Conflict Analysis Framework

Field Guidelines & Procedures

Reflecting on Peace Practice Project/CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
Norwegian Church Aid

May 2012
Second Draft for Review and Field Testing

CDA COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT

NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
actalliance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

An Introductory Note 1
What is Conflict Analysis? 1
Guiding Principles for Conflict Analysis 2
Gender Considerations for Different Phases& Tasks of Conflict Analysis 3

PART I: GETTING STARTED AND GATHERING INFORMATION

I. GETTING STARTED & PREPARATION

Determine the Purpose and Context of the Conflict Analysis 6
Identify the Arena or Level of Analysis 7
Mobilize Resources: Budget and Personnel 8
Examine Existing Analyses 8

II. WHO GATHERS INFORMATION?: PUTTING A TEAM TOGETHER

Team Considerations 10
Working with Partners 10

III. GATHERING INFORMATION

What Do You Need to Know? 12
Methods of Data/Information Collection 13
Whom Should You Interview? 14
Categories and Questions for Data Collection 16
Keeping It Simple: Use of Open-Ended Questions 17
Addressing Practical Constraints in Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis 18
Specific Considerations for Phases of Conflict 19

PART II: ANALYZING THE INFORMATION GATHERED

I. INTRODUCTION 22
Processes for Validation/Refinement of the Analysis 22
Uses of the Analysis 23
Presentation and Tone 23
Preliminary Sorting Processes 24
Overview of Analytical Tools 24

II. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS 26
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: POSITIONS, INTERESTS, ISSUES AND POWER 27
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING 30
THE CONFLICT TREE 33
DIVIDERS & CONNECTORS ANALYSIS 35
IMMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM THREATS/VULNERABILITIES ANALYSIS 38
LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE EXERCISE 41
MAPPING OF CONFLICT USING SYSTEMS THINKING 43
ALTERNATIVE FUTURE STORIES (SCENARIOS) 47

APPENDIX A: Types of Questions 48
APPENDIX B-1: Introduction to Systems Thinking 51
APPENDIX B-2: Common Conflict Systems 53
APPENDIX C: Examples of Conflict Systems 60
APPENDIX D Resources for Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis 62
APPENDIX E: Bibliography 65

INTRODUCTION

An Introductory Note

This document represents a framework and associated practical guidelines for conflict analysis that various organizations, including GPPAC regions, can adapt, revise and localize to fit their respective conflict contexts and organizational needs. A previous draft was tested in the field—and we expect that this draft that will be further tested and refined.

Development of the first draft was made possible by funding from NORAD, which was made available through Norwegian Church Aid. It was compiled by Peter Woodrow, Co-Director of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Program (and Chair of the GPPAC Preventive Action Working Group) with input from William Tsuma, Program Manager for Preventive Action in the GPPAC Global Secretariat.

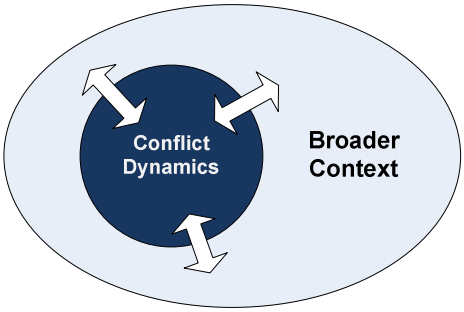
The first users of the guidelines were staff and partners of Norwegian Church Aid in Sudan. Subsequently, that experience and the basic document was reviewed by a technical group convened by GPPAC under the auspices of the Preventive Action Working Group, including Grace Maina from South Africa, Andrés Serbin from Argentina, William Tsuma from Kenya, Gesa Bent from Germany, Arne Sæverås from Norway, and Peter Woodrow from the United States.

This document has drawn on the work of many peacebuilding practitioners over the years, including Lisa Schirch, John Paul Lederach, Rena Neufeld, Simon Fisher, Sue and Steve Williams, Dekha Abdi Ibrahim, Susan Wildau, Christopher Moore, Bernie Mayer and Manuela Leonhardt. Their work is listed in the Bibliography in Appendix E.

What is Conflict Analysis?

Conflict analysis is crucial tool for the design, implementation and evaluation of peacebuilding programs—whether for the prevention of armed conflict, attempting to bring war and violence to an end, or to help societies recover in the aftermath of war or to attain greater justice and equality. Conflict analysis is the deliberate study of the causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. Peace practitioners engage in conflict analysis in the same way that a doctor performs a diagnosis on a patient before determining how to proceed with treatment. Social and political conflicts are, however, much more complex than diagnosis of a single patient, as they involve multiple actors, groups, issues and other factors. Nonetheless, conflict analysis helps organizations trying to address conflict to know how to promote positive changes in the situation to reduce the potential for violence and/or transform the conflict to make room for development and social justice.

Conflict analysis should be distinguished from *context* analysis—which seeks to understand the broader situation, including all economic, social, and political factors. The conflict exists within the context and is influenced by it, but the conflict has its own important dynamics.



A case in point is the issue of poverty. People often assert that "the main cause of our conflict is poverty." Poverty may well be an important aspect of the broader context; but how does it generate conflict? It is necessary to examine the issues and dynamics around wealth, poverty, privilege, and access to resources to discover which economic factors contribute to the potential for violent conflict and how. In some cases, the issue will be enormous differences in wealth based on ethnicity or race. In other words, it is not the absolute level of poverty that is the issue, but the fact that some people gain while others lose along group lines. In another case, the problem may be associated with rampant corruption, in which certain officials make significant personal profits by misusing public funds and indirectly impeding development for all. Even here, further analysis may be important. Many societies tolerate or even encourage certain forms of favoritism, such as hiring your nephew or helping your sister to get a loan. At what point does nepotism become corruption and a cause of conflict?

In recent years, many approaches to conflict analysis have emerged, both formal and informal. Some models emphasize the ***actors or stakeholders*** in a conflict and seek to understand the motivations, needs, stated demands/positions, sources of power and influence and deeper interests of the various individuals, parties, and groups involved in a particular conflict. Other approaches focus on the ***issues or problems***, focusing on the historical origins of the problems, the groups involved, how the issues manifest themselves, and the possible options for resolution. Another approach develops alternative future ***scenarios*** that describe realistic ways that the conflict might evolve, as a basis for planning interventions to avoid the worst possible futures and promote the best outcomes.

Another important dimension in conflict analysis relates to the ***time or phase of conflict***. Some analyses strive to understand the long-term ***structural causes*** of conflict and how those might eventually result in violence and social breakdown. Other forms of analysis look for more immediate causes of ***emerging crisis*** through early warning systems, and often identify potential ***triggers*** of violence (elections, economic downturn, sharp increases in food or fuel costs). When the purpose of the analysis is associated with conflict prevention in particular, it will be important to explore both the deeper structural causes and more immediate "triggers" of violence. (Note: discussions of conflict analysis use a somewhat confusing and overlapping array of terms, including actors, forces, triggers, proximate and structural causes and more. Often, these are lumped under the general category of "factors" of conflict.)

This manual provides guidelines for integrating actor and issue analysis, as well as both long-term structural and shorter-term analysis of potential triggers.

Is There Such a Thing as "Good Enough" Conflict Analysis?

Donors, peace practitioners and local organizations are all confronted with time and resource constraints. They may ask, therefore, "What is the least amount of analysis I can do and still develop credible and effective programming." In many ways, the answer will depend on the purpose of the analysis—as discussed further in Part I, Section I below. However, we can say that if the organization does not intend to address conflict factors directly, but will implement humanitarian assistance or development programmes in a conflict context, they may be able to get away with something less than a full conflict analysis. For instance, if the organization wishes only to ensure that its humanitarian/develop projects are conflict sensitive, they might need to perform only a dividers and connectors analysis (see Part II, p. 36). If the aim is to conduct programming that will incorporate peacebuilding goals/objectives, then a more complete conflict analysis will be necessary.

Guiding Principles for Conflict Analysis

The following principles inform our conflict analysis approach and methods:

1. Conflict analysis/assessment is *not a neutral activity*. Depending on how it is done, it can be an intervention in itself. Analysis of the sources/causes of conflict is often a contested issue. A data collection and analysis process has potential for exacerbating conflicts. "Do no harm" principles should be followed.
2. Who performs data collection and analysis has a direct impact on the reliability and credibility of the resulting product. Local knowledge and information is paramount, but can be enriched by questions and observations from "outsiders." In any case, local culture must be respected.
3. Analysis must be based on information from a full range of stakeholders in the conflict area; efforts should be made to seek information from all perspectives.
4. When politically feasible, people living in the situation should lead the data collection and analysis process, supported by additional team members from outside when necessary. This can help ensure cultural sensitivity.
5. In some circumstances, local people cannot or should not take a visible role in conflict analysis for political/safety reasons. At times, the understandable biases of local people will make it difficult for them to take the lead in conflict analysis; sensitive outsiders can conduct the process, with input from multiple local people.
6. Gender perspectives should be integrated into a conflict analysis process through-out. In order to reflect several dimensions of the conflict and open additional ways of taking preventive action, a conflict analysis should be informed from a gender perspective. This includes being aware of who was involved in planning and executing the analysis, determining potential ways to access gender-sensitive information while remaining respectful of local conditions and culture, and using gender-sensitive questions which can reveal different roles, capacities and vulnerabilities of men and women in conflict. (See next section.)
7. Conflict analysis is not an end in itself. It is only useful if it becomes the basis for further initiatives, such as program planning and decision-making. The process should engage the question of how to *respond* to the conflict(s) analyzed.
8. Conflict analysis is not a one-time task to be completed during the program development phase and then forgotten. Rather, the understanding of the conflict will

evolve over time, and the documented analysis should be updated regularly as an integral part of program work.

9. The goal of a conflict analysis exercise is not THE perfect analysis! Rather, the analysis should be "good enough" for the purposes it will be used for—recognizing that the analysis can be further developed and refined over time.

Gender Considerations for Different Phases and Tasks of Conflict Analysis

Gender perspectives should be integrated into a conflict analysis process throughout—while, at the same time, remaining respectful of local conditions and culture. The following questions raise gender considerations for different phases and tasks. These are then raised again in the relevant sections of the text.

