

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE MODERN WORLD

## Part 1 - The Modern World

### The rise of the individual (individuum)

The modern world is a world full of chances and options (for people). Never before in history so many choices could and had to be made by the individual (humans). But the modern world is also a world of competing interests, ideas, values, (world-)views, ideologies, religions and cultures – a world full of conflicting interests on all levels, between individuals and groups of people within their societies, between all sectors of societies as well as between economies, nations, states and so forth. If we want to characterise our contemporary world it would be in many ways more appropriate to speak about a ‘Clash of Interests’ instead of “Clash of Cultures”.

What is the reason for the increase in conflicts in the modern world ? Traditional societies are pre-individual societies characterised by the acceptance of one’s role in life and society, the will of God, fate, Karma, destiny and so on. The Individual and its interest are taken up by and merged with the higher interests of the community/species, etc.; the individual is dissolved in and abdicates vis-à-vis the collective interest - say God/religion and tribe/nation/state - represented by the religious leaders and the head of state/monarch. The individual did not disappear in these cultures - it simply did not yet emerge in history.

The rise of the concept of the individual in European history changed drastically the way more and more people viewed the world and themselves within the world and their societies. Today, people accept less and less the bonds of family and society but they wish to express and manifest their individuality in competition to and even on the cost of others and their societies.

With the expansion of the “Western” values and civilisation through religious mission, colonisation, commerce, science, technology, education and now mainly through the media and pop-culture – in other words with what is called today Globalisation – the desire of the individual to manifest and express itself is changing traditional societies and cultures everywhere and becomes more and more the dominant role model for younger generations around the world.

There are times in the evolution of humanity when preference for the stability of the traditional must give way to the imperatives of the future (and present). Today, it seems that we live in such times.

### Globalisation, One-ness, Identity and Love

Globalisation: makes everyone (all cultures, etc.) the same (see: homogeneity). Humans are reduced to replaceable consumers, standardised entities and mere numbers in the statistics of a worldwide techno-commercial bureaucratic system (of markets). This leads to a loss of identity. An endless flood of marketing campaigns and pop culture offer to the stripped humans, to the naked consumers an infinite number of pseudo-identities. Yet many people are not satisfied with this ‘irresistible’ offers. They continue to search (struggle) for finding or maintaining their own identity.

The (Counter-) Reaction to the loss of identity is: (neo-) nationalism, all types of fundamentalism, ethnic struggle, etc. Through these 'alternative' offers many are trying to (re-) establish (or to replace) their 'old' identity or to find a 'new' identity to compensate for the loss.

### **Definition of love:**

Conditional or unconditional love; (conditional or unconditional) intense state of pure joy or ecstasy of being – and living in (co-) existence;  
necessary (pre-)condition: unconditional full acceptance of an-other (and one-self); sufficient condition: (conditional or unconditional) wish to make the subject of your love happy.

### **Mathematics of Love, Paradox of Love:**

Love as total surrender makes you also loose your identity but at the same times enriches you because it gives you an intense feeling of self, of unique-ness, of individuality, etc. and by this love takes on the one side away (makes you loose) your identity but at the same time it gives you back (on a higher level) a new unique identity: Two become One in the new and more complex identity of 'Two-ness'.

Conclusion: The following model can be derived: By giving up your identity on a lower level you find a new, more complex and richer identity on a higher level ! Through love all people (and beings) become One in the new and more complex global identity of 'humanity' (and the planet).

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## **Human Rights and Democracy**

Are Human Rights and Democracy universal ? Both are "Western Concepts". The origin of Democracy lies in ancient Greece (other cultures before and after the ancient Greeks were structured in their societal decision making processes different. Yet, they also have been participatory and "democratic": they were e.g. consensus oriented and not majority based (see: wisdom, council of elders, tribal communities, etc.)

### **Concept of Synthesis**

The German Philosopher Hegel developed the concept of thesis and anti-thesis which leads to a synthesis (this was the basis also for Karl Marx and Marxism/Communism).

What Hegel developed as a concept was that for each position there exists a counter position and that the inter-action between the position and the counter-position ultimately leads to something new on a "higher" level which he called the synthesis. That means that the synthesis encompasses and transcends the position and the counter position. It integrates them into a higher different quality and wholeness. Both are resolved in this new inclusive fusion. This new level has a higher degree of complexity, organisation, communication, energy and information processing, etc. (see: evolutionary system theory).

