



Practical Guide linked to training:

Group Dynamics: Animation of groups to undertake dialogue and conflict resolution activities

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OUTLINE

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Introduction

The following tools and reference documents focus on two self standing, but powerfully interconnected issues - Group Dynamics and Conflict Management. They have been used as an integral component of a two day introductory course for Lebanese CSOs.

The first part of the briefing focuses on an introduction to Group Dynamics, and is rooted in the Myers Briggs Typology Indicator. The second section focuses on an introduction to Conflict Management and is informed by the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument.

Most of the tools and instruments included here are intended more for practical application in direct group work, than as theoretical background material. At the end of the briefing, we include some introductory reference material and a reading list.

1. Why Group Dynamics?

The successful management of group process is a critical element in both the management of constituency (aka 'beneficiary') relationships for CSOs. Understanding the complex and intricate nature of both the open and less apparent agendas of individuals and groups in external relations is a critical element of success in communication, negotiation and relationship stewardship. It is also a vital element in the management of the organization itself. All the available evidence demonstrates to us that group 'culture', leadership style, organizational norms and communications methodology are powerful elements of group function. If their significance is ignored or marginalized, organizational effectiveness is impaired.

2. Why Conflict Management?

The management of conflict is a critical element in the CSO's external relations with its constituency, its funding and technical assistance partners and host government. In this context we do not use the term 'conflict' pejoratively. Conflict, seen through this lens is an inevitable human consequence of people promoting different concepts, aspirations and concerns together as they interact. Well managed conflict is a process where apparently incompatible ideas are revealed as compatible. Un-managed conflict represents a danger to all parties, especially those who perceive themselves (or are perceived by the other party) to be in the weaker position. Thus the negotiated and agreed use of common conflict management instruments can provide a code of conduct inside the CSO and permit the opening up of complex issues that may otherwise lay dormant, unaddressed and corrosively damaging to the fabric of the organization and its work.

Disclaimer

The editors of this briefing draw the reader's attention to the fact that the material contained here is in no way exhaustive. Indeed the information within this briefing represents only a basic introduction to the issues. Further, the two instruments on which we focus most attention are merely a taste of the vast array of group dynamics and conflict management instruments available. They should not be taken as definitive and they should not be used externally without much more extensive study than a two day introductory training course could provide.

The Tuckman forming, storming, norming, performing model

Dr Bruce Tuckman published his Forming Storming Norming Performing model in 1965. He added a fifth stage, Adjourning, in the 1970s. The Forming Storming Norming Performing theory is an elegant and helpful explanation of team development and behavior. Similarities can be seen with other models, such as Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum and especially with Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership model, developed about the same time.

Tuckman's model explains that as the team develops maturity and ability, relationships establish, and the leader changes leadership style. Beginning with a directing style, moving through coaching, then participating, finishing delegating and almost detached. At this point the team may produce a successor leader and the previous leader can move on to develop a new team. This progression of team behavior and leadership style can be seen clearly in the Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum - the authority and freedom extended by the leader to the team increases while the control of the leader reduces. In Tuckman's Forming Storming Norming Performing model, Hersey's and Blanchard's Situational Leadership® model and in Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Continuum, we see the same effect, represented in three ways.

Tuckman's forming storming norming performing four-stage model

The progression is:

1. forming
2. storming
3. norming
4. performing

Forming - stage 1

High dependence on leader for guidance and direction. Little agreement on team aims other than received from leader. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leader must be prepared to answer lots of questions about the team's purpose, objectives and external relationships. Processes are often ignored. Members test tolerance of system and leader. Leader directs (similar to Situational Leadership® 'Telling' mode).

Storming - stage 2

Decisions don't come easily within group. Team members vie for position as they attempt to establish themselves in relation to other team members and the leader, who might receive challenges from team members. Clarity of purpose increases but plenty of uncertainties persist. Cliques and factions form and there may be power struggles. The team needs to be focused on its goals to avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues. Compromises may be required to enable progress. Leader coaches (similar to Situational Leadership® 'Selling' mode).

Norming - stage 3

Agreement and consensus is largely formed among team members, who respond well to facilitation by leader. Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted. Big decisions are made by group agreement. Smaller decisions may be delegated to individuals or small teams within group. Commitment and unity is strong. The team may engage in fun and social activities. The team discusses and develops its processes and working style. There is general respect for the leader and some of leadership is more shared by the team. Leader facilitates and enables (similar to the Situational Leadership® 'Participating' mode).

Performing - stage 4

The team is more strategically aware; the team knows clearly why it is doing what it is doing. The team has a shared vision and is able to stand on its own feet with no interference or participation from the leader. There is a focus on over-achieving goals, and the team makes most of the decisions against criteria agreed with the leader. The team has a high degree of autonomy. Disagreements occur but now they are resolved within the team positively and necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team. The team is able to work towards achieving the goal, and also to attend to relationship, style and process issues along the way. Team members look after each other. The team requires delegated tasks and projects from the leader. The team does not need to be instructed or assisted. Team members might ask for assistance from the leader with personal and interpersonal development. Leader delegates and oversees (similar to the Situational Leadership® 'Delegating' mode).

Tuckman's fifth stage - Adjourning

Bruce Tuckman refined his theory in 1975 and added a fifth stage to the Forming Storming Norming Performing model - he called it Adjourning, which is also referred to as Deforming and Mourning. Adjourning is arguably more of an adjunct to the original four stage model rather than an extension - it views the group from a perspective beyond the purpose of the first four stages. The Adjourning phase is certainly very relevant to the people in the group and their well-being, but not to the main task of managing and developing a team, which is clearly central to the original four stages. Tuckman's fifth stage, Adjourning, is the break-up of the group, hopefully when the task is completed successfully, its purpose fulfilled; everyone can move on to new things, feeling good about what's been achieved. From an organizational perspective, recognition of and sensitivity to people's vulnerabilities in Tuckman's fifth stage is helpful, particularly if 2 members of the group have been closely bonded and feel a sense of insecurity or threat from this change.

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator

1. What is the MBTI?

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator or MBTI is based on C.G. Jung's theory of psychological type. The MBTI provides a positive and constructive way of understanding and valuing differences between people.

The MBTI is the world's leading indicator of personal styles.

The instrument is a tool to identify a person's preferences. These are assessed in four main areas, and the particular combination of preferences for an individual constitutes their MBTI type. For instance, the MBTI contrasts a person's preference for focusing on detailed facts and practicalities against looking at patterns and less tangible possibilities. In addition, it explores differences between those preferring to reach decisions in an objective manner and those preferring to use a more empathic approach, based on personal values. The MBTI has broad practical application in organizations, including: developing effective teams, developing managerial potential, improving communication and resolving conflict. It is also used extensively in educational development and career guidance.

The MBTI is an affirming, non-judgmental instrument that recognizes and validates the unique contributions that every individual can make.

The MBTI is used by qualified, registered practitioners, all of whom are signatories to a code of practice. Practitioners are guided by strict professional ethics.

2. What the MBTI is *not*

The MBTI is not psychotherapy. It is not a way of judging people, or of determining traits, abilities or capacities. It is not used to determine if one person is superior to another or more capable than another.

