

CHAPTER 8

THE CONDUCT OF A WORKSHOP

In a CAPS workshop, the analysis of a conflict and a resolution are two aspects of the same process. What the parties have to say about the conflict provides the source of its solution. Therefore, everything that happens in the workshop has to be designed to increase the probability that the participants engage in genuine communication, and correspondingly reduce the chances of a breakdown of the meeting.

1. The First Workshop: An Ideal Model

In a perfectly constructed and wholly successful workshop, the flow of events follows a smoothly evolving pattern, passing through four broad phases. The meeting opens with greetings and assurances that the proceedings will be informal and confidentially directed towards understanding and research. This is an important event, which sets the tone of the first days of the workshop. It should be carefully prepared and delivered, with some contingency planning for the kind of issues that participants often raise at the outset of the workshop. Can one take and take away notes? Will a record be kept? Can one introduce written evidence? Should one interrupt other speakers with questions or to 'set the record straight'?

SEE EXERCISE 8.1

The participants are then invited, in turn, to explain to the whole group the nature and origins of the conflict, its present state, and what appear to be key obstacles to its solution. Presentations follow, and usually take at least two days in total depending upon the number of participants. They should be given without interruption or debate, a requirement that calls for tact and skill on the part of the lead facilitator and other members of the panel, because the atmosphere often becomes tense and fraught with emotion. The account by each side includes references to history, atrocity stories perhaps affecting family members of those present, and a great deal of provocative comment on present and future conditions, possible outcomes and the effects of various forms of outside intervention. Much emotion can characterize this first stage of most workshops, but this should not be surprising given the protracted and possibly violent nature of the conflict under analysis. It is absolutely necessary to complete this stage of the process, to allow participants a full opportunity to present their histories of the conflict and their own feelings about events, motivations, the other side, their own justifications and aspirations - and aspects of the conflicted relationship that they deem important in its development, protraction and resistance to solution. This first stage can seem long-drawn-out and depressing, but it is important not to try to cut it short. Until participants feel that they have 'told their story' in a way fully satisfactory to them, they will be unwilling to move on to consider the present and the future rather than the past and its effects on the present. Premature closure of this process can be self-defeating.

It is possible to discern that a turning-point has been reached when participants begin to repeat themselves and show frustrating signs of recognizing that they seem to be 'going around in circles' and getting nowhere. In many cases, participants begin to display an air of waiting to see what will happen next and to display a slightly impatient expectation that the panel 'do' something. At that point, members of the panel need to provide some 'bridge' from the initial stage of the workshop into a second and hopefully more productive stage.

SEE EXERCISE 8.2

A variety of options is now open to the facilitating panel. Members can ask a series of carefully prepared 'clarifying' questions about points made during presentations that open up further issues or probe more deeply into why certain events took place, or why widely differing perceptions and interpretations arose. They can begin to construct a list of key issues or points for further discussion with the participants. They can stimulate a general discussion of what seem to be 'the main issues' as derived from the opening statements by the participants. The last should be done by the panellists without padding or any judgement whatever and often consists mainly of inquiry into the theoretical implications of the factual and historical statements that have previously been made. In this way, the ground covered is retraced, but this is not done with the purpose of reconciling differences, nor to set the historical record straight. It is done by the panellists often with the evident and rather formal purpose of using what they have heard in order to improve their theories. Relevant general theories about why conflicts occur can be discussed. Models of conflict processes can be considered. In particular, panellists can draw parallels with other conflicts. They can talk at some length about conflicts that have occurred in the past, conflicts at other social levels, and conflicts that are currently taking place in other parts of the world. This will usually be met with a response from the participants that their conflict is 'different' (as, of course, it is) but some comfort generally seems to arise

from a recognition that, while their conflict *is* different, it is not necessarily completely unique. Moreover, others have found workable solutions to conflicts that do not appear wholly dissimilar.

Hopefully, the tension drops as the participants become interested and involved in this second phase of the workshop. In most cases, it will require approximately as much time as the first phase, so that the phase usually begins to come to an end on about the fourth day. Its conclusion is signaled when the participants begin to take a serious part in the business correcting what the panelists have to say about conflict theory. There is a progressive decay in the number of set-piece monologues from both participants and panelists, although the facilitating panel may have to work strenuously to bring this about, especially when participants come to the workshop with their own, rigidly set agendas.

SEE EXERCISE 8.3.

At this point, long statements, indignant rebuttals, provocative challenges or responses and harsh accusations gradually diminish, and something recognizably like a good academic seminar emerges around the table. The panel can begin to feel that the workshop has succeeded in its first task.

The third phase involves a focus on the central problem: how to end, or begin to end, the violent conflict under consideration. Discussion is again guided by the panelists, although firmly within a non-judgmental style, and a day or so is spent on it. They take the group through the various possibilities for a termination of their conflict, selecting one by one the 'solution' identified and recommended by the various participants in earlier statements. Each possible formula is discussed strictly in terms of its theoretical properties, illustrated with references where and when some version of it has been used before in the world, under what conditions and with what effect.

In the course of this discussion, every single one of prescriptions favoured by each party before arrival at workshop is likely to be rejected. The rejection occurs not so much because of the unacceptability of any given proposal to the opposition, as represented at this discussion, but more usually because of the theoretical predictions that can be made about the probable future history of each scheme if it were ever implemented; its constitutional impracticability, its functional shortcoming, or the unrest that would result from some injustice contained within it.

The workshop members are left, therefore, with the central problem to be solved. The situation is now understood, in the sense everyone present is satisfied that everyone else present has an accurate grasp of what the difficulties are. The problem is the parties in the conflict could and should do next.

At this stage, the mood of the workshop is frequently one of discouragement. The participants do not necessarily enjoy being in the presence of their opponents any more than they did at the outset of the workshop. In fact, they may enjoy it less, because harsh words have been exchanged and pet ideas have been crushed. But the participants do recognize, in a way that they might not at the beginning, the extent of their opponents' commitment and determination, and the limits within which both sides are free to act. Realistic mutual perceptions should have been achieved. Everyone begins to develop an awareness that this workshop has nearly run its course. But none of the proposed solutions seems to be viable. What remains?

What remains is an uncomfortable choice. That, at least, is usually clear to all those present. Either the participants return to the conflict, and carry on as before; or something must happen, now, in the workshop. There is a real danger that the participants pack their papers in their briefcases and leave. But usually they do not. They stay, because 'carrying on as before' is considerably less attractive to them than it was, and in any case they have been engaging in violent conflict behaviour not from *attraction* but from *compulsion*. The exchanges in the workshop have demonstrated in vivid detail just what is to be expected in the way resistance from the adversaries. And the probable long-term consequences of permitting the conflict to escalate have been thoroughly examined, to equally depressing effect.

Discussion then enters the last days, and its final substantive phase. The clashing perceptions and combative intentions of the parties are explicitly known. It is usually all too apparent that the area of possible initial agreement is very small indeed, almost too small to be seen. The participants are forced, by their own, shared, hostile logic, to focus upon that tiny area. Almost visibly, they will try to expand. Panelists can help by suggesting possibilities for expansion, or how it might develop, but the nature of that development is for the participants to choose and explore. And they usually do, because they can now see that to focus upon this is the only realistic course of action open to them. This becomes a path towards resolution; the process of this initial workshop is complete.

Before considering in more detail the theory and practice of this workshop process, it should be emphasized that two things do not happen in a workshop. Most importantly, each party's basic, underlying attitudes towards the other side are not changed, although respect for the individual participants in the workshop may increase. If there were fundamental changes, a workshop would become a brainwashing session, which it is not. And it would be a pointless exercise, because the brainwashing process would be obvious to the colleagues of the participants as soon as they returned to their normal activities. Everything they say would be discounted. Instead, a workshop should ensure that mutually hostile perceptions are not

necessarily reduced, but may even be heightened, sharpened, enlarged, intensified – but, above all, they are understood. Workshops should be exercises in realism, not in wishful thinking.

Equally, the workshop is rarely a joyous occasion during which the participants achieve their resolution by acquiring firm friendships in the opposite camp, henceforth resolving conflict on a new basis of mutual liking and willing cooperation. That process might be more likely with interpersonal conflicts, where attitudes matter more than resources, but it is initially irrelevant to the representative process by which large-scale social and political conflicts must be tackled. Personal feelings of amity or discord among participants in a workshop are only peripherally relevant with the underlying potential for resolution, with two provisos;

- (1) The participants must actually go through the process; if they should walk out, switch off or waste too much time and energy on vituperation, they would never see the point of it.
- (2) At some later stage in the overall resolution process, an accompanying large-scale reconciliation process involving the grass-roots members of warring adversaries must be set in train; if this process of conflict transformation is not effected then agreements at elite levels will simply be repudiated at a later date and the conflict will resume.