Comment: Each philosophical or political or other position – as unwelcome and radical and extreme it may be regarded – has some 'truth' in it otherwise it would not manifest itself (in history). Therefore each position in any (public) discourse has to be taken serious and carefully analysed because we can learn something from it.

### **System of Democracy:**

The System of Democracy has formalised the representation of partial interests (= political parties, etc.). People with the same or similar/overlapping interests form an interest group/political party to lobby their interests in competition and against the interests of others. This leads to and creates unavoidably conflicts.

Democracy is the mechanism based on commonly accepted rules to keep these conflicts within certain limits (e.g. no violence) and to find ways to harmonise them to a certain degree. Democracy is an arbitration mechanism whereby the populace, the voter is the arbiter. Democracy works in accordance with the laws of statistics: sometimes you get right, sometimes I get right and over time the conflicts of interests and goals are evened out (see: concept of compromise).

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### **The New World Order – Culture of Peace**

In its quest to maintain and promote international peace and security the United Nations has proclaimed in 2000 a decade for a “Culture of Peace and Non-Violence”. One of its primary purposes is to achieve within 10 years worldwide the transition from a ‘Culture of War’ to a “Culture of Peace”. The goal (for humanity) is the prevention and suppression of acts of aggression and ultimately the eradication of all forms of violence from the hearts and minds of people and the face of the planet.

Already in the 1970’s the UN General Assembly has unanimously condemned aggression as “the gravest of all crimes against peace and security throughout the world.” Yet, until today statesmen are still unable and/or unwilling to even agree clearly on how to define aggression (and violence), and still states decide solely for themselves when they resort to force. Partisan self-interest often binds or blinds those charged with speaking for a particular government. However, this existing situation and international anarchy is unbearable for the people of the world. We have to find ways to bridge the gap between the bad practices of the past and the requirements of a future New World Order of Peace and Love.

The questions of what constitutes to be a lawful use of force (and can only the UN Security Council authorize force), what is self-defense and what is the right of self-determination (and whether is this right so crucial and compelling that every means to achieve it, including the use of violence, is legally justifiable) are still unanswered. Further, up until today there are no severe consequences of aggression and for those responsible for aggression – still they are not held accountable by the world (humanity).

The most fateful challenge to the international community in our time embraces the dual tasks of creating the structures of authority to move the people of the world from the current state of fear, international anarchy and terror toward a more complete world order of human rights, equity, justice, dignity, harmony and love – a Culture of Peace - and to have such structures accepted by all and put into practice.

Despite the paralysis caused by the fear of change and/or adhesion to power, the evolutionary thrust toward a more just, equitable and fair rational social order is irresistible. The dispersion among a growing number of nations of the means of mutual annihilation, the rapidly growing destruction of our life support system (natural environment) and the rise of international terrorism has already compelled collaboration in areas beyond the dreams of yesterday. The

sea, the skies, and the air we breathe are only a few of the arenas in which the need for collective cooperation and security is being increasingly recognised and implemented.

It is a dangerous anachronism that States, restricted only by the limits of their power, still exercise unbridled discretion to determine for themselves when they may resort to force and take up arms against their neighbours or others. We have to restrain the perpetuation of this international anarchy. It has become much too hazardous to remain tolerable. .

No one pretends that by defining violence and aggression a peaceful world will thereby be assured. Violence, aggression and belligerency is not a virus which can be eradicated by a verbal formula, vaccination, an international campaign or an UN decade. No formulation, no matter how detailed or precise, can hope to eliminate disagreements about interpretation or application. It can only serve as a guide in helping to indicate some of the relevant factors which must be taken into account in determining the circumstances under which the application of violence is tolerable in international society.

The people of the world, who are the victims of aggression, must have at least some objective criteria by which to begin to measure the validity of actions which may affect the destiny of us all.

## Conclusion

The movement toward a rational world order - a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence and Love - will be a long and tedious journey from the very important first step to clearly define aggression to the prevention and resolution of conflicts to finally the total banishment of the idea to use violence to settle disputes and conflicts on all levels. A Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind, and an International Criminal Court are just a few of the steps along this way to deal with such major international crimes as aggression, genocide, apartheid and other crimes against humanity.

