutions so sought may only be temporary if root causes are not tackled in conjunction with all stakeholders. Paramount to this approach in dealing with young people is their involvement in dialogues on issues that concern them. They should be given opportunities to analyse conflicts, their views should be well heard and their inputs on means/ ways to change taken seriously. They should be actively involved whether as mediators or facilitators of information.

### **3 Sources of conflict**

The sources of conflict in youth groups include:

#### **(i) Shared resources**

When there is a limited amount of resources in the group that must be shared by the members, lack of co-operation and eventually open conflict can result because everyone strives at the same time to get hold of the same set of scarce resources.

#### **(ii) Differences in goals**

Conflict can be generated when individual's goals in the youth group are inconsistent with those of the group. At times this could lead to formation of different 'camps' (sub groups) within one association or club.

### (iii) Differences in perception and values

This occurs when individuals in the group have different perceptions and value systems. For instance, a member of the group may place high value on his time. He may really want to work on the group's activities but at the same time may accord a lot of importance to spending time with his family. This is an obvious value system conflict. In the same vein, a leader and some of his members may have conflicting perceptions of a situation, yet their goal remains the same.

### (iv) Disagreements in role requirements

An individual member of a group may have conflicting demands placed upon him/her by both the group and other institutions he belongs to. For instance, a female member may be required by the group to work on an activity on a Saturday when she is supposed to attend the Seventh Day Adventist Church Service on the same day of the week.

### (v) Nature of work activities

This concerns the quantity of work assigned in the group in performing the group's activities. Individuals may compare workloads relative to the other. If there is inequity, conflict can result. This type of situation would be more manifest in a youth enterprise group.

### (vi) Individual approaches

People have different styles and approaches in their interaction with others in a group situation. One person may be reflective, speak little, but deliver words of wisdom when ready to talk about a topic. Another member in the group may adopt an argumentative approach. This may generate conflict.

### (vii) Internalised conflict

The mountainous challenges encountered by young people today leave them with internalised conflicts. A displaced young person, for example, worried about his family, not assured of a meal in a day, would wish to have further education or find a job, but these are far-fetched.

Empowering such young persons requires information, education, communication and provision of the wherewithal to facilitate improvement of their welfare. Information, education and communication (IEC) can be provided along the lines of guidance and counselling.

It is very important that the leader in a youth group not only knows the potential sources of conflict but also develops strategies for resolving potentially disruptive or dysfunctional situations.

## 4 Concept of conflict resolution

Conflict resolution has been defined as consisting of '*Changing reality (by reducing scarcity or by changing the causal links), changing the demands of the actors (by compromise, horse trading, persuasion, or sheer manipulation), such that a distribution of values is found that is subjectively acceptable to all the actors and therefore, can be agreed to.*' Another author has defined conflict resolution to mean '*finding a solution to the basic incompatibility between the relevant parties in such a way that they (voluntarily) express their satisfaction with the outcome*'.

As understood in the above sense, conflict resolution goes beyond conflict management. The latter does not do away with the basic root of conflict, but serves to keep it within manageable bounds so that it does not escalate. For example, the United Nations peace-keeping mission in Bosnia and the Economic Association of West Africa States' (ECOWAS) intervention in Liberia could both be said to fall within the realm of conflict management. Another example will be that of two factions within the same youth organisation not resolving an issue and the intervention of the Youth Ministry or Department or Youth Council to keep the conflict in check pending when issues can be resolved.

Conflict resolution can further be distinguished from conflict prevention, which aims at diffusing simmering conflicts, before they get into uncontrollable situations. Preventive diplomacy is probably the most well known strategy used to achieve this end. An example of this at state level would be the intervention in 1995 by Malawi's President Bakili Muluzi in the tension that had built up between Uganda and Sudan. An example at a youth club level would be when the election period for a new executive committee draws near, and the board senses a division in members' interests, the board calls for a special meeting of all members to forestall election conflicts.

## 5 Methods of conflict resolution

Conflict resolution is one of the most serious challenges facing mankind today with shifts from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts. Armed conflicts in places such as the former Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Somalia, Zaire, Sri Lanka and Rwanda, to mention only a few, serve as a grim reminder that the quest for world peace is far from over.

Article 33 of the United Nations Charter provides for a wide range of methods that could be employed in conflict resolution. A brief summary of these methods would include: early warning systems, negotiation, good offices, conciliation and mediation, peace-making, humanitarian assistance, arbitration, judicial settlement, and resort to regional agencies or arrangements.

There are some general problems which are attendant to these strategies: the fact that most of the methods are employed after conflicts have already blown up, the ad hoc character of most peace

efforts, and the principle of national sovereignty which rules out intervention, unless invited.

Going by the number of conflicts raging in the world today, it is quite clear that the above strategies are not fully utilised and if they are, they contain serious weaknesses that reduce their effectiveness.

But it is also true that the relative peace enjoyed by the world can partly be attributed to 'behind the scene' efforts which do not enjoy public limelight.

### 5.1 Early warning system

The above concept has been widely used in weather forecasting. In recent times, organisations such as the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), have extended it to forecasting crop yields; the concept is used to detect and avert looming weather disasters.

In conflict resolution studies, early warning carries the same essential meaning found in weather and agricultural forecasting. It is meant to be a system of detecting potentially violent conflicts before they could develop into explosive situations.

The success of an early warning system in conflict resolution depends on information gathering. Often fact finding and observer missions have been used to appraise relevant authorities of potentially dangerous situations. In the event that parties to a conflict agree to seek a peaceful solution, the early warning system personnel may prove to be very useful in providing non-partisan information that would facilitate negotiations.

An example in a youth group would be that of the Youth Ministry/ Department or the Youth Council making use of techniques and methods of youth work in analysing a prevailing youth-related social situation which, though government or the authorities concerned may not foresee, is predictable. The early warning from the Youth Ministry/ Department/ Council would be the advocacy that all stakeholders in the issue at hand take a critical look and analyse as appropriate before the resultant predicted conflict occurs.

### 5.2 Mediation

Throughout human history, skilful mediation by third parties has repeatedly succeeded in nipping potential conflicts in the bud and helped build peace. It is therefore worth exploring the role mediation plays in diffusing conflicts. Mediation has been selected for closer scrutiny because it is amenable to use in a wide variety of conflict situations. Mediation is a widely employed strategy in inter-/ intra-state, group and interpersonal conflicts.

Mediation in conflict resolution is a process involving a third party who is acceptable to the warring parties. Being non-partisan is thus considered a critical quality of any mediator. Despite its potential, however, mediation can only exert influence on a conflict within the

confines of certain parameters. The resources commanded by the mediator, his/her competencies, as well as the context of mediation, are all factors that bear on the outcome of the process. Mediation is therefore a dynamic and adaptive process. It has been defined as a third party dispute settlement technique integrally related to the negotiation process whereby a skilled disinterested neutral party assists parties in changing their minds over conflicting needs, mainly through the non-compulsory applications of various forms of persuasion, in order to reach a viable agreement on terms at issue.

However, claims of neutrality in mediation have been challenged, as most observers believe that neutrality in a conflict is most unlikely although mediators should strive to be non-partisan. Three principal strategies adopted in mediation are: communication, facilitation and manipulation. The issues under each of these strategies can briefly be listed as follows:

### **5.2.1 Communication**

- make contacts with parties
- gain the trust and confidence of parties
- arrange for interactions between the parties
- identify issues and interests
- develop a framework of understanding
- offer positive evaluations.

### **5.2.2 Facilitation strategies**

- choosing meeting sites
- control pace and formality of meetings
- control physical environment
- establish protocol
- structure agenda
- help parties save face.

### **5.2.3 Manipulation strategies**

- change parties' expectations
- take responsibility for concessions
- make substantive suggestions and proposals
- make parties aware of costs of non-agreement
- reward party concessions
- offer to verify compliance with agreement.

It is evident from the above listing that mediational strategies are not mutually exclusive. There is a great deal of overlap and it is possible

to employ all the strategies within the same process of mediation. A successful mediational outcome should include several things: an end to violence or hostilities; agreements that allow each party to save face; good precedents in the eyes of observers; and arrangements that can be implemented. Above all results should improve the climate of relations between the former disputants.

A novel form of mediation is what Kelman (1992) has called 'interactive problem solving'. This strategy is based on the use of problem-solving workshops that are not accorded the official status of negotiations. The mediators in this case comprise a team of skilled individuals, whose role is limited to facilitating interaction among carefully selected participants from the warring factions. The workshops are not designed to produce binding solutions. The major objective of the workshops is to help participants change their perceptions of each other and the formulation of issues.

This form of mediation is also applicable in the example of a youth club election conflict cited above.

### 5.3 Negotiation<sup>1</sup>

Disputing parties agree to solve their problem by talking about their concerns face to face and working together to find a solution that is mutually acceptable. It is in this form of conflict resolution that the disputants maintain the greatest degree of control.

### 5.4 Conciliation

A conciliator is a third party that encourages disputing parties to solve their problem. For example, s/he may make suggestions on how to approach the other party to the conflict, help the person understand her or his underlying interest, and/or provide shuttle diplomacy (act as a 'go-between').

### 5.5 Arbitration

An arbitrator is a person appointed by two disputing parties to settle their dispute. In arbitration, the third party makes a judgement after hearing both sides of the dispute. Disputants no longer have decision-making power.

### 5.6 Adjudication

In adjudication, attorneys represent disputants and their control is minimal. The courts are well established as a form of dispute resolution in the West. Their popularity in the public mind is reflected in statements such as:

'You'll hear from my lawyers!'

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<sup>1</sup> The rest of section 5 is based on Mediation Services Canada (nd).

‘I’ll take it to the highest court!’

Such statements often make it difficult for people to think of alternatives.

## **6 Leadership and conflict resolution in youth groups**

Conflict among individuals in a group setting is inevitable, as wherever people work together there will be degrees of conflict. This is so because it is not possible for people to always agree on all goals, issues or perceptions.

Conflict in a group may be created by the evolution of any of the stages of a group’s development. It should however, be mentioned that conflict is inherently neither positive nor negative. For instance, if a leader in a group is able to handle conflict correctly, conflict can be functional in meeting the goals and aspirations of the members of the group. But on the other hand, conflict can have negative repercussions if the leader and members do not properly manage it.

In order to manage conflict in a youth group, the leader should ask him/herself the following questions:

- (i) What is the type of conflict? In other words, is it between individuals or between an individual and a group, or between groups?
- (ii) What is the source of conflict? Is it from shared resources, differences in goals, role conflict, etc?
- (iii) What is the level of conflict? How heated is it?