1. Have both men and women been actively involved in determining the overall purpose and ultimate uses of the conflict analysis to be produced?
2. Have both men and women been engaged in data gathering activities? Are they aware of the gender dimension and able to gather gender-sensitive data? If not, will trainings be provided to increase their capacity?
3. Have gender-sensitive indicators been developed and used during the conflict analysis? Have the views of both women and men been elicited?
4. Have both women and men participated actively in analyzing the data gathered and applying the analytical tools and frameworks?
5. Are there practical problems in gathering data, conducting interviews and related tasks which are rooted in gender roles as practiced in the society and have ways been found to address these problems?
6. Has the resulting conflict analysis been validated by both women and men?
7. What does the conflict analysis itself reflect regarding differential impacts of the conflict on women, men, girls, boys, youth and elderly (etc.)?
8. Has the analysis process revealed any gender-based differences, in terms of particular potential roles for men or women in promoting peace or addressing specific conflict factors?
9. Has the analysis revealed specific dynamics of the conflict that empower or disempower women and men in certain ways based on their gender? Could these dynamics assist a sustainable preventive action process?
10. Are the outcomes of the gender analysis followed-up, i.e. are gender-sensitive early response options developed as part of a preventive action plan?

In the following sections, **Part I** will provide information about getting started in an analysis process and discuss the issue regarding who performs the analysis. Part I ends with guidelines regarding the gathering of information.

Part II provides a range of tools, frameworks and processes for analyzing information gathered, following the processes described in Part I or any other information collection method.

PART I:

GETTING STARTED & GATHERING INFORMATION

I. GETTING STARTED & PREPARATION

Determine the Purpose and Context of the Conflict Analysis

People perform a conflict analysis for many different reasons and in many different circumstances. The purpose and context of the analysis have a profound influence on how it is done: who does it, where information comes from, and the sensitivities regarding any attempt to characterize a conflict, among other things.

Some of the basic purposes of analysis include the following:

Conflict analysis as a tool for conflict sensitivity.[1] In some cases, an organization does not intend to address conflict factors directly—but does want to ensure that its humanitarian or development programmes are sensitive to conflict dynamics. In this case, a more limited analysis may be all that is necessary, such as dividers and connectors. (See Dividers and Connectors Analysis in Part II, p. 36.)

Conflict analysis as a first step towards program development. In this context, analysis is a diagnostic tool for understanding the problem(s), in order to design ways to address them programmatically. Such an analysis is often an internal organizational process among staff, although it can also be done in a participatory manner with key partner organizations.

Conflict analysis as preparation for working with stakeholders or parties to the conflict. Once you have decided to intervene in a conflict, it is important to understand the perspectives of those directly involved—the origins of the conflict, the perspectives of the different parties, their needs and demands, and so forth. Again, this is often done as an internal process, although information is gathered as widely as possible.

Conflict analysis as a conflict resolution or transformation process. This is definitely an intervention—and therefore to be approached carefully. The parties to conflict each have their own view of the causes, history, and current tensions. Often the history and origins of the conflict are themselves contested issues that must be handled sensitively. Joint analysis of the conflict is a common early step in a conflict transformation process.

Each of these purposes implies a different answer to

- WHO does the analysis,
- The SOURCES of information,
- HOW the information is analyzed, and
- How the resulting analysis is USED.

For the most part, these guidelines will assume that analysis is being done to inform program planning—through an internal organizational process, including implementation partners, or through engagement of some external stakeholders.

---

[1] For a full discussion of the difference between peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity, see: Chigas, Diana, and Peter Woodrow, "A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding," CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2010. See www.cdainc.com.

An INGO had been working on peace issues in Sri Lanka for several years. An evaluation recommended that the program team develop a shared conflict analysis as the basis for forward planning. They hired a consultant to facilitate their analysis process. The staff themselves represented a spectrum of perspectives, so the early steps of analysis were performed internally. Once they had drafted a tentative analysis, they invited partner organizations from a range of viewpoints to participate in a workshop where they commented on the analysis and added rich layers to the understanding of the ongoing conflict.

For many purposes, conflict analysis:

1. Will serve as the basis for dialogue among stakeholders and planning of conflict prevention actions by a range of actors.

2. Will describe a set of initial or baseline conditions, which will be updated periodically to track changes/shifts/ trends in the conflict over time, as part of an M&E system.

3. Provides a foundational understanding of why a given conflict occurred and hence a useful tool for sensitizing, raising awareness and advocacy work (both for behavioral and policy change)

It is also import to take into account whether the conflict to be analyzed is latent, emerging slowly, becoming manifest in various ways, or already resulting in violence.

Identify the Arena or Level of Analysis

What are the boundaries of the conflict we are interested in? One community? A district or province? A sub-region of the country? The entire country? Do we include regional neighbors? International dimensions? Such boundary questions are partly determined by the purpose, as discussed above.

Identification of the study area/arena/location is an important procedure for any conflict assessment process. This is because effects of conflicts tend to spread beyond the point of origin, making analysis a complex process. In some cases, conflicts assume a national or regional dimension, while, in effect, their source was at a very local level.

Conflicts in the Karamoja area of East and Central Africa are a good example. The conflicts have persisted for many years and involve issues of land ownership and use, grazing rights and migration, and cattle rustling, among others. The conflicts implicate four countries, including Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan—and identifying the appropriate area of analysis in such a region calls for an extensive understanding of the dynamics of the conflict and how they manifest; otherwise there is a risk of gaining a one-sided perspective.

Intra-state conflicts can be even more complex, in terms of the entry point for conflict analysis. The 2007 post-election violence in Kenya presents a good case in point. Where does one begin in analyzing such a conflict? Do you start in the communities most affected by the violence? Do you begin with the people identified as being the key instigators of the violence? If so, do you look for these at a local level or national level, or both? The answer may lie, at least initially, in the purpose of the analysis and the

likely level of programming. To intervene effectively at the national level, one would need to understand national political dynamics. To intervene in specific local communities, it would be more important to comprehend local tensions and their origins.

An NGO was preparing to organize dialogue and negotiation sessions between two ethnic communities who had conducted mutual massacres during the civil war in Liberia. Groups formerly living side by side were now housed in separate though nearby communities and land use issues were intense. Before bringing elders from each group together, organizers interviewed women and men, youth, and ex-combatants from each group, seeking to understand not only the history, but also the current feelings and tensions.

Mobilize Resources: Time, Budget and Personnel

Conflict analysis requires a plan for mobilizing resources – both material and human. The next section of this manual addresses the issue of who performs data gathering and analysis. Meanwhile, conflict analysis also represents a cost to the organization, in terms of time and sufficient funds to carry out the process.

In terms of budgeting, the following are *potential* costs that could occur, depending on the situation, the composition of the analysis team, and the logistics involved:

- Travel to/from the conflict area and local transport
- Lodging/meals for team members
- Space for team meetings or workshops
- Interpretation (if "outsiders" without language skills are involved)
- Salaries/fees for additional team members/consultants not already on staff (if needed)
- Expenses of community members or other volunteer participants
- [If survey research/public opinion polling is included, this would represent additional expense.]

The largest cost is usually in the staff time devoted to collecting information and then analyzing it. At times, organizations are under extreme time pressures, such as meeting the deadline for a program proposal to a donor. Many poor quality or inadequate analyses have been produced under these kinds of pressures. If, for whatever reason, the organization is forced to produce a rushed analysis, plans should be made to deepen the analysis at a later time, perhaps after a grant is awarded.

Examine Existing Analyses

Prior to any conflict analysis exercise, the conflict analysis team should obtain relevant secondary information about the conflict being assessed and about the general location, in order to gain a general overview of the conflict situation. Such information can be obtained from relevant secondary data either from media archives (print and mass media); government offices; research reports or other NGO analysis efforts.

Some conflicts (especially long-term ones) have been studied extensively, and lots of relevant information is available, including the following types of sources:

Existing conflict analyses. Some governments have performed conflict analyses and make them available. For instance, DFID will often post the results of a Strategic Conflict Analysis, and USAID has started to make the results of their Conflict Assessment Framework available. NGOs and civil society organizations working in the area may well have developed various forms of analysis that can save time. Caution: Existing analyses are quite helpful, when available, but they will almost always need to be brought up to date.

Journalistic Reports and Analysis. It is often possible to find well-researched reports that provide a certain kind of analysis on many conflict areas around the world.[2] The International Crisis Group produces reports of this kind, along with several other groups. Caution: ICG reports are typically cogent analyses based on extensive interviews with local actors. However, they are usually limited to capital cities and the perspectives of well-informed people of influence, unless explicitly stating otherwise. At times, ICG reports have been quite controversial, as various groups and individuals disagree with their analysis, even though they try to provide objective information. In any case, one should never rely on a single source of information.

The International Crisis Group produced a report regarding ethnic riots in Kosovo in 2004, based on a series of interviews with a wide variety of people in several communities in the country. Many in the international community and local peace workers read the report with interest, because, until that point, no one had been able to provide any clear analysis of why the riots occurred.

Studies, articles or books. In some cases, either academic or journalistic literature is available providing historical background and other relevant information on the economy, politics, social conditions, etc. Caution: Although the information may be useful for your analysis, these are seldom conflict analyses in themselves. Academic research can be useful on certain questions, although it can also be narrowly focused at times.

Indexes and Assessments: There are various indexes that assess conflicts or countries according to a range of factors of conflict and fragility, much of it available on line.[3] Caution: much of the information for these indexes is generated from available international sources or event data—it is not compiled from detailed local knowledge. It can be useful for comparative purposes, but should be used with caution to understand a specific situation.

[2] International Crisis Group: http://www.crisisgroup.org

[3] See for instance, 1) the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy from Carleton University in Canada http://www.carleton.ca/cifp/ 2) University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/ 3) the Global Peace Index, http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2010/scor and 4) Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Conflict Database Program, http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP

II. WHO GATHERS INFORMATION?: PUTTING A TEAM TOGETHER

Team Considerations

An analysis team is best composed of members with complementary skills and views. Some team members should be knowledgeable about conflict and peace programming, while others will be knowledgeable about the context, culture, politics, language, etc. Consider the possibility of a mix of outsiders and insiders from the conflict, recognizing that "outsiders" may be people from the same community but a different ethnic group, from the same country but a different location, or from a different country. Particular attention needs to be given to the perception of bias of the team. Questions to consider include the following:

1. How will the team be viewed by conflict actors in the area? Might certain individual characteristics—based on (perceived) religion, skin color, gender, nationality and language, for instance—expose the team to additional risks or perceptions of bias?
2. Given the purposes of the analysis, what are the needed skills, experience, relationships of those collecting and analyzing information? Is there any reason to deviate from the norms of a mixed-gender team?
3. What is the appropriate mix among people who know the context well—and people who are less familiar with the area, but bring other kinds of expertise (knowledge of peacebuilding, analytical skills, survey research expertise, etc.)? Do team members have the ability to gather data which is representative of the overall society as relevant for the analysis? Does the team have the needed language skills?
4. What is the working style of prospective team members? Do all members: a) demonstrate skills and comfort working in potentially dangerous and politically sensitive situations in a calm, non-threatening manner; b) employ interpersonal approaches that are transparent, trusting and evoking trust; and c) exhibit skills for managing conflicts and tension?
5. How will the team make up affect access to certain populations, such as women or minority groups, or to certain stakeholders who may be difficult to reach for a variety of reasons?