People are asking what is the use of a definition, of a court, of an UN decade, etc – things which are unenforceable - and why should time, effort and money be wasted in pursuit of an utopian dream. My answer is: In a world filled with fear, war and terror, we have to choose to either live with despair or with hope. I have chosen to live with hope - and I invite you to do the same.

## Part 2 - Understanding Conflict

### From simple dispute to cross-cultural conflict

#### Introduction

**Introductory remark:** In this (and also in the following) part we do not attempt to give participants final solutions on conflict resolution, but we rather would like to inspire everybody to do more research about conflict prevention and resolution and to stimulate everybody to learn practical techniques about what we can do in daily live situations where we have a disagreement with somebody or where disputants cannot agree on certain matters.

Conflict and dispute are everywhere in and part of our lives: from an argument with a family member to an international dispute. There is no state, nation, society, community,

organisation or interpersonal relationship which does not experience conflict at some time or another as part of their (daily) interaction.

**Definition of Dispute and Conflict :**

Dispute is an open disagreement between two or more (human) entities (people, groups of people, ethnicities, nations, states, cultures, etc) who have different interests, goals and/or values. Dependent on the intensity of the disagreement the dispute may gradually become a confrontation and finally a conflict.

Conflict is a state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war. A state of (severe) disharmony or a clash between persons, ideas or interests.

Comment: Conflict involves people – it is not between objects or issues ! Conflict is about people's perceptions, feelings (emotions) as well as their problems (objectives, issues). Therefore all three perceptions, feelings as well as problems must be resolved to produce a lasting result (outcome) of the conflict. Agreement must be found or a compromise worked out. Otherwise the dispute or latent conflict escalates to a manifest conflict and spirals through several stages until ultimately it can erupt in violence.

**Cross-Cultural Conflict**

Globalisation brings people from different cultures into contact. This gives rise to a 'new' type of conflict: Cross-cultural conflicts. They are in particular challenging because they touch our most deeply held beliefs about ourselves and our society (see: identity). Therefore, in the modern world, peaceful coexistence is more desirable than ever - but also more challenging. This makes cross-cultural conflict resolution an important skill.

**Definition of Culture**

Socially transmitted values, rules, behavioural patterns, beliefs, attitudes, forms of expression, institutions and all other products of human effort, thought and creativity.

**A Note About Culture**

Culture is the filter, the lens through which we view the world. It shapes our values, perceptions and attitudes. People have different definitions of culture. Some definitions include things like ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, language, physical or mental ability etc.

However, everyone sees the world through his or her own cultural filter/lens. It is like a pair of glasses that we might be aware of, but can't completely take off. While definitions may vary, participating in culture as well as searching for and finding a cultural identity is something we all (humans) have in common.

**Definition: (Peaceful) Co-existence**

To exist together, to live in peace, interact and co-operate with another or others despite differences or disagreements.

**The nature of conflict**

Conflict arises when people or groups are pursuing opposing interests and/or are engaged in competition to meet goals which are perceived to be, or are in fact, incompatible. Conflict can become physically and emotionally damaging or it can lead to growth and productivity for all parties. It all depends on how conflict is managed and resolved.

Conflict is by no means negative. Conflict is challenge and stimulation. Conflict is creative – is the main instrument/tool of progress. But conflict is never comfortable. It is crisis. Yet without crisis there is no evolution. That seems to be a law/strategy of nature – a universal law (see: concept of synthesis, evolutionary system theory, mechanism of democracy, spiritual aspects of conflict, etc).

Some points on the nature of conflict, which describe the definite advantages that are triggered by or can be gained from conflict:

- confronting the individual with him/herself
- challenging the status quo and stimulating innovation and creativity
- forcing understanding and reassessment of the interests, emotions/feelings, needs, rights and position of the other party
- facilitating evolution and change and preventing stagnation
- redefining and developing relationships and roles
- raising an awareness of alternatives and options
- creating scenarios for new and alternative (common) options and futures

### **Spiritual aspects of conflict:**

Every conflict has its meaning like every disease is a way of an organism to communicate that something is out of balance. Therefore we should not suppress conflicts but see them as symptoms of a disease and duly analyse (see: diagnose) them and find out what they are telling to us. Then we have to jointly transform the conflict (see: therapy) by seeing it as an opportunity for co-evolution. Without crisis there is no evolution.