3. How is the MBTI used?

Organizations use the MBTI to:

- Make the most of human resources
- Utilize individuals' natural strengths
- Improve teamwork
- Understand and adapt to different leadership and management styles
- Enhance effective communications between supervisors, peers, employees and service users
- Assist career development
- Coach individuals
- Recognize employees' unique contributions
- Resolve conflict
- Develop skills creativity, time management and stress management

4. Who uses the MBTI?

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator has been applied for many years by a variety of users around the globe, including:

- Government at all levels
- International bilateral funding and cooperation agencies
- Voluntary and non-governmental organizations
- Educational and health care institutions
- Service industries and manufacturing concerns
- Large multinational corporations
- Consulting and training services

5. How the MBTI is used

5.1 Developing Leadership Potential

Self-awareness is fundamental to good leadership. An understanding of the impact that personal style has on people's motivation and commitment is essential. The MBTI helps managers assess their strengths, their preferred style of problem solving and also how their style relates to other people's styles, particularly those that are different from their own.

5.2 Developing Effective Teams

Using the MBTI, teams can evaluate their strengths and also clarify biases in their working practices. For instance, does the team over-emphasize logical assessment at the expense of considering personnel issues, such as morale? Or does it focus too strongly on strategy and not enough on the practicalities of implementation? By assessing these biases, teams begin to appreciate the importance of valuing different approaches and perspectives.

While the MBTI is used successfully with individuals, its power can be multiplied when applied to teams. Each person's individual preferences can be used to help the team function more productively and effectively to accomplish common goals.

5.3 Managing Change

Individuals of different Types tend to experience change and the process of transition in quite different ways. Building awareness of these different reactions can help managers and organizations support their staff and themselves through the stresses of organizational change.

5.4 Problem-Solving

The MBTI gives an insight into potential strengths and blind spots in problem solving and hence can allow individuals and groups to improve the breadth and depth of their analyses.

5.4 Counseling

The MBTI is very helpful in building self-esteem as it explicitly emphasizes the positive contribution that each Type can make. It can also help in dealing with conflict in

relationships. This is because having identified the differences it focuses on valuing them, and giving people a clear way of understanding them.

5.5 Improving Training Methods

The MBTI can be used to analyze and improve training and learning methods. It provides a framework for understanding differences in learning styles, and hence for creating learning situations which will appeal to different Types. It also helps trainers explore various styles of communicating with people.

Note: Malcolm Gladwell (of 'Tipping Point' and 'Blink' fame) wrote a critical article about the MBTI several years ago, suggesting that it unfairly categorizes people and that they are forced to use it. At worst this can indeed be the case. But correctly used, the instrument is simply an indicator of innate preference. Used ethically and correctly it may not be used in any coercive context, and it cannot be used to categorize people. The fact that it is sometimes misused by unethical companies does not diminish its validity – but makes great headlines.

An Introduction to Type in the MBTI

The MBTI uses a continuum approach to enable individuals to self assess.

1. The Extraversion/Introversion continuum – what energizes us?

E: People with an innate preference for E are energized by the external environment and look to interaction with others in the development of their thinking, before reflecting on their ideas internally.

I: People with an innate preference for introversion are stimulated initially by their internal process, preferring a more reflective initial approach to the formulation of their ideas before moving to an interactive mode.

2. The Sensing/Intuition continuum – what kind of information do we pay attention to?

S: People with an innate preference for S are interested by facts and data. They trust what they know and what they can prove to be true. They also trust their previous experience and learning. They pay attention to detail and focus on the present.

N: People with an innate preference for N are more interested in the world of possibilities and potentialities than by raw data or facts. They are also more focused on the 'bigger picture'. Facts are less important than meanings to Ns. They are future oriented and comfortable with ambiguity.

3. The Thinking/Feeling continuum – how do we make decisions?

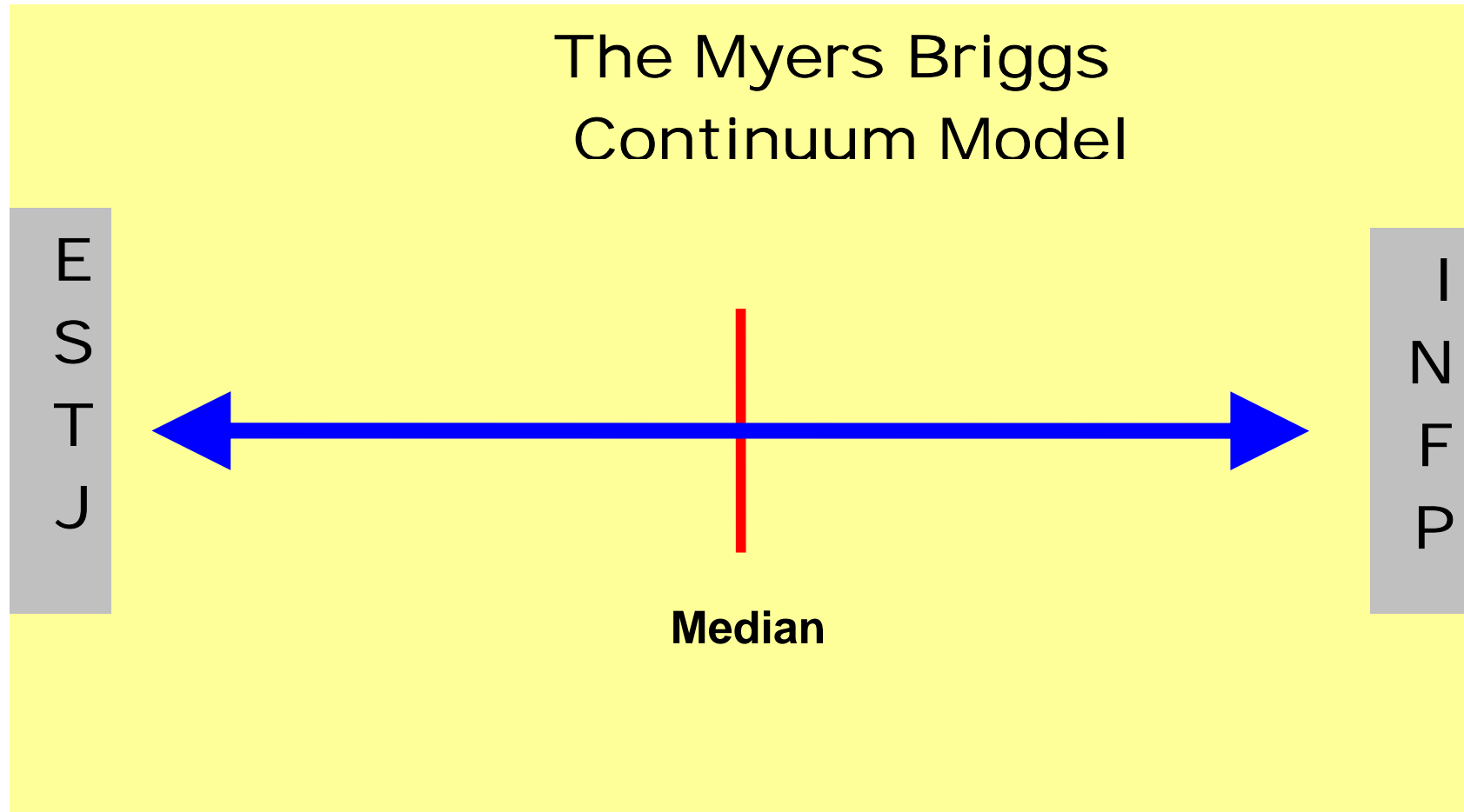
T: People with an innate preference for T are looking at cause and effect in their decision making process. They are guided by objectivity and logic and are looking for flaws in logic as they move to their decisions. They prefer the result over the process.

