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Key Messages

- A conflict can be understood as an incompatible interaction between at least two actors, whereby one of the actors experiences damage, and the other actor causes this damage intentionally, or ignores it.
- Conflict analysis can support orientation for future action. Conflicts are dynamic systems. Any intervention becomes part of the system and should focus on supporting the creative, positive energies, in the system or related to the system.
- Conflict analysis can be used individually or in a participatory manner in a group. The analysis does not lead to an objective understanding of the conflict. Rather it makes one's subjective perceptions transparent. This way they can be reflected on and clearer communicated.
- Conflict analysis can entail: 1) verifying if one is dealing with a conflict, 2) determining the conflict system boundaries, with the option of revising these later on, 3) using conflict analysis tools (presented below) to focus on certain aspects of the conflict and organize information.

INTRODUCTION

This conflict analysis Tip Sheet¹ summarizes seven tools that can be used to assess different characteristics of a conflict in a structured way. It focuses our attention on particular aspects of a conflict, to bring order into a confused conflict perception. Conflict analysis is not an "objective" art. It is influenced by different world-views. The Harvard Approach, the Human Needs Theory and the Conflict Transformation approach are frequently used:

- The Harvard Approach² emphases the difference between positions (what people say they want) and interests (why people want what they say they want). It argues that conflicts can be resolved when actors focus on interests instead of positions, and when they develop jointly accepted criteria to deal with these differences.
- The Human Needs Theory³ argues that conflicts are caused by basic "universal" human needs that are not satisfied. The needs should to be analyzed, communicated and satisfied for the conflict to be resolved.
- 3. The **Conflict Transformation**⁴ approach sees conflicts as destructive or constructive interactions, depending on how conflicts are dealt with or "transformed". Conflicts are viewed as an interaction of energies. Emphasis is given on the different perceptions, and the social and cultural context in which reality is constructed. Constructive conflict transformation seeks to empower actors and support recognition between them.

Once we have decided that the situation we are dealing with is a conflict, we need to decide on the system boundaries. What actors and factors do we want to focus on, which ones shall we leave out for the moment? One can focus on various "systems". Every conflict is a sub-system in a larger system – its context (or super-system). A conflict in one sub-system may only be a symptom of a conflict located in the "context" of a larger system. Domestic violence, for example, may be part of a conflict between two land-use systems, which is embedded in an ethnopolitical conflict in one country, which in its turn is affected by different international policies dealing with economic trade. A conflict is often enacted at a system's weakest point, not necessarily where it is caused. Thus whenever analyzing conflicts, we must consider the system boundaries we have set, and reflect on how they relate to the environment the conflict is embedded in. Depending on where we set the boundaries, the conflict will present itself differently. The boundaries have to be revised periodically, to make sure we are working where we have the best leverage. After setting the conflict system boundaries, we can use one or more of the following tools to deepen our insight onto various aspects of the conflict.

HOW TO USE THE CONFLICT ANALYSIS TOOLS

All the conflict analysis tools are structured in the same way: 1) description of the tool, 2) aim of the tool, and 3) step by step instructions on how to use the tool. The tools can be categorized accord-

ing to their focus on dynamics, actors, causation, structures, issues and options/strategies. The Conflict Wheel summarizes all the tools and helps you decide which tool to use for which aspect.

SUMMARY OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS TOOLS

- Conflict Wheel: Introduces six important dimensions of conflict analysis (dynamics, actors, causation, structures, issues and options/strategies). It organizes the other conflict analysis tools and is a "meta" tool.
- Conflict Tree: The conflict tree deals with the difference between structural and dynamic factors, visualizing how conflict issues link these two aspects.
- 3. Conflict Mapping: The conflict mapping focuses on actors and their interrelationships. It is a good tool to start analyzing a conflict. Power asymmetry can be represented by the relative size of the actors circles. Animosity and alliances are symbolized with lines.
- 4. Glasl's Escalation Model: The model aims to fit our conflict intervention strategy to the conflict parties' escalation level. The message is that it may be pointless to talk to a suicide bomber, or shoot people who are shouting at each other.

