



**Transforming
Fragilities, Inc.**

PATHWAYS TO PEACE: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT

CONFLICT ANALYSIS: YOUR COMPASS FOR STRATEGIC RESPONSE

**A TRAINING MODULE FOR
MINDANAO GRASSROOTS PEACEBUILDERS**

Module Developer
Ahmed Harris R. Pangcoga

www.transformingfragilities.org





Conflict Analysis: Your Compass for Strategic Response

A Training Module for Mindanao Grassroots Peacebuilders

This training course equips participants with the analytical frameworks and practical tools needed to dissect complex disputes and understand their core components. Moving beyond surface-level issues, learners will gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that drive conflict.

Conflict Analysis: Your Compass for Strategic Response

A Training Module for Mindanao Grassroots Peacebuilders

October 2025

Ahmed Harris R. Pangcoga

Transforming Fragilities, Inc.
Cotabato City
Philippines

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Module Developer:

Ahmed Harris R. Pangcoga

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Delcano Street, Rosary Height X, Cotabato City, Philippines

www.transformingfragilities.org

Project Team:

Judith Joy G. Libarnes

Muhamadissa C. Guiam

Jaffari M. Wabdulwahab

Princess G. Balinte-Malaguial

Ruel L. Pugoy

Roselle C. Maglasang

Munjaheed D. Malaguial

Habiba A. Basaluddin

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FOREWORD

In the heart of the Bangsamoro, peace is not an abstract concept but a daily practice—a delicate and deliberate act of understanding, navigating, and transforming the complex currents of our shared history and our unfolding future. The work of building a sustainable peace requires more than just good intentions; it demands skill, wisdom, and a profound commitment to seeing the world through the eyes of others. It is this fundamental need for skilled, reflective, and deeply contextualized peacebuilding that inspired the creation of this training module.

Conflict analysis is the bedrock upon which all effective peace work is built. Without a deep and nuanced understanding of the context we work in, our interventions risk becoming part of the problem, unintentionally fueling the very divisions we seek to heal. This module, therefore, is more than a collection of academic theories. It is a practitioner’s toolkit, forged from global best practices but designed to be wielded with local wisdom. It is an invitation to move beyond surface-level problems and to courageously explore the roots of conflict—the structural causes, the competing narratives, and the fundamental human needs that drive us.

Transforming Fragilities, Inc. is proud to present this module as a contribution to the growing community of peacebuilders in Mindanao and the Bangsamoro. We believe that by equipping dedicated individuals with these analytical skills, we are investing in a more resilient and just peace. The journey ahead is challenging, but it is one filled with hope. May the knowledge contained within these pages serve not only as a guide for your work but as a catalyst for the transformative conversations and courageous actions our communities deserve.



Judith Joy G. Libarnes
Managing Director
Transforming Fragilities, Inc.

PREFACE

To my fellow development and peacebuilding practitioners,

This training module was designed with a core belief: the most profound learning happens not through listening, but through doing. You are the experts in your own communities. You live and breathe the complexities of the contexts you work in. Our goal here is not to give you answers, but to provide you with a structured process and a set of powerful tools to help you find your own.

Throughout our time together, you will find that our approach is highly participatory and experiential. We will build our understanding through shared stories, hands-on activities, and reflective dialogue. We believe that people learn best when they are actively engaged in solving problems and making sense of the material in a way that is directly relevant to their reality.

Our journey is structured in three parts. In Part 1, we will build our Foundations, establish a shared language and explore the core concepts that underpin all conflict analysis. In Part 2, we will move to Application, where we will roll up our sleeves and practice using a range of practical tools—from mapping stakeholders to analyzing root causes and predicting conflict dynamics. Finally, in Part 3, we will construct the crucial Bridge from Analysis to Action, learning how to translate our insights into the design of smart, strategic, and truly conflict-sensitive interventions.

Think of this module as a guided conversation. The tools within are not rigid formulas but frameworks for inquiry. They are designed to spark curiosity, challenge our assumptions, and help us see the interconnectedness of the systems we are a part of.

Thank you for your commitment to this important work. I am confident that by engaging fully in this process, you will leave not only with a new set of skills but with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper capacity to be an agent of positive change. Let us begin this learning journey together.



Ahmed Harris R. Pangcoga
Module Developer
Transforming Fragilities, Inc.

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Title: Conflict Analysis: Your Compass for Strategic Response

A Note on Prerequisites: This module on **Conflict Analysis** is designed for participants with a foundational understanding of the core concepts of conflict and peace. For the most coherent and comprehensive learning experience, we strongly recommend that you have previously completed an introductory course on peace and conflict fundamentals, such as training in the **Culture of Peace**.

While this module provides a comprehensive framework for analysis, a prior understanding of topics such as the inherent nature of conflict, the difference between positive and negative peace, and core peacebuilding principles will allow you to more effectively engage with the analytical tools presented here. If you do not have this background, we encourage you to seek out foundational training to ensure you are fully prepared for the nuanced content of this module and the rest of the course series.

Course Description: This three-day course equips participants with the analytical frameworks and practical tools needed to dissect complex disputes and understand their core components. Moving beyond surface-level issues, learners will gain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that drive conflict, including, including: 1) the parties involved, 2) positions, interests, and needs, 3) root and trigger causes, and 4) conflict dynamics and context, among others. Through case studies, practical exercises, and conflict mapping techniques, participants will develop the skills to diagnose the true nature of a conflict. This module is an essential prerequisite for anyone seeking to manage, resolve, or transform conflict, as it provides the critical diagnostic skills necessary for effective and ethical intervention.

TIME	SESSION	ACTIVITY
Day 1: Setting the Stage and Introduction Activity		
Morning Session		
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM	1 - Preliminaries	Activity 1: Opening Program
		Activity 2: Getting to Know You – Mapping Our Hopes and Experiences
		Activity 3: Building a Learning Community – Navigating Our Learning Journey Together
		Activity 4: Expectation Check
	Chapter 1: The Foundations of Conflict Analysis	
	2 – Core Concepts of Conflict Analysis	Activity 5: Introduction to Conflict Analysis
		Lecturette 1: Conflict and Peace
		Lecturette 2: What is Conflict Analysis?
		Activity 6: Fundamental Dimensions of Conflict
		Lecturette 3: The ABC Triangle
		Activity 7: Key Analytical Categories
		Lecturette 4: The Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis
	3 – Foundational Analytical Frameworks	Activity 8: Galting’s Violence Triangle
		Lecturette 5: The Violence Triangle of Johan Galtung: Understanding the Obstacles to Peace
		Activity 9: Moore’s Circle of Conflict

		Lecturette 6: Christopher Moore’s Circle of Conflict
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
Afternoon Session		
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	4 – Data Collection for Conflict Analysis	Activity 10: Setting the Scope
		Lecturette 7: The Three Pillars of Scoping
		Activity 11: Data Collection Methodologies
		Lecturette 8: Data Collection Methodologies for Conflict Analysis
		Activity 12: Principles of Conflict-Sensitive Data Collection
		Lecturette 9: The Three Pillars of Responsible Data Collection
	Chapter 2: Applying the Analysis: Conflict Analysis Tools	
	5 – Stakeholder Analysis (The "Who")	Activity 13: Conflict Mapping
		Lecturette 10: The Language of Conflict Mapping
		Activity 14: The Onion/Doughnut Model
Lecturette 11: Peeling the Layers with the Onion Model		
End of Day 1 Session		
Day 2: Conflict Analysis Tools		
Morning Session		
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM	6 – Root Cause Analysis (The “What” and “Why”)	Activity 15: The Conflict Tree
		Lecturette 12: Formalizing the Conflict Tree
		Activity 16: Context Analysis
		Lecturette 13: The Conflict Profile – Structured View
		Activity 17: Timeline Analysis
		Lecturette 14: Formalizing Timeline Analysis
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
Afternoon Session		
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	7 – Analyzing and Predicting Conflict Dynamics (The “How”)	Activity 18: Glasl’s Nine-Stage Model of Conflict Escalation
		Lecturette 15: The Nine Stages of Descent
		Activity 19: Introduction to Systems Thinking
		Lecturette 16: Seeing the Whole System
End of Day 2 Session		
Day 3: Bridging the Gap from Plan to Practice		
Morning Session		
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM		Activity 20: The Conflict Wheel: Assembling our Toolkit
		Lecturette 17: Introducing the Conflict Wheel
	Chapter 3: Bridging Analysis to Action	
	8 – From Analysis to Strategic Intervention	Activity 21: Using Dividers and Connectors from Program Design
		Lecturette 18: the “Do No Harm” Lens: Dividers and Connectors

		Activity 22: Identifying Leverage Points for Interventions – The Ripple Effect
		Lecturette 19: Finding the Point of Leverage
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch Break	
Afternoon Session		
		Activity 23: Scenario and Contingency Planning
		Lecturette 20: Preparing for the Future with Scenarios and Contingencies
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	9 – Commitment, Synthesis, and Closing	Building the MEAL Plan
		My Peace Commitment
		Course Synthesis
		Next Steps
		Closing Program
End of Day 3 Session and Training		

SETTING THE STAGE AND INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

SESSION 1: PRELIMINARIES

This session sets the non-negotiable standards for the training environment. Through icebreakers, participants build immediate rapport and establish a map of hopes and experiences and a collective learning journey. The session culminates in the collaborative creation of a Learning Agreement to ensure a safe, brave, and respectful space for all faiths.

ACTIVITY 1: OPENING PROGRAM¹:

This session sets the tone and provides a foundational framework for the entire training. It is crucial for fostering an inclusive atmosphere and ensuring all participants feel acknowledged and prepared.

- **Opening Prayer:**
 - Request a representative from each identified faith group present to lead the opening prayer, one at a time.
 - Note to the facilitator: It is important to be culturally sensitive. Do not ask a female Muslim to lead the prayer if there are Muslim males present, as the former can only lead in the absence of the latter.
 - Thank the representatives for their prayers.
- **Playing the National Anthem:**
 - Ask the participants to remain standing after the prayer for the National Anthem.
 - You have the option to play a video clip of the National Anthem or ask for a volunteer to lead the group in singing.
 - If applicable to the context of the training, play other institutional hymns after the National Anthem.
- **Welcome Message from a Ranking Official:**
 - Allow the participants to sit comfortably.
 - Request a ranking official from your organization or a local elder to give a brief welcome address.
 - Introduce your guest properly to the participants.
 - Thank the guest immediately after their remarks.
- **Course Overview:**
 - Present the general description and objectives of the module to the participants.
 - Post the training schedule and lead the participants in a walkthrough of the planned activities.
 - Use this opportunity to compare the program with the participants' consolidated expectations to see if all expectations can be met by the lineup of activities.
 - For any expectations that fall outside the training design, explain why it is not included or how it might be indirectly related but is a separate topic on its own.
 - Ask the participants if they have questions or suggestions for amendments to the schedule.

¹ Adapted from the Preliminaries Section of the Panagtagbo sa Kalinaw Manual

ACTIVITY 2: GETTING TO KNOW YOU - MAPPING OUR HOPES AND EXPERIENCES

Objective: To build rapport among participants by creating a visual representation of their diverse geographical contexts and to surface their collective experience with local peacebuilding, establishing a shared foundation of practical wisdom.

Materials:

- A large map of Mindanao or the region, roughly covering all “places of origin” of the participants, posted on a wall
- Sticky notes in two different colors for each participant (e.g., Blue and Green)
- Markers

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: “This training is built on the idea that the expertise is already here, with us. This activity will help us see that expertise and begin learning from one another.”
2. Mapping our Places.
 - Each participant receives a blue metacard. Ask them to write their name and their organization on it.
 - One by one, participants are invited to come up to the large map, place their blue metacards on the municipality or city where they primarily work, and briefly introduce themselves (e.g., “My name is Fatima, and I work with a youth organization in Marawi City.”). This step visually populates the room with the group’s geographical diversity and helps everyone put names to faces.
3. Mapping our Experiences.
 - Each participant receives a green metacard. Ask them to think of a time they witnessed a small but successful moment of collaboration or conflict resolution in their community. It does not have to be a big, formal project. It could be a disagreement between neighbors that was settled well, or two different groups working together on a community project. On their green metacard, write just three or four words that capture that positive moment.” (e.g., “Elders settled land dispute,” “Youth groups shared sports field,” “Interfaith clean-up drive”).
 - Participants then come forward again and place their green sticky note next to their blue one on the map.
4. Plenary Sharing and Reflection.
 - Invite 3-4 volunteers to briefly share the story behind their green metacards.
 - Leads a short reflection with the whole group: “Look at our map. It is already full of positive actions and local capacities for peace. These stories are our starting point. The goal of conflict analysis is to understand our context so we can create more of these green moments. Thank you for sharing the wisdom you’ve brought with you today.”

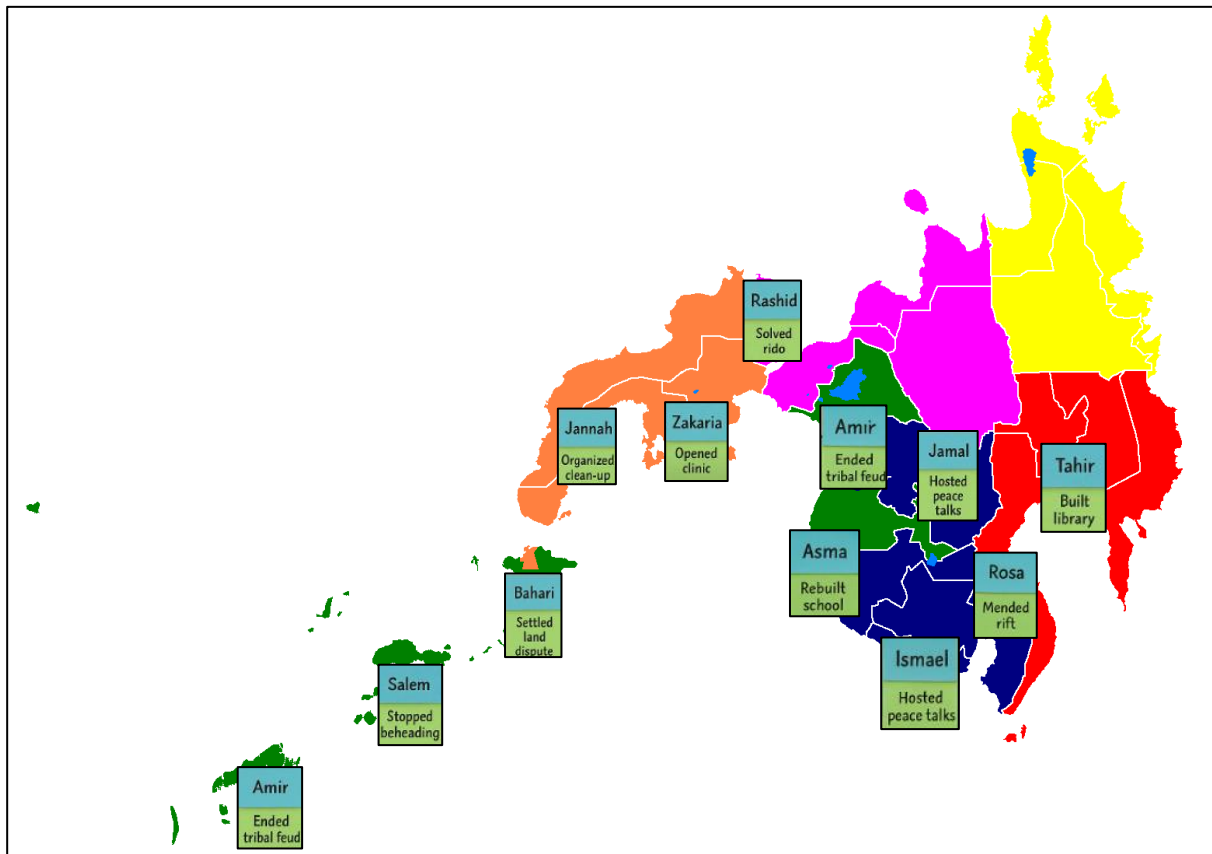


Figure 1. Example of Mapping Our Hopes and Experiences.

ACTIVITY 3: BUILDING A LEARNING COMMUNITY - NAVIGATING OUR LEARNING JOURNEY TOGETHER²

Objective: To collaboratively identify the values and behaviors that will create a supportive and effective learning environment for all participants, using a shared metaphor.

Materials:

- A long sheet of blue “*cartolina*,” laid out on the floor or a large table to represent a “river”
- Sticky notes or small metacards in two different colors for each participant (e.g., One color for “what helps us flow,” and another color for “what blocks our path”)
- Whiteboard for the “Learning Agreement”
- A clean sheet of manila paper labeled “Our Learning Agreement”
- Markers

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: “Let’s imagine that our time together over the next few days is a journey down a river. For our journey to be smooth, productive, and safe, we need to understand two things: what helps our boat flow freely down the current, and what rocks or obstacles might get in our way and make the journey difficult.”
2. Each participant receives one each of the two small metacards of different colors.
 - On the first metacard (“Flow”), ask: “Please write one or two words describing something that helps you learn and participate fully in a group. What helps you stay engaged and feel comfortable?” (Examples: “Practical examples,” “Respectful listening,” “Humor,” “Openness”).
 - On the second metacard (“Rocks”), ask: “Please write one or two words describing something that blocks your learning or makes you hesitate to participate. What are the obstacles?” (Examples: “Judgment,” “People talking over each other,” “Long lectures,” “Fear of asking questions”).
3. Participants are invited to come forward and place their sticky notes on the blue “river” paper. The yellow “Flow” notes are placed in the middle of the river, representing the current. The grey “Rock” notes are placed along the sides, representing the obstacles we need to navigate around.
4. Gather the group around the river map and lead a discussion.
 - “Let’s look at our river. What do you notice about the things that help us flow? What are the common themes?”
 - “Now let’s look at the rocks. What are the biggest obstacles we need to be mindful of as a group?”
 - “How can the things in our ‘flow’ help us navigate the ‘rocks’?”
5. Share this Input.
 - “Our river map gives us a perfect picture of what we need for a successful journey. To ensure we all have a positive experience, we can transform this wisdom into a formal agreement. This is a common practice in peacebuilding and facilitation, often called a **Learning Agreement** or **Community Guidelines**.”

² A Battle Within. (n.d.). *Conflict resolution training: Key skills, strategies & benefits*.

- "A Learning Agreement is not a set of rules imposed by the facilitator. It is a set of promises we make to each other about how we will interact, based on what the group itself has said it needs. It is our first act of conflict resolution—we are collaboratively solving the potential problem of how to work together effectively."
 - "The goal is to create a 'brave space'—a space where we feel safe enough to be honest, ask difficult questions, and respectfully disagree. This agreement will be our guide, helping us to turn potential conflict into productive problem-solving discussions throughout our time together."
6. Using the "River" map as the source material, guide the group in turning their ideas into a short list of positive, actionable guidelines.
 - Ask: "Looking at our 'rocks,' we see 'people talking over each other.' What positive guideline can we create to prevent this?" (e.g., "Listen to understand, not just to reply," or "One person speaks at a time").
 - "Looking at our 'flow,' we see 'openness' and 'respect.' How can we phrase that as a promise to each other?" (e.g., "Challenge ideas respectfully," or "All perspectives are valuable").
 - Continue this process, synthesizing the group's ideas into 5-7 clear guidelines.
 7. Write the final, co-created guidelines on the "Our Learning Agreement" chart.
 - Ask for the group's formal commitment: "Does this agreement capture what we need to work well together? Can we all commit to upholding these promises to each other for the next few days?"
 - After gaining verbal consent, invite participants to sign their names on the chart as a personal and public symbol of their commitment.
 8. Post the "Our Learning Agreement" in a place where everyone can see it. "This is now our guide. We can refer back to it at any time to help us stay on track. Thank you for building the foundation for our learning community."

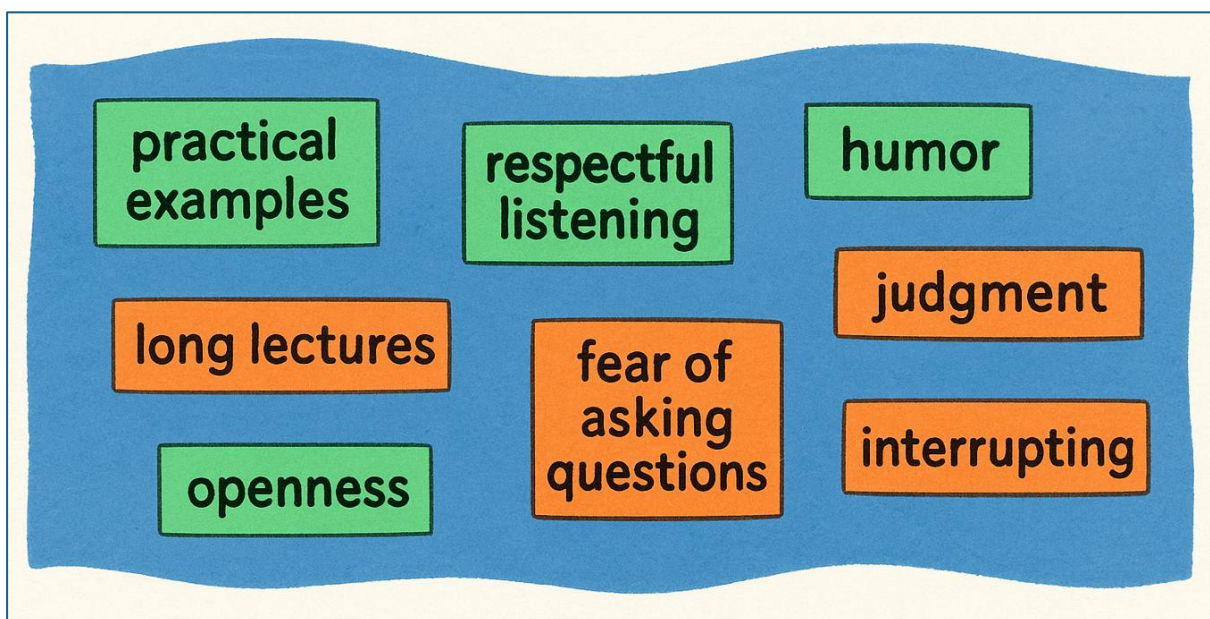


Figure 2. Example of Navigating Our Learning Journey Together.