F: People with an innate preference for F are guided more by their values than by logic. They are looking for harmony and consensus in the context of a group and are more influenced by individual needs than by systems and structures. They value the process as much as the result.

4. The Judging/Perceiving continuum – how do we organize our lives?

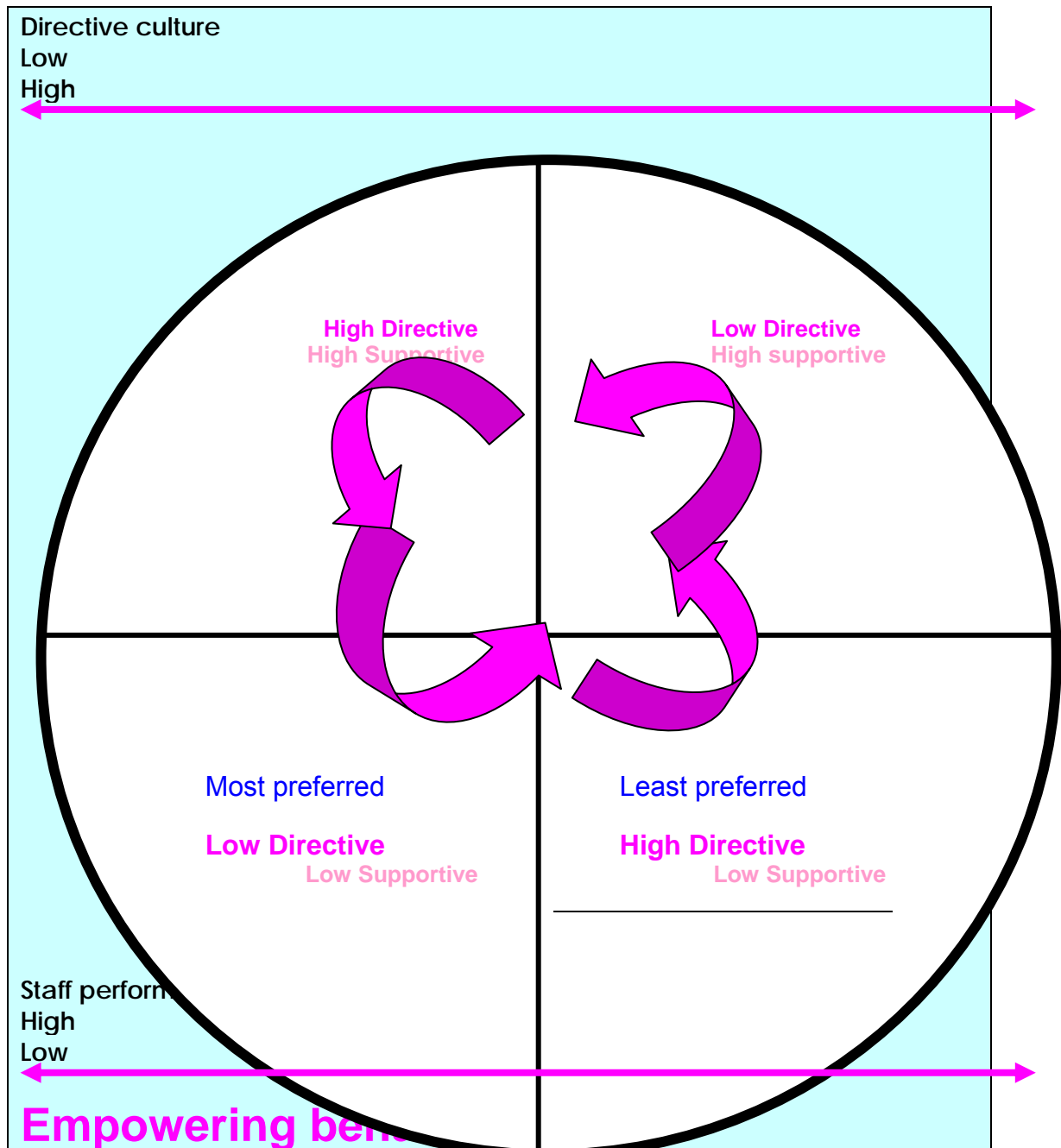
J: People with an innate preference for J like a planned and organized life. They enjoy planning and strategy. Js like to make decisions efficiently, reach closure and move smoothly on to the next thing. They prefer a well-organized and scheduled lifestyle and are comfortable with routine if it is productive and efficient.

P: People with an innate preference for P prefer a lifestyle that is relatively unstructured and provides opportunities for spontaneity. They like to keep their options open rather than make a binding decision and sticking to it rigidly. Ps are energized by last minute time pressure, even if they find this can be stressful.



The Culture of Motivation

This model explains that CSO leadership and management styles have a direct impact on the involvement of staff, and in their sense of ownership of the organization. Organizations that invest in strengthening their internal dynamics need to take a holistic approach to the issue by considering if their governance, leadership and management culture is complementary to the intended dynamics they seek to promote internally.



Individual Motivation in the Group Context

Understanding what motivates people is critical to the development of a productive group dynamic.

1. David C McClelland's Motivational Needs Theory

American David Clarence McClelland (1917-98) achieved his doctorate in psychology at Yale in 1941 and became professor at Wesleyan University. He then taught and lectured, including a spell at Harvard from 1956, where with colleagues for twenty years he studied particularly motivation and the achievement need. He began his McBer consultancy in 1963, helping industry assess and train staff, and later taught at Boston University, from 1987 until his death. McClelland is chiefly known for his work on achievement motivation, but his research interests extended to personality and consciousness. David McClelland pioneered workplace motivational thinking, developing achievement-based motivational theory and models, and promoted improvements in employee assessment methods, advocating competency-based assessments and tests, arguing them to be better than traditional IQ and personality-based tests. His ideas have since been widely adopted in many organizations, and relate closely to the theory of [Frederick Herzberg](#).

David McClelland is most noted for describing three types of motivational need, which he identified in his 1961 book, *The Achieving Society*:

- **achievement motivation (n-ach)**
- **authority/power motivation (n-pow)**
- **affiliation motivation (n-affil)**

2. David McClelland's needs-based motivational model

These needs are found to varying degrees in all workers and managers, and this mix of motivational needs characterizes a person's or manager's style and behavior, both in terms of being motivated and in the management and motivation others.

3. The need for achievement (n-ach)

The n-ach person is 'achievement motivated' and therefore seeks achievement, attainment of realistic but challenging goals, and advancement in the job. There is a strong need for feedback as to achievement and progress, and a need for a sense of accomplishment.

4. The need for authority and power (n-pow)

The n-pow person is 'authority motivated'. This driver produces a need to be influential, effective and to make an impact. There is a strong need to lead and for their ideas to prevail. There is also motivation and need towards increasing personal status and prestige.

5. The need for affiliation (n-affil)

The n-affil person is 'affiliation motivated', and has a need for friendly relationships and is motivated towards interaction with other people. The affiliation driver produces motivation and need to be liked and held in popular regard. These people are team players.