- 5. INMEDIO's Conflict Perspective Analysis (CPA): The Conflict Perspective Analysis (CPA) focuses on the different perspectives of the various parties. By putting them side by side, one can see where there are differences and things in common. CPA follows the phases of a mediation. It is a good preparation for a mediation, can also be used to coach one conflict party. CPA does not look explicitly at structures or context.
- 6. Needs-Fears Mapping: Similar to the CPA, this method focuses on actors and their issues, interests, needs, fears, means and options. It allows for a clear comparison of actors similarities and differences in the form of a table.
- Multi-Causal Role Model: This model focuses on causation, on the different quality of reasons, triggers, channels, catalysts, and targets. Content and actors, dynamics and structures are also considered.

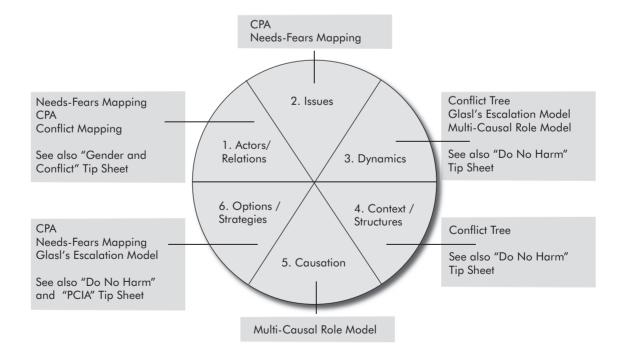
TOOL 1: THE CONFLICT WHEEL

Description: The conflict wheel is a "meta" conflict analysis tool, introducing the others tools. Each of the six sections of the wheel can be further analysed using tools presented below (or references to other Tip Sheets). The Wheel gives a first overview of a conflict, before analysing specific aspects. The Wheel symbolizes wholeness and movement, once the various aspects have been examined, they need to be brought together again, to get the conflict analysis "rolling".

- Aim: → To organize the other conflict analysis tools
 - → To serve as an overview when first approaching a conflict.
- Actors/Relations: Actors or "parties" are people, organizations or countries involved in a conflict. If they are directly involved in the conflict they are called "conflict parties", if they become involved transforming the conflict, they are called "third parties". Stakeholders have an interest in the conflict or its outcome, but are not directly involved.

Conflicts by definition refer to frictional relationships between parties.

- 2. Issues are the topics of the conflict; what people discuss or fight about.
- 3. Dynamics refer to the escalation level of the conflict, the intensity of interaction, the "temperament" and the energy of a conflict that transforms people.
- 4. Context/Structures: The conflict context and structural factors are often outside the conflict system one is looking at. Structural violence refers to violence that is not directly caused by people, but by the economic and political systems in place, e.g. causing poverty.
- 5. Causation: Conflicts are never mono-causal, but multi-causal and systemic factors interact. Instead of saying that everything is related to everything, it is helpful to differentiate between different "causes" or influence factors.
- 6. Options/Strategies: This point examines ways to deal with the conflict, strategies that are used or could be used, conflict party or third party efforts to de-escalate the conflict.



Step by step instructions:

- 1. Draw a wheel, list the various aspects in the six 2. Choose the sections of the wheel. aspects y
- 2. Choose further conflict analysis tools for those aspects you want to examine in more depth.

TOOL 2: THE CONFLICT TREE⁵

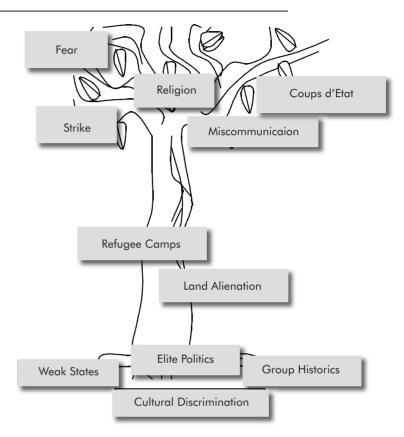
Description: The conflict tree is a visualizing and sorting tool. The tree visualises the interaction between structural, manifest and dynamic factors. The roots symbolise structural "static" factors. The trunk represents the manifest issues, linking structural factors with the dynamic factors. The leaves moving in the wind represent the dynamic factors.