Working in Partnership for Conflict Analysis

Increasingly, program implementation is undertaken through a series of partnerships. International NGOs almost always work through local civil society and NGO partners. International donors work with a range of partnerships as well. If conflict analysis is to form the basis for strategy development and program design, all of the organizations that will be involved must work from a shared understanding of the causes, issues and actors. They must, therefore, be involved in some significant way in development of the conflict analysis.

Partnerships can be positive and mutually beneficial. At the same time, partnerships are a potential source of unintended negative effects. Some INGOs decide to work with a local organization before they understand how that organization or its members are perceived by others in the situation—or whom they represent, in political or cultural

terms. Similarly, local organizations can feel overwhelmed or "bullied" by dominant international organizations.

The Principles of Conflict Analysis (page 4) state that local knowledge and involvement is paramount for the credibility of any conflict analysis process. At the same time, we have acknowledged that engagement and partnership with "outsiders" can also enrich the conflict analysis. At times, an outsider is able to raise useful questions, some of which might be too sensitive to be raised by locals. In some circumstances, respondents within a conflict arena might find it more comfortable to open up to an outsider than a fellow local (bearing in mind that an outsider could be someone from a different location within the same country, a different country within the same region, or even from another continent).

What is the appropriate mix of truly local people, partner organizations from elsewhere in the same country, as well as colleagues from other countries in the region or internationally. The answer is partly determined by the scope and boundaries of the conflict to be analyzed. If you are working with a several communities in a local district, most likely local people will be able to handle most/all tasks. If the area of interest is an entire nation, including regional dynamics, then a team including nationals and others from the region may be advisable. If the needed technical skills are not readily available among "insiders" (however defined), it may be necessary to engage international experts, either as team members, trainers or resource persons.

A second aspect of partnerships is regional knowledge. In some cases, conflicts that appear localized might have regional or even international dimensions. For example the conflict over the use of Lake Turkana waters in Northern Kenya between the Pokot and Turkana communities also links to the use and control of waters in Ethiopia's Omo basin. An analysis of this conflict might, therefore, require the involvement of partners from Ethiopia and also some basic understanding of integrated cross-border resource management.

Conflict Sensitivity/Do No Harm Considerations:

- How will the team composition affect conflict dynamics?
- How will the analysis team be perceived, in terms of potential biases or relations with the various actors/parties?
- Will anyone be endangered by participation in a conflict analysis process?
- Will partner organizations (at whatever level) be adversely affected by involvement in conflict analysis?

III. GATHERING INFORMATION

How to Determine What You Need to Know

Considering the purpose of the analysis, the availability of existing analyses performed by others, the level or boundaries of the analysis and any limitations imposed by time or budget, *what further information do you need*? Some/all team members will bring some understanding of the conflict already; what additional information will be helpful? How might the team be limited or even biased in its information or perspectives—and how can these be addressed through more information gathering? Are there significant gaps in the information already gathered in the preparatory phase?

Team members should discuss among themselves the quality and completeness of the information they already have. Imagine the following possible exchanges among team members:

> "We have a lot of information from the capital. We have talked with intellectuals, government officials, the international community and journalists, but we don't know anything about the views in the countryside or refugee camps."
>
> "We did a whole series of interviews in villages in the province, but in every case, we were only able to talk with male elders, who viewed themselves as spokespersons for the communities. How can we get the perspectives of women and youth?"
>
> "Our organization has been working in North Province, but the conflict extends into East Province. It could look really different there—we better send a team to talk with people in East."
>
> "Everywhere we go, we hear about land conflicts, but we have not spoken yet with the national Land Commission or the Parliamentary Committee on Land and Natural Resources."

Your sense of what you need to know may shift over time and as you start gathering information. As you look at existing analyses and start talking with people, new questions will arise, leading you to seek out specific individuals or groups to fill in the knowledge gaps—always with reference to the purpose of the analysis and remaining open to being surprised by what you hear.

It is not unusual for teams to enter a situation with one or more preconceived ideas about the nature of the conflict or about the role of a particular group. It will be important to work against such tendencies, which will be helped by maintaining a diverse team, in terms of gender, age and other important factors.

An organization was researching and writing a case study in Burundi, including an analysis of the nature of conflicts there. After interviewing a wide range of people in the capital, Bujumbura, the research team decided that they needed additional information from other locations in the country. They therefore organized a series of focus group discussions in provincial towns and in camps for internally displaced people. Many of the views expressed in these settings were quite different from those articulated in the capital.

An important caution: Avoid information overload!! You can overwhelm yourselves with enormous amounts of information—with no capacity to process it all. Start with modest and focused efforts at gathering information, and then assess what you have and what more you need, before seeking more.

Methods of Data/Information Collection

The way you collect information will depend on what information you are trying to find and where you can find it. By far the most common method is a series of interviews with a range of people (see #2 below). However, this is not the only approach. In fact, no single method of data collection can generate information sufficient for understanding a particular conflict. An objective conflict analysis relies on "triangulation," using several methods to better derive credible information and data. In other words, if you have found the same information in an analysis produced by another organization, through several interviews, and from a government document, you might have sufficient evidence to trust that it is valid.

Some methods of data collection include:

1. ***Desk studies:*** Existing analyses, academic reports, media archives, histories, program reports, NGO reports, etc. (See Section II: Preparation above.)
2. ***Key informant interviews*** of a range of well-informed people representing different perspectives and constituencies. This is discussed in full below.
3. ***"Person-on-the-street" interviews*** with members of the general public (including those outside of the capital city or major urban areas, if at all possible). This is similar to key informant interviews, but the people are chosen at random in public.
4. ***Analysis workshop.*** In some circumstance, it is possible to organize a one- or two-day workshop in which the participants engage in a participatory conflict analysis process. This approach is particularly useful for generating dialogue among different kinds of people regarding the nature and causes of conflict. However, this can be risky if the groups are not prepared to talk with one another—in which case separate parallel workshops might work. *This approach requires skilled facilitation.*
5. ***Focus groups*** with either cross - cutting groups or groups that bring a certain perspective (IDPs, diaspora, opposition leaders, women, youth, religious leaders, etc.). Focus groups allow for interaction and discussion, often resulting in a deeper understanding, even where there is disagreement among participants. A lot has been written on how to organize and conduct focus groups. *This approach also requires skilled facilitation.* [References?]
6. ***Public opinion surveys***. In some circumstances, it will be important to determine the extent to which an attitude or perception is shared in the public—and the main tool for doing that is a social science or public opinion survey. This process takes specific skills and funding, and is therefore rarely used for conflict analysis. (It may be used to track trends and changes in a monitoring system, if the resources are available, however.)
7. ***Crowd sourcing*** using mobile phone and internet technologies is emerging as a useful tool for generating information to be analyzed along with other data sets. Various groups are experimenting with gathering information from cell phone users

and social media. This may prove more useful for early warning of crises rather than for conflict analysis.

8. ***Government or intergovernmental reports.*** Some governments collect information about social issues and conflicts. In some cases, national aid coordinating ministries compile information about groups working in the peace building arena, and UN/OCHA produces similar reports according to sector as well, particularly in large UN mission countries.

Which methods you choose will depend on the information needed, the time and resources available, and the skills of the analysis team.

Conflict Sensitivity/Do No Harm Considerations:

- Are people in the area quite open and willing to talk about conflict—or is this a sensitive area, for political, cultural or security reasons?
- Are people able to talk, or will they feel constrained? Why?
- Are there specific issues or topics that are taboo or that should be approached in a specific way?
- Will you endanger people just by asking them questions?
- Will you endanger yourself or your team by asking questions?

Whom Should You Interview?

A range of people should be interviewed to get a complete story. People from relevant sectors at different levels (decision makers, middle level leaders and local grassroots leaders) of society should be interviewed, including also people representative of the agencies doing development, relief or peacebuilding work, donor agencies supporting peacebuilding, governmental and intergovernmental agency representatives.

To the extent possible, the perspectives of people from the key parties in conflict should be included. This should also reflect the perspectives of those who are not immediately visible along the lines of the conflict, for example perspectives of women from all key parties. In any case, whom you interview will partly be determined by the purpose and scope of the analysis. Those interviewed for a focus on a particular local community would be entirely different from those interviewed for a country level analysis. Interviews in preparation for work in security sector reform would be different from those for peace education in elementary school curricula.

Consideration should be given to obtaining perspectives from:

1. Individuals of all relevant ages;
2. People in positions of authority as well as those over whom authority is exercised; and
3. Both women and men, as they may have different and complementary information and perspectives.

The following categories are suggestive; you will need to determine which groups are most important in a specific conflict context. Potential groupings include the following:

Civil society	Local civil society organizations, religious leaders, traditional elders, and NGOs/INGOs, marginalized groups, powerful groups, women's groups, other international organizations.
Peace practitioners	People who have organized peacebuilding programs at different points in time in the area of interest, including official and unofficial efforts. *It is important to find out what has already been tried, and with what results.*
Political leaders	Representatives of all perspectives or tendencies, including those who were involved with any negotiation processes.
Civil service	Local administration, national ministry representatives (e.g., foreign ministry, ministry of economy, police, army, other ministries implicated with issues in conflict).
Business	Local business leaders, business associations, chamber of commerce.
Media	Radio, TV and print journalists, editors.
International community	UN agencies and officials, bilateral embassies, donors, regional organizations.
Academia/educators	Academics working on issues related to the conflict, teachers at the community level.
"Hard to reach" groups	Groups that are difficult to reach, because they are physically isolated, constantly moving, hold themselves apart, or even represent criminal elements. Even if it is not possible to talk with them directly, it will be important to gather information on their perspectives.

In many conflict zones, the population is polarized and fragmented. Some groups may hold unpopular or "politically incorrect" views; while others are deliberately quiet and reluctant to speak. These may represent particular challenges for data collection—but should not be ignored, as they may represent important viewpoints.

The fundamental principle is that conflict analysts should invite diverse views from multiple stakeholders, with particular attention to the groups perceived to be in conflict. Areas experiencing conflict involve diverse actors, both individuals and groups. All the groups and their perceptions must be mapped so that a full picture of reality is captured. In some cases, failing to include all groups might lead to conflicts, as the conflict analyst might be blamed for favoritism or bias.