ACTIVITY 4: EXPECTATIONS CHECK

Objective: To align the training's content and process with the participants' needs and ensure transparency about what the course will and will not cover.

Materials:

- Manila paper
- Small metacards in different colors
- Markers
- Masking tapes

Procedure:

1. Ask participants to form into groups.
2. Provide each group with a set of colored cards. Each color represents a category for your expectations.
 - **First Color:** Content (e.g., specific topics they want to learn).
 - **Second Color:** Process (e.g., a participatory approach, open forums).
 - **Third Color:** Facilitators (e.g., knowledgeable, patient, flexible).
 - **Fourth Color:** Co-participants (e.g., respectful, cooperative, open-minded).
3. Ask groups to discuss amongst themselves and write down their expectations on the corresponding-colored cards.
4. Write **one idea per card** using keywords or a short phrase.
5. Once all groups are finished, ask them to post their cards on the wall under the correct category.

The Expectation Check Template

(This template is designed to be drawn on a large manila paper, for a group activity.)

CONTENT	PROCESS	FACILITATORS	CO-PARTICIPANTS
<i>(What topics, skills, or knowledge do you hope to gain?)</i>	<i>(What kind of activities or methods do you expect?)</i>	<i>(What do you hope for from the facilitators?)</i>	<i>(What do you hope for from your peers in this training?)</i>
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-

Figure 3. Expectation Check Template.

Clusters similar ideas and then leads a discussion to "level off" the expectations. Clearly explain which expectations are realistic for this foundational course and which will be addressed in future training stages, ensuring no topics are prematurely covered or permanently dismissed.

CHAPTER 1: THE FOUNDATIONS OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Welcome to Chapter 1. Over the next three sessions, we will build the essential foundation for all effective conflict analysis. We will start by establishing a shared vocabulary for talking about conflict, then move on to the core frameworks that analysts use to make sense of complex situations. We will finish by covering the practical side of gathering the right information in a way that is both effective and sensitive to the context you're working in.

SESSION 2: CORE CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

In this first session, we will get on the same page by defining the core concepts that underpin all conflict analysis. The goal is to move beyond an intuitive sense of conflict and toward a structured, professional approach that allows us to see a dispute from multiple angles.

ACTIVITY 5: INTRODUCTION TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Here, we will define conflict analysis as a structured inquiry into a conflict's causes, actors, and dynamics. We will discuss why this is the critical first step for any intervention, ensuring our actions contribute to peace and, at a minimum, "Do No Harm".

Objective: To collaboratively surface and share participants' existing knowledge and experiences of conflict and analysis within the Mindanao and BARMM context, creating a shared foundation for learning.

Materials:

- Four sheets of manila paper or flip chart paper
- Markers in various colors
- Masking tape
- PowerPoint Presentations "Conflict and Peace" and "What is Conflict Analysis?"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity, explaining that before diving into formal definitions, it's vital to start with the group's own wisdom and experience. The goal is to understand what "conflict" and "analysis" mean to them in their daily work.
2. Divide participants into four breakout groups. Tape one sheet of manila paper in each corner of the room, each with a different prompt:
 - Prompt 1: What does CONFLICT look like, sound like, and feel like in the communities we work with in Mindanao? (words, symbols, share examples).
 - Prompt 2: What does it mean to ANALYZE or UNDERSTAND a situation before we act? What do we usually do?
 - Prompt 3: Why is it IMPORTANT to deeply understand a conflict before trying to help? What are the risks if we do not?
 - Prompt 4: What are the CHALLENGES we face when trying to understand a conflict in our context?

3. After the initial brainstorm, instruct the groups to rotate clockwise to the next station. At each station, they will read what was written and add new ideas, questions, or comments. Continue the rotation every 5 minutes until all groups have finished.
4. Each group returns to its original station. A volunteer from each group will then present a 2-minute summary of the key ideas on their chart to the plenary. Capture overarching themes on a central whiteboard, highlighting the richness of the group's collective knowledge.
5. Present Lecturette 1: Conflict and Peace
6. Present Lecturette 2: What is Conflict Analysis?



Figure 4. Conflict analysis prompts.

LECTURETTE 1: CONFLICT AND PEACE

Defining Conflict

At its most basic level, conflict is the disruption caused by differing thoughts, wants, or ideas³. However, a more rigorous social scientific definition moves beyond the notion of a simple "disagreement" to a more active and intentional process. Conflict is a social situation or process in which two or more actors are linked by at least one form of antagonistic interaction or psychological relation⁴. It is fundamentally a struggle for agency or power in society, occurring when two or more parties oppose each other in social interaction.

The core of this struggle lies in the perception of incompatible goals⁵. As sociologist Lewis A. Coser defined it, social conflict is "a struggle over the values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals"⁶. This definition highlights several key elements:

- It is a struggle: Conflict is not passive; it is an active and dynamic process.
- It involves scarce resources: The competition is often over limited commodities, whether tangible (like land or wealth) or intangible (like status or political power)⁷.
- It is intentional: The action is oriented to carry out an actor's own will despite the resistance of others.
- It is based on perception: The goals of the parties do not have to be objectively incompatible, only perceived as such⁸.

Crucially, conflict should not be viewed as an abnormal or pathological occurrence. It is a natural and permanent part of social life, and its constructive resolution is a primary driver of social change and progress⁹. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States, for example, was a period of intense social conflict that challenged systemic racism and ultimately led to landmark legislative reforms. Conflict only turns destructive and violent when the systems for managing it fail¹⁰.

Five Principles of Conflict¹¹

1. Conflict is Natural and Inevitable. Conflict is an inherent part of human existence and social interaction. It emerges naturally from the fundamental nature of human relationships, where individuals and groups have different needs, values, and goals.
2. Conflict is Embedded in Human Relationships. All conflicts occur within the context of relationships, making them fundamentally relational phenomena. Conflict affects relationships at multiple levels - personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. The quality of these relationships significantly influences both the nature of the conflict and potential paths to resolution.

³ Study.com. (n.d.). *Conflict: Definition, types & sources - lesson*.

⁴ Dennen, J. M. G. V. D. (2005). *Introduction: On Conflict*. In *The sociobiology of conflict* (pp. 1–19).

⁵ GSDRC. (n.d.). *Definitions and concepts: Topic guide on conflict analysis*.

⁶ Dennen, J. M. G. V. D. (2005).

⁷ Structural Learning. (2023, June 15). *Conflict theory*.

⁸ GSDRC. (n.d.).

⁹ Study.com. (n.d.).

¹⁰ Fiveable. (n.d.). *Social conflict - AP US History*

¹¹ Burgess, H. (2017, April). *Conflict transformation* (Originally published October 2003; "Current Implications" section added April 2017). In J. P. Lederach & M. Maiese (Eds.), *Beyond Intractability*.

3. **Conflict is On-going.** Conflict is fundamentally ongoing because it represents a continuous process rather than discrete, isolated events that can be permanently resolved. This ongoing nature stems from several interconnected factors that make conflict an inherent and persistent feature of human relationships and social systems.
4. **Conflict is Dynamic.** Power imbalances and struggles for authority are fundamental aspects of most conflicts. Those with greater power often seek to maintain their advantage, while those with less power may challenge existing arrangements. These dynamics shape how conflicts develop, escalate, and can be resolved.
5. **Conflict is Positive.** Rather than being purely destructive, conflict has the potential to drive positive transformation and growth. Constructive conflict can foster innovation, promote learning, enhance problem-solving skills, and lead to improved relationships. The principle recognizes that "conflict can be an agent of change" when properly managed.

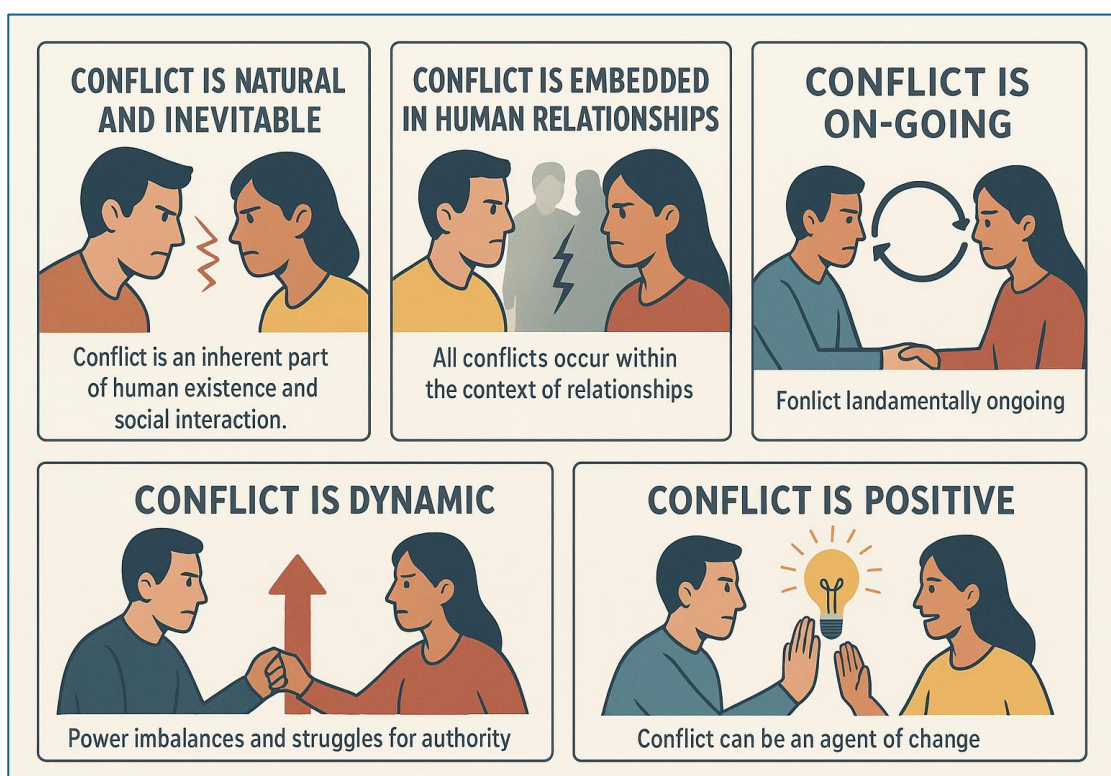


Figure 5. The Principles of Conflict.

Defining Peace

Negative Peace - The most popular and widely understood definition of peace is a negative one: it is a state of harmony characterized by the absence of hostility, violence, conflict, or war. This is the primary dictionary definition and the one most commonly used in everyday language and international relations. It refers to a "simple silence of arms". This conception of peace is foundational and serves as a necessary starting point. The cessation of direct violence is an urgent and non-negotiable first step in any peace process, as it is impossible to build a just society amidst the chaos of war. Pacifist traditions, which categorically oppose violence as a means of settling disputes, are strongly rooted in this understanding of peace as the absence of violent behavior¹².

Positive Peace - However, this negative definition is widely considered insufficient by peace scholars and practitioners. As Albert Einstein noted, "Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order--in short, of government". This sentiment is echoed by numerous thinkers and leaders. Martin Luther King Jr. famously distinguished between a "negative peace which is the absence of tension" and a "positive peace which is the presence of justice". Sargent Shriver elaborated on this, stating, "Peace must mean not only the absence of war among governments, but also the creation of social justice among peoples... Peace must mean furthering the dignity of man and the sanctity of life"¹³.

Transformative Peace - This expanded definition reframes peace from a passive state (the absence of something bad) to an active one (the presence of something good). It is not just about stopping violence; it is about building a society where the causes of violence are addressed. This includes the establishment of just laws, the protection of human rights, mutual respect between groups, and goodwill in social relations. In this view, a society under a brutal dictatorship may be free of open warfare, but it cannot be considered truly peaceful because it lacks justice and freedom. True peace is a condition of both societal harmony and individual flourishing¹⁴.

Justice as the Foundation

The central, indispensable principle of a lasting peace is the establishment of social justice. Justice, in this context, is defined broadly as the full and equitable enjoyment of the entire range of human rights—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—by all people. Peace and justice are inextricably linked; one cannot exist without the other. A peace that is built on a foundation of injustice is merely a temporary truce, a latent conflict waiting for a trigger to erupt into violence once more. True peace requires a social order that is perceived as fair and that provides all its members with dignity, opportunity, and a stake in the system¹⁵.

¹² Pangcoga, A. H. R. (2010). *Panagtagbo sa kalinaw ug panag-uli II: Training manual of a culture of peace for Mindanao communities*.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Pangcoga, A. H. R. (2010).

¹⁵ Sandy, L. R., & Perkins, R., Jr. (n.d.). *A definition of peace*.

LECTURETTE 2: WHAT IS CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

Conflict is complex. The professional world has a term for what we've been discussing: **Conflict Analysis**. It's formally defined as a structured inquiry into the causes, actors, dynamics, and potential direction of a conflict¹⁶. Think of it as moving from a gut feeling about a situation to a systematic process of understanding it. It's a way to organize all the complicated information you just shared into a clear, shared picture that a team can use to make decisions¹⁷.

It is a common misconception that this kind of analysis is an arcane art practiced only by outside experts or intelligence analysts. The truth is that conflict analysis should be a habitual activity for all of us working in regions like BARMM that are at risk of instability. It is a practical skill that builds on the intuitive process of understanding our environment but gives it structure and rigor so we can challenge our own assumptions and develop a common vocabulary for describing the conflict dynamics with our colleagues¹⁸.

Why Do We Do It? The Purpose and the Promise

You all highlighted the risks of acting without understanding—making things worse, wasting resources, even putting people in danger. This brings us to the core purpose of conflict analysis: to inform **conflict-sensitive programming**¹⁹. This is a professional way of saying we want our work to help, not harm.

Conflict sensitivity is built on the foundational principle of "Do No Harm." It requires us to understand the context we work in and the interaction between our intervention and that context, with the goal of minimizing any unintended negative effects and maximizing our positive contributions to peace. Without a solid analysis, even our best intentions can unintentionally fuel conflict²⁰. Ultimately, the promise of good analysis is that it helps us identify opportunities to manage or resolve disputes without recourse to violence. It moves us from simply reacting to crises to proactively understanding the dynamics so we can support local capacities for peace.

A Foundational and Continuous Step

Finally, it is critical to understand that conflict analysis isn't a one-time report that you write at the beginning of a project and then file. It is the living foundation for everything we do.

- It informs our initial **project design** and planning.
- It guides our day-to-day decisions during **implementation**.
- And it is essential for **monitoring and evaluation**, as it helps us measure how our project is interacting with the conflict dynamics we are trying to influence.

Most importantly, conflict analysis must be a continuous and dynamic process, especially in a context like Mindanao that is always changing. Our analysis must be regularly updated to reflect new events, shifting relationships, and emerging trends. This creates a cycle of learning and adaptation, allowing us to respond to evolving conditions with greater agility and insight, making our work more effective, more responsible, and more likely to contribute to a sustainable peace.

¹⁶ United States Institute of Peace. (n.d.).

¹⁷ Herbert, S. (2017). *Conflict analysis: Topic guide*.

¹⁸ United States Institute of Peace. (n.d.).

¹⁹ Herbert, S. (2017).

²⁰ GSDRC. (n.d.). *Conflict Analysis. In Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building*.

ACTIVITY 6: FUNDAMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

Conflict is more than just a fight; it exists in our thoughts, feelings, and actions all at once. We will introduce the three core expressions of conflict—Perception, Feeling, and Action—to understand how a dispute is experienced by those inside it.

Objective: To experientially deconstruct a simple, relatable conflict into its different components, allowing participants to discover for themselves the concepts of attitudes, behaviors, and context.

Materials:

- Manila paper or flip chart paper for each small group
- Metacards or sticky notes in three different colors (e.g., Yellow, Green, Blue)
- Markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation “The ABC Triangle”

Procedure:

1. Introduce a simple, low-stakes scenario relevant to the local context:
"Two respected community leaders in a barangay were asked to co-organize a youth sports festival. Leader A wants to start immediately with the existing funds to build momentum. Leader B insists they must wait two more months to secure a promised donation from an LGU official, which would make the festival much bigger. Last week, at a community meeting, Leader A announced the festival would start next month. Leader B stood up and said this was a reckless decision that showed a lack of respect for proper planning. The room went silent, and now community members are taking sides."
2. In small groups, participants are given the three colors of metacards and the following instructions:
 - On the **GREEN** cards, write down everything the leaders **DID** or **SAID**. What were their observable actions?
 - On the **YELLOW** cards, write down what you imagine the leaders were **THINKING** or **FEELING**. What were their perceptions, emotions, or beliefs?
 - On the **BLUE** card (just one per group), write down the core **ISSUE** or **SITUATION** they were disagreeing about.
3. Each group posts their cards on their manila paper, clustering the colors together.
4. Ask the groups to reflect on what they see.
 - "Look at your maps. What is the difference between the information on the green cards and the yellow cards?" (Guide them to the idea of visible vs. invisible).
 - "Which of these things—the actions, the feelings, or the core issue—is the easiest for an outsider to see? Which is the hardest?"
 - "How do you think the 'yellow card' feelings influenced the 'green card' actions?"
5. Present Lecturette 3: The ABC Triangle.

LECTURETTE 3: THE ABC TRIANGLE

A single conflict has many different parts. Some parts are very visible—the shouting, the protests, the fighting. Other parts are invisible—the mistrust, the fear, the history.

To help us organize these different parts, we are going to use a very simple but powerful tool developed by Johan Galtung. It is called the ABC Triangle. This tool helps us remember that every conflict has three interconnected dimensions.

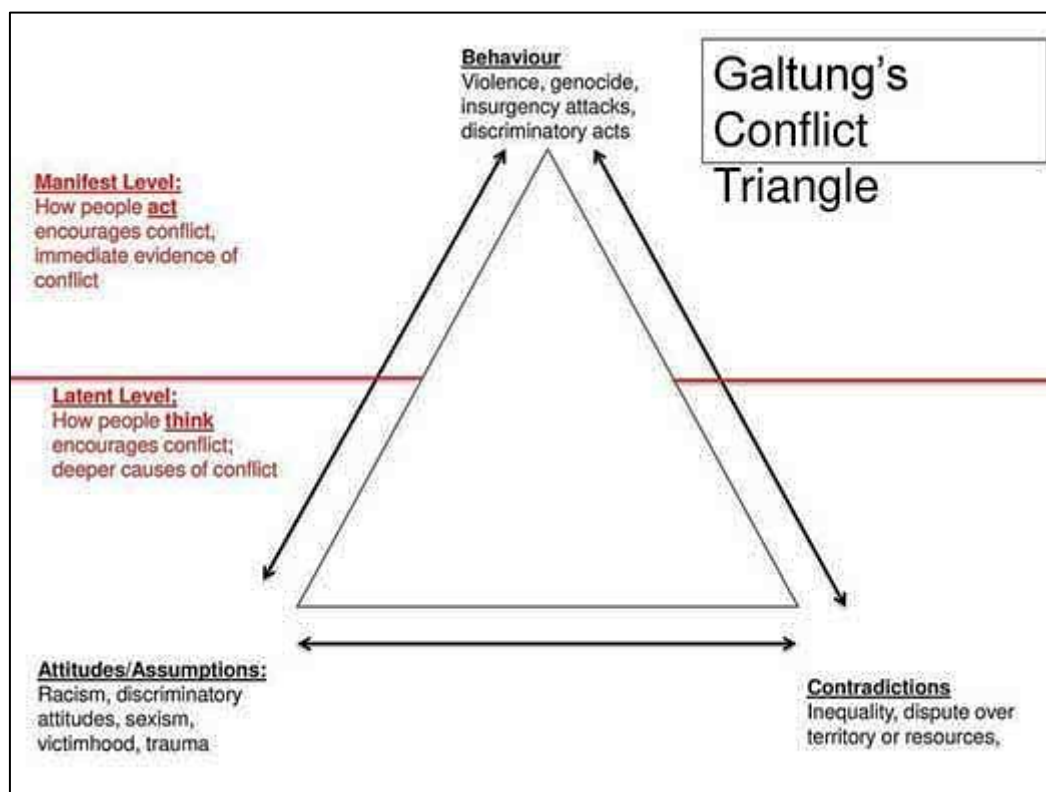


Figure 6. The ABC Triangle (Galtung).

- **A for Attitudes:** This represents our **Attitudes**. These were your yellow cards. Attitudes are the **invisible parts** of the conflict. They are what people *think* and *feel*. This includes:
 - **Perceptions and Misperceptions:** How the parties see themselves and each other. Are they "aggressors" or "victims"? Are their actions seen as "justified" or "evil"?
 - **Emotions:** This is the fear, anger, hatred, mistrust, and suspicion that fuels the conflict.
 - **Stereotypes:** These are the simplistic and often negative beliefs about the "other side." For example, "All of them are untrustworthy," or "Those people are naturally aggressive."Attitudes are often the hidden drivers of conflict. You can't see them, but you can definitely feel their impact. They are the **psychological** dimension of the conflict.
- **B for Behavior:** This is our **Behavior**. These were your green cards. Behavior is the **visible part** of the conflict. It's what people *do*—the actions you can see and hear. This can range from non-violent to violent actions, such as:
 - **Cooperation:** Working together, talking, negotiating.
 - **Coercion:** Threats, insults, protests, political sanctions.

- **Destruction:** Physical violence, fighting, property damage.

Behavior is the easiest part of a conflict to see. It's the part that gets reported in the news. It is the **physical** dimension of the conflict.