Dynamic Factors: Dynamic factors include the form of communication, escalation level, relationship aspects etc. Working with dynamic factors involves a short time horizon; reactions to interventions are quick and at times unpredictable. Examples are diplomatic interventions, or multi track conflict transformation dealing directly with the form of interaction between the conflict parties. Quick money is often more important than big money when addressing dynamics factors.

Manifest issues: Issues are what the conflict parties want to talk about, the "topic" of the conflict.

Structural Factors: Root causes are the basic "reason" of the conflict. They are difficult to influence on a short time basis, if they are avoided, however, the conflict may pop up again later. This is the typical area for development cooperation, longer-term involvement and the prevention of structural violence (Human Needs Theory).

- Aim: → To initiate reflections on the links between root causes, issues and dynamic factors
 - → To differentiate the time horizons of various conflict transformation approaches



Step by step instructions:

- Draw a picture of a tree, including its roots, trunk and branches – on a large sheet of paper or a flipchart.
- Each person gets several index cards, on which they write a word or two, or draw a symbol or picture, indicating important factors of the conflict as they see it.
- 3. Invite people to attach their cards to the tree:
 - on the roots, if they see it as a root causeon the trunk, if they think it is a manifest
 - issue, a "topic" of the conflict
 - on the branches, if they see it as a dynamic factor influencing the conflict
- 4. Someone facilitates the discussion on where the factors are placed on the tree. There is no absolute "right" or "wrong". Placement of factors is partly subjective, may be different in different conflicts, and may change over time. Nevertheless, try as a group to create a common snap shot of the conflict as the group sees it.
- People can visualise their own conflict transformation efforts (e.g. as a bird or worm) and place this on the tree in relation to the factors they are currently working on.
- 6. Discuss the links between root causes and dynamics factors and how to address these.

TOOL 3: CONFLICT MAP6

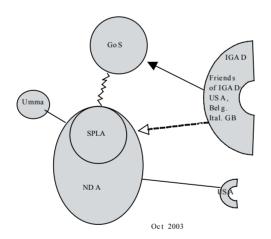
Description: Similar to a geographic map that simplifies terrain so that it can be summarized on one page, a conflict map simplifies a conflict, and serves to visualise 1) the actors and their "power", or their influence on the conflict, 2) their relationship with each other, and 3) the conflict theme or issues. A conflict map represents a specific view point (of the person or group mapping), of a specific conflict situation (it should not not be too complex!), at a specific moment in time, similar to a photograph.

Aim: → To clarify relationships between actors

- → To visualize and reflect on the "power" of various actors
- → To represent the conflict on one sheet of paper, to give a first conflict overview

Sudan North South Conflict

Issues: 1) Security, military arrangement, 2) Sharing power, 3) Sharing wealth, 4) The capital, 5) The three areas: Blue nile, Nuba and Abyey



Step by step instructions:

- 1. Decide on the conflict you want to analyse. Set the conflict system boundaries.
- 2. Form groups of two or more people. One can make a conflict map by oneself, but in a group is better. If there are people in the group that know nothing of the conflict, they can help by asking clarifying questions, by being a person the involved actor can talk to and test ideas on.
- 3. Take a large sheet of paper and draw the actors as circles on the paper, or on cards that can be pinned on a paper, the size of the circle representing an actors' "power". Do not forget to put yourself as an actor on the page as well, if you or your organization is involved. List third parties as semi-circles.
- Draw lines (see symbols below) between the circles representing the relationship between the actors.
- In square boxes, or at the top of the map, list the main themes. For more details on each actor, use the Needs-Fears mapping tool.
- Don't forget to add title and date to the conflict map, and if not confidential, also the name or organization of the person mapping.