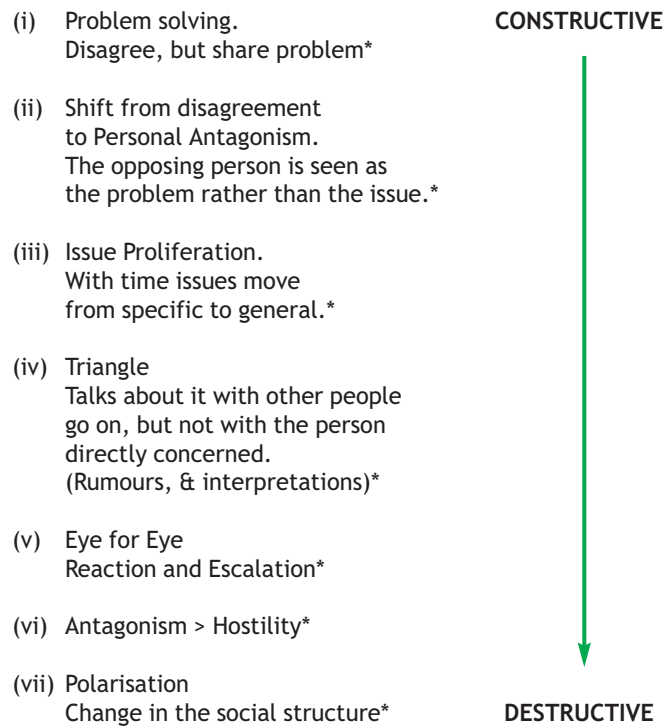
After analysing the foregoing factors, the leader may be in a better position to select the appropriate strategy to resolve the conflict. Some of the strategies that may be employed include:

- (a) **Initiating Compromise:** Here each party is required to give up something and the parties involved realise that there are no win-lose outcomes. Unfortunately, the approach does not remove the root cause/s of the problem, hence the problem may occur again.
- (b) **Initiating Integrative Problem Solving:** Here the group leader has to focus on mutual problem-solving by the parties involved. The conflicting individuals or groups are brought together with the idea of discussing the issues. At times the group may work towards a consensus, seeking agreement by all on the best solution to the problem. Another approach is for a confrontation session. In this process, the conflicting parties verbalise their positions and areas of disagreement. The hoped-for outcome is to find a reason for the conflict and resolve it.

Whatever strategy the group leader selects there will be need for conflict management skills. It is also apparent that when conflict is allowed to escalate, the quest for change becomes more difficult and can make a situation less constructive.



## 7 Conflict escalation and change (where is it at?)



From John Paul Lederach, *Conflict Transformation*, MCS, 1989, Peace Education.

## 8 Conclusion

This paper has discussed some of the complex issues involved in conflict resolution. However, a number of the issues dealt with can find wide application in different conflict settings apart from inter-state and intra-state conflicts. One point to have come out of the discussion is that young women and men cannot afford to be indifferent to conflicts raging in their communities and the larger environment. For this reason conflict resolution should rank alongside challenges young people encounter in their daily lives as enumerated. More so in developing nations, where poverty continues to place them in positions of personal and group conflicts; hence unemployment, lack of adequate social welfare facilities including health services and education, compound young men/ women's insecurity.

When young people's socialisation is within a violent environment, they also develop a culture of violence, and violence becomes the norm for resolving disputes. The same can be said for other values, such as insincerity, injustice, tolerance, good governance, etc. In the same vein, it is incumbent upon young people to join efforts in the search for ways to contain socially destructive behaviour and promote measures for order and peace on our planet, if their future is to be better secured.

Many young people today find themselves in leadership positions at various levels within society, and should take responsibility to model

a new attitude to showcase their potentials for leadership, democratic principles, good governance and non-violent behaviour.

Formation of youth interest groups is one form of mobilisation that could give opportunities for young people's voices to be heard. To a large extent, formation of a strong 'Youth Voice' both at national and regional levels, has eluded Africa, as many forms of conflict cloud or disrupt youth organisations even at the grassroots. Conflicting values, adult manipulation/ exploitation and quest for leadership are some of these. Rather than being dogged to the goals of association, divisions, which lead to fragmentation of groups and which can be disempowering are allowed to simmer. If leadership training, and good governance are encouraged in youth groups, they could serve as benchmarks for internalising leadership development for these 'future national leaders'.

Hearing young people's voices also requires that they possess advocacy and lobbying skills with which to communicate their concerns to the larger society. But this requires that they denounce violence and injustice and lobby for improved socio-economic conditions, and thus avoid sowing seeds that could result in conflicts.

Finally, it is crucial to note that young people have a great stake in the peace process because it is their future that is at risk; they are the ones whose future is being torn away, and who must be given opportunities now for building that future in order to value it. It is important that they are involved in any peace process on issues that affect their lives if solutions are to be meaningful.

## **Participants' concerns**

*Where a third party mediates between two disputing parties, each legitimately laying a claim to the same throne, how does a mediator handle the situation?*

Both parties must have agreed to negotiate and there is need for both to recognise and respect each other's potentials. The mediator must sort out all protocol issues appropriately and facilitate respect for the agreement reached.

The pre-mediation stage is also crucial as both parties must agree upon the mediator and have trust in the mediator even before the actual mediation begins.

*Which of the strategies that have been mentioned is preferable or most effective in case a conflict could not be prevented?*

This depends on the level of conflict, but where it is still at the initial stages, negotiation is advisable.

*Do you really think all that is being learnt at this workshop can be applicable to our youth clubs/ organisations when the examples we see from national leaders is that they want to remain in power?*

Note that the concept of change is a crucial factor in the process of this workshop. It is in order that young people can be enabled to

make informed choices that a workshop like this one is organised to equip them with necessary skills. If multiplier effects are achieved through follow-up national workshops, then your peers in youth organisations/ clubs and institutions, would also be equipped. In this manner young people become empowered to bring about change where and when necessary.

If young people's socialisation process is through a structure that recognises good governance, justice and respect for one another, then the tendency is that they practice the same when they become 'future leaders'.

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### Part 1: The Eastern Highlands Provincial Rehabilitation Committee

#### Introduction

By sheer coincidence, in February 1981, I found myself talking with a so-called 'rascal' gang in Goroka (the term 'rascal' is better avoided as it conveys a sense of naughtiness or harmless roguery, when in fact people are juvenile delinquents or criminals. However, it has been adopted into common usage in Papua New Guinea and so seems the more appropriate word to use). Within two weeks they had introduced me to two more gangs, and within as many months I had met six. The word had spread around town there was someone who would talk with them, listen to their problems, allow them to ventilate their grievances and discuss their futures, but I was unprepared for the challenge and wished it would go away. The Eastern Highlands Provincial Rehabilitation Committee was not planned, perceived or instigated by me, but it was the youth, the ex-gangs who pushed, pressured and demanded a response (see Giddings 1981 for a description of the backgrounds of members).

To give these young people something to do and keep them out of further trouble, contract work, permanent jobs or economic projects had to be found. A short-term contract, or an application to the Provincial Youth Council, were openings for establishing a project. Economic projects could not be discussed only with the youth in town; there was a need for consultation with village leaders and the communities from which the youths came. These were the people with wisdom and expertise, and the people who could give the youth access to land, or withhold it. Indeed one of the problems is reluctance of the village leaders to make the land available. They say it was not traditional to give land to people before they were married, but school-leavers who have been unable to find jobs interpret the withholding of permission to use land as punishment for not finding work. The parents consider they have made considerable sacrifices, sometimes for many years, to raise the money for school fees in anticipation that when the youth find work they will send money back to the village to look after them in their old age. Parents see education as an investment, and a school leaver without a permanent job is a poor investment on the 'share market'. The youth, therefore, pressured me to visit their communities saying, *'our parents will not believe us when we say we cannot find work, but they might listen to you'*.

After numerous excursions into the rural areas to talk with the parents and communities of the youth, it became apparent that the task was too big for one person alone. About this time both national and provincial government leaders were stating that law and order was not just a problem for the police and courts, but was a community problem. I decided to put it to the test, and through the Provincial Youth Council suggested that the Goroka Town community form a rehabilitation committee as a response to the problems surrounding us. The work had to be preventive as well as curative so that it was not interpreted by the youth to mean they must participate in a life of crime before help would be forthcoming to them.

### Projects and volunteers: 1981–1984

The seed that was sown by my interview with the first gang germinated in September 1981 when a small committee was formed to attempt a new approach in Goroka to the problem of the rehabilitation of youth. The initial core group members were predominantly church workers but some public servants also showed interest. Private enterprise in Goroka was, and still is, not interested. The following table shows the occupations of members of the inaugural committee:

**Table 9.1: Occupations of members of the inaugural Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee**

Place	Public servant	Church worker (spouse)	Private enterprise	Village	Other official	Total
Goroka	2	7			1	10
Henganofi	1	2		2		5
Kainantu		1				1
Watabung				1		1
Total	3	10	Nil	3	1	17

Source: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee records.

Of the seventeen inaugural members, nine were nationals and eight were expatriates. Of the ten Goroka town members, eight were expatriates and two were Papua New Guineans. One expatriate was a Solomon Islander (see Giddings 1982 for a description of the initial activities of the Committee).

The committee was established none too soon, for in March 1982 a large number of young people from the Unggai census division marched through town carrying placards asking for forgiveness, and surrendered themselves at the Goroka police station. This idea was not entirely without precedent: during the late 1970s the newspapers had occasionally reported criminal gangs in Port Moresby

‘surrendering their lives to the lord’ at evangelical meetings. It seemed there was good publicity and a considerable degree of prestige to be had from a surrender as some of the ex-criminals in Port Moresby had been feted around the country with ‘testimony tours’. Unless there has been a genuine change of heart, there is invariably an element of blackmail about a surrender but the Rehabilitation Committee was able to ensure that the Unggai surrender did not degenerate into this.

Although approximately one hundred youths surrendered, the police finally laid charges against only eight of them. Committee members went to court and spoke on their behalf requesting a short prison term, followed by a long suspended sentence so that we still had control over them for some time. The national court took up the suggestion and sentenced the eight who had been charged to three years imprisonment of which they were to serve the first eight months in jail, and the remainder was suspended. This meant that there were about ninety supposedly ex-rascals not imprisoned and wanting immediate assistance to keep them out of further trouble, so the committee went on an emergency recruitment campaign for more members.

The real work now began. None of the committee members had qualifications in social or community development work, although some, being church workers, had some counselling and pastoral experience. The bulk of the committee had little more than good will and commonsense on which to rely. From the outset we decided that community involvement did not mean the town community acting like a benevolent society; it had to mean community involvement at the local level including the parents and village leaders of the youth. So we recruited further members from among the village communities with whom we are working (see Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee 1982 Annual Report).

As the process of applying for and receiving grants for projects through the Provincial Youth Council was often slow, we saw a need to be able to act promptly, and so we raised some money overseas to use as ‘soft’ loans to start groups with projects. Within a year we had raised K40,000 from overseas voluntary aid sources and local donations of seed potatoes. We found that help could be obtained from overseas funding agencies for voluntary groups working at the grass-roots level, although it is more difficult to raise money for administrative costs. This is where provincial governments should be prepared to step in with assistance, as the Eastern Highlands Provincial Government has done for us. Overseas funding agencies want to see some local component and if it can be shown that the administrative costs will be met by the receiving country, they will fund the project at the community level.

We did not charge interest when youth groups were given a loan, and we did not ask for capital assets as backing. We simply asked for community support as a ‘mortgage’. We were willing to carry a high-risk factor that banks will not entertain, and initially the majority of

the groups began repaying their loans, although sometimes slowly and irregularly. With this loan policy, groups had the option of waiting for a Provincial Youth Council project grant, which was free but could be slow, or contracting for a loan through our committee which could be approved promptly (see Office of Religion, Youth and Recreation 1982 for a description of the National Youth Movement Program grants scheme). The money was lent to village leaders for the youth, and the leaders had to be prepared to sign the contract with the committee and take responsibility for its repayment. In this way we hoped to enlist their support for the project, and by making the youth indebted to their leaders, some control could be exercised over the young people and the generation gap might be reduced.