For an effective 're-entry' of the participants into their own political surroundings and an equally effective 'follow-up' process of conflict *transformation*, the only solid foundation is a cool realism. That is the aim of the workshop. There are no magic solutions to severe, protracted conflict. The escalation of a conflict is caused by unrealistic attitudes and expectations. Escalation can be stopped only by a realistic understanding, by the parties themselves, of what is happening, what can be expected happen, and what can be done about it.

2. The Practical Aspects

To enable the flow of communications to proceed smoothly, some of the principles of group dynamics need to be applied in designing and managing the workshop. The most important of these is concerned with numbers. Serious discussion cannot occur in large groups, just as it cannot take place on a public platform. Optimal size of a CAPS workshop is about twelve persons, comprise eight participants and four panelists, although reasonably successful ones have been mounted with as many as twenty.

It is desirable also to achieve continuity in personnel, but for various reasons affecting both participants and panelists this may be difficult to maintain over any length of time. Some workshop have been run with floating populations of up to forty or people, including 'in-and-out' panelists and representatives of a series of different parties. Flexibility and variety do, of course, have advantages, and there is legitimate debate about the *relative* efficacy of different models. But the objectives of shared vocabulary, a degree of 'trust' (in strictly workshop-purpose terms) and the build-up of a joint creative tension (in short, a 'workshop culture'), all point towards the model of a single, small group, in a single room throughout the meetings. Deviation from this tends to shift the process towards bargaining, conference procedures with formalized rules, and public display.

Numbers are also important as regards the overall size of the facilitating panel with its attendant observers and advisers. Again, it is important to keep this overall 'Planning Group' relative small and close-knit, although there is always a temptation bring in more people, either because they can offer local expertise on the conflict, or because their presence will help familiarize them with problem-solving procedures, or because their organizations are sponsoring the workshop. These reasons are all more or less valid, but they should not be allowed to supersede the basic rule of keeping the Planning Group flexible and manageable. A maximum of eight members seems to work well. Beyond that, numbers begin to interfere with coherence and effectiveness.

Second to numbers in importance is the nature of the agenda. A problem-solving meeting opens with no detailed agenda. Proceedings will be built around the single general-purpose item that is known to all concerned in the early stages of the exercise. This is that the participants should each explain their conflict to the panelists, in the presence of their opponents. If inquiries should be made about what happens after that, the answer is that what has been said will then be thoroughly discussed. That is the basic agenda, and it should be openly described at the outset, although it is also sometimes helpful to suggest certain broad topics - conflict origins, underlying issues, obstacles to progress - which might well be discussed during the five or six days of meetings.

In discussing these points with the parties *in advance*, it is important to explain the absence of the familiar, itemized agenda, with its briefing papers, draft resolutions and working texts. It may also be necessary to allay suspicions that what is about to happen is some kind of therapeutic exercise, a T-group, or a cult process. Decision-makers may, or may not, approve of such exercises for other people to indulge in. But they certainly will regard it as a waste of time for their own busy staff, advisors or consultants to engage in them. So the workshop should be described, and run, as what it is: a research seminar,

open-ended, with the detailed agenda emerging point by point in response to the wishes and interests of the party representatives as they go through the features of the conflict.

Physical details also deserve attention because of their effect on the behaviour of those present. Arrangements for seating can be critical, particularly where the participants see themselves as having symbolic roles. In inter-governmental mediation, seating arrangements, and even doorway provision, have been known to wreck negotiations before they commence. In a problem-solving workshop, seating arrangements should be such as to convey the desired nature of the discussions: informal, but serious. Successful workshops in the past have always employed a single large table, square or preferably round, with adequate elbow room for all concerned. The lead facilitator (or chairperson) takes up any position, or in the centre of one long side if the shape deviates from the preferred circular model; and panelists should take seats on either side of him in case those locations are thought to determine precedence. Participants are invited to choose their own seats, and invariably do so in opposed rows, which they then retain.

For problem-solving and its fundamental reliance upon formal conflict theory, blackboards or flip charts are a basic need. The panelists must be prepared to use them extensively to draw diagrams, models, tables, maps and other symbols for the simplified display of complex ideas. Problem solving cannot succeed unless the panelists can capture the genuine interest of the participants in what they have to say. Conflict theory is not an easy subject.

Bodily comfort, control of stress and the maintenance of attention all need to be provided for as well. In these matters, the timetable is decisive. Six hours a day, in two sessions each having a short break at midpoint, is a practical norm. It allows for meals and drinks to be taken together, which may (but only may) be helpful in encouraging the participants to mix with each other. It also gives a needed opportunity for each party, panel included, to caucus and thus to debate their contribution to each forthcoming session. In practice, many workshops have been timetabled more intensively than this, because the people involved were short time. It is sometimes argued that intensive timetabling should always be done, and even that the organizers should employ supporting devices, such as clock-stopping, in order to coerce weary discussants into agreement. Such proposals are usually counter-productive. A problem-solving workshop cannot indulge in coercion in any form at all, or it fails.

3. The Role of the Panel

Panelists in a workshop have one of the most daunting of tasks known to social science. They have to be neutral. But we have long known, from ideologists and philosophers, both in the world of hard politics and in the self-indulgent world intellectual theorizing, that in the world of action, there are neutral persons. He (or she) who acts can only act upon his (or her) values. Values, by definition, specify choices. Choices, in turn, are by definition one-sided. Hence, anyone who acts in workshop runs the danger of favouring – or, at least, being seen to favour – one party.

There is no simple answer to this formidable observation. Its logic has undermined most of the well-meaning efforts at constructive mediation throughout history. Equally, most of the apparently successful 'resolutions' of conflicts in which a powerful intervening third party has played a major role demonstrate the principle clearly and directly. Typically, one party is favoured, with or without compensation, under some bargained or imposed arrangement which, essentially, takes the form of a compromise. On examination, these 'resolutions' turn out to be mere settlements: terminations imposed on the conflicting parties by the power, resources or authority of the third party.

If a panelist should forget the logic of neutrality in the course of a workshop, he stands to ruin his own credibility, and possibly that of the entire problem-solving approach as well. Therefore, he must not 'act'. What this means is that he should always try to avoid making any substantive comment or, particularly, moral judgement upon the characteristics of the parties, on the case which their representatives put forward, or on the merits of any outcome under discussion. It bears repeating that a confrontation between participants, people who represent groups in violent conflict, is in deadly earnest. It is not an intellectual game. It is the most sensitive of circumstances, and the demand placed upon the panelists is correspondingly extreme.

Panelists, then, are part of the furniture – the intellectual furniture in their case. Their first and most important task in any workshop is to listen and to make an analysis of the nature of the issues in the conflict and of the obstacles to its peaceful resolution. This is the first time they will have had the opportunity to do this with members of the parties in conflict together in one room, and often the conflict is revealed as being very different from that portrayed in parties' public positions or in outside analyses. Panelists need to listen for submerged issues, for hidden agendas, for unnoticed and unacknowledged hurts and resentments. They must note the differences between the public and private issues that exist within most parties in conflict. They must use their own experience of analysing conflicts to point them in the direction of relevant theories and insights about the causes, dynamics and exacerbating factors in this particular case. Positive and sensitive listening is demanded, not least because the panel needs to understand important nuances of the situation but because it is also an important confidence-building tactic to demonstrate 'committed' and

Careful listening to what participants have to say. Moreover, by undertaking 'careful listening', panel members may serve as a persuasive model for participants, whose inclination to listen hard to what other participants say, especially adversaries, may not be very strong.

SEE EXERCISE 8.4

Apart from careful listening and analysis, the panelists undertake other intellectual tasks. They supply insights, ideas, theories and parallels. They do this by asking questions, making analogies, drawing pictures, describing other situations, puzzling over definitions or details which they have trouble grasping, constantly returning to points made by participants and re-phrasing them, probing assumptions and drawing out implications. This should not mean that the participants perceive the panelists as bland or ineffectual. On the contrary, an effective panel can create some respect among the participants, which is a dangerous tendency because, as everyone knows, power tends to corrupt and no panelist should be exposed to the temptation to behave like King Solomon.

There is, however, one sense in which the values of the panelists should be made explicitly clear. Their values should be visible in the same way that the values of a doctor are visible to his patient. Just as the doctor's commitments to life and health are known to be sworn on oath, so panelist's commitment to a functional, just and non-violent social structure should be apparent in his every contribution. And just as the doctor must respect his patient's right to live as he pleases, whatever the damaging consequences, so the panelists must show their respect for the right of the parties to determine their own conduct. In short, to serve as a panelist in a problem-solving workshop is to learn what both politics and applied social science are really about.