A cautionary tale: A conflict analysis on the violence resulting from drug dealing/use/abuse and social disintegration in Colombia resulted in increased violence. A reviewer of these analyses stated that violence ensued simply because the views of the drug trafficking gangs were not represented in the analysis. In effect, engaging the drug traffickers (perceived as spoilers) would pose a challenge to any conflict analyst.

To determine the individuals or groups from whom the data shall be collected, the analysis team could conduct an initial quick round of interviews to identify which groups and individuals should be interviewed, especially if they are new to the area. Another approach is to start with a short but diverse list and ask each interviewee whom else to talk with.

Conflict Sensitivity/Do No Harm Considerations:

- Are there groups or individuals with whom you must talk?
- Are there groups or individuals that you should not approach? Why?
- What might be the consequences of including/excluding specific groups?
- Will there be potential negative effects simply from approaching people to talk about conflict? How sensitive is the topic?

Categories for Data Collection

Many of the formal conflict analysis frameworks concentrate on long lists of questions for conflict analysis, demonstrating a certain anxiety about missing important factors. On the other hand, people living in a conflict area are usually painfully aware of the conflict and its causes, and lists of questions or factors are not particularly useful. Nevertheless, such lists can be helpful as a check, in case you have forgotten an important area of inquiry.

The categories provided below should be considered in that light. The conflict analysis team should use these categories as a way to ***develop your own set of questions for data collection***. It may also be useful to try out your questions with a few relatively safe sources, and then refine them as needed. You may also find that it is important to focus on different questions for different people or groups.

The following categories provide a basis for discussing specific questions to use in interviews:

1. Positive factors for peace/resolution/transformation. These are elements that can be strengthened or built upon in peace work. Prominent individuals or groups, traditional institutions, mechanisms for conflict resolution?
2. Negative factors producing conflict/tension/barriers to peace. These should lead you to the identification of key drivers of conflict—which will need to be addressed.
3. Key actors/stakeholder analysis: roles, sources of power/influence, interests, positions, etc.
4. Identification of long-term structural issues and short-term operational issues/triggers (latent conflicts, emergent, already manifest but not yet violent, violent).
5. Effects of the conflict on different people/groups. Are there differences across groups, genders, age, geographic areas?

6. Information in any of the above categories by sector, but focused on elements that contribute to conflict:
    - Historical factors
    - Economic factors
    - Social/relational factors
    - Political factors
    - Security factors
    - Justice/human rights factors
5. Particular questions oriented to specific groups, such as women, youth, religious leaders, business people, etc.
6. Specialized questions for examining various layers/levels of conflict (local to province/state to national to regional…)
7. Specialized questions related to issues of particular interest (land issues, ethnicity, religious tensions, youth, gender, etc.)
8. Identification of existing peace efforts: Who is doing what? What have been the results (positive and negative)? Are there significant gaps, issues not addressed, groups not involved, etc.?

Keep It Simple: Use of Open-Ended Questions

In most cases, it is not important to develop an elaborate set of questions for data collection. If people are willing and able to talk, all that is required are a few ***open-ended questions***[4] that invite people to share, such as:

> "What do you see as the nature of conflicts in this area (community, province, country…)?
>
> "Where did these conflicts come from? What do you see as the causes of these issues?"
>
> [Follow-up question] "You suggested that [X] is an important conflict issue? What aspects of that issue lead to conflict?" [For instance: "You said that poverty is an issue? In your view, how does poverty contribute to conflict?"]
>
> "You have mentioned a number of causes of conflict? Do any of these stand out as more important than others? Why?"
>
> "Among the issues and conflict factors that you mentioned, which might be more likely to lead to violence than others? How might that happen and in what timeframe?"
>
> "What is your sense of how different groups view the conflict?"

Such open-ended questions give people a chance to talk about what is most important to them. They essentially invite people to share their perspective or story. On the other hand, *closed questions* or *leading questions* can feel like an interrogation, as they usually probe for a "yes" or "no" answer or a specific response. Note the difference between:

> "What is your sense of how the violence erupted in your community?" [open-ended]
>
> "Did government policies cause this problem?" [closed, yes/no answer]

[4] See Appendix A for additional information about Types of Questions.

"I am interested in what you said about ethnic groups living for many years in harmony. Tell me more about that…" [open-ended]

"Would you agree that the international community failed to put pressure on the government?" [leading, yes/no]

Interview questions should also seek to address potential "gender gaps." That is they should try to obtain the perspectives of groups within society (such as youth/elderly, women/men…) which have not been specifically addressed but which may reveal an important dimension of the conflict and lead to enhanced possibilities for preventive action. An example of a probing question for revealing gender dimensions might be:

"You have talked about the increase of violence within your community [relevant area]. Do you know if there also an increase of violence in families within the community?"

Conflict Sensitivity/Do No Harm Considerations:

- People are generally quite sensitive about conflicts in their communities or countries—and the way you ask questions can have an impact.
- Open-ended questions are safer, as they leave the initiative and control with the person responding—they can take the conversation in the direction they prefer. Follow-up questions can seek clarification or additional information.

Addressing Practical Constraints in Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis

Gathering gender-sensitive data for conflict analysis can be impeded by factors which are specific to the gender dimension of the information needed. Especially in societies where cultural rules are strongly linked to gender roles, it can be difficult to obtain data about or from all members of society. For example, it can be against cultural practices to speak to women in the family directly, which means that interviews with women will not be permitted. The perspectives of youth on the conflict may be valued less than those of elders within a society, so that young people may not be ready or allowed to speak.

There is no one solution to this issue, since it is often deeply rooted in the customs and practices of a society, and it also depends on the particular situation of conflict. Finding a way to obtain all the information relevant for conflict analysis therefore requires a thorough knowledge of the values and communicated role models which form the basis of the society in question, as well as knowledge of how they are playing out in the context of conflict. Once you have this core of information you can engage to find a creative way of gathering data that reflects the gender dimensions of the conflict. (See Appendix D for additional information and resources on gender-sensitive conflict analysis.)

Specific Considerations for Different Phases of Conflict

The information needed and the types of questions to be asked may vary, based on the phase of conflict in which the analysis process takes place. The following are suggestive lines of inquiry for the major phases.

Early Intervention for Conflict Prevention

1. What are the deeper, long-term structural and cultural causes of conflict? For example, these may be issues of political, social or economic exclusion based on ethnicity or religion that are present in society, but have not yet emerged in visible conflicts or violence.
2. What issues, if left unaddressed, could lead eventually to violent conflict? Over what time period? Examples: sharp economic disparities; neglect of whole regions or groups/unequal distribution of government support for development; rampant corruption; lack of government services in education, health, transport (etc.); problematic governance structures/processes in terms of participation, decision making, representation.
3. What policies or groups are attempting to address these issues? How? To what effect?

Emerging Crises/Urgent Conflict Prevention

1. What immediate issues or events could trigger widespread political violence? Examples: poorly organized or contested elections; sudden increases in costs for basic goods; sharp economic downturn / unemployment; poorly implemented demobilization.
2. What are the warning signs for any of the above examples or any other identified "triggers"? What forces are attempting to manage these issues?
3. Is there an increase in violence against women, or any other "silent" warning signs?

Period of Open Violence

While this guidance is oriented primarily towards conflict prevention, the same tools can be used to analyze conflicts that are already in a period of open violence.

1. What are the underlying causes of conflict? Why did these factors lead to violence? Were any unsuccessful efforts made to avoid descent into war?
2. How has the conflict shifted during the period of violence? Have new issues emerged?
3. What efforts are being made to stop fighting? Are official negotiations planned or underway? If so, are there barriers to progress? What support is being provided for the negotiation process, and with what success? What issues are on/off the table?
4. Are there opportunities for Track 2/unofficial dialogue or negotiation? Is anyone doing this already, and, if so, to what effect? What other initiatives would support movement towards peace?

Cyclical Violence or Low Intensity Conflict

In some situations, rather than a single significant period of violence, the conflict comes in waves or cycles. The violent conflict in central Nigeria is an example, in which contending groups engage in riots and mutual attacks periodically, with periods of relative calm in between.

1. What are the underlying causes of cyclical violence? Why do these issues emerge when they do, and what allows for relative calm during other periods? Are certain members of society targeted by violence more often than others?
2. Who is doing what to address the underlying causes and immediate triggers? To what effect?
3. What can be done to prevent the recurrent cycles of violence, in terms of both short-term and long-term strategies?

Post-Violence/Post-War/Post-Peace Agreement

1. What were the underlying causes of the war/violence? How did these factors change during the war? What new factors emerged?
2. Of the causes identified, which ones (if any) were addressed in any peace agreement? What is the important "unfinished business" or persistent issues, which, if unaddressed, could threaten a relapse into violence?
3. In "post-conflict" peacebuilding funding and programming, what drivers of conflict are being addressed and how? Are these efforts successful or effective? What issues are being ignored or actively avoided?
4. What is the strategy for recovery? To what extent is it necessary—and are people willing—to address issues of trauma from the war/violence? Is there a need for some form of transitional justice or other forms of healing? Are their cultural factors, perceptions or gender roles that hinder peoples' ability to address issues of recovery/healing?

PART II:

ANALYZING THE INFORMATION GATHERED

I. INTRODUCTION

In many cases, gathering information is not the problem; the problem is making sense or giving meaning to the information collected. When engaging in conflict analysis to inform preventive action or peacebuilding work, analysis is a vital component of the process. Data analysis contributes to the credibility of the information and also shapes the response mechanisms expected.

This section will present approaches and tools for working with information you have gathered using Part I of this guide. Before we explore analytical tools, we discuss three important topics: how to choose among analytical tools, validation of an analysis, and uses of conflict analyses. Next we will address preliminary ways to sort through information and then the final section will present a range of tools or "lenses" for analyzing the information to produce a conflict analysis.

How to Choose among Analytical Tools

This section presents eight different tools for analyzing conflicts—and there are many other tools and larger frameworks available. How do you choose among them, as in most situations, you cannot afford to apply them all? First, return to the discussion in Part I regarding the purpose for the analysis. Then look at the array of tools presented in the following sections of Part II. The Overview of Analytical Tools within this Introduction section provides a brief summary of each approach. Then in Section II, each tool or method starts with a description, a purpose and suggestions of the circumstances in which the tool might be particularly helpful. We also encourage experimentation and getting experience with each of the tools. Over time you will gain a better idea of which method of analysis is appropriate in which situations.