Possible symbols used in conflict mapping

	Circle = parties involved in the situ- ation. The size of the circle symbo- lized the power of the conflict party in relation to the conflict. The name can be written in the circle.
	Straight line = close relationship
	Double line = Very good relation- ship, alliance
••	Dotted line = weak, informal or intermittent links

••	Arrow = predominant direction of influence or activity
om 5	Zig zag line = discord, conflict. Ligh- ting bolts can be added to indicate hot events.
•	Crossed out line = broken connection
\bigcirc	Half circles or quarter circle = exter- nal parties, third parties
	Rectangular boxes = issues, topics or things other than people and organi- zations

TOOL 4: GLASL'S CONFLICT ESCALATION MODEL7

Description: Escalation is an increase in tension in a conflict. Initially, people in a conflict start by wanting something. After escalation we not only want something, but we also want to hurt our opponent. The final level of escalation is mutual destruction. Conflict transformation understood descriptively, refers to how we create conflicts, and the energy of a conflict also that changes, "transforms" us. Prescriptively, conflict transformation is understood as our efforts to de-escalate conflicts.

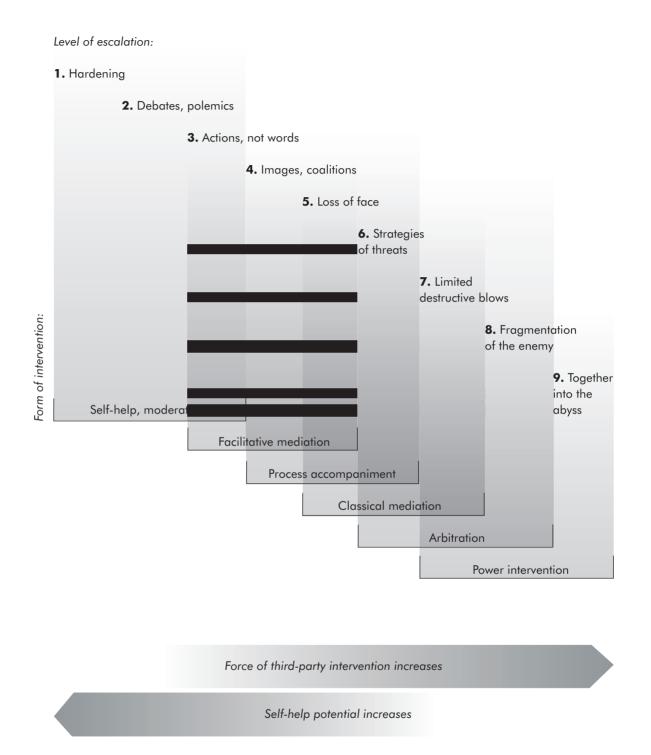
The dynamics of escalation can be analysed with the following model: Glasl differentiates between nine levels of escalation. He portrays escalation as a downward movement, where conflict parties get sucked into the conflict dynamics. They are pulled into a negative downward spiral. This is not a linear movement, but one over a series of stairs and falls. Parties may stay in one phase for a while, before plummeting down to a further level of escalation. As the level of escalation increases, the intervening party has to become more forceful in its form of intervention, because the potential for self-help of the involved parties decreases. The forcefulness of an intervention therefore increases from level one, where the parties may accept a conflict management intervention based on trust, to level nine, where parties often have to be forced to accept an intervention. Interactive forms of conflict intervention are suitable in low- or mid-level escalated conflicts where the involved parties are still willing to sit together to discuss the conflict.

- Aim: \rightarrow To find out how escalated the conflict is.
 - → To decide how to transform conflicts. The form and force of conflict intervention in a conflict has to fit the level of escalation of the conflict.

Step by step instructions:

- Analyse the escalation level of the conflict parties in question, using the table and graph below. Note that the level of escalation of the "group" may be different from the level of escalation of an individual member of that "group". Conflict parties may be at a different level of escalation.
- 2. Once the level of escalation is determined, assess if the planned or implemented conflict transformation effort is potentially an adequate form of intervention. Refer to the graphic.