By December 1983, after two years' work in Unggai, a total of thirty-seven projects had been established. These included nine trade store projects, and thirteen other projects involved with sheep, coffee, cattle, goats, chickens, bees, scone ovens and sewing. There were also fifteen potato projects and these were the most successful of all, bringing K2,000 into the area in one harvest. Not all projects ran smoothly, but law and order had certainly improved in the Unggai. Unintentionally, we had broken up the gangs by suggesting projects. The Unggai gangs had been formed by frustrated, like-minded youth from all over the census division. Their solidarity had not been based on village or clan affiliations, but on age, economic circumstances and shared anger. No landowners would give land to youth from other clans, so each individual had to return to his own community, a more stabilising situation than if the former gangs had retained their own identity for the economic project.

While individual trouble-makers could still remain in the Unggai, the gang raids in the town which had persisted for the previous two years ceased.

The expectations of the Committee had never been high regarding the projects. We expected problems from the youth: idleness, dishonesty and waning of interest. What we had not anticipated was problems from the village leaders. In fact the picture that unfolded to us was that about one third of our projects ran smoothly with youth and village workers co-operating. About one third failed because of the restless and irresponsible attitude of the youth. But the remainder failed because the village leaders took over the project to become businessmen. However, the fact that we were talking with people and establishing relationships meant that law and order seemed to improve whether the project was successful or not. What happened is best summed up by an Unggai seminarian at the Bomana Catholic Seminary who said to me:

“Please do not feel discouraged. I come from a group in the Unggai whose project failed because a village leader stole it. But when I returned home recently, the members of that group had ceased their rascal activities and had all found work to do at home or in a nearby coffee plantation. Don't think your work

has failed, you have shown these young people that there are alternatives to being members of a rascal gang.”

In December 1982, because of success in Unggai, we were asked to do the same work on Daulo Pass, a notorious trouble spot for highway robbery. Committee members were exhausted from the work in Unggai, which was over difficult and rough terrain, and were afraid that if we spread ourselves too thinly, nothing would be a success. While we were wondering what to do about Daulo Pass, we heard of an Australian volunteer couple who had one year of a three-year work permit left and were looking for a project to complete their time in the country. The Eastern Highlands Provincial Government agreed to provide K3,600 as their married allowance. The committee obtained an equivalent amount from a funding agency in Germany to employ a national understudy to work with them during 1983, and take over the work entirely in January 1984. The committee members pulled out of the Unggai at the beginning of 1983 and moved into Daulo Pass to repeat our work there. The volunteer took over monitoring the Unggai work and extended the work by answering requests from Henganofi, Kainantu and Upper Asaro areas. By the beginning of 1984, the committee had grown to 136 members. The following tables show the location and occupation of members:

**Table 9.2: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee:  
Location and occupation of members in January 1984**

Location	Public	Church	Private	Village	Other	Total
Goroka	26	31	1	1	4	63
Henganofi	2	1				
Kainantu	2	9		7		18
Watabung				1		
Marawaka	1					
Lufa	3	3				
Oka pa	1			1		
Unggai	3	2		17		22
Daulo Pass	1			19		20
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>136</b>

Source: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee Records



**Table 9.3: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee: Occupation of national and expatriate members in January 1984**

Occupation	National	Expatriate	Total
Public servant	27	12	39
Church worker	20	26	46
Private enterprise	1		1
Village official	46		46
Other (e.g. spouse)		4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>136</b>

Source: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee Records.

By the beginning of 1984, the volunteer had been replaced by his understudy, a graduate of Yangpela Didiman (a ‘young farmer’ or village motivators’ scheme with an emphasis on integrated human development, run very successfully by the Lutheran Church; see Tietze 1980 for a description of this organisation). A Catholic seminarian completed his year’s fieldwork with our committee instead of being placed in a parish, and the involvement and co-operation of church workers is an important aspect we hope to continue and expand.

Having no model on which to build, the Committee has developed its own philosophy and methods through ‘trial and error’. It recognised from the outset that in traditional Melanesian society wealth was more equally distributed than it is today, and that the seeds of discontent have taken root as society has become divided between the urban elite and the peri-urban and rural people. School-leavers, although educated to have the same expectations as their urban neighbours, are often unable to share the opportunities that economic development should provide. However, it did not take us long to realise that, while economic problems were paramount, economic wealth was not the panacea for all the ills of society.

### Reflections on integrated human development

The Committee saw the wisdom in the concept, which at times can appear to be no more than an idle cliché, of ‘integrated human development’: the need for economic, social, political and spiritual development to go hand-in-hand. It rejected the term ‘drop-out’ for school leavers as a dis-integrating label: school-leavers have neither ‘dropped’ nor should they feel ‘out’. Here was the root of one of the problems: they need to be ‘in’, to be included in their communities, to feel that they belong and have a contribution to make. A sense of belonging is an important factor facilitating the exercise of social control.

We saw, too, that those involved in youth work very often do not bring integrated development. The government brings mostly

economic development, but almost no spiritual development. Yet there is a real need for development of young people, so that they learn how to handle a project with integrity, and work together in relation to the project. Even at community school level, much more could be done to develop the child with a stress on ethics and morals, integrity, a sense of responsibility, motivation to pursue a task through to its completion, and above all, a respect for others.

On the other hand, most church youth work concentrates almost exclusively on spiritual development, with perhaps some recreational activities to maintain interest, but ignores economic development, seeing it as secular and a cause of disruption from jealousy and associated problems. Most young people coming through the courts have had some association with the church. This means the churches are losing their young people because they are not fulfilling felt-needs, particularly economic needs. So often church youth groups only pick up the 'good' people and reward them. Projects are frustrating and often bring tension and disappointment, but, as the Unggai seminarian pointed out, they can also be learning experiences. Churches could at least lend support to Provincial Youth Council projects rather than distancing themselves from them or even attacking and opposing them (see the 'Christian Declaration on Youth and Development' accepted by the participants at the July 1982 Ministers of Religion Workshop on Youth and Development, Youth on the Move 1(3), June/July 1981:1-4).

It is not hard to determine the problems of youth and their needs if we look at their responses, but the difficulty is in finding appropriate solutions. So many of these young people are reacting to their social reality in either one of two ways: lethargy or crime; but, if youth are ignored by society, then they will ensure that society at least takes notice and defers to their trouble-making capacity. Formation of powerful gangs is compensation for their powerlessness and sense of failure. These needs and these factors must be kept in mind when we start thinking of youth work. Somehow our work has to meet at least one of these needs and bring a sense of dignity in work to the young people, remembering that while there is a desire for the Western cargo and technology, there is not an equal desire for the Western ethic. If both the urban and rural sectors make the youth feel unwanted and unwelcome, then both sectors are edging them down a one-way road to a life of crime, and education is a graduation certificate into a rascal gang.

### **Community education and youth projects**

One component of youth must be 'awareness building' with both the youth and their communities. If there is not on-the-spot, non-formal education, we cannot correct the imbalance and unequal opportunity between those who are successful in the school system, or become one of its casualties. Parents need help as much as their children. They need help to see that they have a responsibility to their young people beyond merely finding the school fees and educating them.

Traditional communities adjusted to the sweet potato, and cash cropping, and they can adjust to the school-leaver problem too. They can adjust by making land available to young people at an earlier age than was traditionally the norm.

There has been some discussion with Unggai village leaders of developing youth coffee gardens. The idea is that school-leavers could attend to sections of the gardens and pick the coffee for themselves. When they get married they would leave the garden, and new school-leavers would fill their place. No particular youth would have permanent rights over his or her section of ground. It is hard to know if this is one answer for the rural youth problem, but it certainly is a move in the right direction for community leaders to think creatively about the changing times and their ensuing problems. Youth should maintain their communal obligations in the traditional economy, but parents and leaders should not expect youths to become merely 'cheap labour' in the cash cropping sector. If communities do not want their young people to become 'rascals', they must open up avenues for them to obtain money legitimately – through contract work such as coffee picking or cutting copra. Our experience with youth groups who run successful projects is that the parents and village leaders may try to take the project over as their own and exclude the youth from it. Quite often they are jealous and threatened by a youth project.

At the end of June 1984, the Committee was in contact with 142 youth groups, most of whom had projects:

**Table 9.4: Youth groups in contact with the Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee**

Location	Number
Unggai	35
Daulo Pass/Upper	73
Asaro	
Kainantu	14
Henganofi	1
Lufa	1
Lowa	3
Bena Bena	1
Goroka Town	2
Watabung	11
Wetsan	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>

Source: Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee Records.

An important element of the Rehabilitation Committee has been that of non-formal education with communities, to discuss problems,

listen to their ideas and together try to find some solutions. In doing this we are building up relationships. This has become the central philosophy of the Committee: the establishment of relationships with individuals, groups and communities. Our success and strength has been this aspect, more so than any money that has been poured into our work. Time and interest have been the important features, coupled with concern, and we are using the Melanesian tradition of systems and relationships which create obligations. The implication is that: 'we will support you, if in return you control your young people and improve the law and order situation in your area'. The Committee formulated the following general guidelines:

- 1 We are a BRIDGE between offenders (gangs and delinquents) and the police and courts, remaining neutral ourselves.
- 2 We provide information and expertise to people, and assist them to get in touch with the appropriate authorities.
- 3 We assist first offenders to try and keep them out of jail for a first offence, and support them in their rehabilitation.
- 4 We assist genuine appeals for help from criminals or gangs who wish to reform. This means encouraging them to surrender, facing their outstanding charges, and supporting them through their court cases, and after their release.
- 5 We work with the community, not just the youth, and encourage village leaders, councillors, village court magistrates and parents of the young people to participate in the rehabilitation of their youth.
- 6 We assist groups to find contract employment to earn money to commence a project.
7. We work with and through the Provincial Youth Council.
- 8 We offer interest-free 'soft' loans when other sources of income are unavailable, and when our funds permit. We will only lend money if the community will go guarantors for the group receiving the loan. In this way the youth become obliged to the community, and the community can exercise some control over their youth.
- 9 We listen to people's problems, grievances and articulation of their frustrations. We ask them what they recommend as solutions. We make suggestions, and encourage people to seek for solutions themselves.
- 10 We work for an improvement of law and order, and a better society at the village level.