4. The Role of Ideas in Problem Solving

The practical job of the panel members thus consists of listening, taking notes (done quite openly, although filming and recording are wholly inappropriate), asking questions and making academic points. The 'academic points' draw upon whatever body of theory and practice is relevant to the topics emerging as the case proceeds.

One commonly employed set of material is that which describe the tendency of conflicts to escalate, which is fortunately the best understood part of conflict theory. The panelist needs to be ready with ideas and examples about the interdependence of parties to a dispute; the escalatory effect of sacrifice and commitment; the polarization of attitudes; the way in which issues are changed and party alignments are shifted with each upward twist of a conflict spiral; ideas about the dynamics of arms races; of displacement and scape-goating; of the propensity for the parties to seek allies and for external parties to intervene.

The theme running all through this material is that of costs, benefits and alternatives. To fight involves costs of many kinds which include loss of freedom of choice and severe attitude changes in society, in addition to the more obvious costs involve in the exchange of butter for guns, the killing and maiming human beings and the destruction of homes, fields, highways and factories. Decision-makers in any conflict situation are concerned, constantly and rightly, about these costs, but they are usually forced by the logic of circumstances to see them as justifiable in relation to the potential benefits to be gained.

What may be less clear to them, because of the terrible short term pressures upon any leader in a crisis, is the way in which progressive accumulation of costs forces an equally progressive inflation of the anticipated benefits. An escalating conflict, therefore, has a logic of its own, comparable perhaps to that of a gathering hurricane in the atmosphere, or an impending multiple crash of cars travelling at speed on a super highway in misty conditions. Within this systemic framework, it should be possible to assist the participants in identifying the elements within the process by which they, as responsible authorities, are in danger of losing control over their own decisions. There are stages where the pace accelerates, decisions have a multiplier effect, and actions are undertaken, the consequences of which can never be taken back. As the kings and chancellors of Europe learned in August 1914, there are points of no return.

While engaged in this process of guiding the analysis of problem, the panelists need to be extremely careful when applying the most suggestive body of theory concerning conflict spirals, namely the theory of perception. It is especially a problem for a social psychologist, who can unwittingly find himself lecturing participants on the many ways in which cognitive dissonance theory, for example, proves them to be in the grip of misperceptions. They may be said to be misperceiving their opponents' behaviour, their own goals, the implications of the messages both sides transmit, and even their own fundamental values.

To do this (and much of the existing body of scholarly literature on the subject seems to suggest that panelists *should* do this) is not only an insult to the intelligence and responsibility of the participants; it also thwarts the purposes of the problem-solving process. It implies, logically, that the conflict is subjective, a thing that will dissipate of its own accord once a perceptual readjustment is made.

In a God-given sense, this does appear to be true; there is no objective need for massive violence in human affairs, merely a requirement for continuous adjustment of conflicting goals and actions as the risk of potential collision and damage becomes apparent. But in the context of a workshop, the parties are already ensnared in a genuine conflict situation. Damage has been done and more damage is likely. Intentions are hostile. These things are real, and the parties do their own self-interest no violation whatever in thinking of them as real. It is, consequently, something of an act of arrogance for a panelist to suggest to a participant that misperception is the root of the problem. It suggests that the panelist knows better than the participant what the facts are. He cannot possibly know that, and must never allow himself to think that he does.

Insofar as misperceptions can be identified in the analysis of the problem, and it always does seem to be present in substantial amounts, it should be treated as a physician treats psychosomatic pain. What the patient is suffering is completely genuine, but its cause may not be what he thinks it is.

The only possible cause of misperception that should, perhaps, be brought out into the open for full-scale destruction in a workshop is that most malignant of perceptual errors, the extreme hostile stereotype. If one party sees the other as totally malign, capable only of wicked acts, ways must be sought for the accused participant to show that these things are not so. His very presence in the meeting should be enough in itself to begin to break down this image and to show that there are potential negotiating partners on the other side.

Whereas perception theory is a minefield which has to be traversed, our experience suggests that there are other broad expanses of conflict theory which need not even be approached. Most of them deal with those broad-gauge interpretations of conflict causation and conflict structure that may together be called 'metaphysical' in the sense that they cannot be proved true or false. For the decision-maker, who may have suffered the misfortune of dogmatic inculcation with some of these ideas while taking university courses, they present nasty problems.

At the least, they demean him by their pretentious implications that only high-powered intellectuals can grasp their subtleties. At the worst, they frustrate his capacity to make choices that benefit his followers, by their suggestion that history is fated, controlled inexorably by mysterious historical forces that will work out his destiny in a way that he is powerless to prevent.

Most prominent among these pseudo-scientific claims is that which asserts that states live, in international relations, in a permanent condition of perpetual, objective conflict. The condition is said to be uniform and multi-dimensional, expressed in the 'laws' of power politics. Minor variants of this family of irrelevant dogmas suggest that geo-political considerations determine political decisions, or that climate shapes national character. An unsophisticated item is the modern form of Social Darwinism predicting that racial conflict is destined to work out its savage course in human affairs, and cannot be stopped. At the other extreme, sophisticated bodies of theory suggest that relations between rich and poor communities are necessarily, inevitably and 'homogeneously' shaped into patterns of dominance and dependency. At an even higher level of sophistication, it is argued that political processes are fundamentally ordered according to class struggles, which, in turn, follows the historical course of material or technological change.

What is wrong with such ideas, for workshop purposes, is not that they are incorrect. Some of them may be right, in an ethereal domain of human understanding. Centuries of intelligent debate have, after all, culminated in the agreement of reasonable men to disagree about them. There is no question that, as ideas in themselves, some of them are important.

But for a workshop, the point is that they are of little practical use. They do not tell anyone what to do, when faced with a specific problem to be solved. Worse, they encourage fatalism, an excuse for decision-makers to rationalize away responsibility for the effects of their decisions. An appeal to one of them, which occurs from time to time in workshop discussion, is simply to flourish a red herring, the equivalent of a politician's pre-election promise to be all things to all men.

On the other hand, many of the unpretentious, smaller-scale theories of the causes and processes of conflict do have the potential for stimulating non-fatalistic, more productive discussion. These include ideas about resource scarcity and rank disequilibrium; various theories of rebellion and revolution; the prisoner's dilemma and game theory generally, including the zero sum/positive-sum distinction; theories about the nature of power; the Pareto optimum theorem; control theory and various other ideas about the nature of obedience to authority; and theories about the trickiest intellectual problem of all in conflict analysis - positional role defence.

In a workshop, these more concrete sets of ideas have two significant utilities. First, they are technically interesting, discussable in themselves and probably novel for at least some of the participants. Some of them lend themselves to being presented as graphic models on the blackboard, such as shifting alliances and cross-cutting cleavages; others can be shown to have a neat fit in history, both in domestic and international politics. Second, they are usable. They can be shown to lead towards a stimulating, productive body of ideas for the closing phases of a workshop. Fundamental distinctions, like that between associative and dis-associative peace strategies, can be offered for examination. '[t]he role of boundaries, partitions, and constitutionally entrenched clauses relating to majority and minority communities, all typical issues facing the

participants in a workshop, can be related to fundamental and repetitive patterns as demonstrated by the relevant theories.

At this concluding stage, discussion may well be steered towards integration theory. Its emphasis on managed social change is valuable. But it should be used selectively. Some of the scholarly writings about it can be misleading. These materials are based on the false assumption that the only way to solve small scale conflicts, even at the international level, is to create bigger and stronger states with full statutory provisions and with giant sized law-and-order forces to apply them. This is of no help to a workshop, because it is just as historicist as broad-gauge philosophies of inevitable conflict. A complete nation-state cannot be constructed in an academic workshop.

But integration theory also contains many ideas that can be used to enable the parties to see some way forward. Some of these are relatively abstract, such as the distinction between basic human needs, freely expressed human values, and the 'institutional' values of behaviour learned within a particular socio-situation, which could be changed by deliberate policy. Discussion of values leads to an examination of the notions of identity, legitimacy, and self-determination, which are the basic building-blocks of genuinely peaceful relationships. Time can be productively spent examining them.

Other ideas are more concrete, such as the notion of participation. Everyone alive has an intuitive understanding of human dignity, which means that the proposition that participation is a *sine qua non* for effective problem solving can easily be accepted, and its implications spelled out by the participants. The practical utilities of classical functionalism can also be coaxed into the discussion, because the notion of functional co-operation, or productive exchange, is universally understood in theory and applied in practice. That functionalism has far-reaching political implications, however, may not be a familiar idea, and panelists should find opportunities to emphasise the point.