McClelland said that most people possess and exhibit a combination of these characteristics. Some people exhibit a strong bias to a particular motivational need and this motivational or needs 'mix' consequently affects their behavior and working/managing style. McClelland suggested that a strong n-affil 'affiliation-motivation' undermines a manager's objectivity, because of their need to be liked, and that this affects a manager's decision-making capability. A strong n-pow 'authority-motivation' will produce a determined work ethic and commitment to the organization, and while n-pow people are attracted to the leadership role; they may not possess the required flexibility and people-centered skills. McClelland argues that n-ach people with strong 'achievement motivation' make the best leaders, although there can be a tendency to demand too much of their staff in the belief that they are all similarly and *highly* achievement-focused and results driven, which of course most people are not.

McClelland's particular fascination was for achievement motivation, and this laboratory experiment illustrates one aspect of his theory about the affect of achievement on people's motivation. McClelland asserted via this experiment that while most people do not possess a strong achievement-based motivation, those who do, display a consistent behavior in setting goals:

Volunteers were asked to throw rings over pegs rather like the fairground game; no distance was stipulated, and most people seemed to throw from arbitrary, random distances, sometimes close, sometimes farther away. However a small group of volunteers, whom McClelland suggested were strongly achievement-motivated, took some care to measure and test distances to produce an ideal challenge - not too easy, and not impossible. Interestingly a parallel exists in biology, known as the 'overload principle', which is commonly applied to fitness and exercising, i.e., in order to develop fitness and/or strength the exercise must be sufficiently demanding to increase existing levels, but not so demanding as to cause damage or strain. McClelland identified the same need for a 'balanced challenge' in the approach of achievement-motivated people.

McClelland contrasted achievement-motivated people with gamblers, and dispelled a common pre-conception that n-ach 'achievement-motivated' people are big risk takers. On the contrary - typically, achievement-motivated individuals set goals which they can influence with their effort and ability, and as such the goal is considered to be achievable. This determined results-driven approach is almost invariably present in the character make-up of all successful business people and entrepreneurs.

McClelland suggested other characteristics and attitudes of achievement-motivated people:

- achievement is more important than material or financial reward.
- achieving the aim or task gives greater personal satisfaction than receiving praise or recognition.
- financial reward is regarded as a measurement of success, not an end in itself.
- security is not prime motivator, nor is status.

- feedback is essential, because it enables measurement of success, not for reasons of praise or recognition (the implication here is that feedback must be reliable, quantifiable and factual).
- achievement-motivated people constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better.
- achievement-motivated people will logically favor jobs and responsibilities that naturally satisfy their needs, i.e. offer flexibility and opportunity to set and achieve goals, e.g., sales and business management, and entrepreneurial roles.

McClelland firmly believed that achievement-motivated people are generally the ones who make things happen and get results, and that this extends to getting results through the organization of other people and resources, although as stated earlier, they often demand too much of their staff because they prioritize achieving the goal above the many varied interests and needs of their people.

Group Think (Normative behavior – aka the Elephant Under the Table)

The following section opens the issue of group norms, and proposes a simple workshop instrument for CSOs to use in order to highlight normative behaviors and suggest how changes can be made.

Norms

Norms are the unwritten, unstated culture and sets of rules that govern the behavior of a group. Norms often evolve and are socially enforced through social sanctioning. Norms are usually passed to newcomers in a group in indirect ways – but the pressure to conform to the norms is considerable.

At their best, norms – especially mutually and explicitly agreed norms – provide stability and behavioral boundaries that are mutually beneficial for all. At their worst, norms can block communication and trap groups in unproductive and damaging behaviors where everyone loses.

Norms – be they positive or negative provide stability to a group – even if the stability is unhealthy. Few individuals will step outside the norms – especially when they discover the cost of non-conformity. A group of people may hold onto norms that are no longer needed, simply because they have always been part of the unspoken group culture or ‘groupthink’.

Often groups are not aware of the unwritten norms that exist. New people to the group have to discover these norms on their own over a period of time - and may face sanctions because they did not know a norm existed – and failed to conform.

The Exercise

This exercise is best done after you have had an opportunity to observe the group for a period of time to discover some of its norms. It works best with a group that has been functioning for some time – e.g. a management group or an office department.

Depending on the size of the group, divide the larger group into small working groups of five. Remind them of norms and their meaning. Ask each group to discuss norms and come up with 5 more that they know are active in their group as well as in the larger workshop group. Ask them to write these on flip charts so they can present them to the larger group. 30-45 minutes to do this exercise.

While they are working, visit each group and answer their questions. Sometimes a group will get stuck and will struggle to engage in the task. These may be new people to the group. Be patient.

When they have captured some norms, ask them to classify them into positive and negative norms.

Another way you can decide what norms to keep and which to discard is to have the group vote on the norms. Hand out 5 red dots to each person so they get to vote on the 5 norms they want to keep, with only one vote per norm. Have the norms written on down and posted. All members of the group vote at one time quickly. After the vote, you will graphically see which norms get the most votes. Usually about 30% will get high votes and about 20% will get no votes.

In plenary, ask the group what would be different for its members if the negative norms were removed or changed. What would need to be done to change the negative groupthink into a totally positive set of norms? Would it be feasible? One way of doing this is to do a facilitated cost-benefit analysis list.

Conflict Management

1. Conflict: risk or opportunity¹?

Conflict is part of our lives; it is mostly an element of development and progress. Therefore, it is important to understand and master its mechanisms to get the best possible solutions.

In our modern quick and unstable society, where communication means have become more complicated, we note that human communication is fading. Therefore, the task of recovering social ties has become an urgent necessity that cannot be delayed. In order for me to be able to live in peace with my “other” neighbor, I should start by speaking out, communicating and understanding him to deduct together a satisfactory compromise for both parties.

Conflicting relations

Is conflict good or bad?! The answer: only solutions are either good or bad. Only methods are either good or bad.

The letters which form the word “Conflict” in the Chinese language, mean both terms “risk” and “opportunity” together. Conflict may be destructive or constructive according to the suggested solution and the way one deals with it. If this solution leads to the destruction of relations and opens the way to violence then people undergo it with negative attitude and great pain. On the contrary, when it results from communication, understanding and consensus between conflicting parties, it becomes an element of development and a source of change. Conflicts exist and can’t be ignored, canceled or denied. We also should not try to resolve them by evasion or hostility, such behaviors are usually due to lack of courage and creative methods.

Finding a positive and non-violent solution means finding the correct balance between self-confirmation- with my needs and rights- on one hand and respect of others- with their needs and rights- on the other hand.

Achieving this demands control of conflict mechanisms to succeed in ruling potential violence out of the game. It also requires the development of some positions and basic skills of dialogue and negotiation in addition to training on the skills and tools to discover the best/ most appropriate possible means.

The positive treatment of conflicts satisfies direct needs in addition to being consistent with the fundamental rights and the search for a right-based non violent society. The main values and positions of respect of oneself and the other, the perception of the absolute value of each human life, tolerance, dialogue and listening to others are values and behaviors that all together make an element of development away from threat and fear.

The basic violence results from repression, unfairness, humiliation, misery, poverty and discrimination.

¹ From “*To Whom It May Concern*”, by Nizar Rammal, issued by the Association of Action for a Civil Choice, Beirut 1998

This “Basic Violence” instigates the escalation of violence through armed insurgency and oppression.