Processes for Validation/Refinement of the Analysis

Before we present a range of different methods for analyzing information, we should discuss an important topic: ***how to make sure that your analysis is correct.***

Even if you have a balanced analysis team and have done a good job collecting information from many perspectives, inevitably the resulting analysis will not be entirely accurate or may include some biases. This is no need to blame anyone for this; it is natural that some people will emphasis some things and not others. What is important to one person may not be important to another. *In fact, the interpretation of the conflict and its causes may be a major part of the tensions and disagreements among groups.* Luckily, you can include contrasting views/perspectives in your analysis.

If you are going to use the conflict analysis as the basis for making choices about the general direction of programming, for detailed program/project planning, or to design an intervention process with the parties in conflict, you need to be sure that your analysis is correct—within reason. No map or narrative or list of important factors is the same as reality—nor should it be. But some maps are more accurate than others. You need to make sure that the analysis is "good enough" for your purposes.

Also, analysis should not be a one-off activity, but should be continued throughout a program or any other initiative. You must keep updating and refining the analysis—

which provides more opportunities for increasing the accuracy.

Meanwhile, if you have produced an initial analysis, using any of the tools presented in the rest of this section, you should find some way to check whether it is accurate. There are various ways to do this, suggested below.

Basic Principle: Regardless of the method of validation chosen, it is extremely important that you and other members of your organization (or those that produced the analysis) remain open, respectful and non-defensive in relation to feedback offered. ***Do not attempt to defend the analysis!*** Find ways to accommodate different perspectives.

Some ways to do obtain validation include:

1. Hold a short workshop in which the participants represent all of the important perspectives—if the levels of tension and political situation allow. Present the analysis and ask for feedback, suggestions, corrections, additions, etc.
2. Hold separate meetings with small groups of people representing different viewpoints. Thus you might hold one meeting with civil society and another with government, or one meeting with tribe A and another with tribe B, or with women, men, youth, elders, depending on the nature of the conflict and the parties involved. As in the option above, present the analysis and ask for feedback, suggestions, corrections, additions, etc. This approach may be particularly appropriate in highly polarized societies.
3. Meet with a series of individuals who represent different perspectives, presenting your analysis and asking for feedback.

Following any of these approaches, you should determine how to change your analysis (narrative, maps, diagrams, charts, tables) to take account of the feedback you have received. Keep in mind, however, that you are, in most cases, looking for a "good enough" analysis, not the perfect depiction of the situation. Ideally, you will also be refining and updating the analysis on an ongoing basis.

Presentation and Tone

In most cases, the analysis will be a written document, unless the situation is so insecure that written text would pose a danger. Assuming that some form of written document will be produced, what should it be like? Is this an analysis for internal organizational use only or for wider circulation?

Descriptive, not judging. A conflict analysis may have to accommodate sharply different perceptions about the situation, and must find a way to present those views as objectively as possible, without taking a stand or judging views that you may find difficult or that challenge your own values. "Naming and shaming" documents are not conducive to conflict resolution.

Plain language. Text should be written in simply, plain language, avoiding jargon, obscure acronyms or academic terms/concepts.

Mix of graphics and text. Different people gain understanding from visual presenta-

tions or from written descriptions and explanations. Usually a combination is helpful. Graphics need to be explained and key concepts should be depicted graphically, if possible.

Uses of Conflict Analyses

Conflict analysis is not an end in itself. It is only worth the time and effort if it is used:

- In making choices about what to do, where, with whom and why.
- In designing programs or projects, through setting goals, intermediate objectives, activities—and indicating the expected changes from the activities, immediate outcomes and longer-term impacts.
- In determining whether and how to work with the various parties to a conflict.

Some of the tools and frameworks that follow simply analyze the information. Others help make the bridge from analysis to program choice and design. The tools can be used in sequence or combination, depending on the core purpose of the process.

Preliminary Sorting Processes

If you have performed any/all of the steps for gathering information described in Part I of this guide, you will have a large amount of information—in addition to your own knowledge that you bring to the analysis process. The next challenge is to sort through the information to make sense of it. There are several ways to sort information:

1. By actors, issues, causes/origins of conflict, and dynamics among any of the categories.
2. By major sectoral categories: political, social, economic, security, justice….
3. By groupings of related issues or topics
4. By different levels of analysis: local communities, province/state/sub-national region, national, regional, international

In order to sort by any of these categories, one possible first step is to put single pieces of information or "headlines" on cards or pieces of paper that can be moved around. Try sorting a couple of different ways—and see which categories are most appropriate for your situation.

OVERVIEW OF ANALYTICAL TOOLS

The remainder of this section will present a series of methods for analyzing the conflict. Each tool addresses a different way of looking at the conflict. We will look at the tools in three categories: actor-oriented analysis, issue-related and causal analysis, and integrative tools.

1. ACTOR-ORIENTED ANALYSIS

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: POSITIONS, INTERESTS, ISSUES AND POWER

This tool examines each important group or individual in the conflict, identifying their stated positions, interests, needs, issues and sources of power. This is a way to

understand the role that each party plays in the conflict. It is especially important to do this kind of exercise before working directly with any of the groups involved.

MAPPING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ACTORS
This tool is a way to show the relationships among the different groups and individuals involved in a graphic way. It helps to understand all of the different actors and how they interact with each other.

2. ISSUE-RELATED AND CAUSAL ANALYSIS

THE CONFLICT TREE
This exercise is a very simple way to explore the causes and effects of key conflict factors. The "roots" represent the underlying causes, while the "branches" represent the effects or results of the conflict. It is a good way to start thinking about conflict systems.

DIVIDERS & CONNECTORS ANALYSIS
This is a method for understanding the conflict context, by identifying factors that bring people together (connectors) and factors that push people apart (dividers). This is one tool for examining conflict sensitivity and can be used for ensuring that humanitarian and development programming is sensitive to conflict factors.

THREAT ANALYSIS: IMMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM THREATS/VULNERABILITIES
This process helps us to sort through the various conflict factors to identify which ones represent urgent threats of violence, and which ones might eventually lead to violence, but not soon.

LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE EXERCISE
This process examines the different levels and layers of conflict: deeper structural and cultural factors, formal and informal institutions; social norms; inter-group relations; personal attitudes, behavior, perceptions, prejudice.

3. INTEGRATIVE TOOLS

SYSTEMS MAPPING OF CONFLICT
This process treats conflict as a system of causes and effects, often resulting in vicious circles. It helps to uncover the dynamics and interactions among conflict factors and actors, and produces a conflict map that can be used in strategy development and program planning.

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT
Scenario development suggests two or three possible "stories" about the future of the conflict area, as a tool for discussing ways to influence which of the potential futures comes true, based on interactions among actors and issues.

There are many other tools for conflict analysis. The bibliography in Appendix E provides a list of helpful resources.

II. METHODS FOR ANALYZING THE INFORMATION GATHERED

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: Positions, Interests, Issues and Power[5]

What is it? *A relatively simple tool for developing a conflict profile of each major stakeholder—and some minor ones.*

Stakeholder analysis involves listing the primary and secondary parties, and then identifying, for each one, their stated (public) positions or demands, the interests that lie behind those demands, and the basic needs that might be involved. The process continues to identify the key issues in the conflict, the sources of power and influence of the party, and finally an estimate of the willingness of the party to negotiate.

Purpose:

- *To understand each party and their relation to the conflict;*
- *To develop a deeper understanding of the motivations logic of each group;*
- *To identify the power dynamics among the parties;*

When to use it:

- *In a preliminary way, before working directly with the parties, but then updated or elaborated as you gain information from working with them;*
- *In preparation for a negotiation process—as these factors will influence how the parties act at the negotiating table and away from it; and*
- *Later in a negotiation, to provide information that might help break a deadlock.*

Variations in use:

- *Some variations leave out "needs" as too basic.*
- *Some variations of the table add a column as to the importance of each issue for the different parties (sometimes an issue is of primary importance for one party, but less important for another—which gives room to negotiate.*

How to Do It

1. Brainstorm a list of the parties to the conflict, including primary groups or individuals and secondary groups.
2. Mark the list, showing which groups/individuals are primary parties and which ones are secondary. Primary parties are the main individuals or groups involved and without which the conflict or dispute cannot be resolved, while the secondary parties may have some influence or interest but are not directly involved. They also may be those deeply affected by the conflict. Example: In a dispute over land, the tribal elders and the people who have been using the land or claiming ownership might be primary parties, while the District Officer or other neighbors might be secondary parties.
3. Place the groups on the stakeholder analysis table, with the primary parties at the top. (Note: if you are working in a group or workshop, you might draw the table on a whiteboard or blackboard or with flip chart paper. If only one or two people are doing this, it is fine to work with regular paper.)
4. Take the groups one by one and fill in the additional columns, using the following definitions of the categories: (See also the accompanying example.)

[5] Adapted from CDR Associates, Boulder, Colorado (various training manuals).

Positions: The stated demand(s) or public declaration by the party or stakeholder. A labor group might say, "We demand a 10% increase in the hourly wage!" "A nomadic tribal group might state, "This has been our grazing land for thousands of years. You have no right to take it for settled farming."

Interests: The preferred way to get ones needs met—or concerns and fears that drive a position. The labor group cited above might have an interest in making sure that wages keep up with inflation, or they might be afraid that they will not be able to support their families. The tribal group has an interest in protecting open grazing rights.

Needs: Basic human needs that are required to live and prosper. These include material/physic, social and cultural elements. When basic needs are threatened, people often react forcefully. The labor group is concerned with the wellbeing of their families, related not only to making sure they have housing and food, but also social status and other intangible factors. The nomadic group might be fearful that settled farming will deprive them of their traditional livelihood and culture, which, in the extreme case, might be associated with actual survival.

Issues/Problems: What are the specific issues involved with the conflict? Are the parties/stakeholders concerned with identity, land titles; wage rates; threats from armed groups; justice, territorial boundaries; recognition/status; voting rights; participation in decision making…or some other issue? How do they express the issue?

Means of Influence/Power: Groups derive power and influence from different sources. Some are influential because they control resources (money, land, key commodities, jobs, access to financing/loans). Others gain power through political position, either elected, appointed, or dictatorial. Some politicians are powerful because they represent a large and active constituency. Others enjoy the support of a military force or faction. Certain people are influential because they have close relationships with powerful people. Some groups/individuals have the ability to promote a positive agenda, while others exert negative power by delaying or destroying.