However, by 1984 it became clear that there were considerable problems with the management of the interest-free 'soft' loans and it was decided to discontinue this part of the program. The 1984 Annual Report described some of the problems in these terms:

- “1 Our work has grown beyond manageable limits for a voluntary committee. Because we have money to offer as ‘soft’ loans, we feel we cannot turn away youth who have not been in trouble with the law. If we did, they would interpret the situation to mean that the way to get help is to become a criminal first! This meant that we were assisting church groups, youth groups, women’s groups and almost anyone who put in an application, as well as the criminals to whom our work was originally directed. Without the offer of a loan, we feel we will be able to return to the original objective of working with criminals and ex-prisoners and assisting their rehabilitation and be free of the other people who came to us only for the money.”
- “2 The majority of groups to whom we lent money have been remiss in repaying their loans according to the terms of the contract. A few groups made no repayments at all. Usually this meant that one of the youth had stolen the money, or a village leader had taken the project over to promote his own business interests. In these cases where no money at all had trickled back, we have seen the need to take offenders to court as an example to other groups that ‘crime does not pay’. This put the Committee in the anomalous situation of taking people to court when our stated aims and objectives are to keep people out of court!”
- “3 Because of the problems with the repayments of the loans, our relationship with our groups was often damaged. On visiting a project, the issue of money had to be raised as well. Without the money, we feel we will have happier contact with the groups.”
- “4 One of our objectives was to create a self-help response from communities to the law and order situation: to try to educate parents to be responsible for their youth beyond the mere raising of school fees. The ‘soft’ loans, instead of encouraging this attitude, sometimes had the reverse effect and parents and communities became more dependent on looking to outside help to solve their problems, instead of looking to themselves to discover what they could do.”

“Although it is disappointing to have to acknowledge that not every area of the work is a marvellous success, it must be remembered that this work is a new concept and the Committee had no real model on which to work. We ourselves are becoming a model and therefore we can only learn by ‘trial and error’. Each previous report has honestly pointed out these difficulties, so it should not be surprising that after two and half years we should pause and critically review what has been happening. At least we are in a position of being of assistance to any future groups which should arise in the country and

advise them of the pitfalls to avoid. On balance... it seemed that discontinuation of the 'soft' loans policy was the wisest move"

(Annual Report 1984:11 ft.).

### Reflections on the first three years

The birth and growth of the Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee has been in response to the needs of youth at a particular period of time. The following excerpt from the 1984 Annual Report describes how the committee has tried to meet these needs:

"Since the inception of the EHP – Rehabilitation Committee in September 1981, each year has had its own emphasis. In each case, the emphasis has not been the result of a carefully laid plan or programme devised by the Committee, but a response to the need of that year. 1981 could have been called 'The Year of First Contact' (i.e. with criminal gangs). Several gangs in Goroka showed that the great majority of people in trouble with the law are responsive to reasonableness if someone takes the time to show an interest in them, listen to their frustrations, and encourage them to redirect their energy into productive legal activities as against illegal activities. This has been confirmed over the past three years. In almost every contact with criminal gangs, around 10 per cent are incorrigible and can only be handled by the police, courts and prisons. But the other 90 per cent have responded well to the 'hand shake' offered to them by the Rehabilitation Committee, and it is to this 90 per cent that we direct our efforts."

"1982 was 'The Year of The Unggai'. In February 1982 approximately one hundred gang members from the Unggai surrendered at the Goroka Police Station. Following the surrender and the jailing of the gang leader, the year saw the energy of the Committee being directed to the Unggai youth who had not gone to jail and twenty-four youth groups commenced income-generating projects, of which the most successful has been the growing of English potatoes."

"1983 was 'The Year of Daulo Pass'. Following the death of a young man on the Pass as the result of a bullet fired by a policeman, the Committee was invited to commence similar work in this area. With a denser population than the Unggai, and less land available for agricultural projects, scone ovens and coffee-buying projects have been more popular."

"And now, 1984 is 'The Year of Probation'"

(Annual Report 1984:1–2).

## Part 2: The Eastern Highlands Probation Service

### Introduction

As early as December 1981, within three months of the Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee being formed, it was apparent that there was little hope of convincing the courts of our good intentions unless we had official recognition and were part of the legal framework. This meant that Eastern Highlands Province needed to be gazetted under the Probation Act 1979 (Papua New Guinea Acts No. 46 of 1979) so we could offer a formal probation service. Section 6 of the Act allows for the appointment of voluntary probation officers, and section 11 spells out the duties of such people:

It is the duty of a voluntary probation officer:

- (a) to advise, assist and where possible to befriend a probationer as directed by a probation officer;
- (b) when required by a probation officer to do so to prepare and submit written reports to that probation officer in respect of a probationer;
- (c) generally to assist a probation officer in the performance of his duties.

Before the Rehabilitation Committee members could offer their services as voluntary probation officers, a full-time probation officer was needed under whom they could work. The matter was then taken up with the Chief Probation Officer and the Justice Department but, while the request was supported, there appeared to be no funds to extend the service beyond those provinces already gazetted: Morobe, Central and National Capital District. We had to find a probation officer and a means of running a probation office from within our own provincial resources.

The Eastern Highlands provincial government provided a rent-free office, telephone allowance of fifty kina a month and office equipment. We were able to enlist the voluntary services of the wife of the Australian volunteer working with the Rehabilitation Committee as the provincial government was already paying him a married allowance. In January 1983, thirteen months after our initial request, the Eastern Highlands Province was gazetted.

### Probation and good behaviour bonds

After finally receiving our official gazettal, the courts still took a 'hard line' against even the most petty first offenders, such as shoplifters and pick-pockets, and were unwilling to offer probation as an alternative, stating that: 'The stores in town are "urban-dwellers" gardens, and stealing from gardens is strictly taboo' (comment of a senior provincial magistrate). The statistics of the Eastern Highlands Probation Office show the cautious approach by the courts to

probation orders and it took a few months before the service was really accepted.

Just as the office started to build up a service during the months of June, July and August, the Summary Offences (Amendment) Act which had been passed in May 1983 came into effect. At first the Goroka courts did not realise that probation could not be an option to prison when a mandatory minimum applied. The Probation Act 1979 states (in 16 (2) (a)) that 'for the purposes of Subsection (1), "offence" does not include an offence for which a mandatory minimum sentence is provided for by any law'. At the time this legislation was drawn up the only crimes carrying a mandatory minimum sentence were very serious crimes, such as murder, rape, treason and armed robbery, crimes for which we could not request probation as an alternative. However, under the mandatory minimum sentences incorporated into the Summary Offences (Amendment) Act 1983, many offences such as minor assaults, or abusive and insulting language, were precluded from having probation offered as an option to imprisonment (see Dinnen forthcoming for a discussion of the various minimum sentence provisions which were enacted in 1983).

By September, when the courts became aware that mandatory minimum sentences disqualified the option of probation for these offences, the momentum went out of probation. Only five people were placed on probation during the last three months of 1983.

However, the courts in Goroka turned to good behaviour bonds in place of probation, using section 138 of the District Courts Act as an alternative to jail sentences. This led to a rapid increase in good behaviour bonds after October 1983. Most people in Eastern Highlands Province who are put on good behaviour bonds receive the same service from the probation office as those placed under probation: that is, they are told to report to the probation office on a regular basis, and the probation officer or one of the voluntary probation officers visits them and their families in their homes. In 1983/84 this was the only province in Papua New Guinea currently offering this service and the numbers have grown steadily since 1983.



**Table 9.5: Eastern Highland Province good behaviour bonds and probation orders 1982-1984**

Year	Good behaviour bonds			Probation orders			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male/ Female
1982				2		2	2
1983	17	6	23	26	5	31	54
1984	220	170	390	47	13	60	450
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>506</b>

Source: Eastern Highlands Probation Service Records.

The proportion of men to women passing through the courts cannot be accurately established as the court papers do not distinguish between the sexes. However, a one-week survey at the Goroka Court House indicated that only 6.4 per cent of the total cases that week involved women. The accuracy of this sample is supported by the figures given in the March 1984 issue of *The Reporter* (a monthly publication produced by the Australian Institute of Criminology), because at 1 October 1983, out of 3,671 prisoners in Papua New Guinea, there were only 192 females (*The Reporter* 5 (3):16).

However, the number of females on good behaviour bonds is proportionately much higher than the number of males: 179 out of a total of 413 (34.5 per cent). The majority of women on bonds are women with marital problems who have either assaulted other women or have used abusive and threatening language. A few are women who have involved themselves in other marital problems by going to the assistance of other women. Excluding these offences, women are generally law-abiding citizens and this suggests that. Apart from problems of youth, the next greatest pressure point in the country is that of marital conflict. However, many of these women seem to be victims rather than aggressors, and it is ironic that they face a jail sentence and their children often suffer when others involved in the conflict remain free.

The two most persuasive arguments for probation are its rehabilitative potential and its cost efficiency. Of the total of 311 persons referred to the probation office to the end of June 1984, only four had become recidivists and were re-arrested. Even allowing for the fact that the Goroka courts are not referring 'high risk' cases to the probation office, this is an impressive success rate. Social pressure and control can be powerful influences if families and communities can be involved in the rehabilitation of probation. Often people report to the Probation Office more frequently than required, suggesting that many of those passing through the courts require counselling and someone to show an interest in them more than they need a jail sentence. By the probation officer or volunteer probation officers visiting people in

their homes, families and communities are also alerted to the need to offer support to that person, and this encourages the community to participate in the rehabilitation of its members. It means, too, that the probationer can build up a one-to-one relationship with the volunteer probation officer and it is this personalised interest in people which we believe has been the key to our success.

Secondly, in a country which is short of money for basic health and other social services, probation offers a saving in real terms. It proved impossible to obtain an accurate figure of the cost of accommodating a prisoner per day in Papua New Guinea. However, the Vote Index Budget Notes for 1984 show that the government has allocated a total of K10,359,100 for Corrective Institution Services. The population of Papua New Guinea in 1980 was 3,010,727 (National Statistical Office 1982). The Report of the Committee to Review Policy and Administration of Crime, Law, and Order, December 1983 (hereinafter referred to as the Report) gave the imprisonment rate for Papua New Guinea as 151 per 100,000, approximately 4,546 prisoners at an annual cost of K2,279 or K6.24 per prisoner per day.

During the first half of 1984, courts referred 450 people to the probation service. If this were not available, they would have probably received an average imprisonment term of six months, so the Eastern Highlands Probation Office has saved the government K492,750 over this period. The Eastern Highlands Probation Service was granted K8,000 from the non-government organisations funds for probation for 1984. If this is deducted, a total of that K484,750 was saved by the government. The probation service has in effect maintained a 'jail' outside the jail. In 1984, the Bihute Corrective Institute, which accommodates an average 260 inmates, was the only prison in the country which was not overcrowded as a result of the mandatory minimum sentence provisions.

Statistics included in the Report show that Papua New Guinea has one of the highest imprisonment rates in this part of the world. This is no accident, or an indication that people in this country are more prone to criminal behaviour than anywhere else. It is undoubtedly a legacy of the recent colonial past, when the Australian administration 'pacified' the country by sending people to prison and while in jail they were taught Tokpisin [English-lexicon pidgin/ creole language] so that on the return to their communities they, in turn, became instruments of the government in the pacification process. Nine years after independence, large numbers of people were still being imprisoned for what might be regarded as minor summary offences. In 1975, for example, 1,985 persons were imprisoned for 'council' offences, presumably failure to pay local government council taxes, and 197 were imprisoned for obscene language. The Report (pp. 289–290) states that: *'There would appear, on the face of it, to be more than a suggestion that there are far too many people in jail for minor offences. The judges and the magistrates are aware of the problem. However, they are confronted with a legal system that, in the absence of the capacity of a*

*defendant to pay a fine, there appears no reliable alternative to that of imposing a custodial sentence'.*

One possible answer lies in probation. The probation service exists in name, but it is not funded properly, and is inadequately staffed. The powers and the probation act which allow for the extensive use of volunteer probation officers have not been properly exploited.