1. Hardening:	Positions harden and there is a first confrontation. The conviction still exists that the conflict can be solved in discussion. There are no fixed camps.		
2. Debate, polemics:	Polarisation of thinking, feeling and will. Black and white thinking. Perception of superiority and inferiority.		
3. Actions not words:	"Speaking will not help anymore". Strategy of "fait accompli", presenting th opponent with facts on the ground, physical action. Empathy is lost, there is a danger of false interpretation of the other side.		
4. Images, coalitions:	The parties manoeuvre each other into negative roles and fight these roles. Parties seek support from people who have not been involved so far.		
5. Loss of face:	Public and direct attack on the moral integrity of the opponent, aiming at the loss of face of him/her. A major escalation step.		
6. Strategies of threats:	Threats and counter threats. The conflict accelerates through ultimatums.		
7. Limited destructive blows:	The opponent is no longer seen as a human being. As a consequence of dehumanization, limited destructive blows are legitimate. Values are shifted, ones own "small" loss is seen as a benefit.		
8. Fragmentation:	Destruction and fragmentation of the opponents system is ones main aim.		
9. Together into the abyss:	Total confrontation without any possibility of stepping back. The destruction of oneself is accepted as the price of the destruction of the opponent.		



out of trust Parties acceptance of intervention through submission

TOOL 5: INMEDIO'S CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS (CPA)8

Description: CPA is a method to analyze a conflict in a step by step process, developed by Inmedio mediators for micro (interpersonal), meso (organizational) and macro area. CPA focuses on the different perspectives of the involved parties; this helps conflict parties to broaden their view. Ulterior motives become more visible and seem less threatening. CPA can be used without professional help. The CPA steps follow the phases of a mediation. The Conflict Perspective Analysis can be used: 1) when counselling among colleagues, 2) as a preparation before a mediation or 3) as a coaching tool.

- Aim: → To separate facts from interpretations, people from problems, positions from interests/needs/fears.
 - → To enable a change of perspective, to "walk in the other persons shoes", to make motivations of all actors plausible.
 - → To broaden perspectives.
 - → To elaborate hypotheses on new options, without taking the ownership of the conflict or solutions of the conflict away from the involved parties.

Step by step instructions:

CPA is described here as a tool for counselling among colleagues. The setting: a colleague is involved in a conflict, he/she wants your help to deal constructively with it:

- Presentation: The person involved in the conflict describes the situation. What is it all about from their point of view? This should not take more than 10 minutes. For the rest of the time, the person concerned is silent, except if he/she has something important to add or is asked for an input. The effect of this first phase is to inform the "outsider" colleagues and to relieve the person concerned by being actively listened to, by the acceptance and recognition of colleagues.
- 2. Actors: The next step consists of the "outsider" colleagues identifying who is involved in the conflict. Analysis is easier with few actors. Focus on the main parties, possible stakeholders and potential third parties. List them on cards, place them on the floor or stick them on a flip chart.
- Facts: What has happened? Who did what? Who said what? This step should be completely free of interpretations and perceptions. The aim of phase 3 is to focus on observable facts only, things that cold be recorded on video, facts that are not debated by one or the other of the conflict parties. Write each fact or "O-Sound" (original sound =

direct quotation) on a separate card, place it under the relevant actors listed in phase 2.

- 4. Background interests and motivations: What are the motivations behind the "facts" of phase 3? What are the interests of the actors, why did they say or do this or that? In this phase interpretations and hypotheses are sought. Possible interests, wishes, needs and emotions of the parties should be brought forward. The "outsider" colleagues should step into the shoes of the conflict parties and express their interests from their point of view, begin with "I, conflict party A, feel...". Sentences which help to express "needs and wishes" are 'I would like you to' or 'It would be important for me to...'. Also, the concerns, fears and emotions, such as 'I am afraid...', 'If you do.... I feel...', are important. Motivations may be contradictory, list all of them! Look for plausible motivations: there are often "good" motivations for "bad" behavior. If you find different motivations for party A and B, you can list them separately under the two parties' names. If they are similar, they can be placed in the middle. The main aim of this phase is to understand each side, to "walk in his/her shoes for a few miles". Don't forget that all your work during this phase is hypothetical, empathy is needed.
- 5. Options: Only when the parties' motivations have become plausible during phase 4, is a brainstorming on possible options and next steps suitable. Questions such as 'which options cover as many interests/needs of the participants as possible' or 'which options get rid of as many fears of the participants as possible' are helpful. To broaden the possibilities, the question 'how can we implement the conflict parties' interests differently than if we follow what the conflict parties originally demanded (their positions)' is useful. Think of at least two options for each issue. Remember the brainstorming rules: all ideas are good, no corrections, no editing, no comments.
- 6. Reality check: Phase 6 is the place for editing and assessing. Possible concerns about the raised options can be thought through. What are the parties fears concerning possible next steps? Is there a need for optimisation of the proposed options?
- 7. New discoveries/Conclusion: The process of the CPA is wrapped up. The person who is involved in the conflict should give their opinion on whether it was possible for them to gain better insight into the other conflict parties perspectives, and on the added value of the CPA for them personally.