- **C for Context/Contradiction:** This is the **Context** or **Contradiction**. Galtung originally called this **Contradiction**, but "Context" is often easier to understand. It refers to the **root cause** or the underlying situation from which the conflict grows. This is the structural part of the conflict—the disagreement that started it all. It's the incompatibility of goals. For example, the context could be:
 - **A dispute over territory or resources:** Two communities both claim the same piece of ancestral land.
 - **An unequal distribution of power:** One group has all the political power and another group has none.
 - **Unsatisfied needs:** One group's need for security or identity is being blocked by another.

Context is the **structural** dimension of the conflict. It's the "problem" that the parties are trying to solve, but their competing goals create a contradiction.

- **The Dynamic Link - How it all connects:** These three corners are not separate; they constantly influence each other.
 - Negative **attitudes** (A) lead to aggressive **behavior** (B).
 - Aggressive **behavior** (B) can make the underlying **context** (C) even worse.
 - A frustrating **context** (C) can create and reinforce negative **attitudes** (A).

This creates a self-reinforcing cycle. To address the conflict effectively, we can't just focus on one corner.

- Stopping the **behavior** (like calling for a ceasefire) is a necessary first step, but it's not enough.
- If you don't change the negative **attitudes** (through dialogue, reconciliation), the violence will likely return.
- And if you don't address the root **context** or contradiction (through political or structural change), the reasons for the conflict will remain, and new tensions will keep growing.

The ABC Triangle is a powerful diagnostic tool. It reminds us to ask three key questions when we analyze any conflict:

- What are the **attitudes** and feelings of each side?
- What **behaviors** are we seeing?
- What is the root **context** or problem that started it all?
- By looking at all three dimensions, we get a much more complete picture of the conflict and can start thinking about more effective ways to intervene.

ACTIVITY 7: KEY ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES

To wrap up, we will outline the four main pillars of a comprehensive analysis. You'll learn how to organize information into a Conflict Profile, identify its Causes, map the Actors involved, and understand its Dynamics.

Objective: To enable participants to intuitively categorize diverse pieces of information about a conflict, thereby discovering the natural need for a structured analytical framework.

Materials:

- One set of 20-25 pre-written metacards (or sticky notes) per small group, containing various pieces of information about a single conflict scenario
- Blank manila paper and markers for each group

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity with a relatable metaphor:
"Imagine you are helping a relative open a new sari-sari store. You arrive and all the new items—sardines, soap, coffee, biscuits, soft drinks—are mixed together in one big box. To make sense of it all and run the store, what's the first thing you must do? You have to sort them onto shelves. Information about a conflict is exactly the same. It comes to us all mixed up. Our first job as analysts is to sort it onto the right shelves so we can see what we have."
2. In small groups, each team receives a set of metacards detailing a conflict scenario (e.g., a dispute over water rights between an upstream farming cooperative and a downstream indigenous community in Lanao del Sur).
3. Instruct the groups: "Your task is to sort these cards into categories that make sense to you. Create your own labels for the 'shelves' on the manila paper and arrange the cards under them."
4. Each group posts their work on the wall. Lead a brief "gallery walk" and then a discussion.
 - "Let's look at the categories you created. What are some of the common themes?" (Facilitator notes similarities like "People," "History," "Problems," "Actions").
 - "Group 1 called this category 'Key People,' while Group 3 called it 'Stakeholders.' Are they similar?"
 - "Why did you decide to group these specific pieces of information together?"
5. Present Lecturette 5: The Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Each small group will receive one set of the following 20 cards. Explain that all 20 cards are pieces of a single story—**The Lakeview Water Dispute**—an unfolding conflict between an upstream farming cooperative and a downstream indigenous community in Lanao del Sur. The group's task is to work together to sort these different pieces of information onto the correct "shelf" of their Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis worksheet.

Metacards: The Lakeview Water Dispute

Card 1 The Core Issue: The Lakeview Farmers Cooperative has built a new irrigation dam on the Kilang River, significantly reducing the water flow to the downstream Maranaw indigenous community.

Card 2 The Upstream Leader's Position: "Progress cannot be stopped. Our cooperative is bringing jobs and a future to this province. This dam is necessary to modernize our farming and feed our 500 member families."

- **Hadji Abdullah**, *President of the Lakeview Farmers Cooperative*

Card 3 The Downstream Leader's Position: The tribal chieftain, **Datu Nonoy**, has refused to meet with the cooperative, stating, "Their talk is of paper and money. Our talk is of the spirit in the water, the lifeblood of our ancestors."

Card 4 The Mayor's Interest: The Municipal Mayor, whose family owns the trucking company with the sole contract to transport the cooperative's produce, has publicly called the downstream community's claims "a barrier to economic development."

Card 5 The Upstream Group's Identity: The Lakeview Farmers Cooperative is a multi-ethnic group (Maranaws, Cebuanos, Ilonggos) who have farmed the area for generations. They see themselves as pioneers who made the land productive.

Card 6 The Downstream Group's Identity: The downstream community is a traditional Maranaw group with a pending ancestral domain claim over the entire river basin, which they call '*Wato a Ilian*' (stone of the homeland).

Card 7 The Impact: A recent study by Mindanao State University confirms the new irrigation dam has reduced the river's flow by nearly 40%, making the community's traditional fishing grounds unusable.

Card 8 Internal Dissent: Several younger members of the cooperative have privately expressed concern, noting that the dam project was pushed through by Hadji Abdullah without a full vote.

Card 9 Legal Framework (Pro-Indigenous): The **Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997** is a national law that legally recognizes and protects the rights of indigenous communities to their ancestral domains and waters.

Card 10 Government Response: The regional office of the **National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)** has stated it lacks the staff and budget to mediate the dispute effectively due to a backlog of over 100 similar cases.



Card 11 Economic Driver: Provincial economic data shows the cooperative's high-value crops (corn and bananas) are the region's top agricultural export, a key part of the local government's development strategy.

Card 12 Historical Context: A local historian uncovered records of a traditional peace pact (*pagta*) over water sharing between the ancestors of both communities, a practice abandoned 50 years ago.

Card 13 Legal Framework (Pro-Development): Presidential Decree No. 705 (1975) is still active law and classifies any land with a slope of 18% or more as public forest land, potentially nullifying parts of the ancestral domain claim.

Card 14 Political Opportunism: A popular provincial board member, who is challenging the current mayor in the next election, has been visiting the downstream community, promising to "fight for your ancestral rights."

Card 15 Visible Action: Youth groups from the downstream community have organized three peaceful protest marches in the provincial capital, demanding the NCIP and local government intervene.

Card 16 External Climate Factor: A **PAGASA** climate report links three consecutive years of below-average rainfall in Mindanao to the intensifying effects of the El Niño weather pattern, making water scarcer for everyone.

Card 17 International Pressure: An international human rights NGO based in Geneva has issued a press release condemning the "potential economic displacement of the Maranaw community due to unchecked agricultural expansion."

Card 18 Global Market Connection: Market analysis reveals the primary buyers of the cooperative's produce are large multinational corporations based in Japan and South Korea, which demand high volume and consistency.

Card 19 Foreign Funding: The cooperative's advanced irrigation system, including the controversial dam, was partially funded by a development grant from the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**.

Card 20 Downstream Group's Need: A community health worker reports a rise in malnutrition among downstream families, who relied on the river's fish as their primary source of protein.

LECTURETTE 4: THE FOUR SHELVES OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

A conflict analysis can be organized using a multi-layered framework, metaphorically described as the **Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis**²¹. This framework synthesizes established principles from the field of conflict resolution and peace studies. This model provides a structured approach to examining a conflict from different levels of complexity, ensuring a comprehensive understanding. This framework synthesizes established principles from the field of conflict resolution and peace studies. Each "shelf" represents a distinct level of analysis, from the micro-level of individual actors to the macro-level of the international system.

In the field of peace and conflict studies, a robust analysis requires more than a surface-level examination. We must dissect the intricate layers of a conflict to understand its origins, drivers, and dynamics. The Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis is a conceptual framework designed to organize this process. Imagine a library bookshelf where each shelf holds a different category of knowledge. To understand the full story, one must consult books from each shelf. Similarly, this model directs the analyst to four distinct levels of inquiry. By systematically examining each shelf, we move from the specific and personal to the broad and systemic, creating a holistic, multi-dimensional picture of the conflict.

The First Shelf: The Individual Level - The **first and lowest shelf** directs our focus to the **individual level**. This perspective posits that the ultimate decisions in a conflict—to escalate, to negotiate, to make peace—are made by individuals. Therefore, understanding these key actors is paramount.

Analysis on this shelf involves examining the **psychology, motivations, and agency of key leaders** and influential figures. We ask critical questions such as:

- What are the belief systems, ideologies, and personal histories of the primary leaders?
- How do their personalities, biases, and decision-making styles influence their actions?
- What are their personal stakes in the continuation or resolution of the conflict?

Tools such as **leadership profiling** and **political psychology** are essential for this level. By analyzing speeches, writings, and past behaviors, we can construct a profile that offers insight into the motivations driving the conflict at its most personal level. This shelf holds the human element of the conflict.

The Second Shelf: The Group Level - The **second shelf** elevates the analysis to the **group level**. Conflicts are rarely just the product of a few individuals; they are often waged between collective entities. This level focuses on the **dynamics of identity groups**, whether they are ethnic, religious, political, or social.

Here, the analysis scrutinizes the **cohesion, interests, and mobilization of these groups**. The guiding questions include:

- What are the core grievances and aspirations of each primary group?

²¹ The "Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis" is a proprietary framework developed for this training module to simplify and enhance the learning process. It is a pedagogical metaphor—a simple, memorable way to organize the standard, widely accepted components of conflict analysis. The concepts within the shelves—Context, Causes, Actors, and Dynamics—are foundational to the field of conflict studies. It can be considered a conceptual descendant of Kenneth Waltz's "levels of analysis" from his book *Man, the State, and War* (1959), which was developed to explain the causes of war.

- How do group identities form and become mobilized for conflict? What are the roles of "us vs. them" narratives?
- Who are the internal leaders and what are the power dynamics within each group? Are there divisions or factions?

Frameworks like **Stakeholder Analysis** and the **Onion Model** (Positions, Interests, Needs) are particularly useful here. This shelf helps us understand how individual sentiments coalesce into collective action and how intergroup polarization becomes a central driver of the conflict.

The Third Shelf: The State and Societal Level - The **third shelf** broadens the perspective further to the **state and societal level**. This level examines the context in which the conflict unfolds, focusing on the **structures of governance, economic systems, and societal norms**. It assumes that the nature of the state and society can either create conditions for peace or foster grievances that lead to violence.

Analysis on this shelf investigates the **institutional and structural drivers of conflict**. Key questions are:

- Are state institutions seen as legitimate and inclusive, or are they exclusive and predatory?
- How does the distribution of economic resources and opportunities contribute to tension?
- What are the roles of security sector governance, the judicial system, and civil society?
- Do prevailing social norms and cultural practices promote violence or peaceful resolution?

Tools such as the **Conflict Tree**, which distinguishes between root causes and effects, and **structural analysis** frameworks are employed here. This shelf reveals the deep-rooted, systemic issues that perpetuate the conflict cycle.

The Fourth Shelf: The International and Systemic Level - The **fourth and highest shelf** encompasses the **international and systemic level**. This perspective recognizes that conflicts are rarely contained within national borders. They are influenced by a web of **regional and global actors, forces, and structures**. The analysis here focuses on **external influences**. We explore questions like:

- What roles do neighboring states, regional powers, and international bodies (like the UN) play? Are they spoilers or peacemakers?
- How do international economic interests (e.g., resource extraction, trade) impact the conflict?
- What is the influence of transnational actors, such as diasporas, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), or armed non-state groups?
- How do international laws, norms, and geopolitical power dynamics enable or constrain the conflict parties?

A **geopolitical analysis** is essential at this level. This shelf provides the widest lens, helping us understand how global and regional dynamics shape the environment in which the conflict exists.

By examining all four shelves, from the individual leader to the international system, the analyst can construct a truly comprehensive and integrated understanding of a conflict, identifying both its unique characteristics and its connections to broader patterns of human interaction.

THE FOUR SHELVES OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS



Figure 7. *The Four Shelves of Conflict Analysis.*

SESSION 3: FOUNDATIONAL ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Now that we have the basic concepts, this session introduces the key frameworks that help us organize our thinking. These are the mental models and visual tools that practitioners use to turn a chaotic situation into a clear, structured analysis.

ACTIVITY 8: GALTUNG'S VIOLENCE TRIANGLE

Objective: To understand the concept of the violence triangle.

Materials:

- PowerPoint presentation of the lecturette on the violence triangle
- Laptop
- Projector
- Projector Screen

Procedure:

- Present Lecturette 5: Johan Galtung's the Violence Triangle

LECTURETTE 5: THE VIOLENCE TRIANGLE OF JOHAN GALTUNG: UNDERSTANDING THE OBSTACLES TO PEACE²²

This framework helps us see the invisible parts of a conflict. We will learn to distinguish between the obvious **Direct Violence** and the often-hidden **Structural** and **Cultural Violence** that create the conditions for conflict to erupt.

To fully appreciate Galtung's concept of peace, one must understand his corresponding typology of violence. He argued that focusing only on direct, physical violence is a mistake, as it ignores the less visible but equally destructive forms of violence that make direct violence possible. He conceptualized these forms as a "violence triangle," where each corner reinforces the others.

Direct Violence: This is the visible, event-based violence that most people think of when they hear the word. It involves physical or psychological harm inflicted by an identifiable actor, such as killing, assault, torture, or verbal abuse. Direct violence is the primary obstacle to achieving.

Structural Violence: This is indirect violence built into the social, political, and economic structures of society. It manifests as social injustice and inequality, preventing people from meeting their basic needs and realizing their full potential. Examples include poverty, systemic discrimination, sexism, racism, and unequal access to education, healthcare, or political power. Structural violence is often slow, silent, and normalized, making it less visible than direct violence, but it can be far more deadly over the long term. Structural violence is the primary obstacle to achieving

Cultural Violence: This refers to any aspect of a culture—in religion, ideology, language, art, or science—that can be used to legitimize or justify direct or structural violence. Cultural violence works by making direct and structural violence look and feel "right," or at least not wrong. Examples include ideologies of racial or national superiority, religious doctrines that call for holy war, patriarchal norms that justify violence against women, and propaganda that dehumanizes an enemy. Cultural violence provides the moral and intellectual sanction for the other forms of violence. It is also a primary obstacle to achieving.

The three forms of violence are deeply interdependent. Cultural violence provides the justification for structural violence (e.g., racist ideologies justifying discriminatory laws), and both can lead to outbreaks of direct violence (e.g., when an oppressed group rebels, or when the state uses force to maintain the unjust structure). To build a truly sustainable peace, all three forms of violence must be addressed.

²² Galtung, J. (1969). *Violence, peace, and peace research*.

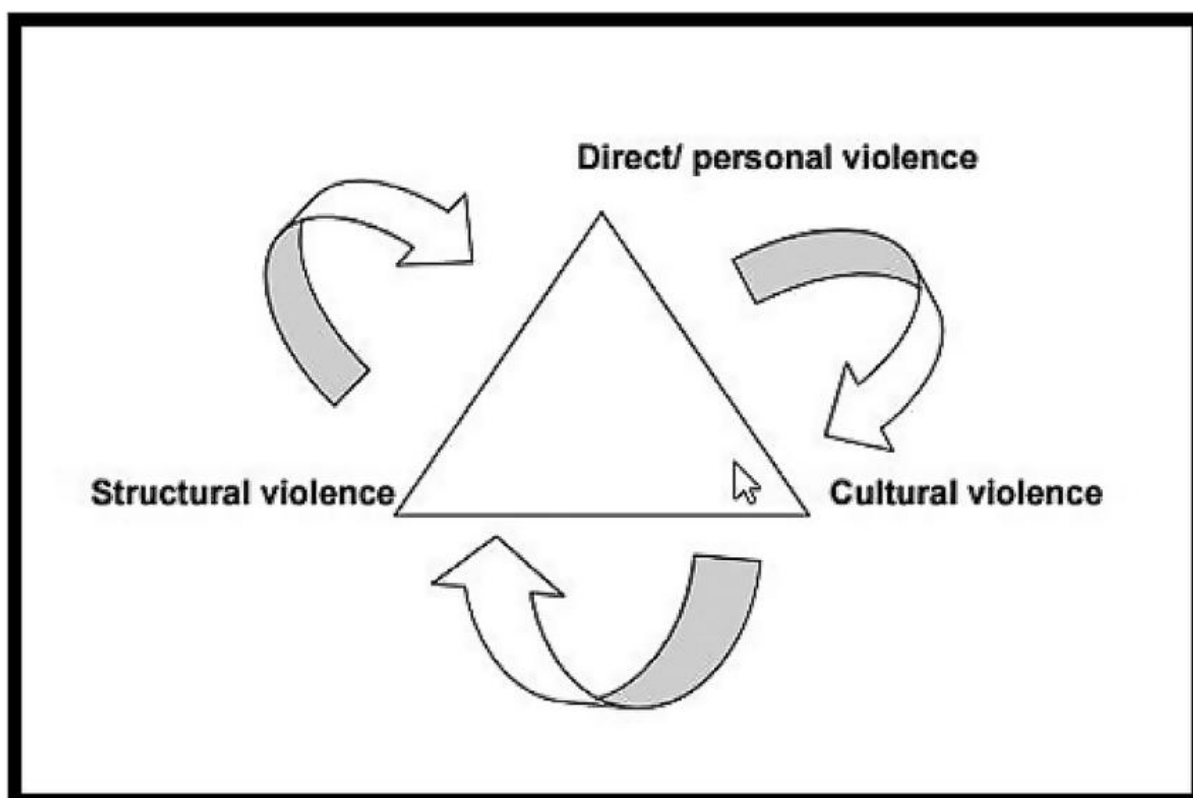


Figure 8. Galtung's violence triangle Source: Muthien and Combrinck (2013)

The following table illustrates the direct relationship between Galtung's typologies of violence and peace.

Type of Violence	Definition	Example	Corresponding Peace State
Direct Violence	The intentional use of physical or psychological force by an identifiable actor to harm others.	War, murder, assault, torture, bullying.	Negative Peace (Absence of direct violence)
Structural Violence	Social, political, and economic systems and institutions that cause harm by preventing people from meeting their basic needs.	Poverty, systemic racism, unequal access to education, repressive political systems.	Positive Peace (Absence of structural violence; presence of social justice)
Cultural Violence	Aspects of a culture (ideology, religion, language) that legitimize and normalize direct or structural violence.	Propaganda dehumanizing an enemy, ideologies of national or racial superiority, norms that condone domestic violence.	Positive Peace (Absence of cultural violence; presence of a culture of peace)



ACTIVITY 9: MOORE'S CIRCLE OF CONFLICT

Objective: To understand the concept of the circle of conflict.

Materials:

- PowerPoint presentation of the lecturette on the circle of conflict
- Laptop
- Projector
- Projector Screen

Procedure:

- Present Lecturette 6: Christopher Moore's Circle of Conflict

LECTURETTE 6: CHRISTOPHER MOORE'S CIRCLE OF CONFLICT²³

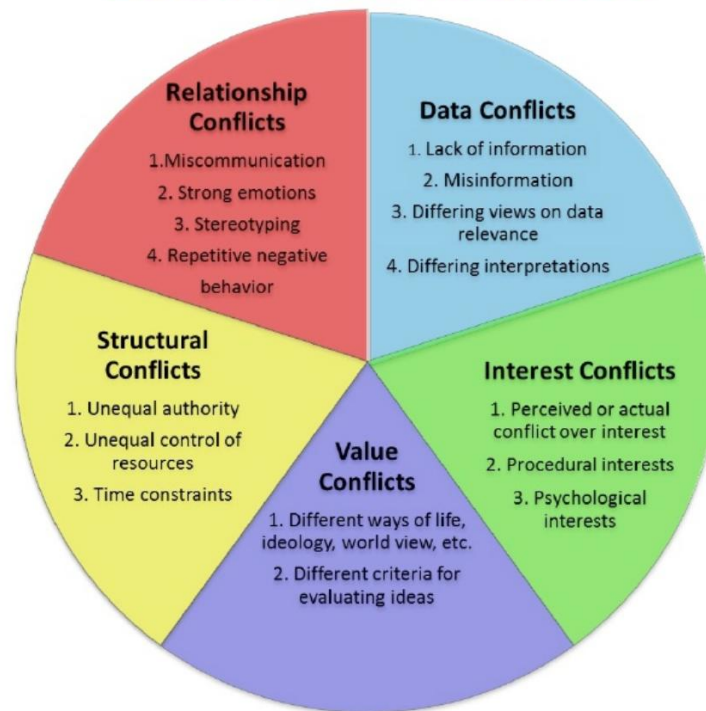
The Circle of Conflict provides a complementary framework that diagnoses the primary **sources or root causes of conflict**. It's a powerful tool for understanding *why* a conflict exists in the first place by sorting its drivers into five main categories.

This framework argues that conflicts originate from one or more of these five sources:

1. **Data Conflicts:** These are caused by a lack of information, misinformation, or different interpretations of data. The parties may have different information, or they may disagree on what information is relevant. They are often the easiest to resolve by ensuring everyone has access to the same, credible information.
2. **Interest Conflicts:** These are the most common cause of conflict. They involve perceived or actual competition over substantive interests (like money, land, or resources) or psychological interests (like the need for respect, power, or trust). The key is to look beyond the stated "positions" to uncover the underlying "interests."
3. **Relationship Conflicts:** These conflicts are caused by strong negative emotions, stereotypes, poor communication, or repetitive negative behavior. They often become self-perpetuating cycles of mistrust and hostility, where the original issue is almost forgotten and the conflict is now about the bad relationship itself.
4. **Value Conflicts:** These are caused by different criteria for evaluating ideas or behavior. They arise from clashes in fundamental beliefs, ideologies, and principles. Because values are so core to our identity, these conflicts are often the most difficult to resolve. The goal is often not to change the other's values but to find solutions that can coexist with them.
5. **Structural Conflicts:** These are caused by the "system" itself—unequal power, unequal control of resources, oppressive social structures, or geographical constraints. The conflict is built into the situation, and resolving it often requires fundamental changes to the existing structure.