Both judges and magistrates complain that they do not see the salaried Probation Officers attending court. There is virtually no co-operation between Judges, Magistrates and Probation Officers. Probation could save the country large amounts of revenue, and prevent the unnecessary jailing of young and first offenders.

At the beginning of 1984, the Eastern Highlands probation officer was the only probation officer in the country and the Goroka Probation office was the last vestige of the service. However, there were fifty-two voluntary probation officers assisting the office, some of whom were outside Eastern Highlands Province. The full-time probation officer travelled as far as Southern Highlands and Madding Provinces to place probationers back in their communities.

### Community involvement in the law and order problem

For many years there have been constant appeals from national and provincial government leaders for community involvement to help solve some of the problems associated with the continuing apparent break-down in law and order in Papua New Guinea.

There is a vast untapped resource surrounding government: the community. This resource needs a minimal amount of funding to provide guidance, directions, timetables, rosters, but they require one or two leaders to give this direction.

On Monday 14 November 1983, Goroka residents held a protest meeting against the rise in crime in the town, following three rape cases in one weekend. The following day the *Niugini Nius* estimated that about 5,000 people attended the meeting. During the meeting it was suggested that a reserve police force be formed to assist the police and about one third of those present indicated that they would be willing to either join a reserve constabulary or come to the police station at weekends and man the telephone to free the police for more patrol duty. A conservative estimate of the numbers present, with allowance for those who lost enthusiasm when the crisis was over, suggests that 1,000 people in the town of 18,000 appeared willing to make a voluntary contribution to the law and order situation. Since that meeting, amongst other things an urban crime Prevention Committee has been instrumental in having police dogs brought to the province: dogs which command remarkable respect! Yet the easiest communities to involve are those at the local level. They have their leaders while town communities are more fragmented, more suspicious of each other and more transient; possibly more selfish too. But it can be done. Our experience shows that the easiest people

to enlist for support are those associated with a church; the second easiest are government officers; and the hardest to enthuse are those in the private sector. Yet while it seems unlikely that the private sector will be among the pioneers, if the pioneers can prove the merit of community involvement they may, although undoubtedly late-comers, finally join the ranks.

**Table 9.6: Voluntary probation officers by location, occupation and sex (as at 31 December 1984)**

Location	Occupation														
	Church workers			Public sector			Private sector			Comm. worker			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Goroka	25	23	48	20	2	22	2	1	3	5	4	9	52	30	82
Asaro/Watabang	4		4	5		5	1		1	6		6	16		16
Kainantu	7		7	5		5				7		7	19		19
Unggai	2		2	5		5				5		5	12		12
Other districts	4	1	5	9		9				1		1	13	2	15
Other province	1		1	5		5					1	1	7		7
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>151</b>

Source: Eastern Highlands Probation Service Records.

It is important to note that 103 (68 per cent) of the voluntary probation officers were Papua New Guineans. The number of females was much lower; out of a total of thirty-two female voluntary probation officers only thirteen (41 per cent) were Papua New Guineans. Female probation officers are more likely to be church workers (75 per cent compared to only 36 per cent for male probation officers).

The introduction of community work orders as a sentencing option is another viable and inexpensive measure which needs only a little organisation and direction. Again community co-operation could be enlisted. Local government councils, churches, government departments and private enterprise could be enlisted to assist, by making work available on their premises and giving it some supervision. Community work orders as a form of punishment are not only less expensive than incarceration, but may well prove more effective as a punishment. The gang members I have talked with seem

to fear public humiliation more than the inconvenience of going to gaol. In some cases a gaol sentence is a 'rite of passage' and a mark of gang membership. After a gaol sentence, they are a true initiate. Most gang members say: 'You must find us "special" work because we are so famous!' They list their provisos and conditions of work: 'We cannot be seen working on a sanitary truck, but we will work on the gravel truck'.

In June 1984, the chief justice ordered the release of twenty children who had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment in adult gaols (see '6-year-old locked up in Wabag' *Post Courier*, June 1984:1) and drew attention to the plight of many juvenile offenders in this country. These may be tomorrow's criminals and, unless measures are taken today to attempt to rehabilitate them before they qualify for tomorrow's gangs, the situation will become much worse. Again one inexpensive and simple way to do something about the situation is to make positive contact with these youngsters and their families. If the mandatory minimum sentences legislation were repealed and at the same time the age at which a juvenile could be placed on probation lowered to twelve years, many of these children could be pin-pointed immediately, and community support could be enlisted to assist. [The mandatory minimum sentence provisions for a number of lesser offences were repealed in August 1985 by the Summary Offences (Amendment) Act, No. 14 of 1985 (ed)].

Not only do children and juveniles need counselling and guidance, but so do their parents and communities. People need help to cope with the conflict between the traditional ethic and the Western ethic. The traditions of the ancestors were part of an ideology based on a subsistence economy. Papua New Guinea remains primarily an agricultural subsistence economy for which the traditional ethic is more appropriate. However, if the country is committed to a Western-type economy running side-by-side with a traditional economy, people need help to sort out the two ethics and know when and where to apply them. In discussion of the 'traditional values and ethics', Ennio Mantovani (1984:206) says that 'values are not inborn: they are acquired through culture and experience'.

An action takes its ethical value from its influence on the community: to steal from a brother is ethically wrong because it spoils a key relationship and endangers the community as a result. But to steal from a community can be ethically indifferent if it does no harm to the community. As a further consequence, if nobody finds out the identity of the thief, there is little harm done: no relationships are broken. Once the thief is found out, it results in broken relationships either within his own community or between two communities, and so he causes his community to experience a loss of 'life'. Hence, a thief will start feeling ashamed, not because stealing is wrong in itself, but because in this instance, stealing has caused trouble for the community. In other words, the ethical value of an action on the community.

But in today's new society there is conflict and confusion among parents and communities in general. What is wrong and what is right? Changing times have overwhelmed them and very little has been done to try to assist them to handle adequately their changing situation. There are no non-formal education programmes to help these people. Non-formal education programmes are thought of in terms of correspondence courses which once again raise the expectations of people for that longed-for piece of paper which will be entree to a job. Non-formal education must be more than this: it must also be a source of information and awareness-building. Literacy campaigns would be more beneficial to the country as a whole than opening more high schools. As was noted in the discussion of the Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee some parents punish their youth when they do not find jobs. People need to appreciate the value of education whether a job is found in the formal economy or not.

As one voluntary youth worker pointed out to me, initiation ceremonies really prepared youth for life. Once the ceremony was completed and the young men were out on their own facing real-life situations, they could apply the things they had been taught by the elders to their situation. They could say: *'That man is an enemy because he acts like this, and this; that man is a friend he does this and this; that man pretends to be my friend but is trying to trick me.'*

Schools need to equip students for life, whether that is in the cash economy or the traditional economy. Schools should be sources of character-building and children should be taught integrity and responsibility. If children left school with these qualities instilled in them it would not matter whether they ended up in a Waigani office or picking coffee in their family garden, they would have worthwhile qualities they could apply to either situation. They would be productive, decent citizens of their country, and their parents could still be proud of them.

Side by side with this, government must come to terms with unemployed youth. If for political reasons it is going to continue to build new high schools then it must find some answers for school leavers. By setting up of the National Youth Movement Programme it has acknowledged the problem of youth, and it has commenced to allocate money for the youth sector. While this has been a major move in the right direction, it needs at the same time to allocate money to provincial governments and in turn to councils for contract work on a rotational basis for young people. For many youths there is real joy in having a job and receiving a pay packet, be it temporary or not. Youth need hope that they will have some work and prestige and dignity from that work. We can argue that there is dignity in subsistence economy. But it is very difficult to convince educated youth of this when their education has alienated them from their traditional economy.

## Conclusion

At the inception of the rehabilitation community there was a great deal of cynicism among the town community. At times it seemed as if some were willing that the idea would not succeed: a collapse would vindicate their own disinterest. However, as we approach our forth anniversary, there are no signs as yet of the work falling apart. It grows faster than we can respond to the demands. It has been shown in the areas in which we have worked that a little self-help and community involvement can provide some help even in a lawless situation.

We have learnt that the majority of so called ‘rascals’ feel neglected, inconsequential and frustrated, as though they have been thrown on the rubbish dump by both sectors of society. The fact that someone talks to them and shows an interest provides an alternative and hope. Most are really seeking an identity, and if they cannot find it in the wider society, they will find it as a member of a gang. Their tattoos and identification marks – some have stars on their foreheads, others two links of a chain on their arms – are symbols of this search for an identity. The towns push them out with *sori no gat wok* (sorry no vacancies) signs and *lukaut doc / save kaikai man* (beware of the dog), and their own communities often will not give them space. Both sectors are pushing them down a one-way road to a life of crime.

At the time of independence there was much talk about unity and *bung wantain* (unite) was the catch cry. It might be time to resurrect this slogan and make it more than words. It might be time for the law-abiding to *bung wantain* with the youth, be they good or bad, to bring both discipline and hope into their lives. Finally, as the 1984 Report of the Eastern Highlands Rehabilitation Committee (p. 24) noted: *‘If law and order is to be a community response, then the smallest assistance, such as buying a bag of potatoes from a youth group, is of paramount importance because it is involving the community in the problem.’*

**Editors’ Note:** unfortunately, the references for this reading are missing.

## Reading 9 (part 1): Formal and Informal Actions for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

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By Charles Namafe, School of Education, University of Zambia. Part 1 of Chapter 3 in *Youth, Conflict and Peace*, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre, 1998, Commonwealth Secretariat.

### Introduction

#### Definitions of terms

Some scholars have tried to differentiate between conflict 'prevention', 'management' as well as 'resolution'. For our purpose, prevention refers to all measures aimed at forestalling the occurrence of conflict. Once conflict has erupted, it requires mitigation to avoid it developing into armed or violent conflict. Such approaches are 'management' measures. Attempts aimed at completely neutralising conflicts are referred to as 'conflict resolution' approaches. The above distinction is, however, only theoretical because in real terms it is very hard to delineate among the three approaches.

Formal actions of dealing with conflict will be understood to refer to those measures put into place by governmental institutions and organisations, be they at the local, national international or global levels. Such formal actions also refer to similar measures employed by registered non-governmental organisations, or institutions, operating at various levels. Informal actions are outside the organisations and institutions of governments or non-governmental agencies. Such informal actions include approaches of individuals or communities (e.g. street vendors) aimed at dealing with conflict, such as divorces or ostracism. But even here a rigid distinction between formal and informal actions is difficult to sustain.

An important distinction is that introduced by Bonta (1996) between a culture of conflict and a culture of peacefulness. The former is associated with the Western setting, while the latter is common in many developing nations' communities. Since many societies are increasingly becoming Westernised, conflict is also increasingly occupying the centre stage in various activities of these societies, such as politics, trade, environment or religion.

Lastly, conflict occurs in the personal, natural and social environments. The discussion in this paper largely centres on conflict as found in inter-human relationships of the social environment.



## Actions for tackling conflict

Three main approaches to conflict and hence peace will be summarised. These are the peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building approaches.