Finally, many workshops inevitably arrive at a most pressing, need to spend much time discussing the nature and source of security. The sense of insecurity among the participants is likely to be very high, and any moves towards a resolution of their conflict needs to be accompanied by an increase in everyone's mutual security - or, at least, no diminution of it. Thus, our experience is that many workshops spend time discussing issues of trust, and lack of it; how to reduce tension between adversaries; what confidence building measures might be envisaged in future; and where they have successfully been used in the past, in other conflicts. Many final sessions of successful workshops have focused on the theory de-escalation processes, and on their practicalities - unfortunately one of the least developed branches of conflict theory.

Theories as such can thus be introduced by the panelists, although their natural tendency to give pat lectures must be firmly curbed. Fortunately, experience suggests that even the most wise, confident and experienced panelists can neither predict the actual outcome of any given workshop, nor forecast which set of ideas will eventually crystallize to form the basis of a minimally practicable resolution strategy.

5. Final Stages: Preparing for Return

In a successful workshop, participants should at least return with the feeling that they have developed a new, deeper and possibly different understanding of the conflict in which they are mutually involved, and with some ideas about how it might be moved nearer a solution, as well as some hope that it can be. Sometimes, these ideas are summarized in a number of mutually agreeable principles on which a long-term solution might be based.

SEE EXERCISE 8.5.

On other occasions, more concrete proposals for mutually reinforcing de-escalatory moves and follow up actions on participants' return to their own country or community, are discussed, and tentatively agreed. On yet others, the first of a series of mutual confidence-building measures has been sketched out for presentation to decision-makers.

At this final stage of the workshop, another sign of its success may be the participants' ability to assist each other in what will frequently be the difficult task of returning home after having talked to 'the enemy' and bringing a set of ideas for consideration by decision-makers or opinion-leaders who have not been through the workshop. 'Re-entry' is usually a difficult process for all participants and this shows itself in the latter stages of most workshops - particularly initial ones dealing with a protracted and violent conflict - in two ways.

Firstly, there is an increasing concern among participants with issues of confidentiality, and what information will be released about the workshop, by whom and in what manner.

SEE EXERCISE 8.6

Secondly, as participants realize that the workshop is almost over, even though there may be mention of a follow-up workshop (or even several) their positions, attitudes and statements often start to harden

somewhat. They tend to revert to the pattern of behaviour shown in the very early stages of the workshop. This may be disappointing for the panelists, but it is understandable in participants who may be anticipating having to justify their defence of their party's interests and positions on their return home. Disappointing or not, it has to be anticipated and dealt with.

Ideally, this issue of 'how best to arrange for return' forms the last topic of the workshop and, in a successful workshop, both sets of participants will be able, at least, to recognize that their opposite numbers *also* face a re-entry problem similar to, if not exactly the same as their own. In a highly successful workshop, both panel and participants may be able to discuss openly the details of this shared problem and work out a scheme or some guidelines which will help all participants avoid embarrassment and personal danger on their return.

Even with such guidelines and subsequent mutually supportive behaviour, which at the very least, takes the form of a mutual agreement about what participants will NOT do on their return home, the re-entry problem is a difficult one for those concerned. Both the members of the panel and all the consultants need to reflect on how this might best be achieved by their guests and what the consultant organization could do *after the workshop* to help ease the process.

From the brief outline above it should be clear that the final resolution of conflict does not happen as a magical transformation. At the end of a workshop there is often no flood of mutual sympathy, no burst of applause for an overwhelming breakthrough, not even a set of grudging signatures to some watered down, painfully negotiated communique. At the least, the participants will thank the panelists for having provided the opportunity for the exchanges, and then say, not merely as a courtesy, that they will be returning home with things to think about. At best, they will depart with specific ideas about possible actions, often small in scale but perhaps potentially large in significance, that might be undertaken by their home organizations.

In our experience, participants nearly always suggest that similar workshops should be held in the future. For the panelists, that may be justification enough, and the event counted as a success. However, the suggestion itself must be anticipated and some thought devoted to the possibilities and problems of follow up workshops, even if the intention of the consultants has always been to plan and conduct several more workshops as part of the overall exercise. What is implied for a workshop series, as opposed to a single meeting?

6. Continuing the Exercise: Workshop Sets and Series

While in the early days of the development of problem-solving approaches, the single workshop was the most that many consultants attempted, more recently there has been a recognition of the inadequacy of problem-solving exercises that consist simply of isolated meetings. Given the complexity of many protracted and deep-rooted conflicts, increased recognition of the need for a sustained, long-term effort to develop acceptable solutions has led to the use of a number of linked workshops. Some involve the same set of participants; others a widening circle of participants; still others a wholly new set of participants from related conflict levels.

This development should not be surprising, in view of the complexity of many protracted conflicts and our earlier comments in Chapter 5 about the need for problem-solving exercises to deal with multi-level or inter-linked conflicts, even if they generally should start with the conflicts at the levels most immediately affected. However, workshop series do pose numerous problems for consultants, and they are problems which are only just beginning to be explored in any systematic fashion. Questions about how workshops should be linked to one another, about what should be the order in which topics are tackled and participants invited to a workshop series, and about the linking of a set of workshops to official interactions and ultimately negotiations, all need to be posed and answered in theory and, ultimately, in practice.

To date, two models of sets of workshops have been developed and used by consultants. The first is the open ended 'series', in which an initial successful workshop generates a demand for further, similar meetings among participants who have found the contacts and discussions with 'the other side' useful and encouraging, at least in the sense of giving hope that some of the options tentatively discussed might lead towards a lasting solution. Often participants wish to return to report on the reception that new ideas and insights have had 'back home'. On other occasions, there is a wish to maintain contacts with participants from the adversary on more than a 'long distance' basis, and to gain some mutual reassurance from further meetings.

In this model, while the consultants may anticipate requests for further meetings, the exercise series continues only on an ad hoc basis, each subsequent workshop arising from participants' feelings that: (a) a further meeting is desirable and useful, or (b) that others would benefit from being included in the circle of those attending a workshop.

At present it is too early to suggest any general rules about ad hoc workshop series, as there have been too few from which to generalize. Experience does tentatively suggest, however, that participants tend to exhaust the workshop formula after three or at most four meetings. The reasons are firstly, that both the novelty and utility of establishing a channel of face-to-face communication with members of the 'enemy'

wear off, and some repetition sets in. Secondly, either the exercise is a success, in which case the interaction moves to more official levels and formal contacts replace those previously being held privately and off the record; or the exercise runs up against major barriers, frustration sets in, and participants turn to other forms of activity to seek a solution to the conflict.

If the 'series' model is an ad hoc, developmental one that takes advantage of opportunities for extending the set as they are demanded by participants, the model of a 'continuing' workshop is far more purposefully planned by the third parties. In the few examples of such purposeful exercises, the third party deliberately plans for a number of linked workshops to meet at stated intervals, with a focused, if flexible, agenda of topics for discussion. Participants are asked to commit themselves for the whole set of workshops, which means that they will have to anticipate and plan to deal not just with a series of re-entry points but also with the strong possibility that a widening circle of people within each adversary will learn that the meetings are occurring and the names of those attending. There is no need to emphasize the increased care that has to be taken in maintaining high levels of confidentiality, and the careful and credible justification needed for the continuation of the exercise.

The great advantage of such a continuing workshop, as opposed to an ad hoc series, is that a systematic programme of talks and discussions dealing with difficult problems in a logical sequence can be undertaken without losing the flexibility that enables new subjects and issues to be added to the workshop agenda as they arise. Given the customary dynamics of protracted conflicts, between-workshop events are bound to have an impact, on the relationships between the parties. These events, therefore, need to be examined and understood at the start of subsequent workshops, which can provide a forum for calmer analysis of their ongoing effects than would otherwise be available. However, the main focus of continuing workshops should be, and usually is, on the discussion and development of long-term solutions to the protracted conflict. This involves dealing systematically with the root causes of the conflict, rather than with behavioral manifestations of deep-rooted antagonisms. Long-term causes and long range solutions are properly the focus of continuing workshops.

Each of the three types of workshop discussed above - single workshops, ad hoc series and continuing workshops - presents consultants and organizers with a number of problems of assessment and evaluation, which are inextricably linked with the whole process of re-entry and follow-up. It is obviously important that participants should be fully prepared for return to their own country and their own party, whether or not there are plans for further meetings. It is equally important that each meeting is evaluated in its own terms and also in its effects on the conflict under analysis. This final task is discussed in the next chapter.

Exercise 8.1: Opening the Proceedings.

Background Discussion.

The task of making the opening statement that starts a collaborative problem-solving workshop is an important one, and customarily falls either to the main organizer of the workshop, who will have previously had personal contact with and thus be a familiar face; or to the panel member who is undertaking the chairing role during the opening session.

Whoever does it has a sensitive task. The participants must be welcomed and put at their ease. The panel must be introduced - and the participants, if necessary. Administrative arrangements should be set out clearly. More importantly, the aims and hopes of the workshop must be introduced in an interesting and motivating manner, without over-doing inspiration or rhetoric.