²³ Graef, A. (2020). Model #3: *The Circle of Conflict*. In *The conflict resolution toolbox: Models & maps for analyzing, diagnosing, and resolving conflict* (2nd ed., Chapter 6).

Causes of Conflict



Adapted from:
Christopher Moore, *The Mediation Process*, Third Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 2003.

Figure 9. Christopher Moore's Circle of Conflict. Source: Tool - Circle of Conflict by Daniel Dow, 03 Oct 2019.

SESSION 4: DATA COLLECTION FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS

A great analysis depends on great information. This session is all about the "how-to" of data collection, focusing on practical methods for gathering information reliably, ethically, and in a way that is sensitive to the conflict environment.

ACTIVITY 10: SETTING THE SCOPE

Before you can find answers, you need to ask the right questions. We will cover how to define the purpose and scope of your analysis to ensure your data collection is focused and relevant.

Objective: Participants will be able to **formulate** specific, answerable, and relevant research questions that define the clear scope of a conflict analysis for a given scenario.

Materials:

- Manila paper or whiteboard for each group
- Markers in different colors
- Metacards or sticky notes (optional for initial brainstorming)
- Handouts:
 - One copy of the "Market Relocation Scenario" for each group
 - Three different "Client Briefing Cards"
- PowerPoint Presentation "The Three Pillars of Scoping"

Procedure:

Part 1: Experiential Activity – "The Analyst's Briefing"

1. Introduce the activity: "Imagine our organization has been asked to analyze a growing conflict in a nearby municipality. But before we can begin our research, we need a clear plan. This activity simulates the very first step: understanding our assignment and what questions we need to ask."
2. Small Group Work:
 - Divide participants into three groups. Each group receives the **same** one-page scenario below.
 - Each group receives a **different** and secret "Client Briefing Card."
 - **Instruction:** "Your team are conflict analysts. Read the scenario. Based on the specific needs of *your* client, your task is to identify and write down the **Top 5 Most Important Questions** your analysis must answer to meet their needs. Prepare to present your client's goal and your five questions."



Part 2: Plenary Debrief and Synthesis

3. Each group presents their client's objective and the Top 5 questions they formulated. Write the questions on a whiteboard, keeping the lists from each group separate.
4. Lead a reflection with the plenary.
 - "Look at the three lists of questions. Even though you all had the same conflict, your questions are very different. Why?"
 - "How did your client's specific goal—reducing tension versus preventing political crisis versus long-term healing—change what you needed to look for?"
 - "What might have happened if the Mayor's team used the questions prepared for the Interfaith Council? Would they have gotten the information they needed to make their specific decision?"

Part 3: Lecturette

5. Present Lecturette 7: The Three Pillars of Scoping

HANDOUTS FOR THE ACTIVITY

Scenario (Given to All Groups): The Market Relocation Conflict

The city government has announced a plan to relocate the historic downtown market to a new facility on the outskirts of the city to ease traffic and improve sanitation. A powerful group of established vendors, who have operated stalls for generations, are fiercely resisting the move, arguing it will destroy their livelihoods. A newly formed association of tricycle drivers is publicly supporting the move, believing the new location will create more business for them. Meanwhile, residents near the proposed new site are beginning to protest, worried about the increased noise and traffic the new market will bring. Tensions are rising, and the first public consultation meeting is scheduled for next week.

Client Briefing Cards (One per group):

Client Card #1: The International Donor - "We are a donor agency with a small fund for quick-impact peace projects. We need an analysis that helps us decide if we should fund a **short-term (3-month) project** here. Our goal is to simply **reduce immediate tensions** before they escalate into violence. We are not looking for a deep historical analysis."

Client Card #2: The City Mayor's Office - "The Mayor is very concerned that this dispute could be exploited by her political rivals in the upcoming election. She needs an analysis that identifies the **key political actors, potential spoilers, and their sources of power**. Her primary goal is to **prevent the conflict from escalating into a major political crisis** that could threaten stability."

Client Card #3: A Local Interfaith Council - "We are a respected council of religious leaders who want to facilitate a **long-term community dialogue** to find a sustainable, win-win solution. We need a deep and empathetic analysis that uncovers the **root causes, history, and the core needs and fears of all groups** involved. Our goal is to promote **healing and reconciliation**."

LECTURETTE 7: THE THREE PILLARS OF SCOPING²⁴

Your teams have just demonstrated the most critical, foundational step of any professional analysis: **Setting the Scope**. Without this step, an analysis can become a huge, unfocused collection of information that is not useful to anyone. You discovered that the scope isn't determined by the conflict itself, but by the **purpose** of the analysis.

To ensure our analysis is always focused and strategic, we ask three core questions before we begin. These are the Three Pillars of Scoping:

Pillar 1: WHY? (The Purpose)

The first and most important question is **WHY** are we doing this analysis? The purpose is the foundation upon which everything else is built. It defines the ultimate goal and determines the depth and breadth of the work required. An analysis without a clear purpose is like a ship without a destination—it may gather a lot of information, but it will never arrive anywhere useful.

You must ask: What decision will this analysis inform?

- Is it for **designing a new peacebuilding project**? Then the scope will need to focus on identifying local capacities, dividers, and connectors.
- Is it for **providing policy advice to a local government unit**? The scope must then include political dynamics, key stakeholders, and actionable recommendations.
- Is it for **preparing for a community mediation**? In that case, the scope should be narrow, focusing on the specific parties' interests, needs, and positions.

The purpose dictates everything else. For example, a donor's "why" might be to make a quick funding decision, which requires a narrow, short-term scope.

Pillar 2: WHO? (The Audience)

Once the purpose is clear, we must ask **WHO** is this analysis for? A brilliant analysis is useless if the intended audience cannot understand or use it. The audience determines the final **format, language, and tone** of your work.

Consider these different audiences:

- A **donor agency** typically needs a concise, professional report with an executive summary and clear, data-driven recommendations.
- A **community group** may need a visual presentation, like a workshop using flip charts, delivered in the local dialect and focused on practical, relatable stories.
- A **team of peacebuilders** might need a detailed internal document full of raw data and nuanced observations to inform their day-to-day strategy.

Tailoring the product to the audience ensures that your insights are received, understood, and acted upon.

²⁴ Chigas, D., & Ganson, B. (2003). *Grand visions and small projects: Coexistence efforts in Southeastern Europe*.



Pillar 3: WHAT? (The Key Questions)

Only after we know the "Why" and the "Who" can we define the **WHAT**. This pillar moves us from the abstract to the concrete. Based on the purpose and audience, what are the specific, answerable lines of inquiry that will guide our data collection?

These key questions form the backbone of your research plan. This is where we decide which analytical tools are most appropriate:

- If a key question is "What are the root causes of this land dispute?", we know we'll need to use the **Conflict Tree**.
- If we need to know "What are the underlying needs of the parties involved?", we'll use the **Onion Model**.
- If we must understand "How did this conflict escalate over time?", we will use a **Timeline Analysis**.

Setting the scope is our compass. It ensures our hard work results in a product that is not just interesting, but truly useful, relevant, and capable of guiding strategic action.

ACTIVITY 11: DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES

We will explore the two main families of data collection: qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups, which help us understand the "why," and quantitative methods like surveys, which help us understand the "how much".

Objective: To understand data collection methodologies for conflict analysis.

Materials:

- PowerPoint Presentation “Data Collection Methodologies for Conflict Analysis”
- Laptop
- Projector
- Projector Screen

Procedure:

- Present Lecturette 8: Data Collection Methodologies for Conflict Analysis

LECTURETTE 8: DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS

A great analysis depends on great information. Once we have set our scope and know the key questions we need to answer, our next step is to choose the right methods for gathering that information. In research, we have two main families of data collection:

Qualitative and **Quantitative**. Think of them as two different types of tools, each with its own special purpose.

Qualitative Methods: Understanding the "Why"

Qualitative data is about understanding the richness and meaning of human experience. It's not about numbers, but about stories, perceptions, and context. These methods help us answer "Why?" or "How?" questions. The goal is to get a deep, nuanced understanding of a specific situation from the perspective of the people involved. Common qualitative methods include:

- **In-depth Interviews:** These are one-on-one, guided conversations that allow you to explore someone's personal experiences, beliefs, and feelings in detail. This is an excellent method for gathering rich, detailed stories and understanding individual perspectives.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** An FGD brings together a small group of people (usually 6-10) to discuss a specific topic. The magic of an FGD is in the group dynamic; participants respond to each other, building on ideas and sometimes revealing shared community norms or points of disagreement. It's a great way to understand collective views and social dynamics.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** This is a specialized type of interview with individuals who have expert knowledge about a topic due to their position or experience—like a community elder, a local government official, or an NGO leader. KIIs are used to get specific, high-level information or an overview of a situation.
- **Direct Observation:** Sometimes, the best way to understand a situation is to simply watch it unfold. An analyst might observe a community meeting, a market interaction, or a protest to understand behaviors and relationships firsthand.

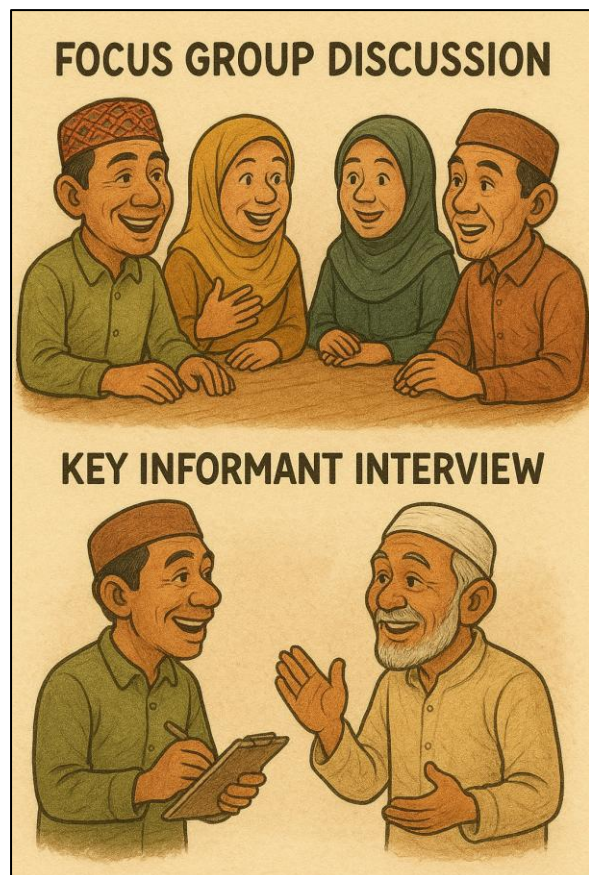


Figure 10. A focus group discussion (FGD) and a key informant interview (KII).

Qualitative methods give us the **depth** and **context** behind the conflict.

Quantitative Methods: Measuring the "How Much"

Quantitative data is all about numbers, figures, and statistical analysis. It is used to measure, count, and compare. These methods are designed to answer "**How much?**", "**How many?**", or "**How often?**" questions. The goal is to get a broad, generalizable overview of a situation by collecting data from a larger population.

The most common quantitative method in our field is the **Survey**. Surveys use standardized questionnaires with closed-ended questions (like multiple choice or rating scales) to collect the same data from a large number of people. This allows us to identify patterns, trends, and correlations in a community. For example, a survey could tell us what percentage of a community feels unsafe, or how many people believe a peace process is fair.

Quantitative methods give us the **breadth** and **scale** of the conflict.

Bringing Them Together: Mixed Methods

The most powerful conflict analysis doesn't choose one or the other; it uses both. This is called a **mixed-methods approach**. We combine qualitative and quantitative data to get a more complete picture.

Imagine you conduct a survey (**quantitative**) and find that 70% of youth in a community feel hopeless about their future. That's a powerful statistic, but it doesn't tell you *why* they feel that way. You can then conduct focus group discussions (**qualitative**) with those youth to hear their stories, understand their frustrations, and uncover the root causes behind the numbers.

By using both families of data collection, our analysis becomes more robust, credible, and insightful. It allows us to understand both the big picture and the human stories that bring it to life.



Figure 11. A person conducting a survey.

ACTIVITY 12: PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT-SENSITIVE DATA COLLECTION

Objective: To experientially demonstrate the potential for harm and data inaccuracy when data collection is not conflict-sensitive, particularly within the BARMM context.

Materials:

- Three "Role Cards" for volunteers: one for "Facilitator," two for "Community Members"
- One "Question List" for the Facilitator role
- PowerPoint Presentation "The Three Pillars of Responsible Data Collection"

Procedure:

1. Explain that how we ask questions is just as important as what we ask. "We're going to do a short role-play to feel what it's like when data collection goes wrong." Ask for three volunteers. Take them aside and give them their role cards, asking them to read them privately.
 - **Facilitator Card:** "You are an evaluator from Manila. Your goal is to quickly find out if the new irrigation project is working. You must ask all the questions on your list. You are in a hurry."
 - **Community Member A Card:** "You are a respected elder. You are grateful for the project, but you are worried it is causing tension with another clan who feels left out. The 'Facilitator' is an outsider and you do not trust them. You will give short, safe answers and avoid talking about the tension."
 - **Community Member B Card:** "You are from the clan that was left out of the project. You feel it was given unfairly to the other clan because of their political connections. You are angry and suspicious. You believe this 'interview' is just for show."
 - **Question List:** (Contains poorly framed questions) e.g., "Has the project been fair?" "Why is your clan always complaining?" "Do you agree that the project has stopped the conflict here?"
2. The three volunteers act out the interview in front of the plenary. The "Facilitator" tries to get through their questions while the "Community Members" react according to their roles. Let the scene play out for 5-7 minutes, allowing the discomfort and tension to become palpable.
3. Stop the role-play and lead a discussion, starting with the actors.
 - "To our community members, how did that feel? What made you uncomfortable or unwilling to share?"
 - "To our facilitator, what challenges did you face? How reliable do you think your information is?"
 - To the observers: "What did you see happening? What were the specific moments where trust was broken? What are the risks of collecting data this way?"
4. Present Lecturette 9: The Three Pillars of Responsible Data Collection

LECTURETTE 9: THE THREE PILLARS OF RESPONSIBLE DATA COLLECTION

In conflict analysis, **how** we gather information is just as important as **what** we gather. Even with the best intentions, a poorly planned approach can cause harm, create tension, and lead to inaccurate conclusions. To ensure our work is both effective and ethical, especially in sensitive contexts like BARMM, we follow three core principles.

Pillar 1: Triangulation (Getting the Whole Story)

Triangulation²⁵ is the practice of never relying on a single source of information. A conflict is like a complex landscape; one viewpoint only shows you a fraction of the whole picture. Just as an investigator corroborates an eyewitness account, we must cross-check our information from multiple perspectives to create a reliable and accurate map. To create a reliable and accurate map, we must cross-check our information from multiple perspectives²⁶. This means combining:

- **Different Methods:** We might compare findings from one-on-one interviews with what we learn in a focus group discussion.
- **Different Sources:** We must talk to a wide range of people—community members, local leaders, women, youth, and elders—and compare their views with existing documents or reports.

For example, if one source claims an aid distribution point was attacked, triangulation requires us to seek out other eyewitnesses, review reports from local organizations, and talk to community leaders before drawing a conclusion. By triangulating, we can validate our findings, identify biases, and get a more complete and unbiased understanding of the situation.

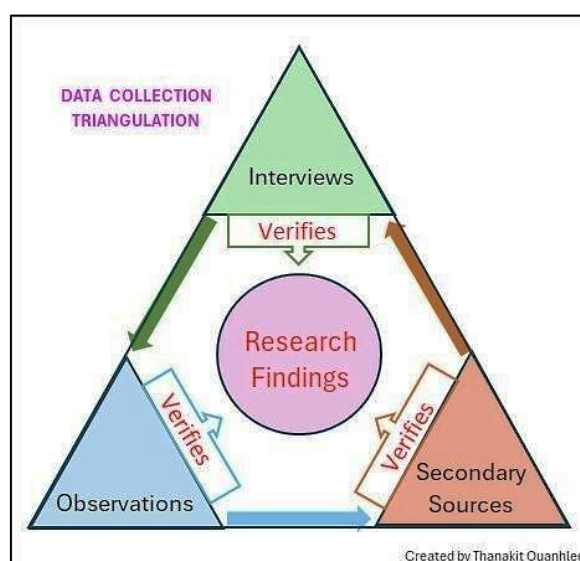


Figure 12. Data Collection Triangulation by Thanakit Ouanhlee. Source: ResearchGate.

By triangulating, we can validate our findings and get a more complete and unbiased understanding of the situation.

²⁵ Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.).

²⁶ BetterEvaluation. (n.d.). *Triangulation*. In *BetterEvaluation methods and approaches*.

Pillar 2: Disaggregation (Seeing Everyone Clearly)

Disaggregation means breaking down our data by specific social categories like age, gender, clan, or ethnicity. A conflict does not affect everyone in a community in the same way; men and women, youth and elders, or members of different clans will have vastly different experiences²⁷.

Think of it like using a camera. If we only take a wide-angle photo of a "village," we miss the details. Disaggregation is like using a zoom lens to see the distinct realities of the different people within that village. If we collect data without disaggregating it, we risk if one group's reality represents the entire communities.

For instance, a water shortage might mean loss of income for male farmers, a longer and more dangerous walk to collect water for women, and increased pressure on youth to leave the community to find work. By separating our data, we can see these unique impacts and perspectives, leading to a much more precise and equitable analysis.

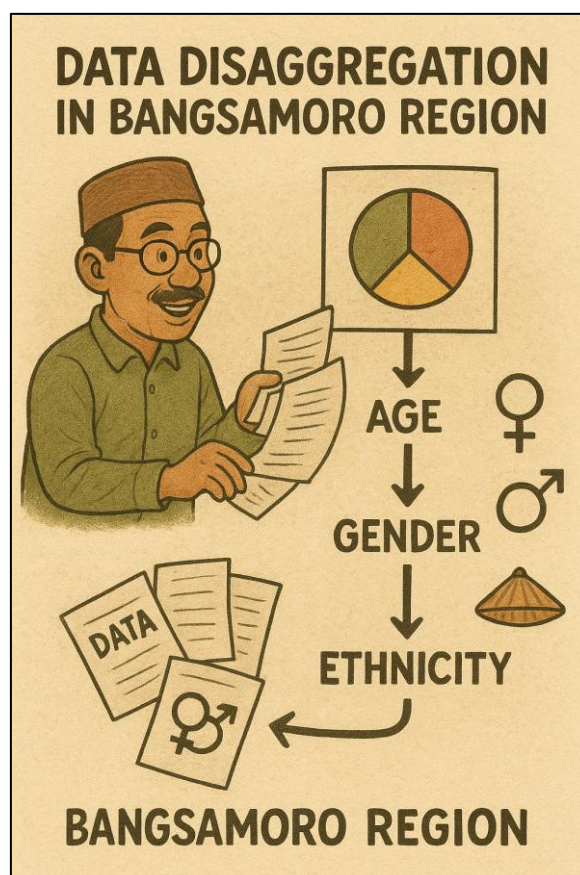


Figure 13. Data Disaggregation in Bangsamoro Region.

²⁷ Brown, K. S., Ford, L., Ashley, S., Stern, A., & Narayanan, A. (2021). Ethics and empathy in using imputation to disaggregate data for racial equity: Recommendations and standards guide.

Pillar 3: Ethical Practice (Protecting People)

This is the most important pillar, centered on our responsibility to the people who share their stories with us. It is grounded in the "Do No Harm"²⁸ principle and involves three key practices²⁹:

- **Safety and Neutrality:** This goes beyond simply finding a quiet room. We must carefully select a location for interviews that is not only private but also perceived as neutral by all parties. We also need to be conscious of who our data collectors are. Their gender, background, and even their accent can affect how they are perceived and whether people feel comfortable sharing sensitive information. The goal is to create a space where people feel safe enough to speak their truth.
- **Informed Consent:** This is a non-negotiable ethical requirement. We must be transparent about the purpose of our research, guarantee the confidentiality of participants, and make it absolutely clear that they can refuse to answer any question at any time without penalty.
- **Sensitive Questioning:** The way we ask questions matters. We must avoid leading questions (e.g., "Don't you agree that...") and use culturally appropriate language. It's always best to begin with less sensitive topics to build trust before carefully approaching more difficult issues.

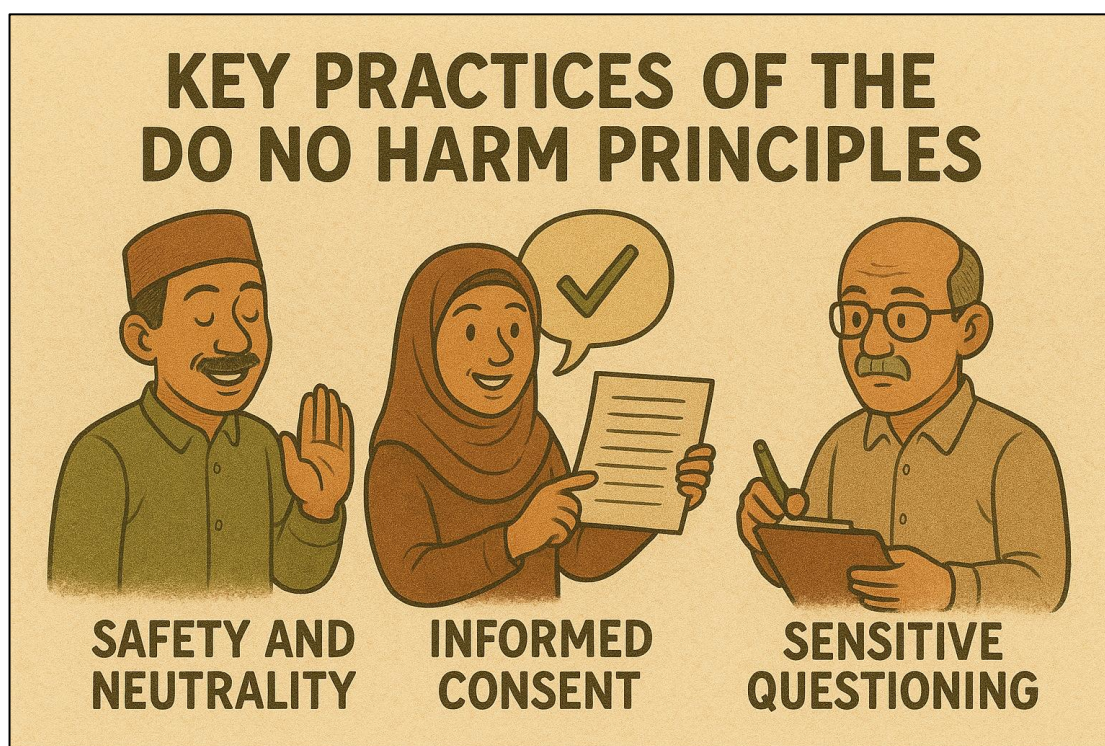


Figure 14. Ethical Practices in Data Collection.