### **Conflict as a process**

The particular nature of conflict situations is well known to us. At the outset a conflict situation is often perceived as a pragmatic question/problem or single event; but this is seldom the case. Conflicts do not simply erupt; rather they develop through various stages, and in each of these stages certain factors contribute to the possibility of conflict.

### **Overview about Stages and layers of conflict:**

**Disputes:** Pragmatic disagreement; potential conflict

**Latent/Perceived conflict:** Potential conflicts are precipitated by how individuals 'see' (perceive) each other. These perceptions strongly determine whether conflict will occur.

**Latent/Felt conflict:** As mentioned in the definition of conflict, people's feelings and attitudes towards each other, and the particular cause of conflict, will further affect their eventual behaviour.

**Manifest conflict:** Based on the two stages above confrontation will occur, being either conflictive or problem-solving.

**Conflict resolution:** At some point in the process conflict will either be suppressed, resolved or it will become violent.

**Post Resolution stage:** Depending on the quality of the outcome of the resolution and/or the way it was achieved the future situation might either lead to further conflict or to co-operation, co-existence and/or co-evolution.

### **Conflict resolution**

Conflict management is one of the activities that we are exposed to on a daily basis. The types

of conflict we are exposed to are not restricted to a particular domain. It can involve relationship, workplace, the community and other stakeholders.

***Definition: Conflict Resolution***

Approaches to settling disputes/conflicts and solving problems without violence. Conflict resolution aims to find solutions acceptable to both parties to achieve peaceful coexistence. Different methods can be used to increase cooperation, promote reconciliation and strengthen relationships.

**Comments**

Problems (disputes, conflicts) must be solved. Therefore in the modern world everybody from the school kid to the heads of state have to develop their skills in the area of conflict prevention and resolution (see: education).

We all know what conflict is: Conflict is crisis. We can see it as a challenge or dread. Conflict Resolution is simply the process the people (involved in the conflict) use to end the dispute, the crisis. To understand the process of resolution, we have to understand the Layers of Conflict.

## The Layers of Conflict

While we experience a conflict, it can be hard - for those directly involved - to see the root causes of the disagreement. In following we describe three layers of conflict to help to understand how (cross-cultural) conflicts occur and can escalate up to an uncontrollable situation.

### 1) The surface level - The Dispute

***Definition of Dispute:*** A quarrel, controversy or conflict of interest. To argue, strongly disagree, debate, and question the validity of. To express dissent or opposition to.

The dispute is what is on the surface. It involves at least two or very often more entities (people, communities, states, etc). In early stages the dispute (the latent conflict) looks on the 'surface' (the rational level) to 'outsiders' very easy to resolve and therefore not serious at all. To outside observers often many disputes even look almost ridiculous.

**Example:** Two neighbours have an disagreement about the placement of a little fence between them which was build by Neighbour-A. He says the fence is on his property, while Neighbour-B disagrees and believes that the fence should be moved more towards Neighbour's-A house. Each individual believes they are right and that the other is wrong. This is a dispute. On the rational/pragmatic level this dispute could be solved objective, fast and easy.

### 2) The Underlying Level (of the Dispute) – The latent Conflict

Disputes consist very often of many layers. Under most disputes exists another level of a latent conflict. This level (of conflict) grows from emotions that are created by past and present experiences (history) with the person/entity (s) you are having a disagreement with. Emotions like anger, hurt, jealousy and sadness fuel the dispute and make it more complex than it is on the pragmatic level.

In fact in many cases the reason for the dispute is secondary and only the symptom of an underlying emotional or deeper cause. This cause can be that the disputants (those involved in the dispute) feel or felt already in the past treated unfair or unjust, or even rejected, etc. When they enter into a dispute these painful memories and emotions of the past come up again and block them subconsciously and make them unable or 'refuse' to act rational. Unfair judgements (stereotypes or biases), etc create tension, frustration and/or fear. These emotions are fuelling a dispute which can break out about any – even minor – reasons (subjects).