Example of how a CPA can be visualised on cards Conflict at a fair:

Actors	Gym Club		Boy scouts
Facts	Destroyed scouts tent		Put tent up near Gym club's market stand
Interests, motivation	We feel threatened by presence of scouts We would like to be informed about tent	We do not want a bad reputation in the village because of the fight	We want the cost of tent paid We want to sell our cake at the fair
Options	Joint activity to show unitiy of groups	Share cost of new tent Insurance pays for the tent	Official clarification of the misunderstanding
Reality check	Insurance will not cover tent		

TOOL 6: NEEDS-FEARS MAPPING

Description: The Needs-Fears Mapping is an actor oriented clarification tool. For each actor, the issues, interests/expectations/needs, fears, means and options are listed in a table. This enables comparison and quick reference. The table is comparable to the CPA tool. It can be used 1) to analyse a conflict by one actor, writing the points for the other actors hypothetically, 2) by a third party to clarify her/his perception of the actors hypothetically, 3) during mediation an abbreviated table can be used, e.g. with issues and interests. By seeing one's issues and interests written down on a flip chart or pin board, a conflict party has some assurance that his/her point has been heard, 4) it can be used as a conflict perspective change exercise, when each actor fills in the table for the other actors, and they then exchange about "self" and "foreign" images. A certain degree of trust and understanding is needed for this last version to work.

- Aim: → To clarify in a comparable format the various actors' attributes
 - → To leave deadlocked positions, and focus on needs and fears, and possible options to deal with these
 - → To help people understand each others perceptions
 - → To stimulate discussion

Parties	Issues	Interest/Needs	Fears	Means	Options
Irrigation farmers	Financing of irriga- tion scheme	Income generation	Scheme will be stopped, they will have to leave their job	Political lobbying, shooting the cows or pastoralists	Join the dialogue process, suggest employment of pas- toralists on the farms
Pastoralists	Access to water for their herds	Livelihood and survival	Their herds cannot survive, they will have to migrate	Political lobbying, pushing the herds into the irrigated area, shooting the farmers	Join the dialogue process suggest a corridor to the water
Development Cooperation agency	Implementation of project in a "Do no harm" manner	Wish to fullfill man- date, income and status at home	Project fails and the agency is blamed	Financial incentives, convening power	Bringing parties together to discuss issues
Government	Economic growth without social unrest	Re-election, popularity	Civil unrest, lack of development	Financial, political and legal means	Influence the dia- logue process, com- pensation fund

The following example is about a conflict over a planned irrigation scheme:

Step by step instructions:

- 1. Draw a table with the following columns: Issues, interests/needs, fears, means and options.
- 2. a) A conflict party or third party fills the table in as a conflict analysis tool, the table is not viewed by the other conflict parties.

b) In a moderated workshop setting, each conflict party fills in the table for their own situation. The joint table is discussed in the group. The facilitator clarifies the importance of focusing on interests (why people want something) and not positions (what people say they want). The options don't necessarily need to be realisable in the near future. c) In a mediated workshop setting, each conflict party fills the table in for the other parties. This helps to switch perspective. It makes the actors walk in someone else's shoes for a moment. Trust is needed, else stereotype pictures may dominate.