Ground rules for the meeting must be reiterated and acceptance obtained. Confidentiality and informality of proceedings must again be stressed. An outline agenda needs to be presented and agreed. Other key issues specific to that workshop must be covered.

Finally, the opening statement must lead easily into the first stage of the workshop: the request to participants to present their views of the current stage of the conflict, and the major obstacles to, and constraints on, the parties seeking a resolution.

Exercise Scenario

YOU have succeeded in finally getting participants and panel together for your planned five-day workshop on the Zandian-Azanian problem, although there was some last-minute difficulty with the attendance of the members representing the views of the ALF to the workshop, the reasons for which are not quite clear to the Planning Committee.

The members of the workshop have entered the conference room, settled themselves around the oval table, both sets of participants grouping together and carefully avoiding eye contact (even though, as you are aware, they are all personally known to one another); members of the panel have distributed themselves between and amongst the two groups. You are the lead facilitator for the first morning and have the task of introducing and starting off the workshop.

Exercise Task

Prepare and deliver the opening statement for that particular workshop, giving your fellow panel members a brief opportunity to introduce themselves and say why they are attending a workshop specifically on 'the Zandian-Azanian problem'.

End by requesting participants to begin to present their accounts of the current state of the conflict and their views of obstacles to a solution, and determine who speaks first.

Before anyone can respond to your last request, one of the ALF members of the workshop raises the issue of confidentiality and says that he feels that any useful findings, ideas or reports from the workshop should be made public. 'After all,' he says, 'what's the use of secret ideas if they are any good?'

How do you respond?

Exercise 8.2. Moving Out Of Stage One.

Exercise Scenario.

YOU and your fellow panel members have just spent two intellectually exhausting days facilitating what you hope will be the first of a series of workshops on the Zandian conflict.

Invited to present their assessment of the sources of the present civil war in Zandia, to give their views about the major current obstacles to a peaceful settlement and to give voice to the present concerns and aspirations of their parties, each member of the three-person teams presenting the views of the Zandian Government and the Azania Liberation Front has made a long and at times acrimonious presentation, during one of which a member of the opposing group walked out, saying he had not come here to listen to a pack of lies and propaganda.

Each of the presentations listed grievances against the crimes of the other side carried out during the war; presented a historical account favourable to their own side and highlighting the immoralities, untrustworthiness and insatiable ambitions of the other side, particularly its present leadership; demonstrated the legal and historical correctness of their own legitimate ambitions (the maintenance of territorial integrity and of given African boundaries by the Government; the right of national self determination by the ALF); and appealed to legal and historical precedent as justification for their present goals and policies.

At the end of the second day, morale within the workshop is generally low, although the participants seem to have grown a little tired of arguing about interpretation of past events, about who is 'to blame', and about who has more right on their side. It remains clear, however, that they are still more than ready to respond to 'verbal provocations' from the other side.

It is apparent to members of the panel that participants are unwilling to continue with the present frustrating process of accusation and counter-accusation, and need to be given some new direction or activity if they are to retain any interest in continuing the workshop process with any hope of a useful' outcome.

Exercise Task

Panel members and support staff of the workshop have gathered for their daily planning session on the second evening of the workshop. It is clear that the workshop is nearing the end of its first phase and that it now requires a clear initiative from the panel to direct it into a new and more fruitful inter-action, and to prevent the participants reverting to yet another round of accusation and counter-accusation in which they 'make a case' to the panel, and grow yet more frustrated with the process. All the panel members have taken notes and gathered large amounts of data about participants' views and perceptions about each other and about the conflict. Some form of activity is now needed to get the participants out of their present, confrontational pattern of interaction. It must be presented convincingly as arising naturally as an extension of the activities of Days 1 and 2, and it must not seem to be arbitrarily imposed by the panel on the participants. The theme or task needs to appear relevant and fruitful.

Discuss what activities might be suggested to the workshop tomorrow morning, and what rationale might be offered for pursuing particular lines of activity. Evaluate the pros and cons of each suggestion and determine which might be the one to be taken up in tomorrow morning's opening session. Have a second suggestion in reserve in case the participants completely reject the first.

What preparation (documents, taxonomies, handouts, diagrams or newsprint) might need to be prepared this evening for tomorrow morning? How will the proposal for new activities be presented? By whom? What will be the role played by this afternoon's chairperson? What roles will be assigned to individual panel members in tomorrow's crucial first meeting? How will the acceptance of the new direction by participants be judged?

What contingency arrangements need to be put in place if participants: (a) seem unhappy with the workshop's new direction; (b) insist upon continuing to confront and argue with each other as has been the case in Days 1 and 2?

Write up the notes of this evening meeting, summarizing decisions taken and reasons therefore. Prepare any documentation that might be needed for tomorrow morning. Be prepared to make a verbal report on your plans for the start of Day 3.

Exercise 8.3: Efforts to Manipulate the Workshop.

Background Discussion.

In spite of all efforts *before* a workshop, it may still be the case that participants arrive at the workshop site without the necessary degree of flexibility to carry forward a fruitful dialogue with the adversaries, moderated by the facilitating panel. It should be recalled that they will have been invited as individuals and not in any official or representative capacity. They will have been asked to avoid adopting official positions and 'posturing'. They will have been requested not to bring documents or books into the workshop with them. They will have been assured, several times, that discussions will be off the record and that there will be no publicity attached to the exercise, so that no 'points' can be scored from either attending the meeting with the adversary, or gaining 'concessions' during the discussion.

Nevertheless, it may still be the case that participants come into a workshop with their own very firm agendas, and that these will both interfere with the conduct of the workshop and may necessitate a change of strategy once such agendas become clear. This may occur immediately or after a couple of days of valuable workshop time. The problem is difficult when one set of participants attempts to manipulate the workshop process; it is even more of a problem when all the adversaries represented at the workshop are 'playing games' and have clearly come to the process solely in order to gain propaganda or other advantages in what they continue to regard as a win-lose confrontation.

Often this is difficult and disappointing for the facilitators, but they should always recall that there is no way in which they can impose their own agenda, process or objectives on determined participants; nor, in the last resort, should they try. However, such a situation does mean that they have to deal tactically (and tactfully) with activities by the participants designed to give one-sided advantages to themselves; and strategically with the task of obtaining a desirable outcome from a process that may have become dominated by 'point scoring' or by a clear determination on the part of at least some of the participants to emerge having humiliated or 'won' over others.

Exercise Scenario

Having successfully cleared up a number of minor problems in the initial stages of the first of your Centre's planned Zandia workshops, you are now at the end of the third day of that workshop and about to participate in the evening review and planning session. Things have not gone smoothly. Initial presentations passed off without any major 'explosions' anger, although at times the atmosphere was tense and one indignant member of the ALF 'team' walked out briefly' following a particularly 'obnoxious' (sic) comment by one of the Zandian participants.

The workshop has dealt with the participants' views of the original causes of the dispute and you have listened to long recitals of the various histories of the conflict, about the immorality and illegality of the other party's position and behaviour, and about the number of OAU and UN resolutions that have been passed on the Zandian conflict, only to be ignored or broken by the other side. Discussion has then passed on to the matter of current obstacles to any solution and thence, at the suggestion of the facilitators, to a very preliminary exploration of options for the future, both in the sense of potentially fruitful processes and mutually beneficial interim objectives.

This last process seems to have been particularly heavy going, and to have become a rather one-sided exchange between the Zandian and ALF participants. A pattern seems to have emerged of the ALF making long statements about future possibilities, which inevitably involve major concessions on the government side, and then including in their statement one two suggestions for short-term confidence-building measures, not linked in any way to the analysis of long-term ALF and Zandian interests and values developed during the first two days of the workshop.

The Zandian response has been to warn that the government will inevitably demand major concessions from the ALF before it will even begin to discuss or negotiate about goals and interests (one constant demand has been that the ALF lays down its arms before talks can even begin); and to denigrate, the few, low-key ideas for tension-reducing moves suggested by ALF participants.

Moreover, the pattern of exchanges between the participants has taken a hierarchical form, with one individual on each side acting as chief spokesperson for that side. Others have come to speak infrequently and only with the tacit 'permission' of that individual. Notes are passed to this emerging 'leader' when others want a point to be made. Several times the leading Zandian has cut off comments from one or other of the Zandian participants, so that the discussion has become stilted and slow.

Participants are obviously becoming highly frustrated by what all see as lack of progress, a frustration shared by the facilitation panel, and, late in the afternoon, there were several comments about intransigence, lack of progress, the need for fresh directions and the lack of competence of the facilitators. 'Why are we all here wasting our time?' was one comment. There is obviously a need for a new initiative.