Willingness to Negotiate: Some parties may be quite reluctant to come to the bargaining table to settle a dispute or resolve a larger conflict, while others are ready to talk. It may be important, not only to identify the degree of willingness, but also to explore ***why*** they might be either willing or unwilling, possibly related to the associated *costs*, financial or otherwise. Negotiation theorist talk about the "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" (BATNA), which looks at what the party could do if they don't negotiate. A labor group might feel that they are in a weak position at the moment—so they might opt to strike first to show their strength, and only later agree to talk. A nomadic group might look back over thirty years of conflict over grazing rights and settled agriculture and feel that they have never gotten a fair deal—and therefore distrust any negotiation process. They might prefer to cause disruption as a way to build negotiating power before agreeing to talk.

As you fill out the chart, you may discover that you need to seek additional information on some groups. That is fine. You don't have to do it all at once.

STAKEHOLD ANALYSIS: Positions, Interests, Issues and Power[6]

People/Parties	**Positions**	**Interests**	**Needs**	**Issues/Problems**	**Means of Influence/Power**	**Willingness to Negotiate**
Primary and secondary individuals or groups	Stated demands; what people say they want	Preferred way to get needs met; desires, concerns and fears that drive the position	Basic human physical, social, requirements for life that underlie interests	Matters in contention, substantive problems that must be addressed	Sources of power and influence over other parties; negotiation leverage	Readiness to talk and reach an agreement. BATNA? Cost/benefit calculus

[6] Adapted from CDR Associates, Boulder, Colorado (various training manuals).

EXAMPLE STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: NOMAD-FARMER DISPUTE [EXAMPLE]

People/Parties	Positions	Interests	Needs	Issues/Problems	Means of Influence/Power	Willingness to Negotiate
Primary and secondary individuals or groups	Stated demands; what people say they want	Preferred way to get needs met; desires, concerns and fears that drive the position	Basic human physical, social, requirements for life that underlie interests	Matters in contention, substantive problems that must be addressed	Sources of power and influence over other parties; negotiation leverage	Readiness to talk and reach an agreement. BATNA? Cost/benefit calculus
Settled farmers	No passage for nomadic groups and herds	Preserve land Protect crops from damage Greater access to decision making	Ability to survive, feed families, maintain way of life and culture	Overuse of water points Destruction of crops Threats/harassment from nomads passing through Political marginalization and	Control of land Ability to block passage of herds/people Alliance with opposition party	Distrust of government (bad past experiences) Would talk if process perceived as fair
Pastoral nomad groups	Free movement of people and herds as a guaranteed right	Maintenance of traditional rights of passage and routes Access to pasturage and water sources en route	Ability to survive, feed families, maintain way of life and culture	Poaching of animals Blocked passage Drought Shrinking available pasturage and decreasing quality (overgrazing)	Alliance with governing party Access to arms Organized militias allowed by government	Prefer to depend on alliance with government to force their position Will talk if pushed by government
Provincial administration	All groups must comply with laws	Keep the peace, avoid confrontations and violence Maintain control and political power	Keep positions, power and control as means to provide for families and other dependents	Ensure production by both nomadic and farmer groups Sort out passage issues	Control of military and police forces Political influence and patronage	Prefer to bring nomads and farmers to negotiation, rather than use of force

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING[7]

Introduction

What is it? *A technique for graphically showing the relationships among the parties in conflict.*

Stakeholder mapping is a technique used to represent the conflict graphically, placing the parties in relation to the problem and in relation to each other. If people with different viewpoints map their situation together, they may learn about each other's experiences and perceptions. People intending to work with the parties to attempt some form of conflict resolution may also map the parties in order to understand the situation before taking action.

Purpose:

- *To understand the situation better;*
- *To see more clearly the relationships between parties;*
- *To clarify where the power lies;*
- *To check the balance of one's own activity or contacts;*
- *To see where allies or potential allies are;*
- *To identify openings for intervention or action;*
- *To evaluate what has been done already.*

When to use it:

- *Early in a process, along with other analytical tools;*
- *Later, to identify possible entry points for action or to help the process of strategy-building.*

Variations in use:

- *Geographical maps showing the areas and parties involved*
- *Mapping of issues*
- *Mapping of power alignments*
- *Mapping of needs and fears*

How to Do It

1. Decide what you want to map, when, and from what point of view.

If you try to map the whole history of a regional political conflict, the result may be so time **consuming**, so large, and so complex that it is not really helpful.

It is often very useful to map the same situation from a variety of viewpoints, as this is how the parties to it actually do experience it. Trying to reconcile these different viewpoints is the reality of working on the conflict. It is good discipline to ask whether those who hold this view would actually accept your description of their relationships with the other parties.

[7] Adapted from Simon Fisher, *et al*, *Working With Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*, Zed Press, 2000.

2. Don't forget to place yourself and your organisation on the map.

Putting yourself on the map is a good reminder that you are part of the situation, not above it, even when you analyze it. You and your organization are perceived in certain ways by others. You may have contacts and relationships that offer opportunities and openings for work with the parties involved in the conflict.

3. Mapping is dynamic -- it reflects a changing situation, and points toward action.

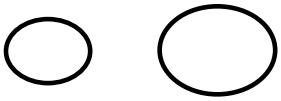
This kind of analysis should offer new possibilities. What can be done? Who can best do it? When is the best moment? What groundwork needs to be laid beforehand, what structures built afterward? These are some of the questions you should ask as you doing the mapping.

4. In addition to the "objective" aspects, it is useful to map *perceptions, needs, or fears*.

Identifying needs and fears can give you a greater insight into what motivates the different parties. It may help you to better understand some of the misunderstandings and misperceptions between parties. It can also be useful in helping you to understand the actions of parties toward whom you feel least sympathetic. Again, it is important to ask whether the parties would agree with the needs, fears, or perceptions you ascribe to them.

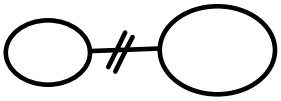
MAPPING CONVENTIONS

KEY: In mapping, we use particular conventions. You may want to invent your own.

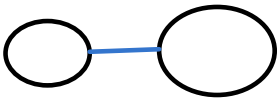


Circles indicate parties to the situation. Larger = more power with regard to the issue.

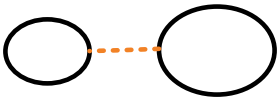
Wavy lines indicate discord or conflict.



Double line/cross hatch indicates a broken connection.

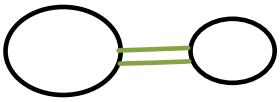


Straight lines indicate links, fairly close relationships

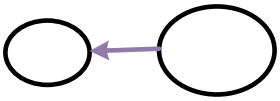


Dotted lines indicate informal or intermittent links.

A Rectangle indicates an issue/topic or something other than people.



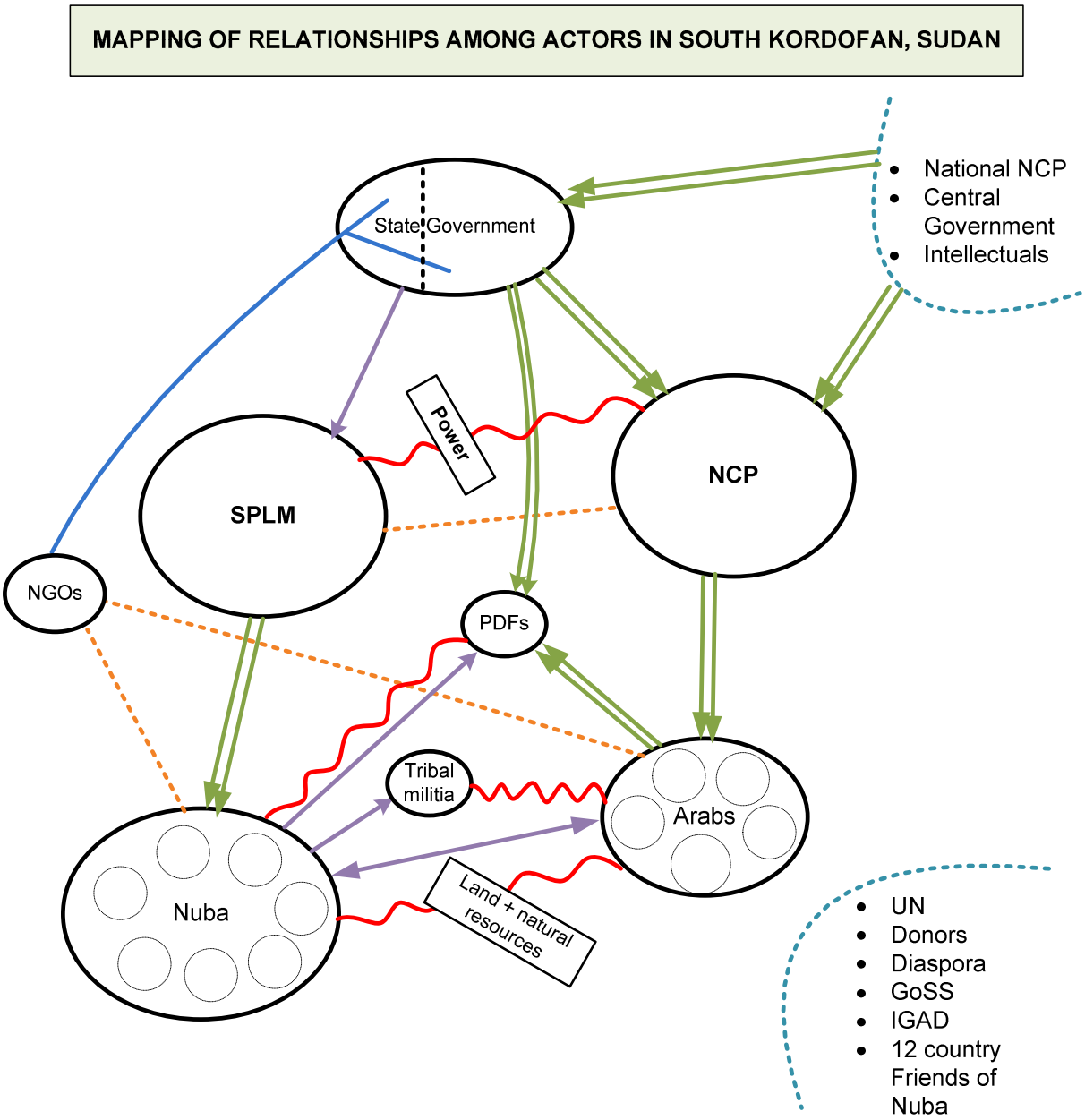
Double lines indicate an alliance



Arrows indicate the main direction of influence or activity.

A Dotted Area or "Shadow" shows external parties that have influence, but not directly involved.