²⁸ Anderson, M. B. (1999). *Do no harm: How aid can support peace—or war*.

²⁹ INTRAC. (2017). *Principles of data collection*.

CHAPTER 2: APPLYING THE ANALYSIS: CONFLICT ANALYSIS TOOLS

Welcome to Chapter 2. This is where the theory meets practice. In these next sessions, we will roll up our sleeves and work with the hands-on, practical tools that bring a conflict analysis to life. We will move from identifying *who* is involved to understanding *why* the conflict exists, and finally, to analyzing *how* it is likely to evolve.

SESSION 5: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS (THE "WHO")

Every conflict is about people. This session is dedicated to understanding the individuals, groups, and institutions involved in a conflict, looking beyond their surface-level actions to uncover their deeper motivations and relationships.

ACTIVITY 13: CONFLICT MAPPING

We will begin with Conflict Mapping, a visual technique for identifying all the key actors in a conflict and charting the relationships between them—whether they are allies, adversaries, or something in between.

Objective: To physically and experientially map the key actors and their relationships in a conflict, allowing participants to feel the dynamics of power, distance, and alliances.

Materials:

- PowerPoint Presentation “The Language of Conflict Mapping”
- Role cards for a scenario (e.g., "Mayor," "NGO Field Officer," "Displaced Community Leader," "Host Community Elder," "Local Business Owner").
- Balls of yarn or string in three different colors (e.g., Green for alliance, Red for tension/conflict, Yellow for informal/weak connection).

Procedure:

1. Present Lecturette 10: The Language of Conflict Mapping
2. Introduce the activity: "Before we draw a map on paper, we're going to create a living map with our bodies. This will help us feel the relationships in a conflict." Read a brief scenario:

"An international NGO is providing livelihood support to a community of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in a town in Lanao del Sur. The local Mayor supports the project publicly. However, some Host Community Elders feel the IDPs are receiving unfair advantages, creating tension. A Local Business Owner is happy about the new customers but is informally connected to the Mayor."

3. Ask for five volunteers and give each a role card. Ask the volunteer playing the "Mayor" to stand in the middle of an open space. Then, one by one, ask the other actors to place themselves in the room in relation to the Mayor and each other. Ask probing questions: "Host Community Elder, how close or far do you feel from the Mayor on this issue? Are you facing them or turned away? NGO Officer, where do you position yourself between the IDP and Host communities?"

- 
4. Hand out the colored yarn. "Now let's show the relationships."
 - "Who has a strong alliance or partnership? Take the **green** yarn and connect yourselves." (e.g., NGO and IDP Leader).
 - "Where is there direct tension or conflict? Use the **red** yarn." (e.g., Host Elder and IDP Leader).
 - "Are there any informal or unofficial links? Use the **yellow** yarn." (e.g., Mayor and Business Owner).
 5. Lead a discussion with the observers and actors.
 - "What do you see in this 'human map'? Who seems to have the most connections? Who is isolated?"
 - "If we wanted to start a dialogue, who might be a good person to talk to first, based on their position in this web?"
 - To the volunteers: "How did it feel to be in your position? Did you feel powerful, ignored, caught in the middle?"

LECTURETTE 10: THE LANGUAGE OF CONFLICT MAPPING

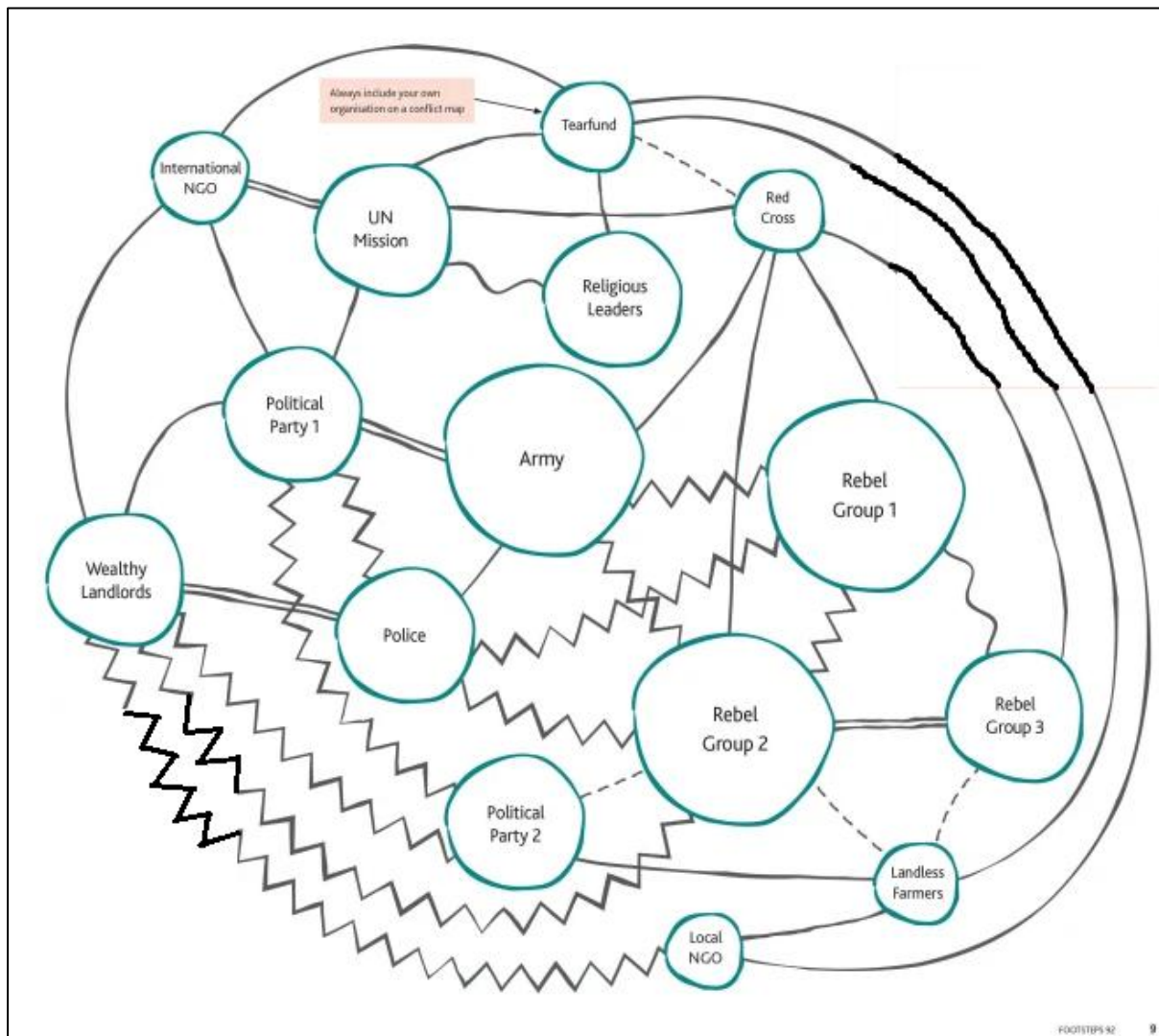


Figure 15. Sample of a Conflict Map. Source: Tearfund (2012).

- **From Experience to Analysis:** "What we just created with our bodies is a dynamic **Conflict Map**. It's a tool that gives us a bird's-eye view of the conflict landscape. Now, let's learn the formal language so we can capture this on paper."
- **Defining the Actors:** "In our 'human map,' we had different types of people. In formal analysis, we categorize them:"
- **Primary Parties:** These are the main actors, directly involved and central to the conflict. In our map, this was the IDP and Host communities.
- **Secondary Stakeholders:** These are actors who are affected by the conflict but are not the main drivers. The Business Owner is a good example.
- **Interested Third Parties:** These are external actors with an interest in the outcome, like the NGO or potentially the LGU.

- **Symbols for Mapping:** Draw and explain standard symbols on the board (distributing the handout simultaneously).
 - **Circles:** Represent actors (size can indicate power).
 - **Straight Line:** Alliance or cooperation (our green yarn).
 - **Jagged Line:** Conflict or tension (our red yarn).
 - **Dotted Line:** Informal or weak relationship (our yellow yarn).
 - **Double Line:** Formal connection (e.g., a contract).
 - **Boxes:** Can represent issues or themes within the conflict.

ACTIVITY 14: THE ONION/DOUGHNUT MODEL³⁰

To understand what drives the actors, we will use the Onion Model. This tool helps us peel back the layers from an actor's public **Positions** to uncover their underlying **Interests** and, at the core, their fundamental **Needs**.

Objective: To experientially discover the critical difference between a stated demand (Position) and the underlying motivation (Interest/Need) in a common workplace conflict.

Materials:

- Two "Role Cards" for volunteers
- Whiteboard or flip chart and markers
- PowerPoint Presentation: "Peeling The Layers With The Onion Model"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "In a conflict, we usually hear what people say they want. But is that the whole story? Let's explore this with a quick role-play." Ask for two volunteers and give them their role cards to read privately.
2. **Role Card A (Finance Officer):** "You need a report from the Program Manager with detailed expense justifications. A major donor is auditing you tomorrow, and your job could be at risk if the paperwork isn't perfect. Your position is firm: 'I need that completed report on my desk by 4 PM, no exceptions.'"
3. **Role Card B (Program Manager):** "You are in the middle of a crisis in a remote community and are coordinating relief efforts by phone. The Finance Officer is demanding a non-urgent report. You see this as bureaucratic interference at the worst possible time. Your position is firm: 'I am too busy with this emergency to do your paperwork right now.'"
4. The two volunteers act out the conflict based only on their positions. The interaction will likely become a tense stalemate, with both sides frustrated and refusing to budge. Let this play out for a few minutes.
5. Stop the role-play and leads a discussion with the observers.
 - "Let's put the stated demands—the **Positions**—on the board." (Writes "Report by 4 PM" and "Can't do it now").
 - "Now, let's dig deeper. Why do you think the Finance Officer is so insistent? What is *really* driving them?" (Guide the group to ideas like 'fear of the audit,' 'job security,' 'accountability').
 - "And what about the Program Manager? Why are they refusing? What is their underlying motivation?" (Guide them to ideas like 'helping people in crisis,' 'effectiveness,' 'frustration with bureaucracy').
6. Circle the underlying motivations. "Notice the difference. The positions seem impossible to reconcile. But when we look at the underlying reasons, we start to see the situation differently."

³⁰ Fisher, et al (2000). *Working with conflict: Skills and strategies for action*.

LECTURETTE 11: PEELING THE LAYERS WITH THE ONION MODEL

Introducing the Model: "Our role-play perfectly illustrates a core concept in conflict analysis. To analyze it systematically, we use a tool called the **Onion Model**. It helps us see that, like an onion, every actor in a conflict has layers."

The Onion/Doughnut Model is a powerful diagnostic tool used in conflict analysis to understand the deeper motivations behind a person's or group's actions. It helps us move beyond the surface-level arguments to uncover what truly drives the actors involved.

The model uses the metaphor of an **onion**, suggesting that every actor in a conflict has layers. To understand them, we must peel back these layers to get to the core.

The Three Layers of the Model³¹

Positions: The Outer Layer - The **Position** is the outer skin of the onion; it's what everyone sees and hears. This layer represents the explicit, public demands that a party makes—it's what they **say** they want. Positions are often rigid, seemingly non-negotiable, and framed as the only acceptable solution. For example, in a community dispute, a stated position might be, "We demand the construction project be stopped immediately."

Interests: The Middle Layer - Beneath the surface of positions lie the **Interests**. These are the underlying goals, concerns, fears, and desires that motivate the position. This layer answers the question of **why** a party holds a particular position. While positions often clash, interests can be more flexible and can sometimes be met in various ways. For the group demanding the construction project be stopped, their interests might include:

- Fear of losing access to a water source.
- Concern about the noise and disruption.
- A desire to be consulted in community decisions.

Needs: The Core - At the very center of the onion are the fundamental **Needs**. These are the non-negotiable human requirements for survival and well-being. Needs are often intangible and universal, including security, identity, recognition, respect, and economic well-being. Conflicts become deeply intractable when core needs are threatened. In our example, the community's core need might be **security**—both economic security (access to water for their livelihood) and cultural security (protecting a sacred site).

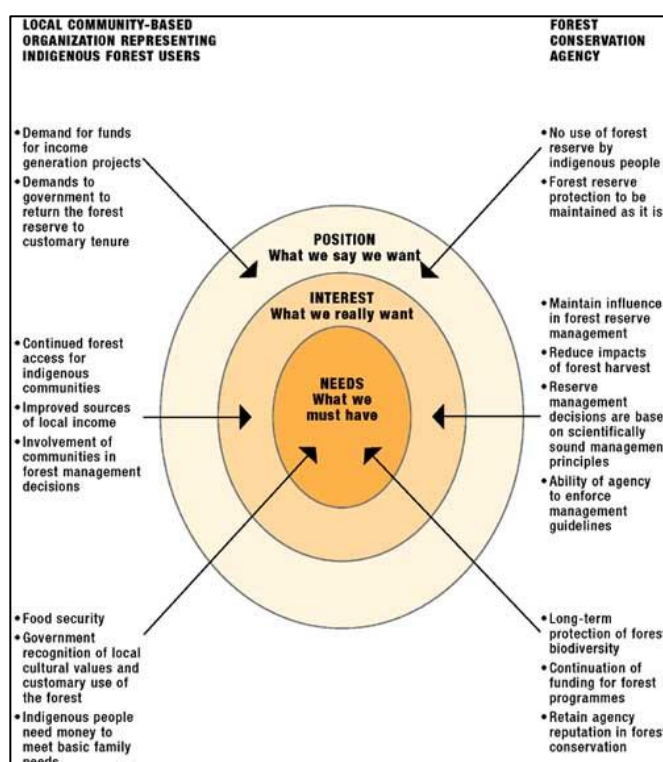


Figure 16. Sample of the Onion Model. Source: FAO.

³¹ Fisher, et al (2000).



The Strategic Value of the Onion Model

The key insight of this model is that while it may be impossible to reconcile conflicting positions, it is often possible to find creative solutions that satisfy the underlying **interests** and respect the core **needs** of all parties.

The goal of the analyst is to get beneath the rigid positions to find this common ground. By shifting the conversation from a win-lose fight over positions to a collaborative, problem-solving dialogue about interests and needs, we open up new pathways to resolution.

SESSION 6: ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS (THE "WHAT" AND "WHY")

In this session, we dig deeper. We will learn to distinguish between the visible symptoms of a conflict and its underlying causes. The goal is to understand the foundational issues that must be addressed for any resolution to be sustainable.

ACTIVITY 15: THE CONFLICT TREE³²

Our main tool here will be the Conflict Tree. This is a powerful visual method for separating the **Roots** (the root causes) from the **Trunk** (the core problem) and the **Branches** (the visible effects), creating a clear picture of the conflict's structure.

Objective: To have participants intuitively structure a complex conflict by sorting its various elements, thereby discovering the natural distinction between causes, the core problem, and effects before being introduced to the formal model.

Materials:

- One set of 15-20 metacards per small group, detailing a single conflict scenario
- Blank manila paper and markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation "Formalizing the Conflict Tree"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "When we look at a conflict, we often see a confusing mix of different problems. Our first task as analysts is to sort these problems to see how they are connected."
2. Present the Lecturette: "Formalizing the Conflict Tree."
3. Present the scenario:
Scenario 1: "In a municipality in Basilan, there is growing tension over the management of a new community fish landing facility built by a national agency. We have a collection of observations and statements from the community on these cards."

*Scenario 2: "In a rural municipality in Maguindanao del Norte, an international corporation has started clearing land for a pineapple plantation. The land is part of a pending **ancestral domain claim by the indigenous Teduray community**, who use it for foraging and sacred rituals. The area is also home to a community of **Christian settlers**, whose parents were relocated there by a government program in the 1970s and who hold individual land titles."*

*Scenario 3: "In a densely populated area of Marawi City, a fistfight broke out between two teenagers from different youth gangs ("tropa") over a basketball game dispute. That night, the teenager who lost the fight was **stabbed and seriously injured**. The attacker and the victim are from two different, prominent Maranaw clans with a history of rivalry."*
4. Each group receives a set of metacards with a mix of information.

³² Fisher, et al (2000).

5. Give the instruction: "On your manila paper, arrange these cards in a way that tells a story. Place the issues you see as the deep, underlying **sources** of the problem at the bottom. Place the main, central **problem** in the middle. And place the visible **symptoms** or results of the problem at the top."
6. Groups post their charts. Lead a gallery walk, then a discussion.
 - "What patterns do you see in how the groups organized the issues?"
 - "Why did your group decide that [e.g., 'clan favoritism'] was a 'source' and [e.g., 'youth fights'] was a 'symptom'?"
 - "Was there any disagreement in your group about what the 'main problem' was?"

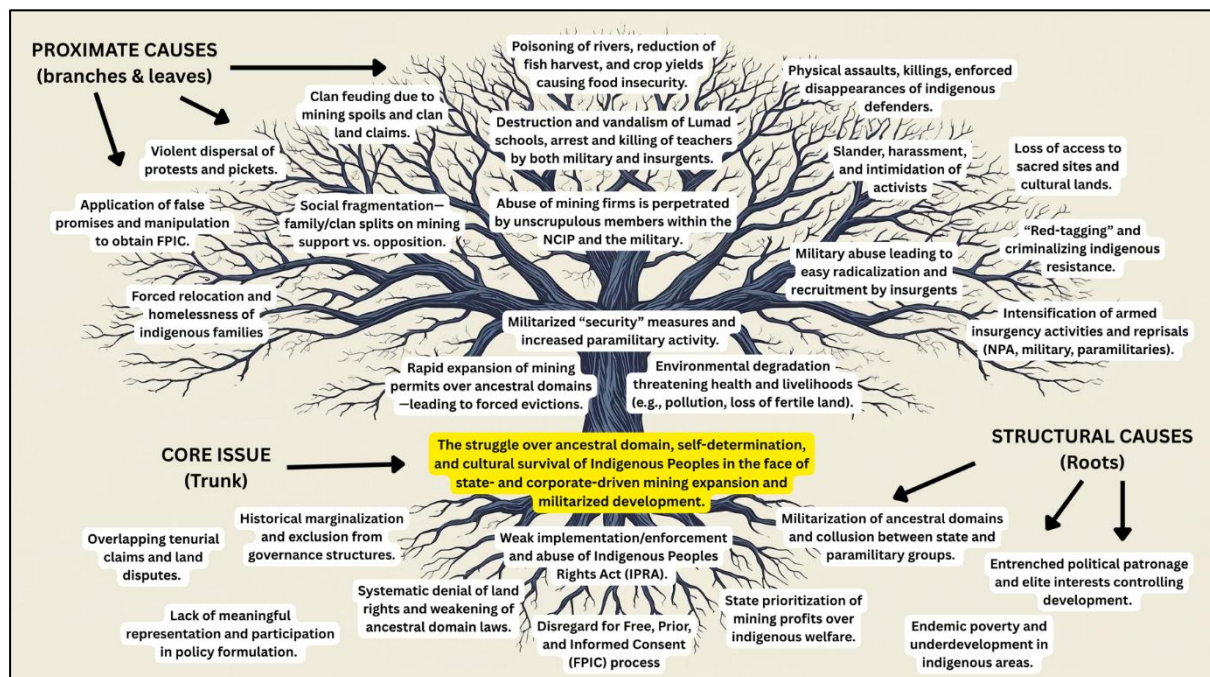


Figure 17. Sample of the Conflict Tree.

Handouts for Scenario 1 (pre-write in colored metacards)

Trunk: The Core Problem (2 cards)

- The **perceived unfair and non-transparent management** of the new fish landing facility.
- A conflict has emerged over **who controls the facility and who benefits from it**.

Roots: Underlying Causes (9 cards)

- A long history of **rido (clan feuds)** exists between two of the major families in the area.
- The cooperative chosen to manage the facility is led exclusively by members of one influential clan, who are political allies of the mayor.
- The national agency that built the facility **did not conduct a broad community consultation** before selecting the management group.
- High rates of **poverty and few alternative livelihood options** make control of the facility a high-stakes issue.
- There is a **general lack of trust** between different community groups due to past unresolved issues.
- Traditional community systems for resolving economic disputes have weakened over the years.
- The **selection process** for the managing cooperative was never made public.
- **Men have traditionally held all decision-making roles** related to community livelihood, excluding women from governance.
- The facility is the **single most important economic resource** for the entire coastal community.