This “Basic Violence” instigates the escalation of violence through armed revolt and oppression. Therefore, it is only a tool of dominance and the non violent solution of the conflict can be made true through correct solutions that would satisfy all the parties without the dominance of either party.

Amidst oppression, domination and totalitarianism, it is hard to think about non violent alternatives. However, history proved that violence generates hatred, desire to revenge and destruction, which leave uncurable scars and wounds. Violence degrades the value of its perpetrators and the value of its victims at the same time, in this sense; we can say that it is destructive to every human value.

Conflict and Democracy

The nonviolent behavior is to acquire methods that eliminate violent and aggressive reactions withholding the effectiveness and strength of reactions.

This behavior promotes democracy. Mutual respect, communication and cooperation that underlie in the nonviolent behavior to solve conflicts are also founding elements of the spirit of democratic mechanisms.

Democratic participation is a goal that the citizen wants to achieve and a tool to establish democracy at the same time. To face the myth that violence is inevitable, we should show that nonviolent positive methods of conflict resolution represent an exciting challenge that requires strong commitment and courage.

Like fire, conflict gives energy that may be destructive or useful and comforting or that may be constructive or source of great damage and sorrow. Hence, facing conflicts requires essential pre-established conditions such as the experience and creativity to turn it into a factor of change on different levels such as social, political or economic etc., this would strengthen the democratic path, boost autonomy and citizens’ responsibility, and contribute to achieving justice and development.

2. General theories about conflicts

The outcomes of researches and questionings about the issue of conflict confirmed the possibility of its “generalization” to different levels (conflicts of individuals, countries and groups). They also showed that our perception and definition of the conflict affect our interaction with it as well as its results.

Conflict is an integral part of life. In this sense, it is a natural issue that we can live with and usually it is part of our growth and transformation process. Therefore, we can further peruse its causes and reasons and explore diversified options to seek creative solutions thereby transforming the conflict into a positive factor that accompany our growth. When we live in the conflict and allow it to eradicate our life and goals, it turns into a negative and destructive factor.

Every dispute and disagreement among individuals at any level is an independent event, with a special content. Such content includes all the cultural and historical factors that affect the conflict. It also includes a position towards the authority and the behavior of the other party. Here, we should learn from each other, experience the points of view of other people and seek new points of view.

You can find different opinions as the reasons behind conflict where every point of view is a reflection of a certain “school of thought” that is developed and modified by experience, observation and the addition of new ideas. We may consider or feel that either point of view is correct or that each point of view adds a new idea about a problem.

Such points of view fall under three dominating theories:

- 1- The realistic theory (strength policy)
- 2- Structuring or the neo Marxism
- 3- Liberal plurality or “the global society”

First: the strength policy is an old theory based on the understanding that the human being and human communities struggle everywhere to gain dominance. This need to domination and fighting goes back to human nature. The balance of power is a term that is used when minimum strength is used to protect existence and survival.

Second: structuring involves external forms, “institutions”, living conditions and the physical manipulation to explain the use of the human being and the origin of conflicts, where the human being becomes the captive of such forms, and either wins or loses according to its status inside the structures of the society.

Third: liberal plurality considers that the different levels of an individual are all involved in any conflict. The human needs theory, communication and the sensual awareness are essential. Laws and the attempts to violate them and cooperation may help solve or hinder the conflict.

3. The analysis of the conflict:

We can move from the observation of the reasons of the conflict in general and focus more on what really happens in a specific conflict. Chris Mitchell views three dimensions for the parties in each conflict:

- 1- Situation (background, scarcity, competition, disagreement etc)
- 2- Behavior (emotion and excitement, demands, accusations, reactions, violence etc)
- 3- Positions (will to change, firm positions, feelings, perception of others)

All such factors are intertwined and may influence each other

The phases of conflict development

Are there specific forms of conflict?

If we wish to intervene in a specific conflict, or simply understand the path of such one, we automatically ask about the phases of the conflict development or the conflict layers?

This is a question that should be cautiously dealt with:

Scientists can observe the phases of development of a tree, a child, an earthquake, a flood, river etc. All such entities or natural phenomena depend on specific and identified conditions of development. Conflicts do not reflect conditions but interaction between different human beings at all rational and non rational levels and their unexpected conducts.

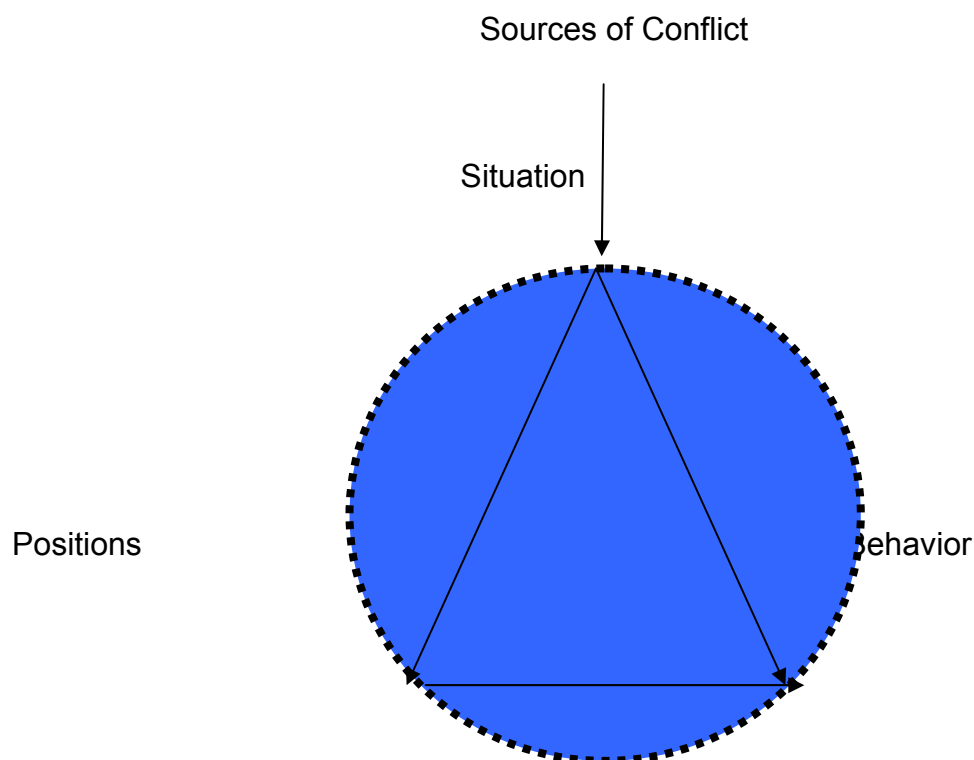
Chris Mitchell, in his introduction to the phases of conflict development, said “there is nothing inevitable in the development of the conflict; all conflicts do not follow one determined and integral path, yet it is possible to happen”.

Some examples of conflict phases:

The starting point to study conflict phases is the examination of transition (the emergence of the conflict) from a cooperation status to a situation where agreement among the conflicting parties to achieve common goals becomes difficult (divergence of goals) then to a situation where individuals are divided among opposing parties and work against each other to achieve their own goals first.