Most disputants are not aware of their own emotions and biases and may have little or no understanding of what the other person is feeling. Yet especially unfair judgements, stereotypes or biases can make disputants either defensive or aggressive. Therefore talking about emotions becomes so important in resolving conflicts.

Although issues below the surface can complicate the dispute, the conflict can be resolved when disputants begin to analyse the dispute and it's underlying layers and find common ground and empathy. Issues around judgements, biases, past events, different values etc can begin to be resolved through positive dialogue.

**Example:** The two neighbours continue their dispute and cannot agree on where to put the fence. Their (outspoken and also mental) arguments are increasing and the level of the dispute is slowly shifting. Now they don't talk any more about the original issue of the dispute: the location of the fence. The dispute turns into a personal emotional confrontation (conflict) between two personalities/egos. They start to be upset about each other and lose their interest in the fence issue. Neighbour-A feels since long that Neighbour-B is unreliable, irresponsible and dishonest. In the past, Neighbour-A loaned him a saw that was never returned. Neighbour-B feels Neighbour-A is irrational, greedy and possessive. He had forgotten about borrowing his saw. Neighbour-A has also not returned Neighbour's-B frequent invitations to come over for tea therefore he feels rejected. They speak now about hurts of the past and misunderstand and distrust one another. Both neighbours are feeling more and more frustrated and even angry and they express their anger about each other with constantly changing arguments which have nothing to do anymore with the original issue of the fence.

### 3) The Deep-Rooted Level - The Conflict

Deep-rooted conflict goes beyond the level of emotion and judgement. They are touching an entity's (person's, group's, nation's, state's, etc) identity and sense of self. This level of conflict pierces through to the very identity of an individual or group. This level of conflict attacks at least an entity's sense of fairness and justice but very often it's feeling/sense of ethnic, social or cultural security and survival.

Deep-rooted conflicts often begin with fear, lead to hatred and end in persecution. Deep-rooted conflicts are more complex because they involve things about a person's identity that they cannot and should never be asked to change, for example physical, ethnic, cultural or spiritual characteristics.

Deep-rooted conflicts include racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, and xenophobia (fear of things that are foreign, of those outside one's culture).

**Example:** Again the conflict shifts to another level. Both neighbours are now suddenly 'discovering' their ethnic and cultural identity and are acting as representatives of their

cultures. In his thoughts neighbour-A has been from the beginning a little intolerant and distrustful of neighbour-B because he is of a different ethnicity and practices a different religion. He never really liked 'these' people (because way back in history they once invaded 'his' country and occupied it for long). Neighbour-B always felt that Neighbour-A is "uneducated and primitive and full of outdated biases". In some way he feels intellectually and culturally superior to him. The neighbours have stopped talking to each other because they feel it makes no sense to talk to somebody like this. Both are believing now that instead of a little fence a high wall between them is necessary, but the best solution would be that the other moves to another place.

They involve and mobilize their families and friends (in the dispute) and feed them with their view and version of the story. Through their 'propaganda' they seek support for their positions and confirmation of their judgements (biases, etc) from their 'constituencies'.

#### Threats as last stage of non-violent conflict

The simple dispute escalates now to a full fledged cross-cultural conflict which involves the broader community. Neighbour-B is part of an ethnic minority in this community and 'extremists' call now for the expulsion of the minority from the community (village, town) because they are always troublemakers. Some even plan to burn down the house of Neighbour-B to set an example and to scare the minority. The conflict is on the edge of getting violent.

#### Violent Conflict

Neighbour-B hears the rumour and buys a gun to defend himself and his family. One night Neighbour-A and some of his friends come home from a bar tour where they did drink a little bit too much. Loudly talking and joking they walk through the property of Neighbour-B to take a short cut to the house of Neighbour-A. Neighbour-B wakes up and hear them approaching his house. He asks them to leave his property but they just laugh and make rude and insulting jokes about him and his family. Afraid of an attack he shoots one shot out of his window into the darkness. By chance a ricochet hits one of the group.

Next day extremists are attacking members of the minority and beat Neighbour-B to death.

#### National Conflict

National media report about this incident and in the following days massive protests, than counter protests and consequently clashes between the two ethnic/religious groups to which Neighbour-A and Neighbour-B belong take place in several cities of country-A. These clashes lead to massive riots. First police, then military get involved and intervene. As a result of all this a number of people of both ethnic groups are killed.