Exercise Task

At the evening planning meeting, one of the panel says that he has been talking with an experienced workshop observer, and the latter is fairly convinced that the participants are acting under detailed instructions from their respective leaderships 'back home' regarding their conduct during the workshop. The emerging hierarchical pattern indicates that each party has had one person designated as the leader of the group, so that participants are not acting as flexible individuals but under major constraints and as part of a 'team of representatives' with instructions about what should and should not emerge from the workshop.

Moreover, it seems clear that the ALF participants have been told to use the workshop as a means of extracting some level of 'recognition' as viable negotiating partners from the Zandian participants, who are regarded by the ALF as an official 'delegation'; and to try out various possible initiatives that would either give them advantages in any long-term, tacit bargaining process, or enable them to score propaganda points from a Zandian refusal to respond to such 'concessions'.

In contrast, the Zandians have been instructed to 'stonewall', to listen to ALF suggestions, not to take any initiatives of their own at all, and to try to turn ALF participants' behaviour to whatever propaganda advantage they can.

The panel member reports that, in addition, he was talking (luring a break) with a Zandian participant who asked if he might be supplied with a copy of the facilitators' notes of the workshop - 'purely for my own academic interests, of course'. The panel member responded that this had not been usual workshop practice, but that he would raise the matter at the evening planning meeting.

Finally, another facilitator says that she has been approached by an ALF participant with a request that the ALF 'team' be allowed to show a video tape to all members of the workshop, or to the members of the facilitation panel at least. The tape, it was claimed, 'will show what the situation in Azania is really like', and will help to 'show the world' the nature of the Zandians' atrocious behaviour towards the people of Azania over the last two years. 'It is like Rwanda, like the Sudan - it is a holocaust ...' was the comment.

How do you deal with these immediate problems and what might be done to produce a useful outcome from the workshop, bearing in mind that you want to use this event to lay the foundation for a series of further workshops at which formal solutions might be explored and developed ?

Exercise 8.4: Listening for Issues.

Background Discussion.

One of the essential skills for all facilitators, irrespective of the process which they employ, is that of being able to listen to participants and, through careful analysis, being able to identify the issues that crucially underlie the conflict, at least as far as those participants are concerned.

Obviously, in many conflicts, members of adversary parties will often differ profoundly on 'what the conflict is about', and a fundamental aspect of many conflicts is that those involved will have differing views about 'the issues' in conflict.

Sometimes these differences are part of a considered strategy, as leaders of parties in conflict recognize that a particular definition of what are the essential issues in conflict will work to their advantage. If a conflict is 'about', for example, 'rights of self-determination', rather than 'a minority's efforts to secede', then many advantages accrue to one party to that conflict.

More often, there are genuine differences about what lies at the root of any protracted conflict, with parties holding widely differing perceptions about the reasons for the conflict having arisen, and the sources that underlie the development of their adversary relationship. At the least, parties will often differ about the relative importance of various issues; at the most, they will have completely incompatible explanations about what issues underlie their dispute.

Part of the third party's task, therefore, is to be able to analyse the parties' different views about what are (and what are not) key issues between them and, at a later stage of the process, to be able to 'feed back' this analysis to the parties in a fashion that both includes these differing views about key issues and makes sense to the participants. Being able to do this depends upon facilitators being able to listen hard and to detect 'covert', underlying issues as well as overt, 'surface' issues, both from what participants say and the way they say it - and sometimes, from what they do not say.

In CAPS exercises, skill in listening for issues is particularly important in the opening stages of a problem-solving workshop, when participants are invited to provide their own views about the underlying causes of the conflict and the reasons for it having reached its, usually, existing circumstances of violence, mistrust, hostility and intransigence. If the panel in such exercises is to help participants consider new options and alternatives, it is important that some acceptable and comprehensive 'mapping' of the issues in conflict be presented to the participants during a later stage of the workshop. It is thus crucial for panelists to hear accurately what participants say, to check what they have heard in a non-offending and non-confrontational manner, and later to be able to reflect the overall 'issue structure' in a clear and sympathetic fashion.

Exercise Scenario

After much time and effort, your Centre has persuaded the government of Zandia and the Azania Liberation Front, still fighting each other fiercely, if sporadically, in the north of Zandia, to attend the first of what you have intimated could be a useful series of problem-solving workshops on the conflict in their country. Eventually, both leaderships have agreed to nominate a number of possible unofficial participants, who would attend and then report back to their respective leaders about the results of the workshop. After some background investigations into the individuals on both lists, you have invited three from each list, and deliberately included people with a range of views about the conflict, including two individuals who have been characterized as 'extremists' by members of the other party.

The participants have arrived safely at a small conference centre affiliated with the Peace Research Institute at the University of Malta, which has strong links with your own University in Umea and has offered to host the meeting. They have rested for half a day and have then joined the four-person panel of facilitators for the opening stages of the workshop. Sitting at a round table, the participants have carefully remained in their own groups, and have been studiously polite to one another and to the panel, although the level of tension and suppressed hostility remains high. They are all obviously puzzled about the nature of the week's work ahead of them, and the facilitator's explanations and assurances of confidentiality have apparently not reassured them very much. They have asked several questions about procedure and have already had a sharp exchange about the degree to which each can trust the other side not to leak details of discussions and positions to the media.

However, they appear to be satisfied with the suggested ground rules for the workshop and have accepted the panel's suggestion of a broad and flexible six-stage agenda, which begins with members of both parties alternately presenting their views about the basic sources of the conflict and the reasons for the continuation of the fighting and violence.

There was some dissension over which party should make the initial presentation, but eventually this was sorted out by the panel suggesting that the oldest participant should begin and be followed by the oldest participant from the other group. This was agreed and the ALF has been given the opportunity to speak first.

*Note: It would be helpful if the statement could be recorded and then played over so that students could actually **listen to this (or another) opening statement, rather than reading it.***

TEXT OF OPENING STATEMENT

Lead Facilitator: Well, if that order of speakers is agreeable to everyone, then perhaps we should start. May I remind everybody that we agreed a while ago that these opening statements should be allowed to run uninterrupted, although we could ask questions, for clarification only, at the very end of each statement. There will be plenty of time for discussing each others' interpretations later in the day. Dr al Hussein, would you like to begin?

Dr al Hussein: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, I have been asked to give my views about the basic reasons for the current struggle that has developed in my country between those of us who believe in the right of a people to self determination, and others who seek to deny that right in order to maintain a historic domination -political, economic, and even cultural - that they have abused over the centuries, but particularly over the last thirty-five years, since gaining independence from European colonialists.

This is at once a simple and a difficult task. It is simple because the underlying reasons for the current dispute are relatively easy to see and evaluate. It is difficult, because presenting a full account of our long struggle against oppression and government inspired and organized violence, or even chronicling the long history of betrayals, broken promises and unfulfilled, so-called solemn agreements would occupy me for the remainder of this week.

Let me confine myself to the sad history of the last thirty-five years. Everyone here will know that, when the Italian mandate came to an end, the colonialists left behind a constitution for the newly independent Zandia that explicitly made allowance for the fact that Zandia was a diverse country of many peoples and cultures. We were hopeful that this constitution - to which all agreed, mark that - would signal a new beginning to the historical divisions between our people and those who, because of their fortunate geographical position in the coastal areas of our country, had controlled trade and commerce, had exploited the indigenous peoples of the interior and had - even under the Italians - dominated the political life of the country.

In the early colonial days, of course, the Italians had exploited these differences within the country and had encouraged the Christianization of the coastal peoples while leaving our own people to their religious practices. Even in the worst stages of colonial occupation, Islam remained our core and our comfort, and it still does. However, even the Italians recognized that we were a separate people and at independence explicitly gave a great deal of political power and authority, including control over the rubber and iron ore, to the new Regional Governments, which represented us as one people

Mr Blanco: This is ridiculous! You never have been one people, even when you ALF grabbed the north-east and talked about unity. There are at least three tribes and eight languages up there!

Lead Facilitator: I'm sorry, but could we keep comments and questions until the end of Dr al Hussein's statement? Thank you.

Dr al Hussein: I am used to this kind of behaviour. As I was saying, we began with a form of government that recognized that we were different, and had separate and special needs in our part of Zandia. Did you know, for example, that only five schools existed in our Region in 1980, compared with over seventy down country? What neglect! And what happened after the Italians had left? Within one year, the independence Constitution had been quite illegally amended, all real power had been concentrated in our capital, Zambasi, the Regional Governments had become a shell of what was intended, and shortly afterwards all political parties were abolished, apart from the ZPP which was under the domination of Mr. Okumu's uncle! We found ourselves powerless and at the mercy of people who cared nothing for justice, nothing for legality and certainly nothing for us. This situation lasted for over ten years of so-called 'democratically centralized development'! Well, for us, it was certainly centralized but there was no democracy and there was even less development; Zambasi grew, new presidential statues were erected, the proceeds from the rubber and the iron flowed down the Rio Negro and that was the last we saw of it! There were no schools built, the only roads led to and from the plantations and the mines, Cobora became the official language of the country, so that all government jobs were closed to us (even those in our own towns!) and our few young school graduates couldn't get into the National University. Within ten years, we had become non-people in our own country ...