Let us assume that some workers agree to work in a specific plant (which lacks basic health and environment conditions) in order to meet their dire needs. They realize after some time that they can change the situation and start a movement to improve their working conditions (because they feel being exploited). The senior management is confident and thinks that it is fair to its workers; workers start demanding and might organize demonstrations... etc

Such movements may lead to a happy ending, achieving or breaking the demands. Violence may erupt or preliminary negotiations may start or some people may decide to go back to work, where keeping the job in such hard conditions is less costly and better than change.



This chart is one of the possibilities and constitutes a starting point to understand conflicts and deal with them accordingly.

Thinking about Personal Identity²

Any conflict inside a group usually awakens the feeling of loyalty and fidelity to one's personal identity.

The person becomes

Muslim, Sunnite, Shiite, Christian, Maronite, Hindu or Atheist ...

Actually personal identities are complicated and unique with specific dynamics.

This is your chance to think about your personal identity.

4. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument³

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is designed to assess an individual's behavior in conflict situations. Research has shown that there are five basic styles or modes for handling conflict. The Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument provides a profile of individuals and teams that indicates the repertoire of conflict-handling skills which you use in the kinds of conflict situations you face. Your profiles are compared to the scores of practicing managers in business and government organizations.

The TKI Inventory assesses your behavior on five different dimensions:

- Competing - the goal is to win
- Avoiding - the goal is to delay
- Compromising - the goal is to find a middle ground
- Collaborating - the goal is to find a win-win situation
- Accommodating - the goal is to yield

Here's how the TKI Inventory can help you improve your working relationships:

- By explaining the 5 conflict-handling styles and explaining how your answers compare to other colleagues/ managers/ staff member who have taken this assessment.
- Depending on your results, the TKI provides suggestions on how your styles may be affecting your current working relationships.

The instrument provides individuals and teams with the following benefits:

- Increase one's effectiveness in conflict management
- Increase one's perspective as to the various sources of conflict and its impact on organizations
- Understand the five basic styles of managing conflict, and your own predominant style
- Develop skills in collaborative conflict management

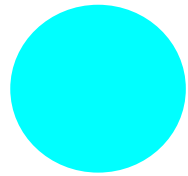
² For more information about identities and affiliations, read "Deadly Identities" by Amine Maalouf, published by Dar Annahar, Beirut, 1999.

³ www.nana-nts.com/performance_consulting/thomas_kilmann.php

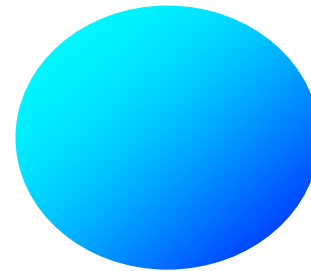
- Develop awareness of your predominate personality style based upon Relationship Awareness Theory
- Develop awareness of flexing your style to increase your effectiveness with people who have style different than your own

Below is a Diagram explaining the TK types:

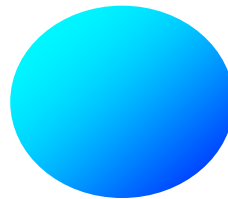
Assertiveness



Competing



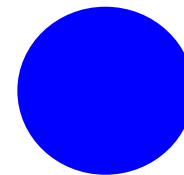
Collaborating



Compromising



Avoiding



Accommodating

**My
satisfaction**

**Your
satisfaction**

5. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Questionnaire

Instructions

- Consider situations in which you find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations?
- On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please circle the "A" or "B" statement which is most characteristic of your own behavior.
- In many cases, neither the "A" nor the "B" statement may be very typical of your behavior; but please select the response which you would be more likely to use.

Conflict Mode Questionnaire

1. A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.
2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
B. I attempt to deal with all of his/her and my concerns.
3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
4. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.
5. A. I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution.
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
B. I try to win my position.
7. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.
B. I give up some points in exchange for others.
8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
9. A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
B. I make some effort to get my way.
10. A. I am firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I try to find a compromise solution.
11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.

-
12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy.
B. I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.
 13. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I press to get my points made.
 14. A. I tell him my ideas and ask him for his.
B. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
 15. A. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.
 16. A. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
B. I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.
 17. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
 18. A. If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.
B. I will let him have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine.
 19. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
B. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.
 20. A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences.
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
 21. A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
B. I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.
 22. A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between his and mine.
B. I assert my wishes.
 23. A. I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
 24. A. If the others position seems very important to him/her, I would try to meet his/her wishes.
B. I try to get him to settle for a compromise.
 25. A. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
 26. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
 27. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain his views.
 28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.
 29. A. I propose a middle ground.

B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. A. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.

SCORING THE THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODE QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle the letters below which you circled on each item of the Questionnaire.

	Competing (forcing)	Collaborating (problem solving)	Compromising (sharing)	Avoiding (withdrawal)	Accommodating (smoothing)
1				A	B
2		B	A		
3	A				B
4			A		B
5		A		B	
6	B			A	
7			B	A	
8	A	B			
9	B			A	
10	A		B		
11		A			B
12			B	A	
13	B		A		
14	B	A			
15				B	A
16	B				A
17	A			B	
18			B		A
19		A		B	
20		A	B		
21		B			A
22	B		A		
23		A		B	
24			B		A
25	A				B
26		B	A		
27				A	B
28	A	B			
29			A	B	
30		B			A
Total number of items circled in each column:					
	Competing	Compromising	Collaborating	Avoiding	Accommodating

6. An Example of Conflict Management

Who gets the NGO car today?		
	Action	Outcome
Compete	I argue my case for the car on the grounds that my meetings that day are more urgent and important than yours	One of us loses, is forced to make other travel arrangements and potentially resents the other
Compromise	I suggest that I take the car in the morning and you take it in the afternoon – even though we both would rather have it for the whole day	Both of us get something, but neither of us gets what we want
Avoid	I decide not to raise the issue at all	You get the car – and we are both saved from a difficult situation – but I feel resentful
Accommodate	I tell you that I will make alternative arrangements	You are grateful – and you might be more willing to accommodate my needs next time. Or you may see me as weak and be more inclined to compete with me in future.
Collaborate	I ask what you are using the car for - understanding your needs - and sharing mine.	We find our needs are mutually compatible. We share the car (and the driving) for the day, and come up with some interesting proposals for working more closely together in future

7. Managing Conflict Under Stress

A case

The Community Empowerment Forum is a regionally based NGO working in community mobilization and peace building, throughout the south of the country. There is a core staff group of 12.

The Board and the Director have decided that the Forum should respond to a Request For Proposals that has no connection to their Mission Statement. The decision was controversial, but the Board's word is final.

The Forum won the bid by promising it would recruit the required experts to assure Project quality and impact. One of the other reasons the donor accepted the bid was because the Forum is present in all the geographic areas where the donor assessment recommended economic development investments should be made.

The core staff group is already overstretched, exhausted and struggling to meet existing deadlines.

A Microfinance Project Manager has been hired and has brought in a new Microfinance Project team of 6 people – all of whom earn up to 40% more than the core staff of the organization.

Six months into a two year project, feelings are running high. This week the Microfinance Project Manager demanded that youth workers from the Forum core staff group assist in the distribution of promotional brochures about the Microfinance Project in all their community animation and peace building sessions. They have also been instructed to run Question & Answer sessions on economic development. This has been justified by the management as a manifestation of an 'integrated community programming approach'. Nonetheless, this new work will entail several hours' additional work for the core staff group – with no additional pay.