 In the case of b) and c), discuss the table in the plenum. Allowing each conflict party to respond to the "self" and "foreign" image.

TOOL 7: MULTI-CAUSAL ROLE MODEL

Description: The concept differentiates structural from actor-oriented factors by synthesizing system and actor approaches. Disputes have their roots in psycho-sociological, socioeconomic, political, and international conditions. There is normally a "syndrome of factors" that causes violence.

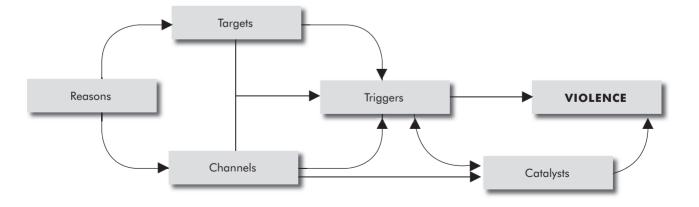
- Aim: → To trace causal mechanisms, patterns, to distinguish between the different quality and role of the various factors that lead to conflicts.
 - → To analyze both the content as well as the dynamics of a specific conflict.
 - → To facilitate the location of entry points for conflict transformation, to differentiate between short term and long term commitment needs.

Step by step instructions:

- 1. Focusing on your conflict, differentiate between the following factors:
- a) Reasons, the basic or root causes and structural factors of the conflict, perceived by the actor as "historical problems". Reasons are related to a conflict parties' interests and needs, but also to their perception of history, trauma, injustice etc. They affect content and dynamics of the conflict.
- b) Targets are the aims of the conflict parties, what the conflict parties say they are fighting about,

the positions and expressed interests of the conflict parties. Targets affect the content of the conflict.

- c) Channels are lines of political, social, economic or national cleavage, that group people together, that form group-identity. Channels affect content and dynamics of a conflict. The channels are often not directly related to the root cause of the conflict.
- d) Triggers initiate a new level of conflict. In violent conflicts, for example, a trigger causes an actor who previously preferred non-violent solutions, to now favor violent action. The trigger influences the dynamics of a conflict. Triggers are hard to identify in advance, and are not easily influenced by a third party.
- e) Catalysts influence the rate, intensity and duration of a conflict once the conflict is underway, affecting content and dynamics of a conflict. Catalysts and channels together may transform reasons over time, for example when two groups begin by fighting over resources, and end up by fighting over ethnicity.
- Once you have identified the various factors, situate the reasons, triggers, channels, catalysts, targets in a graph and link them with arrows.
- 3. On separate cards, see which conflict transformation efforts are addressing which factors and where there is need for a change or further efforts.



SOME USEFUL INTERNET SOURCES

- Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Research: http://www.berghof-center.org/english.htm
- Conflict Research Consortium (CRC), International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict, Glossary, University of Colorado: http://www.beyondintractability.org http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict: http://www.gppac.net/index.html
- International Conflict Research: http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/

Footnotes

¹ This Tip Sheet is based on the INMEDIO/SDC-COPRET "mediation" course and the referenced literature.

- ² Harvard Approach:
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- ⁵ Adapted from: Fisher, Simon, Jawed Ludin, Steve Williams, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, Richard Smith and Sue Williams (2000): Working with conflict, skills and strategies for action. Zed books, London, New York.
- ⁶ Adapted from: Fisher, Simon, Jawed Ludin, Steve Williams, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, Richard Smith and Sue Williams (2000): Working with conflict, skills and strategies for action. Zed books, London, New York.
- ⁷ Glasl, Friedrich, (2002). Konfliktmanagement. Ein Handbuch für Führungskräfte, Beraterinnen und Berater [Conflict Management. A Handbook for Executives and Counselors] (7th supplemented and revised ed.). Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart.
- ⁸ Wüstehube, Ljubjana (2004): Konflikt-Perspektiv-Analyse (KPA) ein mediations-analoges Instrument zur konstruktiven Analyse und Bearbeitung von Konflikten. In: Perspektive Mediation Heft 1.
- ⁹ Bächler, Günther, (1999). Violence through environmental discrimination: causes, Rwanda arena, and conflict model. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

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