### Peace-keeping

The intention here is to 'keep the peace', meaning maintaining absence of direct violence. Subdivisions of peace-keeping include the following:

- (a) Intra-national peace-keeping – what a state does within its territory such as against striking workers or students.
- (b) Intra-regional peace-keeping – what a hegemonical power, such as Nigeria or South Africa, does to keep peace among periphery states in the region.
- (c) International peacekeeping – under, say the United Nations Charter or Covenant of the League of Nations. International peace-keeping efforts can be hampered by the doctrines of sovereignty or non-intervention in internal affairs of other nation states.

This traditional approach to peace has often been dissociative in that antagonists are kept away from each other under mutual threats of considerable punishment if they transgress, especially if they cross into each other's territory. In such balance of power situations, other accompanying measures used may include:

- (a) Social measures (such as mutual prejudice or social distance)
- (b) Use of geography (in the form of distance, like across an ocean or desert)
- (c) Impediments (such as a river or mountain chain).

Third parties may be called in or call themselves in to exercise peace-keeping operations, such as patrolling the borderline, or technology may be used to supplement geography, in the form of mines, electromagnetic fences and so on.

### Peace-making

This is sometimes called the 'conflict resolution approach'. It tries to get rid of the source of tension. Some of the main objectives of conflict resolution are:

- to avoid war
- as a way for society to progress
- to enable people to transcend incompatibilities or contradictions that prevent progress and channel attention and resources away from more important pursuits (e.g. diverting Gross National Product into the military sector, or the impact unresolved conflict

has on the minds of young people, blocking creative thinking in other directions).

There are techniques for conflict resolution which young men and women could use in business, legal systems, educational settings or other situations. Other options for resolving conflicts are covered by Galtung (1976), amongst other scholars.

Of course, conflict resolution strategies will differ depending on the type of dispute being addressed. In resolving ethnic/ cultural conflicts of a political nature, the following list offers possibilities:

- a) Indigenisation
- b) Accommodation
- c) Assimilation
- d) Acculturation
- e) Population transfer
- f) Boundary Alteration
- g) Genocide
- h) Ethnic Suicide
- i) Autonomy (e.g. Aland in Finland)
- j) Democracy
- k) Federation (e.g. Brazil)
- l) Cantonal State (e.g. Switzerland)
- m) Minority rights (e.g. Sami people in Norway)
- n) Constitutional rights (e.g. Swedish population in Finland)
- o) Union of States (e.g. USA)
- p) Association of States (e.g. Niue – New Zealand)
- q) Coalition government
- r) Referendum
- s) Oblivion – trying to forget conflict
- t) Avoidance
- u) Withdrawal.

### **Peace-building**

This approach looks at structures that must be put in place in order to remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to wars in situations where these might occur. Largely coming from development theory, such structures include, for instance, issues of equity, symbiosis or entropy, which are together taken to be neutralisers of unwanted conditions of exploitation, elitism and isolation.

Mediation requires the involvement of a third party mediator. The following skills and conditions may prove useful:

### ***Antecedent conditions***

These are factors to consider before going into mediation (context).

#### (i) Nature of the mediator

The identity and personal characteristics of a mediator are good predictors of success. Since mediation is a voluntary process, mediators need to be perceived by antagonists as reasonable, acceptable, knowledgeable and able to secure the trust and co-operation of the disputants. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for a single mediator, who was distrusted by one of the parties, to carry out any useful function.

Effective conflict resolution also depends on the prestige and authority of the mediator, as well as his/her originality of ideas, access to resources and ability to act unobtrusively. Other requirements of a successful mediator are:

- Knowledge about conflict situations.
- An ability to understand the positions of the antagonists.
- Active listening.
- A sense of timing.
- Communications skills.
- Procedural skills (e.g. chairing meetings or courtesy skills).
- Crisis management.
- A sense of humour.
- Patience.
- Energy and stamina.
- Intelligence.
- Impartiality.
- Legitimacy.
- Rank of mediator (is he/she a government leader, representative of regional and international organisations or a private individual?).
- Previous and subsequent relationship with the adversaries (opponents may attach importance to a continuing, ephemeral or only temporary relationship with a mediator).

#### (ii) Nature of the parties

Does the type of political system affect chances of successful conflict management? The political context may be divided into five regime types: monarchies, one party states, military regimes,

multiparty regimes and others. Some scholars maintain that the smaller the power difference between adversaries, the greater the effectiveness of mediation. Moreover, previous relations between parties to a conflict are an important factor. A dispute may occur between parties who have had a history of friendship or one of enmity (e.g. Arab/ Israeli or Pakistan/ Indian conflicts).

(iii) Nature of the dispute

The success or failure of mediation is largely determined by the nature of the dispute. When vital interests are affected (e.g. issues of sovereignty or territorial integrity) intermediaries will have a tough job to do. Secondly, the duration of a dispute (e.g. the Cold War) and the timing of initiating mediation may affect the success of mediation. When is a conflict 'ripe' for mediation? Thirdly, the intensity of a dispute – such as fatalities – may affect the mediation outcome. The costs (in life, property or resources) incurred by the parties may be so overwhelming at some point that further losses are deemed intolerable and unacceptable. Fourthly, the nature of the issues in dispute is also a factor. Issues in conflict are the underlying causes of a dispute. They may not always be clear, but they refer to what the dispute is all about. Often, more than one issue may be involved, and the parties themselves may not agree on what constitutes a disputed issue or on its relative importance. Issues may involve sovereignty, ideology, security, independence and others (e.g. ethnicity).

**Current conditions**

These refer to conditions prevailing during mediation (process).

(iv) Mediation behaviour

How is mediation initiated and conducted? Who should initiate mediation – is it a potential mediator or parties to conflict? Some scholars suggest that mediation is most successful when both of the adversaries request it. In cases where only one party is interested in seeking mediation assistance, or an interested third party proposes it, the effectiveness of mediation may be reduced considerably. Secondly, mediation also appears to succeed when regional organisations (e.g. SADC) initiate proceedings.

In contrast, mediation initiated by a mediator or international organisations achieve only moderate successes.

Success is also assured when conflict management takes place in a neutral environment, free from the external pressures and influences of media and constituents. In a neutral environment a mediator is able to create a level playing field by guaranteeing each party free and equal access to information and resources as well as maintaining the flow of communication between the parties.

Strategies of mediation range from low to high intervention. At the low end of the spectrum are communication facilitation

strategies where a mediator takes a fairly passive role, largely as a channel of communication or go-between for the parties, and shows little control over the process or substance of mediation. In procedural strategies, a mediator exercises more formal control over situational aspects or the process of mediation. Here a mediator may determine such factors as the mediation environment, the number and type of meetings with the adversaries, the agendas of those meetings, the control of constituency influences and the distribution of information and resources to the parties. Directive strategies are the most active procedures of mediation behaviour. Here the mediator sets out to affect the content and substance as well as the process of mediation. A mediator may achieve these goals by providing incentives, offering rewards and punishments, issuing ultimatums and introducing new proposals. Generally, directive strategies of mediation are more successful than either communication facilitation or procedural strategies.

### **Consequent conditions**

These refer to conditions after mediation (outcomes). The success or failure of mediation depends on all the above noted factors and conditions. Mediation outcomes are described as:

- Unsuccessful
- Cease-fire
- Partial settlement, or
- Full settlement.

### **Conclusion**

Third-party assistance is one of the most promising approaches to constructive conflict management, prevention and resolution. To understand it better, we need to explore the various forms in which it can be offered (e.g. mediation, negotiation, arbitration and so on); what the third parties do, how they do it and the results of their effort.

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## Reading 9 (part 2): Formal and Informal Action in Dealing with Conflicts

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By Razaan Bailey, Trainer, Future Links, South Africa. Part 2 of Chapter 3 in *Youth, Conflict and Peace*, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre, 1998, Commonwealth Secretariat.

International Alert describes conflict resolution as, ‘a method which involves building bridges between hostile communities, working to clarify issues which represent points of confrontation between them, and creating opportunities for developing new relationships based upon a process of peaceful change and grass-roots level reconciliation’.

Peace building is defined as, ‘the employment of measures which consolidate peaceful relations and create an environment which deters the emergence or escalation of tensions which may lead to conflict’.

Citizen-based peace-making is defined as, ‘the process of establishing peace constituencies within conflict areas. These constituencies comprise people from different sectors of civil society whose prevailing interest is the development of sustainable peace’.

The definition of conflict resolution mentions the need to build bridges. Many conflicts we experience today have a history that dates back centuries. Instead of being used to defend their positions, young people have the opportunity to break down the barriers and interact with the other party. This interaction, however, needs to be constructive and should assist in helping them deal with the negative stereotypes. Young people have much in common, and they therefore need to identify the commonalties, as these provide the building blocks for effective conflict resolution.

### Skills training

Young women and men also need to create opportunities where they are able to gain the skills for effective conflict resolution. This can be accomplished by encouraging schools, tertiary institutions and community organisations to offer programmes which offer skills training in some aspects of conflict resolution, effective communication, democratic governance and leadership.

### Youth as social change agents

The youth need to identify themselves as agents of social change – for the conditions that promote peace will not be achieved unless the social, economic and political patterns that promote violence are addressed. Young people’s role as peace-maker/ social change activist needs to be backed up with effective conflict resolution skills. This image, however, also needs to be recognised and acknowledged by the broader society.

## Lobby and advocacy

Youth need to lobby and advocate for non-violent approaches for dealing with conflict within communities and societies. In doing this we need to:

- denounce violence
- mount campaigns to educate the young person and the entire community through workshops
- lobby for the improvement of socio-economic conditions that act as seeds for conflict.

Representatives of the World Health Organization noted that the extent to which the youth can serve as a resource for progress, contributing their energy and idealism to the well-being of all, is greatly influenced by the conditions in which they live and their lifestyle during the crucial years of transition between childhood and adulthood. The above statement highlights how crucial it is that we interact with the youth at an early stage. Today we find too many glaring examples on our continent of young women and men being drawn in and used as foot soldiers by adults, communities, opposition forces and governments in a game of power and control. These games of war have deadly consequences for the youth, both as perpetrators of violence and as victims of the violence. We need to be conscious of the fact that victims of violence very often become perpetrators of violence. Africa, a continent rich in natural resources and diversity, is also the continent with the poorest nations in the world. As the earth stewards of the continent, we need to decide whether we are:

- going to continue employing methods that perpetuate violence as a tool for resolving disputes?
- going to continue living on a continent that is defined globally by its civil wars, refugee crises and starvation?

OR

Are we going to learn from the past, thereby taking up the challenge as agents of social change, in promoting democratic governance and the non-violent resolution of conflict?

During the initial hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), in South Africa, Archbishop Tutu often stressed the importance of the hearings as an exercise to ensure that South Africans will never again repeat the mistakes of the past. World leaders at different points in history have expressed similar sentiments. However, current situations provide us with enough evidence of this promise being broken many times over!

As youth and as potential leaders of our societies, it is our responsibility to make sure that we do not add to the evidence of broken promises.

As youth we have inherited a continent ravaged by decades of violent conflicts. Let us ensure that, when it is time for us to hand over, we shall have propagated the seeds of positive change.