This morning, at an office party to celebrate the birthday of one of the Microfinance Project staff, there was a huge argument between the Peace Building Project Manager and Microfinance Project Team Leader. All the staff heard the insults and the hard words that passed between the two senior staff.

This afternoon, the core staff group has arrived at the office en masse. They are demanding to see the Director immediately, and they are refusing to implement the instructions to participate in the Microfinance Project.

How should the conflict be resolved?

8. Mediation, a Non-Violent Behavior⁴

Conflicts are generated by the clash of interests and values. Dialogue and negotiation allow the positive confrontation of such conflicts. In the absence of dialogue and negotiation, the scene is open to negative competition and hostility, followed by violence. When conflicting parties can no longer draw backwards and take the appropriate distance to reach a reasonable solution, the intervention of an external party (to the conflict) is necessary and very useful.

To be a mediator is to reconnect the broken link between the two parties (whether they are individuals or groups) in crisis in order to restore positive communication between them.

I should have basic qualities of confidentiality and secrecy, respect and modesty. In other term, the mediator cannot claim or practice any power similar to the arbitrator or judge. He/she shall not give lessons, advices or assign authorities to conflicting parties.

As a mediator, my strength lies in my autonomy and my unlimited ability to listen, understand, sympathize, observe the different points of view and show them to the concerned parties.

My ability to create good relations, facilitate communication and act as a responsible citizen, form some of my basic positions and motives as a mediator.

Building relationships is a process that is not only influenced by verbal expression but by non verbal expression as well, i.e. the different glances and physical movements, and above all, my behavior towards them which is the most important.

The spirit of the mediator requires that he/she maintains the dialogue and facilitates direct negotiation between conflicting parties in all conditions.

⁴From "*To Whom It May Concern*", by Nizar Rammal, issued by the Association of Action for a Civil Choice, Beirut 1998

The conflict, which is the opposition of different points of view and desires, distant interests and contradicting needs, is part of any relationship.

Conflict resolution with non violent means is a definite factor to enrich and develop the relationship because it opens the door to unlimited creativity and ingenuity. Whether in the family, institution, local and/or global society, it helps to ease the tension, thereby corroborating the foundations of the relationship itself.

Sometimes, the conflict loses its essential natural characteristics during a confrontation that is dominated by violence as a way of dealing and resolving. Here also, the mediator or mediation can, with the aforementioned spirit, play an influential and decisive role in transforming this conflict by acting as a bridge and link between the conflicting parties. This happens by listening to each party separately first, then gathering both of them to think together how to retie and repair broken relations.

Mediation would then allow solving and dismantling the dynamics or networking of violence.

The intervention of a third party, that is independent but interested and concerned at the same time and who is able to earn the confidence of the different parties, allows creating an interaction space free of tension and attractions. Conflicting parties would, through this space, draw back adequately to control everything once again and move forward together towards a satisfactory and acceptable solution.

Mediation is a building process and a continuous path. The mediator is the witness to this process and the person bound to write it down and document the progress therein with the approval and endorsement of the parties through previously concluded agreements or through agreements that are concluded to accompany and balance the established progress and development.

In this sense, mediation is a relationship builder and repairer, not only at the personal level but also at both the community and global levels.

Focusing on earning the trust and respect of the conflicting parties, mediation applies justice that is consistent with both concepts of solidarity and reconciliation. Therefore, this practice backs peace.

As a complementary tool to any direct non-violent movement, mediation itself is a non-violent method of conflict resolution.

Hence, we call you to explore mediation, and particularly, different mediations in addition to various and rich approaches and experiences in this regard.

9. Phases of Mediation⁵

Mediation is an action mechanism that requires voluntary involvement of the people and encourages them to solve the conflict amicably.

As justice develops centralization and intensification of the established disagreement, resulting in high financial costs and ongoing tension, mediation helps to restore what was broken between the conflicting parties, facing them with their direct responsibilities to solve the conflict by themselves.

⁵ From “*To Whom It May Concern*”, by Nizar Rammal, issued by the Association of Action for a Civil Choice, Beirut 1998.

Mediators shall be equipped with the needed training and competency to facilitate the dialogue between the conflicting persons and/or groups.

The mediator is not a judge or arbitrator. He/she is not supposed to impose a specific solution or determine who is guilty and who is not. His/her role is to simply help the conflicting persons and/or groups reach a satisfactory situation for all (that is appropriate and fair and does not hold seeds of future violence).

10. Different stages of the mediation process:

- Introduction: the mediator opens the session in serenity and determination strong enough to create the appropriate environment to solve the conflict.
After the introduction, the mediator explains to the participants the content of the session, where he/she would make sure that none of the participants oppresses or denies the rights of the other.
In this introduction, the mediator will clarify the laws and regulations that would govern the mediation process in addition to the clear explanation of his role and occupation.
- Stories: each party is given the opportunity to tell the facts from his/her point of view, without interruption. At this stage, the good mediator is the one who listens carefully and with understanding. He/she shall encourage the parties to express all the facts and feelings and show all the underlying reasons behind the conflict.
After each story, the mediator asks the participants to determine their expectations, then starts investing and developing all the expectation-related dimensions and aspects.
- Conflict resolution: at this stage, the mediator starts working on each aspect of the conflict separately and tries to show the points of potential understanding and agreement, thereby encouraging dialogue and cooperation between the conflicting parties. At this stage, his/her intervention is often for summarizing and determining the facts and negotiation ground.
The mediator can also here hold individual meetings with each party separately in order to explore and encourage compromise prospects and potential methods to meet the needs.
If, despite all these efforts, the parties reach a deadlock where everyone wants his/her interests only with no possible compromise, the mediator shall simply remind the parties of the reasons and incentives that made them resort to mediation. In addition he/she reminds them that there is no “panacea” that leads to agreement. However, each person should get involved and sometimes compromise to progress and reach the agreement.
- Agreement: when the conflicting parties are satisfied with the results of the sessions and when they have reached an agreement about the essential aspects of the conflict then the mediator can start summarizing the agreement in the presence of all the parties.
The agreement is made in writing and signed by the parties as well as the mediator and all of them undertake respecting and applying it.

The mediator may contact the parties many weeks after to verify the good application of the agreement.

11. The Mediator

His qualities – role – authorities and limits

(Questions and answers by Francois Bazie – University of Peace – Namur – Belgium)

*What are the qualities of the mediator?

- Being a good listener is definitely the first quality. Also important is to avoid the involvement of the mediator's own feelings and opinions in the mediation process that he/she is in charge of to prevent any negative influence thereon.

The mediator shall not give advice or consultancy.

*Wouldn't being neutral keep the mediator away from the existing conflict experienced by the parties?

- The mediator is neutral meaning that he/she is not for a party at the expense of the other. We can say that the mediator supports the parties that express themselves.

He/she is partially pro one party and partially pro the other. In that sense he/she is present humanly and interacts with the conflict suffered by each party.

*Is the mediator able to fully listen to everything and keep his/her feelings distant?

- The mediator is not an extraordinary person. He/she knows the limits of his/her capabilities and he/she shall not hesitate to stop when he/she feels that it is necessary and resort to another mediator. The presence of another accompanying mediator often ensures the required equilibrium which enables the mediation process to "breathe" i.e. to be more comfortable.