Effects: Visible Symptoms (9 cards)

- **Youth from rival clans have been getting into fistfights** near the facility in the evenings.
- Some fisherfolk complain they are being **charged higher landing fees** than those connected to the cooperative.
- **Rumors are spreading** that the cooperative leaders are mismanaging funds.
- Women who sell fish report **feeling unsafe and excluded** from the facility's main area late at night.
- A **petition demanding the removal** of the current cooperative leadership is being circulated.
- The facility's ice-making machine has been **broken for a month** and has not been repaired.
- The facility is visibly **dirty and poorly maintained**, with trash piling up.
- Overall fish catch brought to the facility has decreased as some fisherfolk are taking their business to another town.
- Elders from one clan have **stopped speaking to the barangay captain**, who supports the cooperative.

Handouts for Scenario 2 (pre-write in colored metacards)

Trunk: The Core Problem (2 cards)

- The **competing and overlapping claims** to the same piece of land by the Teduray community, Christian settlers, and the corporation.
- There is a violent conflict over **land use, ownership, and resource rights**.

Roots: Underlying Causes (9 cards)

- The **Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997** legally recognizes ancestral domain but is poorly implemented by the government.
- A 1970s government resettlement program encouraged Christian migration to the area without recognizing prior indigenous rights.
- The corporation secured a business permit from a **national government agency**, bypassing local communities.
- There is a **deep historical mistrust** between indigenous and settler communities due to past land grabbing.
- Both the Teduray and settler communities are highly dependent on the land for their survival and have few other economic opportunities.
- The local Municipal Government Unit (LGU) publicly supports the corporation, citing promises of jobs and economic development.
- There is a lack of a clear, legally recognized map that delineates the boundaries of the ancestral domain versus titled properties.
- **Cultural differences** exist in understanding land ownership (communal and spiritual vs. individual and economic).
- The **National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)** lacks the funding and staff to resolve the claim quickly.

Effects: Visible Symptoms (9 cards)

- The corporation has hired **armed security guards** who are blocking the Teduray from entering their traditional foraging grounds.
- Teduray youth have organized **protests and a blockade** on the main road leading to the plantation site.
- An elderly settler farmer reported that his crops were **mysteriously destroyed** overnight.
- Tensions are rising between settler and Teduray neighbors who were previously friends.
- The corporation has bulldozed a small forest grove that the Teduray consider a sacred burial site.
- Several settler families are now **afraid to work on their farms** located near the disputed area.
- A local environmental NGO has launched a **national media campaign** against the corporation.
- There are **public verbal clashes** between the mayor and the tribal chieftain during community meetings.
- The local police have been deployed to the area, which has increased fear and tension.

Handouts for Scenario 3 (pre-write in colored metacards)

Trunk: The Core Problem (2 cards)

- The **escalation of a youth gang dispute into a violent and wider clan conflict (*rido*)**.
- The community is paralyzed by a **cycle of retaliatory violence** between two major clans.

Roots: Underlying Causes (9 cards)

- There are **high rates of youth unemployment** and a lack of positive opportunities in the community.
- The cultural obligation of ***maratabat* (clan honor and pride)** requires a family to retaliate when a member is harmed.
- A deep **lack of trust in the formal justice system** (police and courts) leads families to seek their own justice.
- A **historical grievance** over a political dispute between the two clans from a generation ago was never fully resolved.
- There is a **widespread presence of illegal firearms** in the community.
- There are **no effective community-based programs** or safe spaces for at-risk youth.
- Some local politicians have been known to **secretly fund youth gangs** to act as their enforcers.
- High school **dropout rates are increasing**, leaving many young men idle.
- Traditional elders have **less influence and control** over the younger generation than in the past.

Effects: Visible Symptoms (9 cards)

- The stabbing victim's cousin **shot and killed the attacker's older brother** two days after the initial incident.
- **Dozens of families from both clans have fled their homes** in fear of being targeted.
- A "no-go zone" has emerged, creating an **invisible border** between the neighborhoods of the two clans.
- Local businesses have closed, and **tricycle drivers refuse to enter the area**, paralyzing the local economy.
- **School attendance has dropped by 50%** as parents are afraid to let their children walk outside.
- Young men from both clans are now **openly carrying guns**.
- An attempt by religious leaders to mediate was **rejected by the families** of the victims.
- **Gunshots are heard almost every night**, terrorizing the entire community.
- Women from both clans who were close friends are now **forbidden from speaking to each other**.

LECTURETTE 12: FORMALIZING THE CONFLICT TREE

The Conflict Tree is a visual and collaborative tool used to analyze the underlying causes and visible effects of a central conflict issue. It helps a group move beyond arguing about a long list of problems and instead organize them into a shared understanding of how they are interconnected. The model uses the metaphor of a **tree** to separate a complex situation into three main parts.

The Three Parts of the Tree³³

Branches & Leaves: The Effects

The **branches and leaves** are the most visible part of the tree, representing the **effects** or **symptoms** of the conflict. These are the consequences we can easily see and feel, such as fights, protests, property damage, fear, or displacement. While these effects are the most urgent, addressing them alone is like trimming branches—if the roots are unhealthy, the branches will grow back with the same problems.

The Trunk: The Core Problem

The **trunk** represents the **core problem** of the conflict. It is the central, focal issue that connects the deep causes to the visible effects. It is the main issue that the parties are openly fighting about, such as a dispute over land, control of a community resource, or political power. A well-defined trunk is critical because it creates a common starting point for the analysis.

The Roots: The Causes

The **roots** represent the **root causes** of the conflict. These are the deep, often invisible, structural and systemic factors that feed and sustain the core problem. Root causes can include a history of injustice, poverty, weak governance, systemic discrimination, or unresolved historical grievances. These are the foundational issues that must be addressed for any resolution to be sustainable.

The Strategic Value of the Conflict Tree

The Conflict Tree does more than just help us understand a problem; it transforms a confusing list of issues into a **strategic map**. By separating causes from effects, it helps a group:

- Develop a **shared understanding** of the central problem.
- See the **relationship** between the visible symptoms and their underlying drivers.
- Identify strategic points for intervention. It shows that while we may need to address the urgent **effects** (the branches), lasting peace only comes from healing the **causes** (the roots).

³³ Fisher, S., et al. (2000).

ACTIVITY 16: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

No conflict happens in a vacuum. This sub-session is about understanding the broader environment—the political, economic, social, and historical landscape—in which a conflict is embedded. We will learn how to analyze this "big picture" to see the deeper forces at play.

Objective: To enable participants to collaboratively identify and categorize the key contextual factors that shape a conflict, based on a realistic narrative from the BARMM setting.

Materials:

- A one-page handout with a rich, narrative description of a fictional municipality in Mindanao
- Manila papers
- Markers
- PowerPoint Presentation “The Conflict Profile – A Structured View”

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "Before we can understand a specific conflict, we must first understand the world it lives in. We need to learn how to 'read the environment.' Imagine your organization is considering a new peacebuilding project in the municipality described on this handout."
2. Present Lecturette 13: “The Conflict Profile – A Structured View”
3. Distribute the handout, which includes details about:
"...the upcoming local elections and the long-standing political rivalry between two clans; the high youth unemployment rate since a nearby factory closed; the recent settlement of a decades-old land dispute through a traditional justice system; the memory of a violent military encounter in the 1980s that is still talked about by the elders; and the influence of remittances from relatives working in the Middle East."
4. In small groups, participants read the narrative and are tasked to act like an advance team. Their job is to extract all the key background facts an outsider would need to know before starting any work. They should write each fact on their manila paper, clustering them into categories of their own choosing (e.g., "Politics," "Money," "History," "Social Issues").
5. A representative from each group shares one or two key findings and explains why their group thought it was a critical piece of contextual information. Highlight the different ways groups categorized the information, noting the natural tendency to look at political, economic, and social factors.

LECTURETTE 13: THE CONFLICT PROFILE - A STRUCTURED VIEW

Conflicts do not happen in a vacuum; they are embedded in a complex environment of social, political, and economic forces. To understand a conflict, we must first understand the world it lives in. The **Conflict Profile** is a tool that helps us do this systematically.

Think of it like a doctor conducting a full-body check-up on a patient. A doctor doesn't just look at the one symptom the patient complains about; they check all the vital systems—the heart, the lungs, the blood pressure—to get a complete picture of the patient's health. Similarly, a Conflict Profile helps us examine the key "systems" of a society to get a holistic view of the context.

To make sure our analysis is thorough and does not miss anything, we can use a structured framework. A very practical one is adapted from the **World Bank's Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF)**³⁴ and from the **PESTEL Analysis Framework** whose foundational framework was developed by Francis J. Aguilar of Harvard University. This adaptation, called the **Conflict Profile**, looks at six key dimensions of the context.

1. **Social and Ethnic Relations** - This dimension is about the social fabric of the community—the relationships **between** different identity groups. It looks at social cohesion and division.
 - **Key Questions:** How do different clans, religious groups, or ethnic groups interact? Is there a history of cooperation or conflict? What are the key social divisions and, just as importantly, what are the things that connect people across those divides?
 - **Example:** In a scenario, this could include the history of a land dispute and the different community memories and narratives about that history.
2. **Governance and Political Institutions** - This is about power, influence, and decision-making, both formal (government) and informal (traditional leaders, power brokers).
 - **Key Questions:** Who holds power and how did they get it? Are government institutions seen as legitimate, fair, and effective? What is the role of political clans, warlords, or traditional leaders in community life?
 - **Example:** We could see this in the rivalry between political clans and the dynamics of an upcoming election.
3. **Human Rights and Security** - This dimension covers safety, justice, and the rule of law. It's about whether people feel protected and can access fair systems for resolving grievances.
 - **Key Questions:** Do people feel safe in their daily lives? Do they trust the police and the courts? Are human rights respected? Are there active armed groups or high levels of crime?
 - **Example:** This dimension covers the memory of a past military encounter as well as the community's use of a traditional justice system to handle disputes.
4. **Economic Structure and Performance** - This is about how people make a living and the distribution of wealth and opportunities. Economic grievances are often powerful drivers of conflict.

³⁴ Sardesai, S., & Wam, P. (2002). *The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF): Identifying conflict-related obstacles to development* (Social Development Notes No. 5).

- **Key Questions:** What are the main sources of income? Is there high unemployment, especially among youth? Who controls the key economic resources? Are opportunities distributed fairly?
- **Example:** Key factors here could include a factory closure, high youth unemployment, and the economic impact of remittances from relatives working abroad.

5. Environment and Natural Resources - This dimension examines the relationship between the community and the natural world, which is often a source of both livelihood and tension.

- **Key Questions:** Are there active disputes over land, water, forests, or mineral resources? How is climate change (e.g., drought, flooding) affecting the community and potentially creating new tensions?
- **Example:** A land dispute itself is a core part of this dimension.

6. External Factors - This dimension acknowledges that no community is an island. It looks at influences from outside the immediate area.

- **Key Questions:** What is the role of the national government, international NGOs, or neighboring countries? How do diaspora communities or global market prices affect the local situation?
- **Example:** This considers influences from outside the immediate area, like a national agency's involvement in a local project or money coming from the Middle East.

By systematically examining each of these six dimensions, we can build a comprehensive and multi-layered profile of the conflict environment, ensuring our analysis is deep, thorough, and ready to inform effective action.

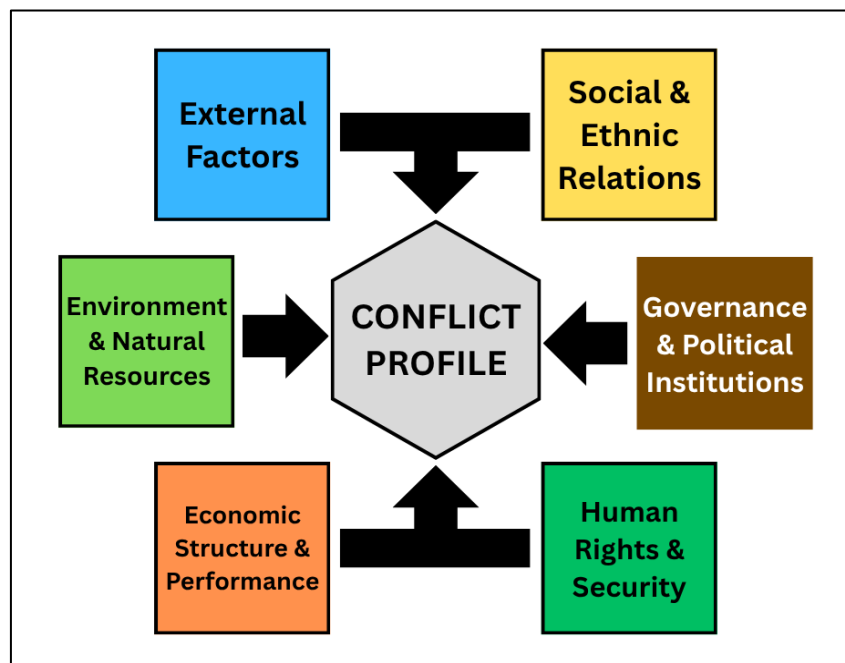


Figure 18. The Conflict Profile.

ACTIVITY 17: TIMELINE ANALYSIS

History matters. We will use Timeline Analysis to map the key events in a conflict's evolution, helping us identify patterns and, crucially, understand how different parties have very different interpretations of their shared past.

Objective: To experientially demonstrate that parties in a conflict often have vastly different perceptions of their shared history, highlighting different key events and interpreting them in unique ways.

Materials:

- Two different one-paragraph handouts ("Story A" and "Story B") describing the same conflict from two opposing perspectives
- Manila paper and markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation "Formalizing Timeline Analysis"

Procedure:

1. Present Lecturette 14: "Formalizing Timeline Analysis."
2. "When a conflict has been going on for a while, the history itself becomes part of the problem. We're going to explore how different people remember the same series of events." Divide the participants into an even number of small groups. Give half the groups "Story A" and the other half "Story B." Do not let them see the other story.

Story A (Cooperative Leader's View): *"Our farming cooperative was struggling. Three years ago, we secured a loan to build a small dam for irrigation. It was a community effort. Last year, during the dry season, the downstream village started complaining about water levels, but we were all suffering. Then, two months ago, they blocked our access road, which was a completely unprovoked and aggressive act."*

Story B (Downstream Elder's View): *"For generations, the river has been our lifeblood. Three years ago, the upstream cooperative built a dam without consulting us. We tried to talk to them, but they ignored us. Last year's dry season was devastating for our crops. We sent a formal letter of complaint six months ago and received no reply. Two months ago, with our livelihoods at stake, we had no choice but to stage a peaceful protest on the road to get their attention."*

3. Instruct each group to draw a timeline on their manila paper, marking the key events described in their story.
4. Ask one group with Story A and one group with Story B to post their timelines side-by-side. Lead a plenary discussion.
 - "What do you notice when you see these two histories together?"
 - "What events are on one timeline but missing from the other? (e.g., The 'formal letter' in Story B)."
 - "How is the same event described differently? (e.g., 'Blocking the road' vs. 'Peaceful protest')."
 - "Whose story is 'true'? (Guide them to the understanding that both are true from their respective viewpoints)."

LECTURETTE 14: FORMALIZING TIMELINE ANALYSIS

In many conflicts, history itself is a source of tension. It can feel like the different parties have read completely different history books about the same series of events. **Timeline Analysis** is the tool we use to put these different "history books" side-by-side to create a more complete picture³⁵.

A conflict timeline is a visual representation of the key events in a conflict's history over time. Its purpose is not to find the 'one true story,' because in conflict, every group's perception of history is their truth. Instead, the goal is to achieve several key things.

The Strategic Purpose of a Timeline

- **Understand Different Perspectives:** The primary goal is to see the conflict through the eyes of each party involved. This helps us move beyond arguing about who is "right" or "wrong" and instead understand why each group acts the way it does.
- **Identify Key Events:** A timeline highlights the critical moments, or "triggers," that caused the conflict to escalate. It also helps distinguish these immediate triggers from the longer-term, underlying causes of the conflict.
- **Recognize Patterns:** By mapping events over time, we can reveal patterns of escalation and de-escalation, cycles of violence, or identify past moments of calm and missed opportunities for peace.
- **Build Empathy:** By understanding another party's version of history—the events they see as most significant and painful—we can begin to understand their feelings and actions in the present. This is a crucial step in humanizing the other side.

The Process

A good timeline analysis involves asking each group to identify the key moments—both positive and negative—from their own perspective, starting from when they believe the conflict began. By first creating separate timelines and then comparing them, we create a shared, multi-layered picture of the conflict's journey. This allows us to see exactly where relationships broke down and helps us identify the historical wounds that need to be addressed before moving forward.

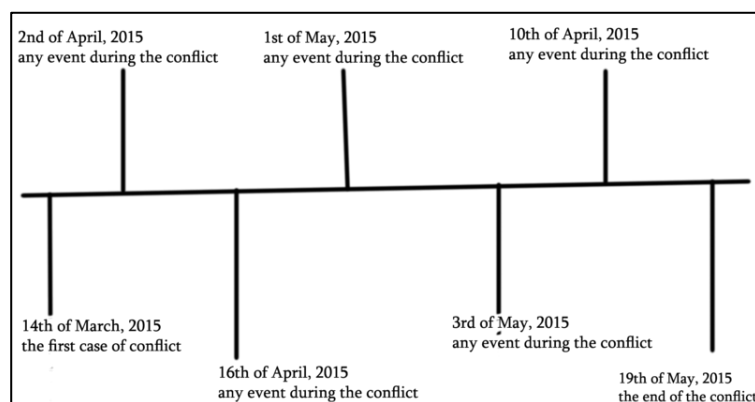


Figure 19. A Conflict Timeline Analysis. Source: Competendo - Digital Toolbox.

³⁵ Tearfund. (2018).

SESSION 7: ANALYZING AND PREDICTING CONFLICT DYNAMICS (THE "HOW")

This final session in Part 2 focuses on the energy and movement of a conflict. We will look at how the parties interact, how conflicts escalate over time, and how we can anticipate plausible future developments.

ACTIVITY 18: GLASL'S NINE-STAGE MODEL OF CONFLICT ESCALATION

Not all conflicts are the same intensity. We will introduce Glasl's Escalation Model as a diagnostic tool to identify where a conflict is on the spectrum—from a rational **Win-Win** phase to a destructive **Lose-Lose** phase.

Objective: To enable participants to intuitively sequence the progression of a conflict from minor disagreement to open hostility, creating a practical understanding of escalation before learning the formal model.

Materials:

- One set of 9 pre-written metacards (or sticky notes) per small group, describing different moments in a single conflict
- Manila papers
- Markers
- PowerPoint Presentation “The Nine Stages of Descent”

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "Conflicts are rarely static; they change over time, often getting worse. We're going to look at the life cycle of a dispute to understand how it can spiral out of control."
2. Present Lecturette 15: “The Nine Stages of Descent”
3. “Imagine a conflict between two community-based organizations over the implementation of a livelihood project.” Each group receives a jumbled set of 9 metacards. Their task is to arrange the cards on their manila paper in a logical sequence from the very beginning of the disagreement to the most intense stage, creating a "ladder" of escalation.
4. Groups post their "ladders." Lead a gallery walk and then a discussion.
 - "What similarities do you see in the order you created?"
 - "Was there a point in the sequence where you felt the conflict changed from being about the 'issue' to being about the 'people'?"
 - "Where did you see the 'point of no return,' where things became truly destructive?"

Conflict Scenario 1: Rival Community Organizations

- "The two leaders have a tense discussion about project priorities." (Stage 1)
- "One leader starts gathering other community elders to support their side." (Stage 4)
- "The leaders stop talking to each other and communicate only through memos." (Stage 3)
- "One leader threatens to file a formal complaint with the donor agency." (Stage 6)
- "During a public debate, one leader accuses the other of incompetence." (Stage 2)
- "One organization deliberately sabotages the other's event by scheduling a competing activity." (Stage 7)
- "Rumors are spread to discredit the other leader personally, questioning their integrity." (Stage 5)
- "Both organizations are now willing to see the entire project fail rather than let the other side 'win'." (Stage 9)
- "The goal becomes to completely dismantle the other organization's influence in the community." (Stage 8)

Conflict Scenario 2: Farmland Boundary Dispute

- "Two neighboring farmers have a firm disagreement over the exact boundary line between their rice paddies." (Stage 1)
- "During a heated argument, one farmer publicly accuses the other of trying to steal his land." (Stage 2)
- "The farmers stop acknowledging each other and tell their families not to interact." (Stage 3)
- "Each farmer rallies their respective relatives and friends to publicly support their claim." (Stage 4)
- "One farmer begins telling people the other is a dishonest person who has cheated others in the past." (Stage 5)
- "One farmer threatens to bring in armed relatives if the other sets foot on the disputed strip of land." (Stage 6)
- "One farmer deliberately diverts an irrigation channel at night, damaging a portion of the other's crops." (Stage 7)
- "The objective is no longer about the boundary line, but about driving the other family off their land entirely." (Stage 8)
- "Both farmers are now willing to let their entire harvest rot rather than concede a single inch of ground." (Stage 9)

Conflict Scenario 3: Local Political Campaign Rivalry

- "Two candidates for Barangay Captain have a polite but tense debate about their differing platforms." (Stage 1)
- "In a public forum, one candidate calls the incumbent's leadership a 'total failure'." (Stage 2)
- "The candidates' core supporters begin avoiding each other and stop patronizing each other's businesses." (Stage 3)
- "Each candidate holds rallies specifically designed to publicly counter the other's promises." (Stage 4)
- "One camp starts spreading rumors about the other candidate's alleged corruption and personal scandals." (Stage 5)
- "The incumbent threatens to block the business permits of the challenger's known financial supporters after the election." (Stage 6)
- "Supporters of one candidate are caught deliberately vandalizing and tearing down the other's campaign posters." (Stage 7)
- "The goal shifts from winning the election to ensuring the other candidate is politically destroyed and their reputation is ruined." (Stage 8)
- "Both sides begin using vote-buying and intimidation tactics that risk having the entire election declared a failure." (Stage 9)

Conflict Scenario 4: Family Inheritance Disagreement

- "Two siblings have a difficult conversation about how to divide their late parents' ancestral land." (Stage 1)
- "During a family meeting, one sibling accuses the other of being 'greedy and disrespectful' to their parents' memory." (Stage 2)
- "The siblings stop speaking directly and start communicating only through their spouses or other relatives." (Stage 3)
- "Each sibling begins calling aunts, uncles, and cousins to try and get them to take their side." (Stage 4)
- "One sibling tells the family that the other is financially irresponsible and can't be trusted with the inheritance." (Stage 5)
- "One sibling threatens to file a lawsuit, which would bring public shame and huge costs to the entire family." (Stage 6)
- "One sibling begins building a fence on the disputed part of the property without consulting the other." (Stage 7)
- "The goal is no longer about getting a fair share, but about making the other sibling suffer emotionally and financially." (Stage 8)
- "Both siblings are willing to sell the entire property to an outside developer, destroying the family legacy, just to spite each other." (Stage 9)

LECTURETTE 15: THE NINE STAGES OF DESCENT³⁶

Conflicts are rarely static. They change over time, and without intervention, they often get worse. The Austrian scholar Friedrich Glasl developed a powerful model to diagnose this process. He describes conflict escalation not as climbing a ladder, but as a **descent** into deeper, more destructive, and more inhuman forms of dispute.