## **Participants' concerns**

*Towards the end of apartheid in South Africa, there were literally thousands of young people out in the streets protesting against apartheid. The same can be said for young people involved in civil strife in other parts of Africa. In the end, many young people ended up dying as victims of police brutality or other forms of violence. Today, young people are being accused of fomenting crime. Where has Africa gone wrong?*

## **Participants' responses:**

- Mismanagement of society's resources.
- Policies of reintegrating ex-combatants did not cater for re-training of the combatants, most of whom were youths, with new skills. This, for example, is the case in Mozambique.



# Reading 10: Democracy, Good Governance and Students' Leadership in Tertiary Institutions in Africa

By Carlson Anyangwe, School of Law, University of Zambia. Chapter 4 in *Youth, Conflict and Peace*, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre, 1998, Commonwealth Secretariat.

## 1 Introduction

This paper starts with an introduction that defines the words used in the title, notes the infrastructure of democracy and alludes to two problems of democratisation. It concludes with a submission that there is need for a meaningful partnership between the three components that make a tertiary institution, namely, students, teachers and the administration. It calls for the deployment of alternative strategies in order to prevent, manage and resolve student unrests. The body of the paper assesses the participation of students in the governance of tertiary institutions and the degree of democracy within a students' union or council. It also looks at the causes of campus unrests and how they are handled. The main thrust of the paper is that students' participation in the governance of tertiary institutions is merely token, that both management and students should pay closer attention to the norms of democracy and good governance, and that it is necessary to revisit the classic strategies that have hitherto been deployed to deal with student unrests.

### 1.1 Definition of terms

*Democracy*: much confusion surrounds what democracy really means. Winston Churchill once quipped that democracy is the worst form of government next to nothing else. Democracy is, however, like the fabled elephant, easily recognisable but difficult to define. To my mind democracy simply means rule by the people. By this I mean that democracy covers the entire process of participation in governance by those concerned, whether at macro or micro level.

*Good governance*: this is governance according to internationally acceptable standards. Accountability, transparency and responsiveness are some of the accepted elements of good governance.

*Students' leadership*: this refers to student leaders.

*Tertiary institution*: this means any institution next after secondary institution, usually at university level. A tertiary institution is therefore a post-secondary institution by whatever name it is called: university, polytechnic, 'technikon', school, institute and college.

*Africa*: this refers to the geographic African continent but excluding the island of Mayotte which is occupied by France, the Canary Islands which belongs to Spain, and the Island States of Cyprus and Malta which the Commonwealth classifies under the African Region.

## 1.2 The wind of democratisation

In 1990 a third wind of political change started blowing across Africa. It is the wind of democratisation. The first wind was that of decolonisation which began with Ghana's independence in 1957. By the end of the 1960s the majority of African countries had become independent. But decolonisation was quickly followed in the 1970s by the wind of authoritarianism. That is to say, the establishment and subsequent entrenchment of military dictatorships and one-party autocracies.

For the past eight years, however, democratic forces have been at work trying to enthrone and sustain democracy and good governance. This wave of democratisation has brought in its train a new wave of 'student power', reminiscent of the student radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s in Europe and America. That radicalism, be it noted, significantly contributed in bringing about certain social changes in those continents and an end to the Vietnam war. It added a fillip to the African struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid. It won for European and American students certain educational reforms and the right to participate in the decision-making processes of the University.

Students see themselves as (and are indeed) the front-line of the democratic forces in Africa. In South Africa they took on the apartheid colossus for decades. In Nigeria and Ghana they challenged the military establishment. In Cameroon, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Benin and Zaire they bared their chest to a trigger-happy authoritarianism. In Zambia they opposed the one-party state. Students also see themselves as the catalysts for change in the political, social and educational spheres at both micro and macro levels.

## 1.3 The infrastructure of democracy and some problems of democratisation

The term 'democracy' conjures the image of elections (presidential, legislative, regional and local) and their attendant electioneering and sloganeering. It also brings to mind the classical Lincolnian catchy ideal of *government of the people, by the people, for the people*.

Democracy is certainly concerned with government institutions or processes. But it is also a style of governance, a style of government<sup>1</sup> and a style of human relationships.<sup>2</sup> Constitutional and electoral provisions, just laws and rules, the electoral process, human rights and an active civil society (of which the student movement is a part) constitute the infrastructure of democracy. Today then, even in an Africa still smarting from the ravages of single-party authoritarianism, democracy has acquired a clearer and more precise

meaning in political discourse. It is now accepted as the linchpin of good governance, societal peace and progress.

The perceptive American political scientist Samuel Huntington rightly noted that, although democratisation is the solution to the problem of tyranny, the process of democratisation itself can also create or exacerbate other problems with which democratising societies must grapple.<sup>3</sup> He mentions three problems, namely, communal conflict, foreign war, and social decay. Of these the first and the third are germane for this paper. Democratisation can engender communal conflict when politicians, competing for elective office, appeal to tribal, or ethnic and/or religious constituencies in order to win votes. When this happens, people identify themselves with tribe and religion; ethnic conflict (or at least rivalry) is then stimulated within the democratising state. Democratisation also appears to involve an increase in socially undesirable behaviour, especially among the youth. This could lead to a 'culture' of violence.

## 2. Students' leadership and campus government

Regulations governing various African tertiary institutions invariably allow students to organise themselves into a students' union or council. That body is usually assigned three types of functions: to represent the students in relations with the authorities of the university and other relevant bodies; to develop the cultural, social and athletic life of the students; and to foster the corporate spirit of the students. Student representatives therefore always make provision for participation in the decision-making bodies of the institution. Freedom of association and the right to participate in the affairs of the institution are part of basic human rights, which are themselves critical elements in democracy and good governance.

However, it is necessary to go beyond what the regulations may say on paper and ascertain the reality on the ground. What is the nature of the participation, if any at all, by students' leadership in the government of the tertiary institution? Where participation exists, is it meaningful and effective or mere tokenism? What about the students' council or union: is it run according to the key values of democracy and good governance? Is its leadership representative?

### 2.1 Participation in decision-making bodies of the institution

Participation by students, through their duly elected leaders, in the governance of a tertiary institution is an integral part of the much wider concept of popular participation in government, directly or through freely chosen representatives. While the right(s) of students to take part in the decision-making bodies of a tertiary institution appears to be generally acknowledged, the terms on which they participate is another issue altogether.

### **2.1.1 Importance of participation**

One point though is certain. It is eminently desirable that students should be allowed to participate in influencing, shaping and implementing policies that affect their studies, their welfare on campus and the university environment in general. The rationale for such meaningful participation is not hard to find. First, it is an aspect of democracy and good governance. Second, it is fair and just: people should be involved in deciding matters that concern or affect them. Third, it is pragmatic because participation more or less guarantees general acceptance of the deliberations of the decision-making body. Fourth, it is critical in the achievement and maintenance of campus peace and stability. Fifth, involving students in identifying problems of the institution, formulating working solutions and implementing decisions gives them a sense of belonging and responsibility and prepares them for leadership roles in the nation at large.

### **2.7.2 Meaningful and not token participation**

Meaningful and effective participation pre-supposes intelligent and responsible participation, and this means accessing information on and understanding the issues involved. Not that the students' representatives must be skilled and knowledgeable in the issues to be tackled by a decision-making body of the tertiary institution, but it is desirable that in order to make participation meaningful they know the issues involved and have information relating thereto. A tertiary institution desirous of ensuring effective participation by students' representatives in its decision-making bodies would see to it that meetings are not convened at short notice or without a stated agenda. Fair notice of meetings and a stated agenda enable the students' leadership to consult the students' body and, if necessary, get information on and study the issues involved. In this way, the students' leadership can be expected to be well equipped and ready to make a meaningful contribution when participating in the deliberations of various decision-making bodies of the institution.

There is no better way of frustrating effective participation by students' leaders than by inviting them to meetings at very short notice, and without disclosing to them beforehand the agenda to be discussed. At some institutions the presence of students' leadership at meetings of decision-making bodies is conceived or perceived as mere attendance rather than participation. Attendance is seen as essentially a function of communication: the students' representatives ritually sit through the deliberations, make little or no input, sign the attendance sheet, take part in the 'light' refreshments usually offered, and then return to their constituents and relay to them whatever decision may have been taken by the authorities.

Sometimes the chairman of a decision-making body is so autocratic and discriminatory in his conduct of meetings that students' representatives are hardly given the floor; or if at all, are quickly hushed or threatened if they make statements considered out of line with his thinking. Such a ritualistic role assigned to student leaders

and such oppressive circumstances at meetings reduce participation by students' representatives to mere tokenism. That sort of environment produces apathy, despair and frustration among the students' leadership. The result is that students soon feel alienated from the processes of decision-making, that is in the process of campus government as a whole.

## 2.2 Democracy and students' associations

### 2.2.1 How representative is the union?

How democratic is a students' association (union or council)? And how representative are its leaders? These issues are important because students see themselves as part of the forces of democracy and are quick to accuse a government or an institution of being undemocratic. If a students' body is itself undemocratic that fact at once puts into serious question the moral claim by students to condemn and censure undemocratic practices. It also gives the lie to their claim to being part of the forces of democracy.

The organisational structure of students' associations may differ from one tertiary institution to another (even within one country) and from one state to another. In some countries each university has just one students' union, the component Faculties having no associations of theirs. But in other countries each Faculty or School in a university has an association and these federate to form the university's students' union. In yet other countries, students go further and form a national students' union comprising the unions of the several universities in the country. This is often discouraged by governments because of the tremendous power such amalgamations put in the hands of students. Still, the day may not be too far off when the Africa region shall witness a Pan-African Students Union (PASU).

### 2.2.2 Elections

When not dissolved, students' unions generally hold regular elections at which any student who is not otherwise lawfully disqualified may vote, stand for and be elected to elective posts in the union. Whether these elections are 'free and fair' is another question altogether, but it would seem they are assumed to be so. Institutionalisation of elections means that retrospective electoral accountability exists. In other words, elected students' leaders know they have to render an account of their stewardship since they must face a day of reckoning at regular intervals. Although membership of the students' union is voluntary, it is not feasible to run for elective office in the union as an independent. First, tertiary institutions recognise the students union as the sole and legitimate organ of the students. Secondly, the electoral process in the union is the monopoly of the union itself.

There is need to recognise and respect the existence of other organisations/ associations within the campus. They too should be permitted to run for leadership positions.

### **2.2.3 Lack of accountability**

Students' unions appear wanting in three areas of democracy and good governance, namely: accountability, transparency and respect for the human rights of others. The accusation commonly levelled at students' leaders is that they are not accountable and transparent. Student finances are hardly ever audited, a state of the union report is hardly ever presented, and there is often no effective feedback from students' leaders if they sometimes choose to behave like 'Animal Farm' pigs. The result, in some cases, has been voter apathy among students, significantly diminished interest in student unionism and low calibre of student leadership. A situation such as this puts into doubt the representativeness of the union and its leadership and raises the question whether they truly represent the students whose interests they claim to cater for.