EXAMPLE OF STAKEHOLDER MAPPING



THE CONFLICT TREE[8]

What is it? *This is an exercise for analyzing the causes and effects of a given conflict. It can serve as an initial step in preparation for later steps of analysis, such as systems mapping. The Conflict Tree works with one or more core problems, and then identifies the root causes, and the effects of the problem.*

Purpose:

- *To explore one or more conflict-related problems to see how they work;*
- *To distinguish between underlying causes and effects—which can help in strategizing (that is, working on effects rarely produces permanent change);*
- *To provide the basis for discussion within groups about what they can or should work on in conflict resolution; and*
- *To enable groups in conflict to discuss causes and effects.*

When to use it:

- *This can be a first step in conflict analysis, especially if you have only identified an initial presenting problem.*
- *Use this when you need a simple tool to provide the basis for discussion within a program team or among stakeholders.*
- *This exercise is best done by a group in a workshop setting.*

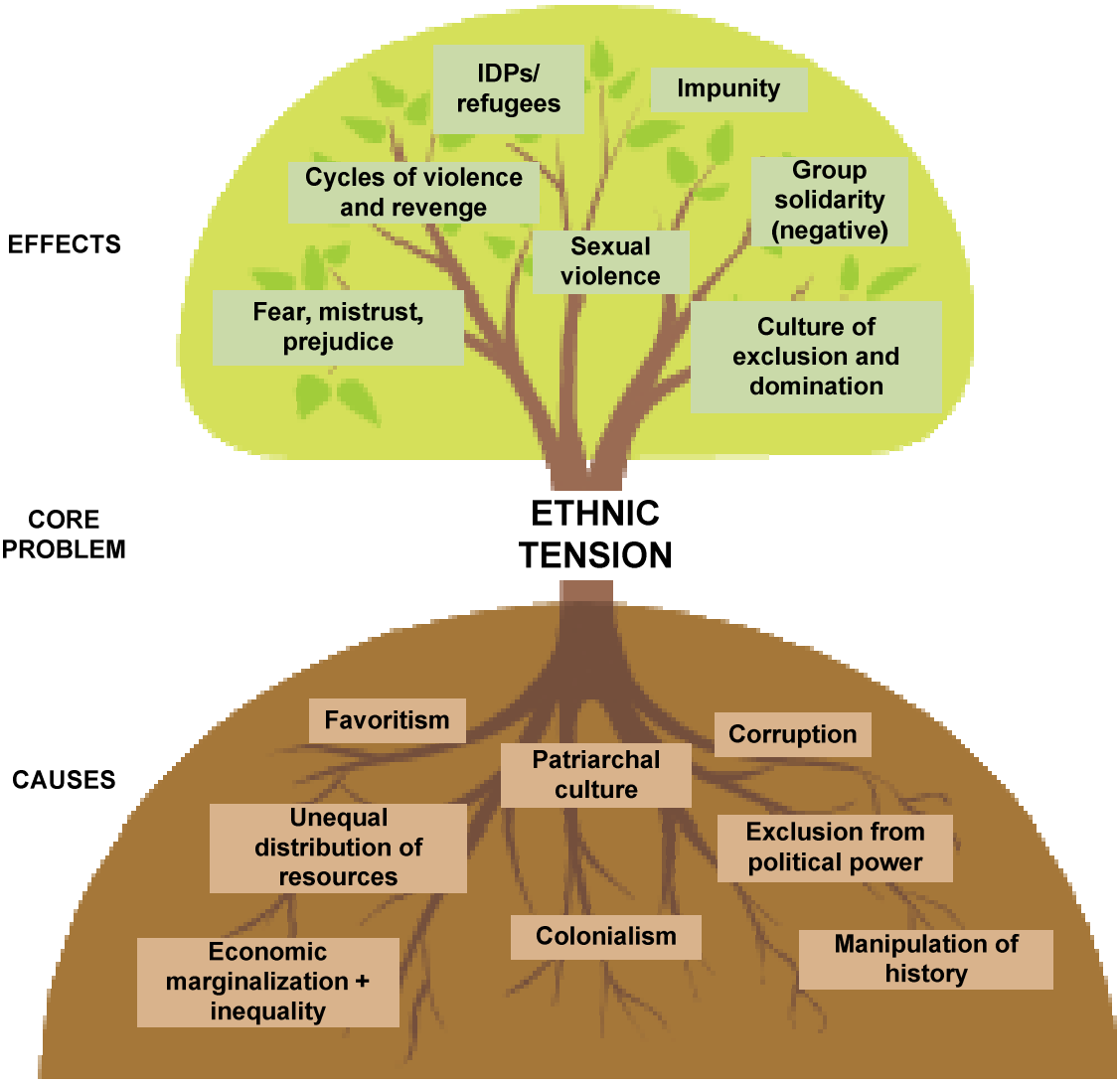
How to Do It

1. Hold a preliminary conversation with a group of workshop participants to determine what they see as the main conflict problems. These could be brainstormed on a flipchart or board, and then discussed to decide which of the items identified are Core Problems. Try to limit it to no more than two or three.
2. Draw a simple picture of a tree, including roots, trunk and branches—on a large sheet of paper, chalkboard, flipchart, or anywhere else convenient. Write one of the Core Problems on the trunk.
3. Give each person several cards or small sheets of paper (about 4 x 6 inches or 10 x 15 cm) or large "stickies" and ask them to write a word or two (or a symbol or picture) on the cards, indicating a key factor in the conflict, as they see it.
4. Invite people to attach their cards to the tree (using masking tape, if needed): on the roots, if they think it is a root cause; on the branches if they see it as an effect; or on the trunk, if they think it is an aspect of the Core Problem.
5. Once the cards have been placed, facilitate a discussion regarding the placement of the cards. Are they in the right places? If someone disagrees that something is a cause or an effect, ask why, and why the person who places it there thought it should go there. Try to reach agreement about placement of the cards.
6. Once you have completed a "tree" on one of the Core Problems, move on to the others, if there are any. (You could have only one Core Problem.) Repeat the steps above with cards, placement, and discussion.

[8] Adapted from Fisher et al, *Working with Conflict*, Zed Books, 2000.

7. If you have completed several trees, facilitate a discussion regarding how the trees interact. Do effects in one tree reinforce causes in the same tree or become causes in another tree? Do we see similar causes in several trees? Are there patterns which emerge?
8. Following this discussion, you can use the trees as the basis for discussing potential points of intervention in the conflict. Given who we are and our mandate, what we do best, and our capacities, where can we make a difference? Is it to alleviate the effects (symptoms) or addressing root causes? How can we best get at the Core Problem? What have we done so far, with what results? Is there another approach that might be more effective?

EXAMPLE: Ethnic Dynamics in Burundi



DIVIDERS AND CONNECTORS ANALYSIS[9]

What is it? *A method for understanding the conflict context, by identifying factors that bring people together (connectors) and factors that push people apart (dividers).*

Dividers and Connectors analysis is the first step in the broader Do No Harm framework, which is a process for ensuring that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives at a minimum do not make conflict worse and, at best, help to address conflict dynamics. That is, it is ***a basic tool for conflict sensitivity***. Understanding what divides people is critical to understanding how interventions can feed into or lessen these forces. Understanding what connects people despite conflict helps organizations understand how interventions reinforce or undermine those factors that can mitigate conflict or become positive forces for peacebuilding in society.

Purpose:

- *To identify the factors supporting peace and those undermining it;*
- *To develop sufficient understanding of the conflict context to avoid making the situation worse through programs and interventions; and*
- *To ensure that local capacities are harnessed in promoting peace;*

When to use it:

- *Before program design, to identify possible negative impacts and avoid them;*
- *In the course of program implementation, to ensure that key operational decisions (who to hire, which groups to partner with, how to distribute resources, how to relate to various parties to the conflict, etc.) are made with full knowledge of their potential impacts; and*
- *In ongoing reflection and evaluations, examining whether the program is having inadvertent negative impacts or not.*

How to Do It

Situations of conflict are characterized by two driving forces (sometimes referred to as "realities"): Dividers and Connectors. There are elements in societies which *divide* people from each other and serve as *sources of tension*. There are also always *existing* elements which *connect* people and can serve as *local capacities for peace*. Outside interventions interact with both Dividers and Connectors. Components of an intervention can have a negative impact, exacerbating and worsening dividers and undermining or delegitimizing connectors. An intervention can likewise have a positive impact, strengthening connectors and serving to lessen dividers.

Key Questions

The following questions can be used to unlock dividers and connectors in a variety of ways. These represent the overall framework of a dividers and connectors analysis, and inform the specific steps that follow.

[9] Adapted from Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, and other materials from the Do No Harm Project at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (www.cdainc.com).

1. What are the dividing factors in this situation? What are the connecting factors?
2. What are the current threats to peace and stability? What are the current supports?
3. What are the most dangerous factors in this situation? How dangerous is this Divider?
4. What can cause tension to rise in this situation?
5. What brings people together in this situation?
6. Where do people meet? What do people do together?
7. How strong is this Connector?
8. Does this Connector have potential?
9. Are there dividers or connectors associated with gender roles or organized groups of men, women or youth? Are certain groups suffering more than others in the situation—and what are the effects of this on dividers/connectors?

Generally, Dividers and Connectors analysis is done with a team or group of workshop participants. (It can be done as an individual exercise, but will have less validity.)

Step I: Brainstorming Dividers and Connectors

Using key questions or other appropriate questions, generate two lists of Dividers and Connectors. Do this through any one or a combination of the following methods.

- Brainstorm in plenary: Everybody shares ideas and the ideas are collected on a flip chart, brainstorm style.
- Buzz Groups of two or three, write down ideas and then come back to the larger group to report ideas and capture them on flip chart for discussion.
- Individual reflection: Participants write down three (or five) important Dividers (and/or Connectors) and write them on cards or pieces of paper. Come back to the large group and post the ideas

Process note: You can also use categories to help the brainstorming process—essentially to prompt ideas that might otherwise be forgotten. The group can consider each category and the potential Dividers and Connectors in each of them. The group might also generate other categories to capture experience and jog memories.

One set of Categories is:	***Another is:***	***Another is:***
Systems & Institutions	*Political*	*Geography*
Attitudes& Actions	*Economic*	○ *village*
Values & Interests	*Social*	○ *district*
Experiences	*Technological*	○ *province*
Symbols & Occasions	*Legal*	○ *national*
	Environmental	

Step II: Group Discussion

Having generated the two lists, the group should then discuss the lists, asking the following questions:

- Are these the right Dividers (and Connectors)? How do you know these things are Dividers (Connectors)? Are these all *existing* factors, or things we wish for?
- Some things listed may appear too broad or vague. Try to reach greater specificity. "We have listed 'poverty' as a Divider—why is poverty a Divider?