In the same sense, the mediator needs to release his/her cumulated emotions during the mediation process that he/she was/is involved in. The presence of another mediator allows him/her to do so through mutual interaction.

*The mediator achieves or restores communication. What is to be done if one of the parties does not interact or damages what is done?

- We should always remember that the conflict belongs to the conflicting parties.

In all cases, the mediator shall respect the time of silence, regression, defeats and setbacks. He/she shall be humble enough to understand that the potential agreement is just a specific phase in the relationship between the conflicting parties.

*Shall the mediator undergo a special training?

- This question has contradictory answers.

Some people think that almost everyone has, in a way or another, mediation capabilities and can use them to serve the society where he/she lives.

Others think that mediation requires quasi-complete training and education which makes the mediation a practicable profession.

Anyway, I believe that there are minimum necessary qualities that should be found in a mediator. Some people acquire such qualities from their daily experiences and not from trainings.

*Does the mediator compete with the judge or arbitrator?

- We should rather talk about integration between the mediator, judge or arbitrator.

Anglo-Saxon countries started to apply the mediation-justice integration process long time ago.

The mediation is not a panacea. Many conflicts cannot be solved but through conventional justice means.

*Where does the mediator get his/her legitimacy or assignment from?

- It is possible that the mediator is assigned and paid by public authorities, such as the Ministry of Justice.

It is also possible that mediators from the private sector perform independent activities and here lies the question of their legitimate assignment.

However, in summary, I would say that the first legitimate assignment of the mediator comes from the conflicting parties who asked for him/her as a mediator.

*At the end, is the mediator the new magician of a confused society?

- The mediator is exposed to the seductions of power. He/she is at the forefront of a society that is in search of an alternative to the public sector through the privatization of social relations. The mediator is able more than anyone else to make things relative and question them.

12. Ten Rules of Mediation

The mediation may achieve its objective by making a written agreement between the conflicting parties.

But, first to facilitate the mediation process, the conflicting parties shall abide by specific rules, systems of action and procedures that help to successfully reach the objective of the mediation.

The University of Peace, in Namur, Belgium summarized such procedures in the following ten points that the conflicting parties in addition to the mediator agreed to abide by during the mediation process:

- The attendance of all mediation sessions according to the dates and times determined and agreed upon.
(The conventional mediation process normally takes two to ten sessions)
- The fees (of the mediation process) are predetermined regardless of any final outcome.
- No moral or judicial pressure shall be made or initiated during the mediation process. If a procedure had been initiated before the commencement of the mediation, it shall be suspended until the termination of the mediation process.
- In urgent cases (with identified subject that is agreed upon before the commencement of the mediation process), the parties can, during the mediation process, ask an appropriate judicial authority to conduct

specific useful preventive measures to avoid a specific damage. In all cases, it is done with the knowledge and acknowledgment of the mediator.

- No change in the relation of the parties without its identification in the mediation sessions.
- No intervention, communication or meeting with the mediator outside the mediation sessions unless in extreme cases or to modify a specific appointment.
- Execution of the requests of the mediator.
- Accurate implementation of the achieved agreements.

*If the mediation process fails

- All parties have the right to seek any judicial means that they deem appropriate to solve the conflict.
- Suggestions, concessions or partial agreements that were worked out and examined during the unsuccessful mediation process shall not be used, in any case whatsoever, especially in arbitration or before courts. Mediation is first about confidence. A mediator shall not be nominated as an arbitrator for a case that he/she has previously mediated.

13. Necessary clarification of some concepts⁶

Friction

The relation with the other person often expresses the confrontation/friction of different interests, needs and values that belong to each party of this relation.

This friction does not only and necessarily assume self-confirmation but also listening and respect to find real communication and dialogue.

Conflict

When the elements of the friction/relation are contradictory or different, the situation becomes conflicting.

Each person defends his/her ideas, rights, freedom, needs and interests...etc

The conflict is an integral part of any relation with the other. It allows renovation, creativity and change.

It is one of the reasons or engines of movement/dynamics in relationships and communities.

A society without conflict is a motionless and static society with no history.

The method of conflict resolution helps establish justice.

⁶ From "To Whom It May Concern", by Nizar Rammal, issued by the Association of Action for a Civil Choice, Beirut 1998

Compromise

Reaching a compromise through negotiation helps in solving the conflict.

The compromise is a better/more valid status compared to the previous one. It responds, even if temporarily, to the demands of the conflicting parties with different but satisfactory levels.

To have a “good” compromise, many considerations/principles shall be taken into consideration, and at the top:

- The principle of equality and/or parity of compromises offered by the conflicting parties.
- The compromise shall guarantee the conditions of peace.
- The compromise shall not include any prior judgments or assumptions about the future (openness principle).

Violence

More than a method of conflict resolution, violence is a situation of irregularity and exception inside the conflict status. It is a mechanism that struggles to eliminate and eradicate the other. It denies the right of the other person to his/her different needs, interests, and values.

During this violence mechanism, the other is denied human qualities and values to facilitate the process of his/her extermination.

Non-Violence

Non-violence seeks peace through justice. It is a holistic approach to the conflict, not only in personal relations but in social, local and international conflicts.

The legitimate expression of needs by people and groups leads to conflicting situations.

The direct non-violent action methods allow this kind of friction in the conflict without generating violence and facilitates positive communication to reach a win-win situation.

Non-Violent Action

There are many non-violent action methods (non cooperation, strikes, boycott, civil disobedience...etc)

Such methods aim at exerting pressure on the adversary, accompanied at the same time by an awareness campaign on the existing oppression and injustice targeting the public opinion.

The matching will and determination of non-violent activists and the pressure of the public opinion make a successful movement and bring the adversary to the negotiation table.

Force

Dialogue and negotiation only cannot handle and change an established conflicting situation between a despot and victim of injustice/oppressor and oppressed/repressor and repressed. The repressed person shall often prove his/her determination and will to recover his/her lost rights. He/she shall use force to restore equilibrium, and force here does not mean violence, but contradicts it.

The non-violent action exerts pressure on the adversary without breaking communication with him/her and avoiding the declaration of violence. Only this force is able to bring the adversary to negotiate. On the other hand, non-violent action encompasses an ongoing and essential call to the public opinion to stop its

cooperation and neutral positions with the established injustice. But this happens in a well-thought and suitable timing and regarding a specific and accurate subject in the time and place to give this force the utmost momentum and pressure.

Repair

The non-violent solution to the conflict aims at establishing justice. Nevertheless, establishing justice only is not enough to put the foundations of a new status. It shall be accompanied by a restorative project that reties the broken relations. It is a sine qua none condition with no other alternative to restore previous relations.

Reconciliation

The non-violent solution to the conflict entails the examination of the essence of the conflict and the creation of solutions that meet the needs of the conflicting parties. The basic issue for a good resolution of the conflict is to achieve justice.

Through the continuous care of the respect of others, the restoration of relations and integration in the social life, the non-violent solution to the conflict creates a big opportunity of reconciliation between parties, therefore, achieving a sincere and true reconciliation.

Dialogue

Dialogue enables reunion, exchange and confrontation of different ideas and positions. It also allows for understanding and respecting the point of view and incentives of the other, without forcibly approving them.

Listening

Listening allows for understanding the other person, being aware of his/her needs and knowing his/her role in the existing conflict, without judging this person's quality and in fully respecting him.

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