#### International Conflict

At this point international media are reporting about civil unrest and ethnic struggle in country A. The government of country-B, the neighbour of country-A in which the ethnic minority to which neighbour-B belongs is the majority, protests sharply against the government (action) of country-A and threatens to intervene across the borders if the government of country-A is not able or willing to protect the minority in it's country. And the spiral goes on.

Within short time a major international crisis has erupted starting from a simple dispute between two neighbours about a little fence in their garden.

## Part 3 - Managing Conflict

### What is conflict resolution?

'Resolution of conflict occurs when parties involved understand each other's position accurately. They are willing to discuss it, because they want to resolve the conflict, regardless of their disagreements. Resolution occurs only when the parties try to reach mutually satisfying solutions.'

In the past we have depended upon a well established hierarchy in authority. The person on top could make rapid decisions and act autocratically when necessary. This was often used to 'resolve' conflict situations, but were these solutions lasting and effective in the long-term?

The definition of conflict resolution posed above assumes a method of problem-solving that is more democratic in its approach and allows those affected to be involved. The next section suggests some ways in which you might want to approach conflict resolution in the future.

### Techniques of conflict resolution

When attempting to reach agreement in a conflict situation it may be useful to take note of the five causes of conflict usually described. These are differences based on a clash of:

- interests
- understanding
- values
- style
- opinion.

At least three styles of reaction to conflict can be identified. These are:

- aggressive ('fight it')
- assertive ('negotiate it')
- passive ('duck it').

Five skills for negotiating conflict can also be identified. These are:

- spot/define it
- understand it
- look for 'win-win' (where all parties to the conflict feel that they have gained something)
- act at the right time
- check out the results.

These approaches to conflict resolution are valuable and instructive. They embody certain techniques which are very useful in reducing tension between persons or groups, but they do put great emphasis on the disputant's skill in being able to negotiate a satisfactory resolution to a conflict.

### **Ten hints on conflict resolution**

In dealing with potential conflicts you might want to consider the following:

- 1 Nurture a positive atmosphere.
- 2 Clarify perceptions of yourself and your position.
- 3 Clarify perceptions of the other parties.
- 4 Clarify perceptions of the causes of the conflict.
- 5 Clarify the underlying factors of the cause.
- 6 Be in charge of your responses.
- 7 Encourage parties to express feelings.
- 8 Focus on shared needs and goals.
- 9 Generate options.
- 10 Develop and implement 'do-able' parts.

### **Conflict management/resolution exclusively between the (two) conflicting parties – without third party involvement**

#### **Negotiation**

One way of positive conflict management is negotiation. Negotiation has been defined as: 'A transaction in which both parties have a veto on the final outcome'.

In other words, each party in a negotiation has to consent to the outcome if it is to be implemented and each has an interest in the other agreeing to it. Thus by negotiating we make a joint decision.

According to this definition, negotiation is something we do every day in our personal, professional or business capacities. For example, people negotiate with their spouses on whether they spend their money on new household furniture, with their children on which household chores they have to do. They negotiate a salary increase with their bosses and may be part of formal high level negotiations on local, regional, national or international policy or business issues.

We are constantly encouraged to become participants in the development process. Participation means shared decision-making which means reaching agreement. Successful participation is dependent on the skill of negotiation.

Negotiation is not easy. The majority of people only know two ways of negotiation, namely gentle and soft or tough and hard. Whatever position is taken involves a trade-off between getting what the parties want and keeping a good relationship between the negotiating parties.

#### **Basics of negotiation**

##### **People**

**Separate the people from the problem.** This first point is important because negotiators are people with their own emotions, beliefs, likes and dislikes which influence the way they perceive the problem and search for a solution. It is thus imperative that negotiating parties identify the problem and work together to solve the problem and do not spend the time trying to attack and change the people involved in the negotiation process.

##### **Interests**

**Focus on interests and not on the position.** This second critical point emphasises the importance of identifying and focusing on the negotiating parties' real interests and not on their positions. Ask the basic question 'why?' to find out your own and the other party's real

interests. Moreover, the most powerful, but often most overlooked interests are the universal basic human needs, that is, economic well-being, security, social acceptance, a sense of belonging and control over one's own life. But above all listen to what is being said.