Mr Okumu: Do we really have to sit here and listen to this tissue of lies and exaggerations? There certainly were not seventy schools in the coastal Regions; the Italians had neglected *everyone's* educational opportunities. Why don't you talk a bit about the banditry up around Habiya, or the tax collectors you murdered near Tereda?

Lead Facilitator: I should remind everyone that we did all agree to allow speakers to make their presentations without interruption at this first stage of our workshop. I know this may prove difficult, especially when contentious points are raised, but everyone will get a chance to speak at length, and these points can be raised then.

Second Facilitator: Yes, I have several points I would like to go back to and ask about in the open discussion, and I am trying to write them down so that I don't forget them later.

Mr Okumu: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, but I do find this so-called historical account very difficult to take sitting down.

Lead Facilitator: I appreciate that.

Dr al Hussein: If I may continue? Very well. Such was the situation in the north-east when the first of our three military coups took place. Some of us thought at first that things could not get worse, but we were wrong. Having the army in control really made no difference. The bulk of the officers were coast people and our few soldiers were rapidly retired or left of their own accord; some were probably assassinated in the aftermath of the second coup - the one where the Cabora junior officers took over - although we never really found out what happened to the two brigadiers. It was this second military regime that really started the planned violence and the repression, although the one that replaced it simply carried on their policies after a futile and ill-conceived attempt at 'reconciliation'. By this time - and I'm talking about the late 1980s and early 1990s now - some of our young men had gone into the bush and had started to fight back

Mr Blanco: Some of them went to North Korea for terrorist training.

Dr al Hussein: The army simply used this as an excuse to station garrisons in our territory, and to declare 'free fire zones' where more of our pastoralists could be murdered without anyone asking questions. People in the region became insecure, then they became terrified, then they left. I forget how many refugees are over the border in Samaale, but it's about 50 per cent of our population now, although some are coming back into the safe areas controlled by the ALF. Their return is going to be one huge problem if peace ever does come.

When the ALF first started up in the Samaale camps, I really think its leaders wanted to stay part of Zandia - perhaps to go back to the Independence Constitution, or to have some freedom to have a say in running their own affairs - some kind of guaranteed autonomy, although they were not at all sure who could guarantee anything given the record of both civilian and military regimes in Zambasi. Now, they have given that up as an unreachable dream. Mind you, it's not true that the ALF wants to secede and join Samaale - a few of the leaders might, but only a few, and that's a story mainly spread by the regime in Zambasi. What it now wants, as far as I can tell, is the chance for the people in the north-east to choose their own future and their own form of government - and that may include the right to say they want to become part of Samaale, although I personally doubt it. Why should they want to exchange one distant government for another? But that's just a personal view, you understand.

That's about all I want to say for the moment. You wanted know the basic causes and I think that's simple. We we denied the opportunity of becoming Zandians. Everyone talked about this at independence, but it's difficult to be Zandian if you are denied all opportunities, systematically exploited and then told you are not 'really' Zandian - just some second- or third-class something, in the country on sufferance. Your religion is seen as something that turns you into a suspect person, the government billets troops in your mosques, they make efforts to suppress your languages. You can hardly blame people for protesting and even for taking up arms in such circumstances. I don't blame any of the boys in the bush, or the so-called 'intransigent' ALF leaders. That's all, I think.

Exercise Task

Individually, examine the text of the opening statement carefully, and extract from it what seem to you to be key issues mentioned by the ALF speaker.

(a) Make a list of these issues, indicate those about which you clearly need to ask for more information, and jot down a number of non-offensive follow-up questions designed to elicit more information about the issue for your own and the other participants' benefit.

(b) Put the issues in some kind of 'order of importance' as indicated by the ALF speaker.

(c) Take the list of issues and categorize them in some fashion so that different types of issue are clustered together in some clear and helpful framework that will assist you and your fellow panel members in analysing the conflict.

(d) Compare your list, your ordering of issues, and your classification scheme with those developed separately by your fellow facilitators and arrive at some consolidated list of issues, an agreed order of importance (if possible) and one or more agreed analytical frameworks that should be useful in 'feeding back' to participants what you have heard, at a later stage of the workshop.

(e) Begin work on developing a format for re-presenting the issues to both sets of participants in a non-provocative and non-confrontational fashion, at some later stage of the workshop when the opportunity arises.

Exercise 8.5: Producing an Agree-able Text.

Background Discussion

In the later stages of many workshops, participants begin to feel that they have made some kind of progress towards a resolution, and, sometimes, that they would like this progress recorded in some form, so that new ideas or suggestions can - at least - be carried back to decision-makers in a similar format, so that both parties have the benefit of the same documentary record.

Often, participants are content with asking for the consultants to make their own confidential, outline Report of the proceedings, without attributing views or statements to individuals, so that this can be circulated among the participants and responded to. Being the consultants' Report, participants can deny any responsibility for its contents.

On other occasions, however, the participants look for some document that summarizes central aspects of their discussions, the implications of which they wish to explore in greater detail 'back home'. This document can take the form of a list of possible tension-reducing moves; a set of options for starting a more formal discussion or even a negotiation process; a set of simultaneous unilateral moves that might help break an *impasse*; an outline process for further progress towards a solution; or some interesting 'formula' that might offer the basis for a future solution.

The key principle is usually that this document, whatever its content, is in no way an agreement between the participants, even in an informal sense, and it usually implies no commitment beyond a willingness to take it home with them so that its contents can be studied and discussed within each party's decision-making circles. For this reason, participants often prefer that any summary document is drafted and, after (much) discussion, amended into its final form by the consultants and their facilitators. In other words, it is the facilitators' document, not the participants' or the parties', and it is thus unofficial, deniable and, in the last resort, ignorable.

Thus, one common task for the facilitators usually involves struggling to put a confusing mass of notes, ideas, suggestions, hints, 'trial balloons' and implications into a summary document that can form a fruitful basis for further discussion and amendment - and ultimate transmission back home - by a set of participants who will usually, by this stage of the workshop, be looking over their shoulders at the problems they may confront on their return.

Exercise Scenario

Your panel of facilitators has just spent an exhausting five days in the first of what you hope will be a series of problem-solving workshops on the Zandian conflict. Initially, tempers have frayed among the participants, accusations and counteraccusations been leveled, OAU Resolutions were quoted and misquoted, and on one occasion, on the second day, an ALF participant walked furiously from the room, vowing never to return. Eventually he was persuaded to come back by fellow members of the ALF.

Latterly, the workshop interactions have grown calmer, the hierarchical tendencies among the two groups of participants lessened, with individuals speaking more freely and spontaneously, and something like a discussion of 'Where do we go from here?' has developed. There was a relapse into accusation and name-calling when the discussions focused on 'present obstacles' to a solution, but switching the discussion to possible tension-reducing moves brought back a sense of purpose to the meeting, although nothing definite was decided about confidence-building moves.

In all this, the panel's role has been a rather more active one than some of its members have liked or felt comfortable with. One major difficulty has been to keep participants focused on the linkage between the sources of the conflict - fully thrashed out in an atmosphere of mutual recrimination during the first two days - and possible long-term remedies. You have lost count of the number of times that one facilitator or another has emphasized the principle that 'Solutions have to deal with root causes' if a lasting solution is to be found - if not in those exact words, at least in some version of them.

The result of the last few days has been that all the facilitators and observers on the Planning Group have over 30 pages of notes and are suffering, in some cases, from writer's cramp.

During today's late afternoon session, the participants agreed that they did have a great deal in common, although there continued to be profound differences about what they wanted for their people and for Zandia as an independent African country. Hence, they have suggested that it might be an interesting exercise if the panel were to summarize '...the positive aspects of our discussions ...' in a short document that sets out a number of basic principles on which '... a settlement might be negotiated ...'

'... Surely there is a framework here that we can all agree upon ...' was the comment of one Zandian participant (who had spent the entire first two days of the workshop arguing that the whole exercise was a pointless waste of time).

'... I am sure our facilitator colleagues can put together some interesting ideas for our first session tomorrow morning...' agreed an ALF participant.

Your lead facilitator has agreed, rather too readily, that you would be happy to produce a document for tomorrow's discussion.