The model is divided into three main levels, each containing three stages. Each level marks a fundamental shift in the conflict's dynamics.

Level 1: Win-Win (The Rational Phase) - In the first three stages, the conflict is still about the original issue, and both parties still believe a mutually beneficial, win-win solution is possible.

- **Stage 1: Hardening.** Positions begin to harden, but the tension is still seen as a temporary problem.
- **Stage 2: Debate and Polemics.** The parties begin to use arguments to try and convince the other side, sometimes resulting in verbal clashes.
- **Stage 3: Actions, Not Words.** The parties become frustrated with talk and start taking unilateral actions to press their case. Communication becomes strained.

Level 2: Win-Lose (The Emotional Phase) - In these next three stages, the goal fundamentally shifts. It's no longer about solving the problem; it's about defeating the opponent. The conflict becomes personal.

- **Stage 4: Images and Coalitions.** The parties begin to stereotype each other and rally supporters to their side.
- **Stage 5: Loss of Face.** The conflict moves from issues to identity. The parties engage in public attacks aimed at discrediting the other's moral character.
- **Stage 6: Strategies of Threat.** The parties begin using threats and ultimatums to try and force the other side to back down.

Level 3: Lose-Lose (The Fighting Phase) - In the final three stages, the conflict becomes completely destructive. The primary goal is now to harm the opponent, even if it means destroying oneself in the process.

- **Stage 7: Limited Destructive Blows.** The parties actively try to damage the other, seeing it as a "necessary" response. Sabotage is common.
- **Stage 8: Fragmentation of the Enemy.** The goal becomes the complete destruction of the opponent's support system and power base.
- **Stage 9: Together into the Abyss.** At this final stage, mutual annihilation is accepted as the price of destroying the enemy.

The Strategic Value

Glasl's model is a powerful diagnostic tool. By accurately identifying the stage of a conflict, we can understand its intensity, predict its likely trajectory, and, most importantly, choose the right kind of intervention. Mediation may work well in Level 1, but it is far less likely to succeed once a conflict has descended into Level 3, where more forceful intervention may be needed to prevent further harm.

³⁶ Jordan, T. (2000). *Glasl's Nine-Stage Model Of Conflict Escalation*.

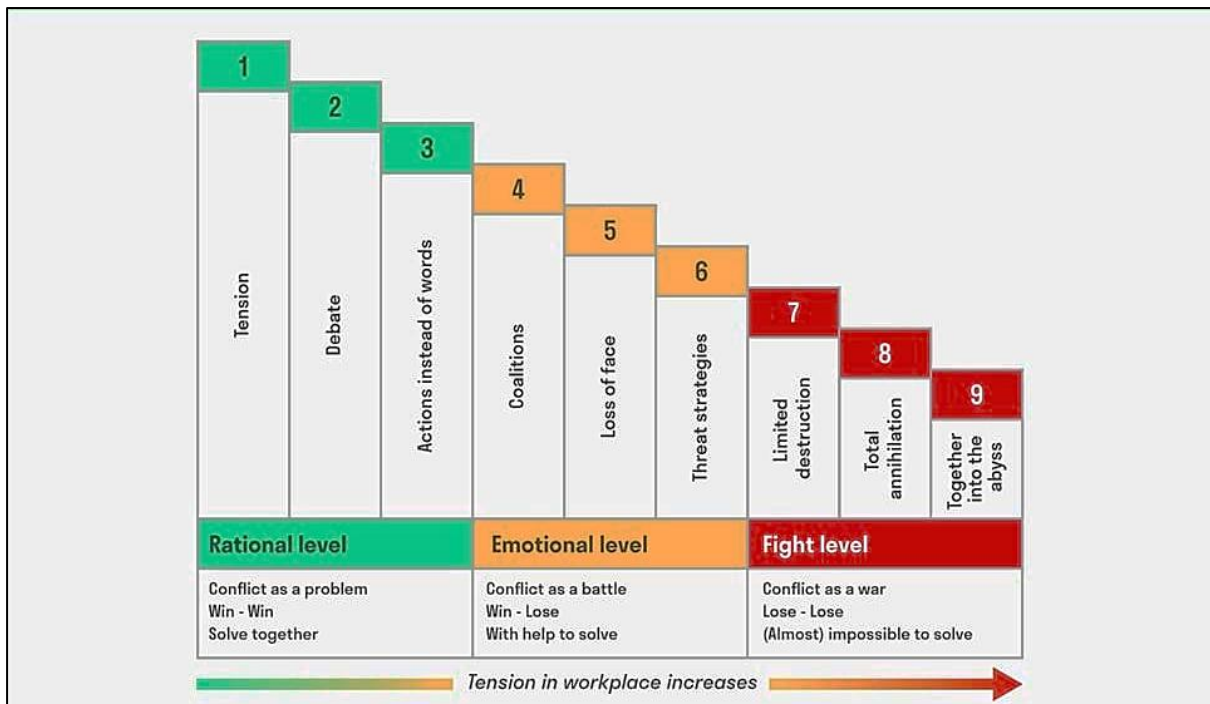


Figure 20. Glas's Stages of Conflict Escalation. Source: Toolshero.

ACTIVITY 19: INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMS THINKING

Conflicts are rarely simple, linear events. Here, we will introduce the basics of Systems Thinking, a mindset that helps us see the interconnectedness of different factors, identify feedback loops, and find high-leverage points for intervention.

Objective: To enable participants to experientially discover the concept of feedback loops and interconnectedness by mapping the relationships between various challenges in a community.

Materials:

- One set of 5-6 pre-written metacards (or sticky notes) per small group
- Manila paper and markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation “Seeing The Whole System”

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "We've used tools like the Conflict Tree to look for root causes. But what if the problems are not in a straight line? What if they are connected in a circle?"
2. Present Lecturette 16: “Seeing The Whole System.”
3. “Let's explore a common set of challenges in many BARMM communities.” Each group receives a set of metacards with different community challenges written on them, for example:
 - High Youth Unemployment
 - Lack of Trust in Local Leaders
 - Limited Access to Livelihood Training
 - Youth Vulnerability to Recruitment by Armed Groups
 - Weak Community Cohesion
4. Give the instruction: "Instead of arranging these in a top-to-bottom tree, place them on your manila paper and draw arrows to show how they influence each other. For example, does 'High Youth Unemployment' lead to anything else on the board? Does 'Lack of Trust' affect any other issue? Keep drawing arrows until you see the full picture."
5. As groups work, encourage them to look for circular patterns. "Do you see any 'vicious cycles' where one problem feeds another, which then feeds back into the first one, making it even worse?"
6. A representative from each group briefly presents their map. Lead a discussion.
 - "What did you discover when you mapped the connections this way?"
 - "Is there a single 'root cause,' or is it more complicated?"
 - "What do you think would happen if an NGO came in and only offered livelihood training, without addressing the lack of trust?"

LECTURETTE 16: SEEING THE WHOLE SYSTEM

What is “Systems Thinking”³⁷?

Systems thinking is a way of understanding reality that focuses on the relationships among a system's parts, rather than just the parts themselves.

It helps us see the patterns, cycles, and the non-linear ways that conflicts behave. It doesn't replace tools like the Conflict Tree, but it adds a crucial, dynamic layer to our analysis, shifting our focus from a "list" of problems to a "web" of interconnected issues.

Key Concepts of Systems Thinking

To see the whole system, we need to understand three key concepts.

1. Interconnectedness - This is the core idea that everything is connected.

All elements in a system—actors, causes, and context—are connected and influence each other. An action in one part of the community will have ripple effects in others. This means that when we are analyzing a conflict, there is no "away"; we must always ask, "And then what happens?"

2. Feedback Loops - These are the engines of a system that cause it to behave in certain ways.

They explain why problems can feel so "stuck" or spiral out of control. There are two main types:

- **Reinforcing Loops (Vicious or Virtuous Cycles):** Think of a snowball rolling downhill. A **vicious cycle** is a negative snowball that gets bigger and faster. For example: high youth unemployment leads to hopelessness, which can lead to recruitment by armed groups, which leads to more violence and instability, which destroys economic opportunities, leading to even higher youth unemployment.
- **Balancing Loops:** Think of a thermostat in a room. It always works to keep the temperature stable. Balancing loops are what make a system resistant to change. They maintain the status quo, even if that status quo is negative.

3. Leverage Points - This is the most important concept for us as peacebuilders.

A leverage point is a place in a system where a small, well-focused intervention can produce a big, lasting change in the whole system.

Think of the small rudder on a massive cargo ship. A small, precise movement of that rudder can change the direction of the entire vessel.

Instead of trying to fix the biggest, most obvious problem (like "youth unemployment"), a systems thinker looks for the smartest point of intervention—the rudder.

Our job is to find these smart entry points.

By understanding the whole system, we can identify these leverage points and design more strategic, efficient, and effective interventions.

³⁷ The Systems Thinker. (n.d.). *Learning from everyday conflict*.

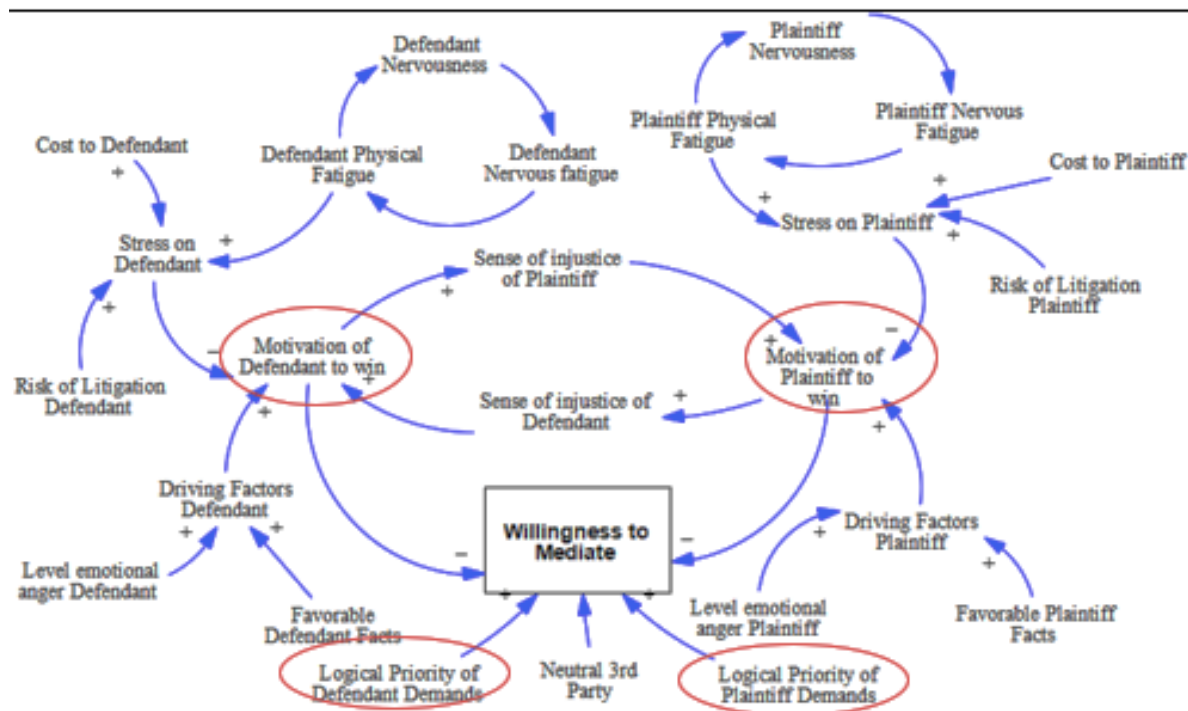


Figure 21. Systems Thinking in Mediation. Source: Mediate.com

ACTIVITY 20: THE CONFLICT WHEEL: ASSEMBLING OUR TOOLKIT

We've now explored a range of powerful tools for taking a conflict apart. But how do they all fit together? In this final sub-session of Part 2, we will introduce the Conflict Wheel. Think of it not as another new tool, but as the analyst's dashboard or the toolbox itself—a "meta-tool" that organizes all the other instruments we've learned, ensuring our analysis is comprehensive and systematic.

Objective: To enable participants to synthesize their learning by mapping the specific conflict analysis tools they have learned onto the corresponding dimensions of a complete analytical framework.

Materials:

- A large sheet of manila paper for each group with a large, blank circle drawn on it, divided into six segments
- A set of metacards for each group, with the name of one analysis tool written on each card (e.g., "Conflict Tree," "Onion Model," "ABC Triangle," "Timeline Analysis," "Conflict Mapping," "Glasl's Escalation Model")
- PowerPoint Presentation "Introducing the Conflict Wheel"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity as a capstone for Part 2: "Over the past two sessions, we have filled our toolkit with powerful instruments for understanding conflict. We have the Onion, the Tree, the ABC Triangle, and more. Now, we need to organize our toolkit so we know exactly which tool to use for which job. Your task is to build the toolbox."
2. Present Lecturette 17: "Introducing the Conflict Wheel."
3. In their small groups, participants are given the blank, six-segment circle and the set of tool metacards. Their instruction is: "Discuss each tool. What is its primary purpose? What part of a conflict does it help you understand best? As a group, decide which segment of the circle each tool belongs in. You can also give each segment a title that describes what that dimension of analysis is about."
4. Each group posts their completed "toolbox" on the wall. Lead a gallery walk, followed by a discussion.
 - "Let's look at where you placed the 'Onion Model.' Most groups put it in a category related to 'People' or 'Motivations.' Why does it fit there?"
 - "I see the 'Conflict Tree' is often in a category you've labeled 'Causes' or 'History.' What makes it the right tool for that job?"
 - "Where did you place 'Glasl's Escalation Model'? Why?"

LECTURETTE 17: INTRODUCING THE CONFLICT WHEEL

Conflict Wheel is not another new tool, but rather the analyst's dashboard or the toolbox itself. It is a "meta-tool" that organizes all the other instruments we've learned, ensuring our analysis is comprehensive and systematic³⁸.

The wheel is typically divided into six key segments, each representing a critical dimension of the conflict that must be analyzed.

The Six Dimensions of Analysis

1. **Actors: The "Who"** - This dimension focuses on who is involved in the conflict. It goes beyond a simple list of names to explore their motivations, relationships, and capacities.
 - **Core Question:** Who are the primary, secondary, and interested third parties?
 - **Primary Tools:** We use **Conflict Mapping** to visualize the relationships between actors and the **Onion Model** to understand their underlying positions, interests, and needs.
2. **Issues: The "What"** - This dimension defines the specific topics of disagreement that the actors are fighting about. It's the tangible subject matter of the dispute.
 - **Core Question:** What are the key issues, and how do different parties perceive them?
 - **Primary Tool:** The **Trunk** of the **Conflict Tree** is the perfect tool for identifying and agreeing on the core problem.
3. **Causation: The "Why"** - This dimension digs into the history and root causes of the conflict. It seeks to understand the structural factors that created the conditions for the dispute.
 - **Core Question:** What are the deep-rooted causes and the immediate triggers of the conflict?
 - **Primary Tools:** The **Conflict Tree** helps separate the root causes from the effects, and **Timeline Analysis** helps us understand the different historical perspectives of the parties.
4. **Structures: The "Where"** - This dimension analyzes the surrounding environment and the systems in which the conflict is embedded. This includes the political, economic, and social context.
 - **Core Question:** What are the key structural factors that are driving or mitigating the conflict?
 - **Primary Tool:** The **Conflict Profile** or **Context Analysis** (using the six categories of Social Relations, Governance, Security, Economy, Environment, and External Factors) is used here.

³⁸ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division (2005, December). Conflict analysis tools: Tool 1 – The Conflict Wheel.

5. **Dynamics: The "How"** - This dimension focuses on the energy, intensity, and trajectory of the conflict. It looks at how the conflict is behaving and evolving over time.

- **Core Question:** How are the parties interacting, and what is the current level of escalation?
- **Primary Tools:** The **ABC Triangle** helps us see how attitudes, behaviors, and context interact, and **Glasl's Escalation Model** helps us diagnose the conflict's intensity.

6. **Options/Strategies: The "What Now?"** - This final dimension is forward-looking. After analyzing the other five dimensions, this is where we begin to identify possibilities for intervention and peacebuilding.

- **Core Question:** Where are the capacities for peace, and what are the potential entry points for a positive intervention?
- **Primary Tools:** This section is informed by all previous tools, especially **Systems Thinking**, to identify leverage points for action.

The Conflict Wheel serves as a checklist and a guide. By systematically moving through each dimension and selecting the right tool for the job, you can ensure that your analysis is thorough, structured, and ready to inform effective, conflict-sensitive action.

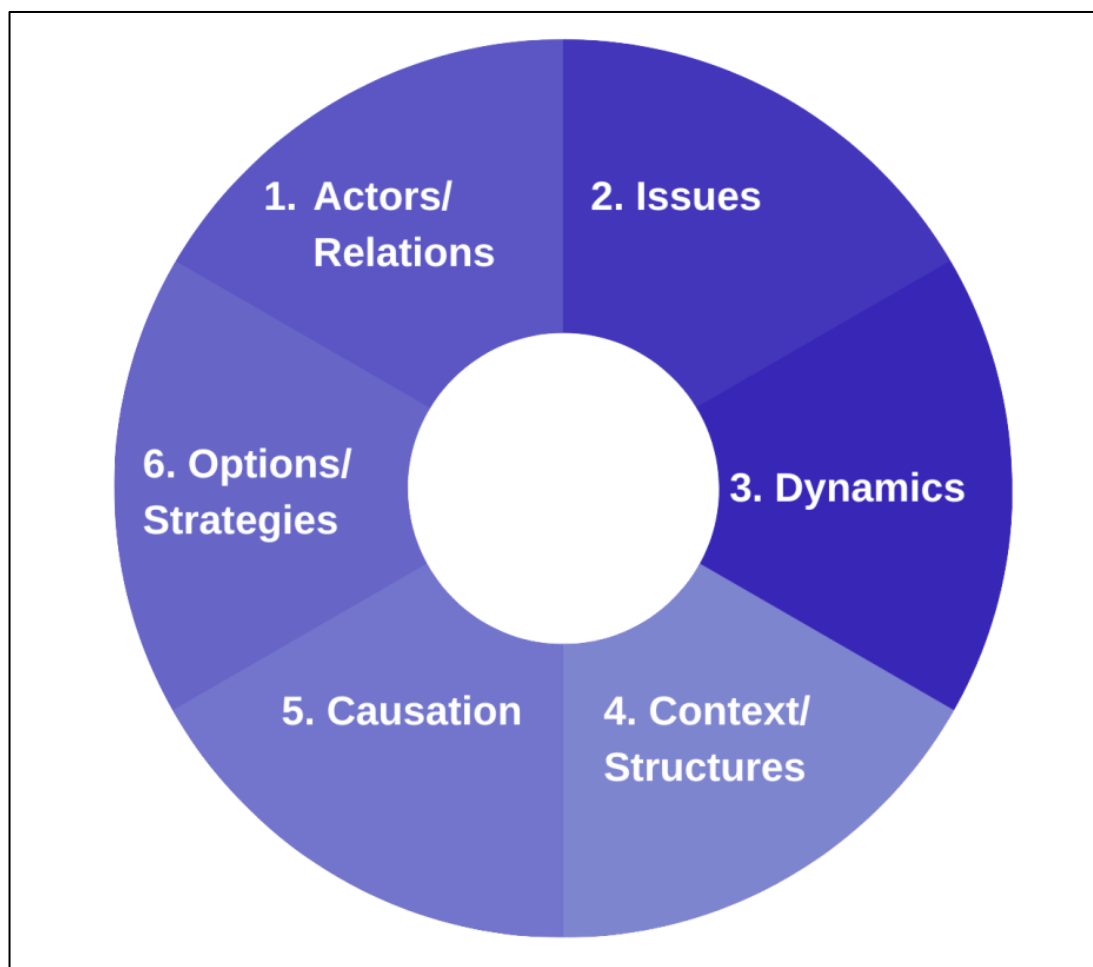


Figure 22. The Conflict Wheel.

CHAPTER 3: BRIDGING ANALYSIS TO ACTION

Welcome to the final part of our training. So far, we've learned how to take a conflict apart to understand how it works. Now, we will focus on putting that understanding to use. This module is all about the bridge from analysis to action, covering how to design smart, strategic interventions and how to learn and adapt as we implement them.

SESSION 8: FROM ANALYSIS TO STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

With a clear analysis and a roadmap in hand, this session focuses on making smart strategic choices. We will explore how to design interventions that are not only effective but also sensitive to the complex environment in which they operate.