### **Options**

**Generate a wide variety of possibilities/options** before reaching a decision. Set aside a special time for the parties to invent a wide variety of possible solutions to the problem. It has been found that the major obstacles to inventing options are:

- premature judgement
- the search for the single answer
- the assumption of a fixed pie
- assuming that 'solving their problem is their problem'.

Comment: To overcome these obstacles it will be necessary to:

- 1 Separate the act of judging from the act of inventing options. One strategy to use is that of brainstorming.
- 2 Look for multiple options by using a Circle Chart which encourages different modes of thinking on the same subject.
- 3 Try and find mutual gain by identifying shared interests.
- 4 Make the solution of their problem also your problem by actively trying to understand their position and coming up with shared solutions.

### **Criteria and measurement of results**

Insist that the result be based on objective and standard criteria by which results can be measured. This will ensure a fair solution.

These four above points are important and relevant throughout the negotiation process.

### **Role of Third Parties in Conflict Resolution and Prevention**

The different roles mainly depend on different levels of trust, engagement, involvement and/or authority and power:

Precondition: the wish of the conflicting parties to find a (peaceful) settlement of their dispute or conflict and/or to establish peaceful coexistence;

**Passive roles:** third parties are called in by conflicting parties:

Moderator  
Facilitator  
Mediator  
Arbiter/Arbitrator

**Active roles:** third parties step in on their own initiative:

Peacemaker  
Higher authority or might (power) who is able to force or threat conflicting parties to settle their conflict (like parents, or teacher/school director etc.).

Peacekeeper

Peacekeepers are stepping in after a conflict was resolved or at least a cease fire was achieved; usually the role of UN forces.

**Comment:** Important note for government/military/police:

If you are (more or less) directly a party of a conflict you can not be in any of the above roles but you need an 'objective' third party !

Most of the time they want to play both roles (that means they are part of the conflict and then they want to resolve the conflict through their authority – this is impossible).

In case of a Monarchy the Monarch has a special role above the parties and is not (and should not be) involved in any conflict. Therefore he could (and must) sometimes play an important role in resolving and preventing serious conflicts.

Based on his moral authority and power not on military force. Sometimes the military can play an important role (positive or negative) within such circumstances.

### **Strategies of conflict resolution**

A popular way of describing conflict resolution strategies is in terms of winning and losing.

These strategies can be broadly described as follows:

#### **Win - lose**

The outcome of this strategy is that one party loses and one wins. In most cases this strategy is unsatisfactory, and in all probability the conflict will erupt at a later stage.

#### **Lose - lose**

Both parties lose in the deal: usually a third party is involved, and tries to reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either of the parties.

#### **Win - win**

Both parties are satisfied with the outcome, and the focus is on solving the problem and not defeating each other.

### **Summary**

The conflict situation can have mutual advantages and benefits if approached in the right manner, and with the right attitude towards a possible resolution.

Striving for a win - win strategy so that both parties can be satisfied with the outcome is the ideal route to follow. Conflicts should be solved democratically. Make use of a third parties when necessary.

In finding a solution to a conflict situation the aim of the resolution process should always be to strengthen the future relationship of the parties involved.

### **Note on (Strategic) Communication and propaganda:**

During the resolution process or in the post resolution stage it can be difficult for leaders of conflicting parties to 'sell' their compromises/settlements to their own constituencies or followers. The reason is that most conflicts (today) are built up, fuelled and fought through propaganda (-wars) and wars of ideas in the mind of the people before they escalate and become violent (the role of education!).

After a conflict becomes violent media reports and propaganda intensify the conflicts often drastically beyond a degree of control (self-dynamic).

One side blames the other of the most horrible things, etc. Enemy pictures have and had to be established to motivate your own people, etc.

Then one day the leaders of conflicting parties are forced to or achieve by themselves (out of their own wishes and initiatives) a settlement of their conflict. But now they are trapped in their own propaganda because they can not stop abruptly the machinery of their propaganda. They have to explain to their people that yesterday's worst and most horrible enemy is suddenly today – and maybe always was – one of the best friends or at least a reliable and trustworthy partner.

## Appendix 1: Different Notes

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Quote from Clausewitz: “States have no morals – states have only interests”.

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Individuality and conflict are the two sides of one and the same coin.