Exercise Task

It is 6.30 in the evening of the fifth day of the Zandian workshop. You and the rest of the Planning Group are slumped over coffee in the seminar room you have been using for evening meetings. You need to produce a short (10 to 15 point) summary document containing a set of basic and mutually agreeable principles on which the details of a solution to the conflict between the Zandian Government and the ALF might be constructed.

The participants have not made it clear whether the principles should concern the nature of a solution, or the processes by which it should be achieved, or both. You need to decide yourselves on this issue.

Apart from your 30 pages of notes, you have begun to sketch out some of the main points about which there seems to be general agreement round the table and which might be used as a basis for a draft framework document (see the sketch below).

Draft a document entitled 'Principles for a Future Zandia' that might command some agreement among the participants at tomorrow morning's session, and which might form the basis of some agreed principles for a settlement to be taken back by participants when they return the day after tomorrow.

Notes for an Outline Document

'The Vision of a (Future?) Peaceful Zandia' ??? or 'Principles on which to Base a Settlement of Zandian Conflict.'

Azadians resentful of gvt calling in outsiders to support their 'repressive' efforts (aid from Italy, Nigeria and N. Korea?); similar view by gvt of Islamic countries calling for recognition of 'rights of self-determination' seen as interference in Zandian domestic affairs.

Shared resentment of vestiges of colonialism; trade diversification agreeable; get away from 'Italian stranglehold' (quote from Okumu).

Both sides want to 'preserve traditional cultures' in the country (probably includes religions) at the same time as both feel that war interferes with 'modernization' (a bit contra- Trouble is they are talking about different traditions which have been historically antithetical. Coast people's long memories of northerners' role in 19th-century slave trade. Azadians obviously resent this constant accusatory attitude. ('That was over 100 years ago; what has it to do with us, here and now?') Both al Arabi and Hassouna said something like this.)

Azadians all feel that they have been denied opportunity to be Zandian; trouble is, these Zandians still, after 5 days, seem to feel that Azadians don't really want to be Zandian; aren't really committed to Zandian unity. What does 'being Zandian' mean?

Neither side trusts the other further than the end of the street! Constant harping on broken promises, violated truces, agreements that weren't kept. Also on need for guarantees and someone to be a guarantor of any agreement. Azadians don't trust the OAU (don't think some of the Zandians do, either; why is this?) Oddly enough, both seem to have positive feelings towards Italians, even allowing for the religious/missionary factor.

Issue of security central to both. (Security for what/whom, from what? Obviously results of having semi-controlled troops around for one thing, but the fear goes deeper than this.) Neither seems to have given any thought to the idea of interdependent security or mutual security, or to the problem that security for one side, e.g. high arms levels, represents insecurity for the other. Who can provide security (1) in the short term and (2) in the long run? You can't base a country on a mutual threat system, at least not in the long run!

Whole dilemma seems to turn on reconciling interest in continuing unity of the country (meaning what - the place is split by a civil war???) with that of self-determination, but the latter seems to fall short of secession when one really gets down to it. On the surface the Azadians seem willing to consider unity with Samaale, but underneath they are really not too happy with this idea. Probably a case of 'the devil you know'. Is there a distinction between having the right to selfdetermination and not wishing to exercise that right? Autonomy - how much and over what? Unity in diversity? Even Blanco seems to recognize that Zandia is a diverse country and cannot be treated as though the population was utterly homogenous.

Everyone seems to share the dislike and distrust of the military (hardly surprising as all are civilians - should we have invited a couple of soldiers? - also given the record of the Zandian army in the mid-1 970s ...) Hassouna said at one point that a future Zandia should really aim to become like Costa Rica (what are they going to do with all the soldiers under arms at the moment if they ever decide to try to abolish the military? Well, they can cross that bridge if they ever come anywhere near it!)

Nobody raised the issue of religious differences or took up one Zandian's point about signs of Islamic fundamentalism appearing in Samaale. How come? Were they avoiding this, is it really not an issue, or is it too sensitive even to raise in front of outsiders or foreigners? We need to explore this further.

Apart from Costa Rica, the country they mentioned most as a parallel was Nigeria - the odd reference to Switzerland, I suppose in connection with local autonomy and having three, or is it four, languages. Nobody liked the Nigerian military very much, but at least they seemed to feel that Nigeria offered a model of reconciliation after a civil war and real efforts to maintain a single country while granting autonomy to various regions and religions. (Okumu and Warati both said they thought the Nigerians had blown opportunities by constantly redrawing internal boundaries and giving in to small minority groups.)

Not much about the economic side of things, apart from trade tied to one European partner, except for a general agreement that the country needed to diversify, get aid from a variety of sources and distribute development more equitably. Azanian perception of continuing historical neglect and their underdevelopment at the expense of the coast - but Zandians denied this and argued that everyone was underdeveloped. Blamed the Italians, the war and the IMF (everyone hates the IMF). Someone quoted Julius Nyerere: 'A fair share of what little we have.'

What agree-able principles on which to (re)build a country?

Alternative Exercise Task

You have conducted a successful set of simulated workshop discussions focused on the conflict you have chosen to analyse and try to resolve. You have taken notes on the discussions that have taken place between the participants in your workshop and the facilitating panel, and have added these to the information that you had already collected on the conflict, as background to the exercise.

Your present task is to use this information to construct a discussion document entitled: 'A Framework for Settlement: Agreed Principles on which a Long-Term Solution to the X Conflict Might be Sought'. Apart from the title, your workshop Planning Group has already composed the following first paragraph:

'... Emerging from the five days of intensive and realistic discussions of the conflict involving _____ and _____ and recognizing the difficulties still awaiting any attempt to move towards a resolution of this protracted and tragic conflict, it is suggested that the following principles could form the basis for a permanent solution to the conflict:

(1)

Complete the draft document in time for tomorrow's session of the workshop.

Exercise 8.6: The Continuing Issue of Confidentiality.

Background Discussion.

One of the continuing problems involved in conducting problem-solving exercises is the issue of maintaining confidentiality and reassuring participants that material from or reports about the workshop in which they are involved will not find their way back into the media or general public knowledge within their own country, community or party. Without this continued reassurance, participants will not feel free to step outside their representative role, reveal aspirations and concerns to members of their adversary, and speculate freely about possible future options, scenarios or solutions.

In general, and given the sensitivities that often surround the issue of 'meeting with the enemy', all participants at least will usually share an interest in maintaining confidentiality, and will expect the consultants and their facilitators to ensure their safety from 'exposure' in the media and from accusations of gullibility or treachery.

The continued credibility of the third party depends, therefore, on keeping confidential, if possible, the fact that the meetings are taking place, the identity of the participants or, at the very least, the content of the discussions. Maintaining a minimal level of confidentiality is doubly important if it is hoped to conduct any exercise consisting of a number of workshops or other meetings.

Exercise Scenario

In spite of numerous setbacks, and in spite of the commitments made in the Alva Accord, your institution has managed to obtain a commitment from the core parties in the Etrurian conflict that they will not prevent individuals '... able to represent their views, positions and aspirations ...' from attending a series of three problem-solving workshops. The first one is to be focused on an exploration of the conditions necessary to establish a multilateral and limited truce in the 'armed struggle'.

After considerable time and effort on your part, and numerous visits to Lusitania and Etruria, you finally have issued invitations to a number of individuals who are prominent members of the four major political parties in Etruria (ASDL, PNE, PAVE and APE), none of whom, however, are officials in the PNE/ASDL coalition currently forming the Regional Government of Etruria. It is clear that all participants have close links with their top leaders, while one of the ASDL participants has close personal connections with the Deputy Minister of National Security in the Lusitanian capital. The individuals who are members of PAVE tend to belong to the 'hawkish' wing of the party and - it is rumoured - have good lines of communication to the guerrilla organization, POME, which continues its bomb attacks in Etruria and in the national capital.

All are clearly nervous about their participation in this first workshop, in spite of the consultants' reassurances that none of the details of any of the meetings will become public and a clear prior agreement, reiterated and agreed again on the first morning of the workshop, that all at the workshop will maintain complete confidentiality with regard to its proceedings.

Exercise Task

After dinner on the evening of the fourth day of the workshop, a very vulnerable member of PNE, a lawyer with a prominent practice in the regional capital of Etruria, comes to you and says that friends in Etruria have informed him that reports of the discussions (naming individual persons and linking them with views and positions) are being leaked to conservative members of the coalition government back in Etruria.

He is worried about these reports and feels very threatened by them, anticipating that it will only be a matter of time, and probably a very short time, before some of this material, much of it apparently reasonably accurate, appears in the highly partisan Etrurian press.

He says that he will withdraw from the exercise at once, unless he can be assured that his statements and views will be kept confidential, and that everyone at the workshop will '... provide cast-iron guarantees at the end of the week ...' that absolutely nothing now occurring in the workshop will be revealed '... to people back home

What do you say to him?

What actions do you take?