ACTIVITY 21: USING DIVIDERS AND CONNECTORS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

Here, we will revisit the "Do No Harm" framework to guide our program design. You'll learn how to use your analysis of what divides and connects people to create activities that intentionally strengthen local capacities for peace.

Objective: To enable participants to experientially discover how a well-intentioned aid project can simultaneously create both positive and negative impacts on community relationships.

Materials:

- A short, narrative scenario on a handout for each group
- Manila paper and markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation "The 'Do No Harm' Lens: Dividers and Connectors"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "Every time we start a project, we bring resources into a community. These resources are like a double-edged sword: they can help, but they can also cause harm if we're not careful."
2. Present Lecturette 18: "The 'Do No Harm' Lens: Dividers and Connectors."
3. Let's explore this with a scenario."
"After a flash flood in a community with both Christian and Muslim residents, an NGO provides materials to rebuild damaged homes. The aid is distributed through local barangay officials. The project successfully rebuilds many houses. However, rumors begin to spread that the officials are giving more materials to families from their own religion. Tensions, which were low before the flood, are now visibly rising."
4. In small groups, participants are given a sheet of manila paper with a line down the middle. One side is labeled **"POSITIVE IMPACTS (Things that connected people or helped them)"** and the other is **"NEGATIVE IMPACTS (Things that divided people or caused tension)"**. Their task is to list all the impacts of the project they can identify from the story.

- 
5. Each group shares one key positive and one key negative impact they identified. Lead a discussion.
 - "What was the intended, positive impact of this project?"
 - "What was the unintended, negative impact?"
 - "What specific part of the project design—the *what*, the *who*, the *how*—caused the negative impact?" (Guide them to the distribution mechanism).
 - "How could this project have been designed differently to avoid causing tension?"

LECTURETTE 18: THE "DO NO HARM" LENS: DIVIDERS AND CONNECTORS

When we work in communities affected by conflict, our good intentions are not enough. Every project we implement, whether it's providing aid, building infrastructure, or conducting training, is like a **double-edged sword**; it has the power to help, but it also has the power to unintentionally cause harm by worsening tensions. The "**Do No Harm**"³⁹ approach provides a practical lens to ensure our work contributes to peace, not conflict. At the heart of this approach is a simple but powerful analytical tool: identifying the **Dividers** and **Connectors** within a community.

Dividers: Sources of Tension

Dividers are the things that drive people apart. They are the sources of tension, mistrust, or open conflict that exist in a community. It's crucial to remember that people are not dividers; rather, dividers are the issues, systems, or fears that separate them.

Examples of dividers can include:

- **Competition** over scarce resources like land, water, or jobs.
- **Historical grievances** or unresolved injustices between groups.
- **Systems** that create inequality, such as corrupt or biased institutions.
- **Prejudices** and stereotypes between different clans, religions, or ethnic groups.

Connectors: Sources of Peace

Connectors are the things that bring people together, even when they are in conflict. They are the existing sources of trust, cooperation, and shared identity in a community. These represent the local capacities for peace that we must identify and support.

Examples of connectors can include:

- **Shared spaces** like a marketplace, a school, or a health clinic that everyone uses.
- **Common experiences**, such as surviving a natural disaster together.
- **Inter-group relationships**, such as friendships, business partnerships, or inter-clan marriages.
- **Shared values**, such as a common religion, a respected council of elders, or a shared desire for their children's future.

The Core Principle: From Analysis to Action

The goal of this analysis is simple but powerful: we must design and implement our projects in a way that intentionally **strengthens the Connectors** and avoids accidentally **worsening the Dividers**. For example, if a **divider** is tension between two clans over access to a well, a poorly designed project might build a new well in the territory of only one clan, fueling accusations of favoritism. A conflict-sensitive project, however, would identify a **connector**—perhaps the local school that children from both clans attend—and build the new well on that neutral, shared ground, thereby strengthening a local capacity for peace while addressing the community's need for water.

This lens forces us to think critically about the details of our projects—the who, what, where, and how—to ensure we are being responsible, ethical, and effective contributors to a sustainable peace.

³⁹ Anderson, M. B. (1999). *Do no harm: How aid can support peace—or war*.

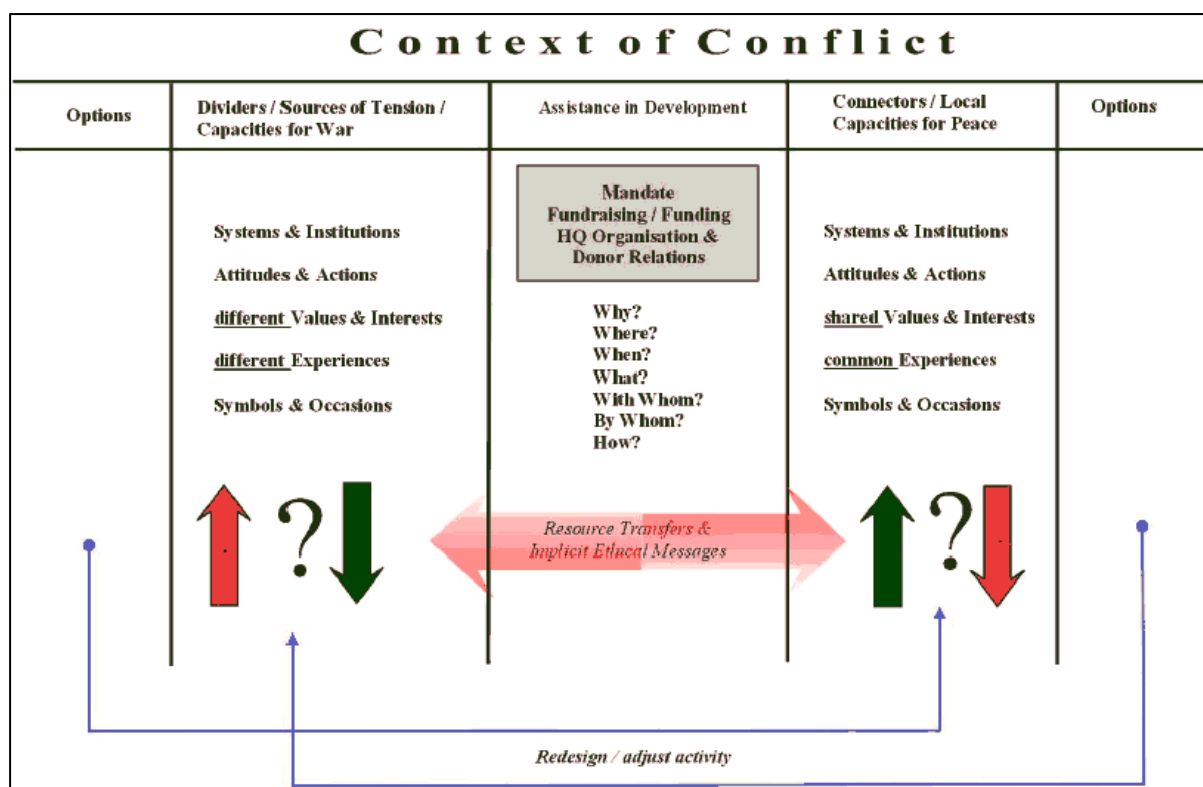


Figure 23. Do No Harm Lens: Dividers and Connectors. Source: Methodfinder.net.

ACTIVITY 22: IDENTIFYING LEVERAGE POINTS FOR INTERVENTION – THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Not all actions have equal impact. Drawing on systems thinking, we will learn how to identify strategic "leverage points"—places in the conflict system where a small, well-focused intervention can create significant, lasting change.

Objective: To enable participants to analyze their own systems maps to discover that intervening in different parts of a system produces vastly different results, leading to an intuitive understanding of leverage.

Materials:

- The groups' "Vicious Cycle" maps from the "Introduction to Systems Thinking" sub-session
- Small sticky notes in two different colors (e.g., Yellow for "Intervention," Green for "Positive Ripple")
- PowerPoint Presentation "Finding the Point of Leverage"

Procedure:

1. Begin by referencing the previous work: "We've created these powerful maps showing how community problems are interconnected in vicious cycles. Now, we face a real-world challenge: our organizations have limited time and resources. We can't fix everything at once. So, the critical question is, *where do we intervene to make the biggest difference?*"
2. Present Lecturette 19: "Finding the Point of Leverage."
3. In their small groups, participants revisit their "Vicious Cycle" maps. Give them the following task:
 - "First, choose the most obvious and biggest problem on your map (e.g., 'High Youth Unemployment'). Place a yellow 'Intervention' sticky note on it. Now, trace the effects. If you could magically solve this one problem, what other issues on the map would be positively affected? Place green 'Positive Ripple' notes on them."
 - "Next, choose a less obvious but highly connected problem on your map (e.g., 'Lack of Trust in Leaders'). Place a second yellow 'Intervention' note there. Now, trace the ripple effect from this point. How many other issues are positively impacted? Use your remaining green notes."
4. Each group briefly shares what they discovered. Lead a discussion.
 - "Which intervention created the biggest 'ripple effect' on your map?"
 - "Was the most effective point of intervention always the biggest or most obvious problem?"
 - "What does this tell us about choosing where to focus our peacebuilding efforts?"

LECTURETTE 19: FINDING THE POINT OF LEVERAGE

When we look at a complex conflict system with its interconnected problems and vicious cycles, the situation can feel overwhelming. It's easy to think we need massive resources to make a difference. Systems thinking, however, offers a more hopeful and strategic perspective through the concept of **Leverage Points**⁴⁰.

What is a Leverage Point?

A **leverage point** is a place in a system's structure where a small, well-focused intervention can lead to a large, enduring shift in the entire system's behavior. Think of a seesaw: a small child can lift a very large adult if they push down on the very end of the lever. That specific spot is the point of maximum leverage. In peacebuilding, our job is to find these smart, strategic entry points where our limited resources can have the greatest possible impact.

Another powerful analogy is the small **rudder on a massive cargo ship**. A small, precise movement of that rudder can change the direction of the entire vessel. The rudder is the leverage point.

Why Finding Leverage Points Matters

Focusing on leverage points is the key to moving beyond short-term, "quick fix" solutions that often fail because they don't change the underlying dynamics of the conflict. Instead of just treating the visible symptoms (the branches of our Conflict Tree), we search for the place in the system that has the power to change the whole pattern.

This strategic approach helps us design better Theories of Change and more relevant program strategies. By identifying a key leverage point, we can focus our efforts where they will create a positive "ripple effect," potentially reversing a vicious cycle into a virtuous one. This allows us to work smarter, not just harder, in creating lasting and positive change.

⁴⁰ CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. (2016). *Designing strategic initiatives to impact conflict systems: Systems approaches to peacebuilding* (Resource Manual).

ACTIVITY 23: SCENARIO AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The future is uncertain, so it's wise to have a "Plan B." We will cover how to use your scenario analysis to develop contingency plans for critical risks, ensuring your project is resilient and can adapt to changing conditions.

Objective: To experientially introduce the concept of multiple plausible futures by having participants creatively imagine and articulate best-case, worst-case, and most-likely outcomes for a given situation.

Materials:

- A short, forward-looking scenario on a handout
- Manila paper and markers for each group
- PowerPoint Presentation: "Preparing for the Future with Scenarios and Contingencies"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity: "So far, our analysis has focused on understanding the present and the past. But our projects operate in the future, which is always uncertain."
2. Present Lecturette 20: "Preparing for the Future with Scenarios and Contingencies."
3. This activity is about stretching our thinking to imagine the different paths the future might take." Present the scenario: *"A landmark peace agreement has just been signed between the government and a major armed group in the region. Your organization is planning a large-scale community reconciliation program set to launch in three months. The situation is hopeful, but also very fragile."*
4. In small groups, participants are given a sheet of manila paper and the following task: "Imagine it is one year from today. Your group's job is to write three different 'news headlines' that could appear in a local newspaper. Each headline should describe a different possible future for the peace process:"
 - Headline 1: The Best-Case Scenario (What is the most positive, optimistic outcome?)
 - Headline 2: The Worst-Case Scenario (What is the most negative, pessimistic outcome?)
 - Headline 3: The "Muddling Through" Scenario (What is a realistic, middle-ground outcome where some things have improved and others have not?)
5. (15 mins) Plenary Gallery Walk & Discussion: Groups post their "headlines" on the wall. Lead a gallery walk and then a discussion.
 - "What are the common themes you see in the 'Best-Case' headlines? What about the 'Worst-Case' ones?"
 - "Which of these futures feels most plausible right now? Why?"
 - "How would your reconciliation project need to adapt to operate in each of these three different futures?"

LECTURETTE 20: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE WITH SCENARIOS AND CONTINGENCIES

As peacebuilders, our analysis gives us a clear picture of the present and the past. However, our projects must operate in the **future**, which is always uncertain and unpredictable. A peace agreement can collapse, a key leader can be replaced, or a natural disaster can shift community priorities overnight. To ensure our projects are resilient and can adapt to these changes, we use the strategic tools of **Scenario Planning** and **Contingency Planning**. While related, these two concepts serve different purposes.

Scenario Planning: Exploring Possible Futures

Scenario Planning is the broad process of exploring several different, plausible futures—both good and bad. The goal is **not to predict** which future will happen, but to stretch our thinking and prepare our strategies to be robust enough to withstand changes in the operational environment. It's a creative exercise in asking, "What if?" A simple way to do this is to imagine three possible outcomes a year from now:

- **The Best-Case Scenario:** The most positive, optimistic outcome.
- **The Worst-Case Scenario:** The most negative, pessimistic outcome.
- **The "Muddling Through" Scenario:** The most likely, middle-ground outcome where some things have improved and others have not.

By thinking through these different stories, we can design projects that are flexible enough to succeed in a variety of contexts.

Contingency Planning: Preparing for the Worst

Contingency Planning is a specific and highly focused type of scenario planning that concentrates only on your 'Worst-Case' headline. A contingency plan is your organization's "**Plan B**" for a sudden, drastic turn of events. It is the disaster recovery plan you create to minimize damage and ensure your key operations and the safety of your staff can continue if an emergency strikes. It involves identifying specific triggers (e.g., "If active fighting resumes in our project area...") and the immediate actions you will take in response.

The Strategic Value: From Reactive to Proactive

Why do we dedicate time to thinking about futures that may never happen? The strategic value is immense. This process shifts our organizational posture from being **reactive** to being **proactive**. It allows us to ask "**What would we do if...?**" for a variety of circumstances. This helps us to:

- **Identify risks and opportunities** early.
- Develop clear protocols and "**Plan B**"s before a crisis hits.
- Build more **flexible and adaptable** project designs.
- Respond **quickly and appropriately** when conditions on the ground change.

Ultimately, preparing for different futures ensures that our commitment to the communities we serve can be sustained, even when the path to peace is unpredictable.

Contingency Planning Matrix

Below is a matrix to guide your contingency planning. Each row represents one key risk. The goal is to think through the worst-case scenario and develop a clear, actionable plan to mitigate its impact.

Key Uncertainty / Risk	Worst-Case Scenario	Impact on Project	Trigger (What tells us to activate Plan B?)	Contingency Actions (Plan B)	Person(s) Responsible
Example 1: Funding	The promised government peace-building fund is delayed by six months.	Project activities halt; we can't pay for supplies or stipends; community members lose trust.	An official government memo or public announcement confirming the funding freeze.	1. Immediately pause all procurement. 2. Convene a transparent meeting with community partners. 3. Submit a pre-prepared proposal to a backup donor for bridge funding.	Project Manager, Finance Officer
Example 2: Security	A clan feud (<i>rido</i>) erupts in our project area, unrelated to our project.	Staff safety is threatened; travel to the site is suspended; project activities stop.	Verified reports of armed clashes in the project area or direct threats against staff.	1. Immediately suspend all staff travel to the site. 2. Activate the staff communication tree to ensure everyone is safe. 3. Engage with local peace monitors or elders to assess the situation.	Head of Office, Security Officer
Example 3: Political	The newly elected mayor is hostile to our project and our local partner organization.	The mayor blocks our permits; our partner faces harassment; community members become afraid to participate.	The mayor's office issues a "stop work" order or publicly denounces the project.	1. Temporarily pause visible public activities. 2. Request a dialogue with the mayor through a respected intermediary (e.g., a religious leader). 3. Document all instances of obstruction.	Country Director, Advocacy Officer
(Your Risk Here)					

SESSION 9: COMMITMENT, SYNTHESIS, AND CLOSING

ACTIVITY 24: MY PEACE COMMITMENT

Objective: To encourage individual reflection and bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in the training and its practical application in the participants' workplaces and communities.

Materials:

- Small index cards or sticky notes (two per participant, preferably in different colors).
- Pens or markers.
- A large sheet of manila paper labeled "Our Commitment Wall."

Procedure:

1. Begin the final activity. "We have spent our time together learning new tools and frameworks. Now, the most important step is to think about how we will carry this learning forward. This final activity is a moment for personal reflection and commitment."
2. Individual Reflection and Writing:
 - Distribute two cards to each participant.
 - Card 1 (Aha! Moment): "On your first card, please write down one key takeaway or an 'Aha! moment' from our time together. This could be a new insight from a tool like the Conflict Tree, a new understanding from the Escalation Model, or any concept that truly resonated with you."
 - Card 2 (Action Step): "On your second card, please write down one concrete, actionable step you will commit to taking when you return to your work. This should be a realistic step to apply your new conflict analysis skills. For example, 'I will use the Onion Model to prepare for my next difficult conversation,' or 'I will facilitate a Dividers and Connectors analysis with my team for our new project.'"
3. Plenary Sharing and Commitment Wall:
 - Invite participants to voluntarily share their commitments in a brief plenary session. As they share, they can post their two cards on the "Commitment Wall."
 - This sharing reinforces learning, allows participants to hear practical ideas from their peers, and creates a sense of shared purpose.
4. Briefly synthesize the themes emerging from the Commitment Wall, acknowledging the group's collective insights and dedication to applying their new skills.

ACTIVITY 25: COURSE SYNTHESIS AND NEXT STEPS

Objective: To provide a comprehensive review of the entire training, reinforce key learning points, and set a clear, motivating direction for future learning and application of conflict analysis skills.

Materials:

- The "Commitment Wall" from the previous activity.
- A copy of the training agenda.
- Flip chart or whiteboard.
- Certificates of Participation/Completion.

Procedure:

1. Begin by referencing the Commitment Wall. "Looking at this wall, we can see the powerful learning that has happened here. Let's hear from a few more of you about the commitments you are taking back to your communities." This links the final session to the collective learning experience.
2. Walk the participants through the training agenda, providing a brief, high-level recap of the journey:
 - Part 1: Foundations: "We started by building our foundation, establishing a shared language with core concepts like the ABC Triangle and the Conflict Wheel. We learned to see the invisible parts of conflict."
 - Part 2: Application: "We then moved from theory to practice, rolling up our sleeves with hands-on tools. We learned to map the *who* with Stakeholder Analysis, understand the *why* with the Conflict Tree, and analyze the *how* with the Escalation Model and Systems Thinking."
 - Part 3: Bridging to Action: "And finally, we built the crucial bridge from analysis to action. We learned how to design smarter, conflict-sensitive strategies by identifying Dividers and Connectors, finding Leverage Points, and preparing for an uncertain future with Contingency Planning."
3. Build anticipation for future capacity strengthening by outlining a clear path forward.
 - Next Steps: "This training is a foundational step. The next phase of our work together will build directly on these analytical skills. We will get into the 'nuts and bolts' of peacebuilding practice, covering topics such as:
 - Advanced facilitation and mediation techniques for high-tension situations.
 - Designing and leading community dialogues.
 - Practical negotiation skills based on the Onion Model.
 - Advanced M&E for peacebuilding outcomes."
4. Conclude their portion by thanking all participants for their active engagement, vulnerability, and commitment to strengthening peace in the Bangsamoro.



CLOSING CEREMONY PROPER

A host from the organizing agency takes over for the formal closing.

1. **Participant Testimonies:** The host calls on 3-4 participants to share a brief testimony about their experience and key learning from the training.
2. **Closing Message:** A ranking official from the organizing agency is invited to give a closing message, congratulating the participants and reinforcing the importance of applying their new conflict analysis knowledge in their vital work.
3. **Distribution of Certificates:** The ranking official, along with the facilitator, distributes the certificates of completion to each participant.
4. **Closing Prayer:** A closing prayer is led by a volunteer from the participants, acknowledging the diversity of faiths and offering a shared hope for peace.

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ABOUT THE MODULE DEVELOPER



Ahmed Harris R. Pangcoga is an international development professional with over 23 years of experience in program management, research, and capacity development. He serves as the founder and Executive Director of Transforming Fragilities, Inc. (TFI), and, from March 2021 to March 2025, he was Country Director for Equal Access International (EAI) in the Philippines.

Pangcoga has contributed to numerous peacebuilding and humanitarian initiatives through roles in leading organizations such as Transforming Fragilities, Inc., Equal Access International, and the United Nations. His expertise lies in designing and managing programs focused on conflict sensitivity, civil society engagement, crisis response, and violence prevention, impacting thousands across conflict-affected areas.

Beyond field-based peacebuilding, Pangcoga is recognized for his prolific work as a module writer and lead trainer in peace and development capability building. He has authored more than 20 comprehensive training modules and facilitated over 300 workshops covering peace education, community resilience, and gender empowerment, working closely with government agencies, civil society, and international partners. His evidence-based, culturally grounded training materials have been instrumental in mainstreaming peacebuilding frameworks within local institutions and grassroots networks. His legacy as a trainer and thought leader is further strengthened by his research contributions and his active mentoring of emerging peacebuilders.

Mr. Pangcoga has authored and co-authored numerous research reports, policy briefs, and articles on topics including child marriage, peacebuilding, and women's empowerment. He frequently applies his expertise by developing and facilitating peace-based trainings and workshops for government and non-government entities in the Mindanao. This training module is a product of that extensive field and research experience, designed to provide practical, foundational conflict analysis skills to grassroots peacebuilders working to advance sustainable peace and development in Mindanao.