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### **Different democratic institutions which can play a role in conflict resolution and prevention:**

Constitution

Head of State/Monarch: represents the wholeness, unity, impartiality, .... ,synthesis

Parliament (legislative)

Juridical system/courts.

Government (executive): representing most of the time partial interests and not the public interest and common good of all people

Administration

Politicians: (political system of Switzerland and Liechtenstein as examples) are representing partial interests and not the public interests of the whole society or nation.

The role of elites:

Military/security forces: Interest of ‘warrior’ cast versus the whole national interest

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History shows that peace is in every way more economic and beneficial than war !

Conflict prevention/resolution is in every case cheaper and more cost effective than (civil-) war (many examples for this are existing throughout history).

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### **Elites:**

Elites have to earn their privileges through impeccable performance and trust; therefore the most important rule should be: keep your own ‘house’ in order:

Do not grab/look for more power (than you in any way have) but instead fulfil your public duty perfectly.

Fight corruption within your own organisation.

Keep up discipline and integrity.

Military elites:

Neither the military (combat) training nor the equipment etc. makes an military ‘elite’ unit or force; only the human attitudes, values, ethics, integrity, honesty, civil courage (see: refusing unlawful orders), etc.... makes an elite.

The will of the military (your will) to be the impartial, honest, just, fair, .... keeper and defender of the undivided public interest of the whole nation and of each and every interests gives you the public trust and makes you an accepted elite.

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History of the Concept of Conflict Resolution and Prevention:

Who started it and how did it develop ?

Examples

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**Note on Fundamentalism**

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## **Appendix 2: Glossary**

### **Definition of Dispute and Conflict :**

Dispute is an open disagreement between two or more (human) entities (people, groups of people, ethnicities, nations, states, cultures, etc) who have different interests, goals and/or values. Dependent on the .....

Conflict is a state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war. A state of (severe) disharmony or a clash between persons, ideas or interests.

### **Definition of Peace:**

Classic Definition

Inner – Outer Peace

Different dimensions of peace

### **Definition of Human Rights:**

Links with Peace

### **Definition of Democracy:**

Conventional Definition

Arbitration/Conflict Resolution Mechanism

### **Definition of Love:**

Conditional and Unconditional Love

### **Definition of Elite:**

Service to the Public

Privileges

Discipline

Obligations and Duties

Self-Image

Misuse and Corruption

### **Definition of Compromise:**

### **Definition of Wisdom:**

### **Definition of Propaganda:**

**Definition of Strategy:**

Win-Win, etc  
Game theory

**Definition of Healing:**

The (natural) process by which an organism (system) re-pairs and re-vitalises itself, re-establishes it's (internal and external) dynamic equilibrium and functionality and re-gains it's full ability to inter-act properly (with it's environment) and co-evolve (see: co-existence).

**Definition of Community:**

**Definition of Public Interest and Common Good:**

**Definition of Compromise:**

**Definition of Fundamentalism**

**Definition of Culture**

Socially transmitted values, rules, behavioural patterns, beliefs, attitudes, forms of expression, institutions and all other products of human effort, thought and creativity.

**Definition: (Peaceful) Co-existence**

To exist together, to live in peace, interact and co-operate with another or others despite differences or disagreements.

**Definition: Conflict Resolution**

Approaches to settling disputes and solving problems without violence. Conflict resolution aims to find solutions acceptable to both parties to achieve peaceful coexistence. Different methods can be used to increase cooperation, promote reconciliation and strengthen relationships.

## **Appendix 3: Workshop Tasks and Questions**

Questions:

What do you think is the best way to approach a conflict? Do you negotiate, compromise, give ultimatums, give in to pressure, make demands, seek mediation?

Not all conflicts are resolved. What is needed for successful resolution? Why do you think some attempts at resolution fail?

Is there a difference between peace and coexistence?

What is the ultimate goal of conflict resolution?

Learning outcomes:

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the nature of conflict
- recognise stages of conflict
- apply techniques of conflict resolution
- establish measures to avoid conflict.

Activity

- (1) Identify a particular conflict situation you are familiar with.
  - (2) List the possible stages in the development of this conflict from beginning to end.
- 15 minutes

Activity

List the conflict situations you have had to deal with over the past two months.

10 minutes