### **2.2.4 Human rights abuses**

Human rights abuses by students, perpetrated usually when there is a students' strike or protest, never fail to elicit hostile reaction in the form of incisive attacks and bitter condemnation from university management and the public at large. While students, like everyone else, have the right to freedom of assembly and the right to protest for the redress of grievances, it is shocking to the public that they should choose to do so violently rather than peacefully, thus grossly violating other people's human rights in the claimed process of exercising their human rights. It is impermissible for students, even in the throes of drawing public attention to a legitimate grievance, to assault people, damage or destroy property, impede the free flow of traffic, or obstruct the enjoyment by others of their right to freedom of movement.

## **3 Students' leadership between Scylla and Charybdis**

Students' leaders do sometimes find themselves in a paradoxical position, accused by management and students alike. Management may accuse them of being too radical, of espousing views that are supposedly not reflective of those held by the generality of students and, in some cases, of pursuing a hidden political agenda. On the other hand students may accuse them of pursuing their own selfish interests, of being sell-outs, government spies, too close to management for comfort, or at the service of some organisation such as a political party. In brief, students' leaders are commonly accused of allowing themselves to be manipulated by management or extra-campus forces for undisclosed ends. In such circumstances the leadership finds itself between the monster and the whirlpool. But accusations such as these are more likely when a leadership is suffering from a credibility or legitimacy problem or, more importantly, when there is hostile interaction between students and management.

### 3.1 Hostile interaction between students and management

Students' strikes or riots are quite common in many tertiary institutions. The impression one gets is that this is the only method by which students can make themselves heard and ensure that their grievances are attended to. For, as Martin Luther King once said, a riot is the language of the unheard. But if students are guilty of easily going on strike, management is equally guilty of easily locking out (that is, closing the institution). All too often these extreme measures are resorted to even though it is clear that alternative methods of conflict resolution have not been exhausted.

#### 3.1.1 Some causes of campus unrest

Causes that may trigger campus unrest are varied. Some are alimentary, as when it is claimed that the food served at the institution's restaurant is of poor quality, or of little quantity, or is too expensive. Others are educational, as when it is claimed that the quality of education offered is low, or that the type of education received is not functional and the syllabus is ill-adapted to local needs, or that tuition fees are too high for parents of modest means, or that the bursary is too small to cover the academic needs of the student (books, Xeroxing, research, etc.).

But not all student protests are food- or education-related. Some are for altruistic rather than for self-interested reasons. For example, a strike for some political or social reform. In countries without an active civil society, students become the voice of the voiceless and assume the role of social engineers of sorts. Even in countries with an active civil society but with underdeveloped democratic structures, students are apt to see themselves as part of the struggle for political change and socio-economic reforms. Because of their youthful daring, convictions and idealism, students see themselves as advocates and champions of people's concerns and as the only civil check on government power. This explains why students are often involved in political or social protests. It also explains why they may be soft targets for manipulation by politicians and political parties and even the government itself.

Some protests are, however, the product of what was referred to earlier as social decay or even of unethical behaviour. One of the curious paradoxes which democratising societies must face is that the process of democratisation may in fact produce social decay. Democratisation involves the removal of state constraints on individual behaviour, a loosening of social inhibitions, and uncertainty and confusion about standards of morality. By weakening state authority, as it must, democratisation also brings into question authority in general and can promote an amoral, laissez-faire or anything goes atmosphere.

Democratisation therefore appears to involve an increase in socially undesirable behaviour including crime, drug use, challenge to bastions

of collective authority (e.g. family, police, army, church, educational establishment, etc.), and what may be called a culture of protest and violence.

Campus unrest may also come about as a result of incitement (by elements with a vested interest in doing so), rumours (especially in an environment in which managerial or governmental decisions are always shrouded in excessive secrecy), unsatisfied rising expectations, unfulfilled political promises, political awakening and demands, deficient management and organisation of the institution, and unethical behaviour by management.<sup>6</sup> For example, some elements linked to a party, an organisation or the government may incite students to stage pro- or anti-government protests, as the case may be. This often leads to violent confrontation between rival student camps split along ideological, religious or political lines. Rumours, whether spread as a result of fear, deliberately voiced in order to incite violence or arising through injudicious media reporting, can also trigger campus unrest.

### **3.1.2 Some negative consequences of campus unrest**

Students' strikes, whether to press for the improvement of their own welfare or for some social, economic or political reform or for some other reason which is not immediately apparent, always have a negative side irrespective of whatever success may be achieved. Yet this method of coercion appears quite handy for students (and labour also) because it is the ultimate weapon in their hands against a management they consider insensitive or perhaps authoritarian, and also because of the perception that what is often achieved through the strike far outweighs whatever inconvenience or hardship may thereby have been caused. But not all strike actions are successful. Some fail, and very badly too. In such cases, it is clear that the game was not worth the candle.

A students' strike, whether successful or not, almost always produces certain untoward consequences. During a strike, especially one that goes beyond just boycotting classes, students tend to vent their spleen on property belonging to the institution or even third parties. Sometimes persons are physically attacked. Confrontation with the police or paramilitary sometimes leads to injuries and even loss of lives. But even more devastating for the students, the institution and the country is the loss of academic time and waste of resources that campus unrest may entail. This is the more so when a strike leads to the closure of the institution. And if this pattern repeats itself the result is likely to be non-completion of the academic programme and the consequent graduation of half-baked graduates with nothing to offer but mediocrity. Surely this cannot augur well for any country that puts a premium on the education and training of youth as future leaders in all spheres of national life.



## 3.2 Dealing with campus unrest

### 3.2.1 Carrot and stick strategies

The classic reaction of management (or government) to campus unrest has always been the deployment of two kinds of approaches: the stick and the carrot.

The stick strategy consists in quickly and violently suppressing the unrest for fear that it may gather momentum and have a rippling effect by infecting other social groups who may then join the 'struggle'. The drudgery of effecting the suppression is invariably assigned to the police, the paramilitary, the military, or a combination of these, depending, of course, on the magnitude of the unrest and the anticipated resistance from students. Forcible suppression may or may not lead to the temporary closure of the institution. But it is generally followed by a witch-hunt of real or supposed ring-leaders. Some are arrested and imprisoned, others are suspended, others still are dismissed, and the students' union may be dissolved. Student leaders are invariably included in the list of ring-leaders and are often the first to be picked up, suspended or dismissed. This makes students' leadership an 'occupational hazard' and discourages many students from taking up leadership roles in the students' union or actively participating in its affairs. There is one learnt lesson which should not escape attention. A management that habitually calls in the police or troops to quell campus unrest thereby signs the warrant for its own eventual and untimely death. Such appeals are a clear indication of a deficiency in control and experience, in management skills, and in ability to manage or resolve a conflict.

The carrot approach consists in buying or winning students over, especially the leadership. The techniques for doing so are varied and changeable. But the classic type consists in increasing students' bursaries even when such a hike has not been solicited by the students themselves.

Another technique is that of allowing student leaders unimpeded access, at any time, to management and even to government ministers. Student leaders may also be allowed access to the Republican President. Protesting students may even be allowed to march to State House where they are then addressed by the President himself. Some would say these are confidence-building techniques. There is yet another technique that is sometimes employed. Student leaders may be co-opted into various structures in the institution. Or they may be granted certain benefits and privileges over and above those enjoyed by other students, e.g. paid an allowance, free meals at the restaurant, invitation to certain functions, special accommodation, and so on. In some cases, student leaders who have been 'good' during their tenure of office (that is, they did not rock the boat by calling strikes) are rewarded, upon graduating, with quick employment. In this day and age of chronic unemployment, the prospect of quickly securing a job after graduating is a very alluring

one indeed. The authorities know that this point will not be lost on other student leaders.

### **3.2.2 Alternative strategies**

The traditional method of handling campus unrest is unfortunate. It has failed as an insurance against campus agitation. The stick approach incapacitates in some cases. It is also intimidatory and invariably leads to human rights abuses by members of the disciplined forces called in to suppress the unrest. The carrot approach is ephemeral as the benefits it confers are easily forgotten.

Alternative methods do exist for resolving campus conflicts. It is the obligation of management not only to ensure and maintain peace, serenity and a conducive academic environment on campus but also to attend to the stirring and pressing concerns of students and to be sensitive to the underlying reasons for students' agitation in the institution. An important aspect of co-operation and conflict resolution is the healthy relationship which should exist between management and students' leaders. Interaction between the two should occur on a continuous basis for mutual trust, understanding and co-operation. In this connection it is necessary to establish structures which encourage communication, consultation and understanding. For example, a standing (or an ad hoc) committee of students, teachers and management charged with preventing and managing conflicts. This is of considerable value even when dialogue does not result in complete unanimity between the parties, for the ability to maintain 'friendly relations' while agreeing to disagree is crucial for securing campus peace.

A wide range of dispute resolution mechanisms and processes exist. Some involve private decision-making by the parties themselves (e.g. informal discussion and problem-solving, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, facilitation, advisory opinion by an impartial third party); others involve adjudication by a third party (e.g. arbitration, commission of inquiry, fact-finding); and others involve adjudication by a public authority (e.g. administrative decision-making, formal litigation by the courts). These are well known<sup>7</sup> and were discussed in the earlier sessions of this workshop. So they need not detain us.

## **4 Conclusion**

Student activism is consistent with norms of democracy and human rights: open society, participation in governance, freedom of association, assembly and expression; and the right to protest. But students, even in their protests, must respect the rights of others and be alive to the faith placed in them as future and more enlightened leaders in the country. The demands of democracy and good governance also apply at micro level. So tertiary institutions should be democratic and those managing them ought to be transparent and accountable. The students union or council should also be democratic and its leaders transparent and accountable.

Students constitute one of the three components of any tertiary institution. They are therefore entitled to participate effectively and meaningfully in the governance of the institution. And this means involving them in designing programmes, in committees, and in controlling, directing and implementing the priorities of the institution.

Campus unrest is a fact of life in all but a few tertiary institutions. Its causes are many. But the food and money questions stand out prominently. A hungry person, it is said, is an angry person. Some of the issues that may provoke unrest can be prevented, others can be managed, and others still can be resolved through a variety of processes and mechanisms. Management cannot, of course, resolve a protest based on a demand for some political, social or economic reform at national level. But it could show understanding by facilitating peaceful protest instead of instinctively siding with the government and calling in the forces of law and order to clobber students.

The age-old stick and carrot approaches are to be deprecated. There is need to insulate students' leadership against victimisation by management or government. Alternative strategies for dealing with campus unrest are available and should be deployed. In particular, there is need for structures of communication to promote dialogue, mutual trust and understanding in the university trinity.

## Notes

- 1 Constitutional democracy, regular and plural elections, separation of powers, rule of law, just and honest government.
- 2 Human rights, citizenship, liberty, equality, justice, peaceful and fraternal co-existence, an active civil society.
- 3 Huntington, S., 'Democracy for the Long Haul,' *Journal of Democracy*, April 1996, p. 3.
- 4 Some people would argue that this is merely a privilege conceded to students and therefore can be withdrawn at any time as the institution sees fit.
- 5 Huntington, op. cit, p. 7.
- 6 Cf. Waldt and Helmbold, *The Constitution and a New Public Administration*, Juta and Co., Cape Town, 1995, Chapters 10 and 11.
- 7 See, for example, Pretorius, P. (ed), *Dispute Resolution*, Juta and Co., Johannesburg, 1993.