What aspects of poverty divide people? Or is it really about inequality—or something else?" "Is 'religion' a divider—or do we mean a specific behavior?"

- In some cases, the proposed Divider/Connector might appear on both lists! Ask: What aspects of this factor might be a Divider? What aspects might be a Connector? Disaggregate further.
- How would you know if these factors changed? How would you know if they got better or worse (***indicators***)?

Step III: Prioritize

- Which are the most important or dangerous Dividers?
- Which are the most important or strongest or best potential Connectors? (Don't invent things you wish for—these must exist now!)

(Note: Local people familiar with the situation should take the lead here.)

Step IV: Options and Opportunities.

- How can these Dividers (or Connectors) be influenced or changed? What can your team or organization do to have a positive impact?
- Is there anything you are currently doing that might have a negative impact? Why is that negative impact happening? What can you do to change the impact?
- Can your options and opportunities be linked to the indicators you developed in Step II? How will you monitor changes?
- If your changes do not have the effect you anticipate, do you have a back-up option? How will you learn why a change has not had the impact you expect?

EXAMPLE: Local communities in Lofa County, Liberia

Dividers	Connectors
▪ Mutual massacres across ethnic lines ▪ Unclear land titles/disputes over use and ownership ▪ Inclusion/exclusion from traditional practices of secret societies ▪ Unequal marriage practices: Muslim men marry Christian women, but Christian men can't marry Muslim women ▪ Disrespect for cultural differences ▪ Patron-client systems of favoritism / exclusion ▪ Persistent ex-combatants and command structures	▪ History of peaceful, mutually beneficial relations, intermarriage, living side-by-side ▪ Generous permission for land use over many decades across ethnicity ▪ Shared desire to put the war behind ▪ Problem solving by elder councils, women and youth leaders ▪ Common rituals and celebrations ▪ Friendships across ethnic lines, mutual assistance and protection during massacres ▪ Willingness to integrate ex-combatants in the community

IMMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM THREAT ANALYSIS

What is it? *An exercise for identifying potential causes of violence in the immediate future and over time. This tool may be particularly useful in conflict prevention planning, as implementing organizations determine a range of strategies for addressing urgent threats (operational prevention) as well as long-term structural prevention work.*

Purpose:

- *To sort a variety of factors into short-, medium- and long-term issues;*
- *To allow planning for conflict prevention work; and*
- *To present information graphically, allowing for discussion of priorities and timing of actions.*

When to use it:

- *When deciding whether and how to intervene in an emerging conflict situation, where some violent incidents have already occurred; and*
- *When considering how to orient development efforts towards conflict prevention, particularly how to address long-term structural problems that are likely to result in violence over several years.*

Variations in use:

Combine with the "Levels and Layers Exercise" as an axis down the left side—and then show the issues in the time dimension across the chart to the right.

How to Do It

This exercise is best done after other analysis processes as a further step.

1. Based on the analyses already done, identify the issues or problems that will potentially lead to violence over time. Create cards or pieces of paper (or "stickies" with one issue/problem on each.

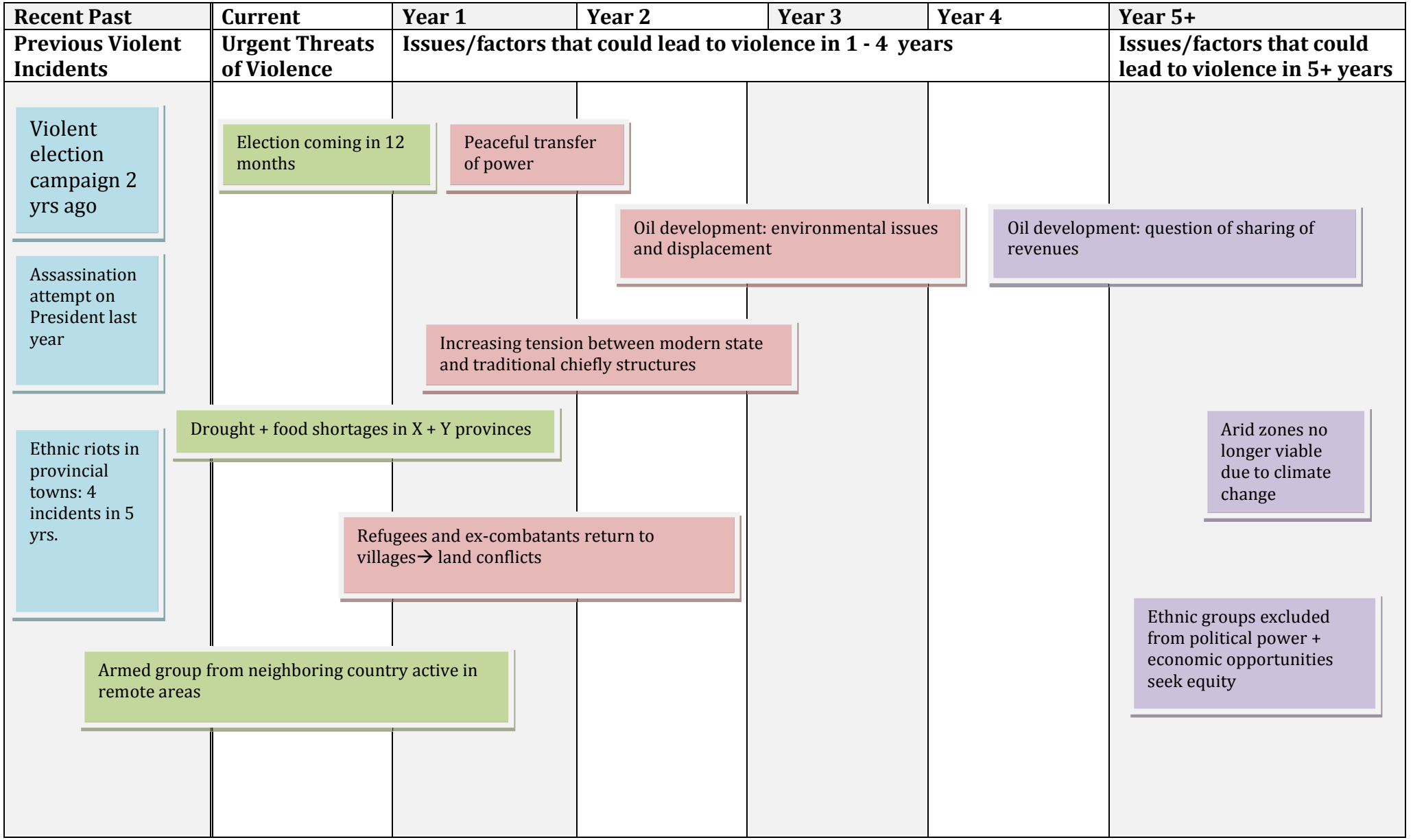
2. Create a chart or timeline like the one on the next page, and place the issues on the chart according to how soon it might result in violence. Be sure to include any incidents of violence that have already occurred, showing what the issue was that sparked violence.

3. As you are considering plans for conflict prevention, keep the chart on the wall as a reference point, when discussing priorities and timing.

IMMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM THREAT ANALYSIS

Recent Past	Current	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5+
Previous Violent Incidents	**Urgent Threats of Violence**	**Issues/factors that could lead to violence in 1 - 4 years**				**Issues/factors that could lead to violence in 5+ years**

IMMEDIATE TO LONG-TERM THREAT ANALYSIS (Example)



LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE EXERCISE[10]

What is it? *Analysis of the levels of conflict, including deeper structural and cultural factors, formal and informal institutions; social norms; inter-group relations; as well as personal attitudes, behavior, perceptions, prejudice—as a preliminary step to considering change strategies.*

Purpose:

- *To identify conflict factors at multiple levels, before deciding where and how to intervene to promote change;*
- *To differentiate conflict factors that are more and less difficult to change; and*
- *To provide the basis for setting change-oriented goals and devising strategies.*

When to use it:

- *As a diagnostic tool early in a program planning process, along with other analytical tools;*
- *After you have used other analytical tools, as a further way to sort through information; and*
- *As a preliminary exercise before program strategy tools, such as the RPP Matrix.*

Note: This exercise is best done following other analytical processes, such as the Conflict Tree or Dividers and Connectors Analysis, or the "three-box" analysis of factors, which is part of a systems mapping of conflict (see next section). It is also most useful to do this as a team or in a workshop group.

How to Do It

1. Draw a large table similar to the one on the next page, listing only the titles of the categories in the left hand column (with explanations given verbally).
2. In the full group and drawing on information generated or organized using other tools, identify current conditions in the categories of the table.
3. Identify changes needed, starting with individual reflection, in pairs or small groups. Each individual or group should identify one or two ***high priority changes*** needed. Write these on cards to be posted. At the same time, identify possible approaches/methods for attaining the changes.
4. Discuss the placement of the cards/items. Do we have things in the right places? Are there more items in one category than another? Are there overlaps and duplications? Can some items be grouped together?
5. Discuss the potential approaches. Given who we are and our mandate, skills and resources, which issues are we realistically able to address? Use a color or symbol to mark those items.
6. Are there items that we think are high priority, but that we don't (currently) have the capacity to address? Use a different color/symbol to mark those items. Are other groups working on this—or is it an important gap? Who might be able/willing to work on it, and how might we influence them to take the initiative?
7. What are the implications of this discussion for our program strategy or preventive action plan?

[10] Similar to material in *Reflective Peacebuilding* and RPP materials (see Bibliography).

TABLE FOR LOOKING AT LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE

FACTORS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS	CHANGES NEEDED	POTENTIAL APPROACH(ES)
Individual/Personal Factors: What attitudes, behaviors, perceptions, and skills do people have that feed into conflicts or reduce them? What evidence do we have?		
Individual Relationships: What are the patterns of individual interaction across group lines? Where do people interact/not? Are there friendships among individuals in different groups? How strong are such relationships? How do leaders at various levels of society relate to larger groups of citizens? What are the points of interaction?		
Group Relationships & Social Norms: How do different groups in society relate to each other? Are there deep divisions—and, if so, along what lines? Are there links or tensions at the leadership level? What social norms support conflict or mitigate it? How are people organized or mobilized? What is the degree of polarization/alienation across groups?		
Institutions (formal and informal): How do schools/universities, police, armed forces, justice system, transport, government administration, banks/finance and other institutions function—and how do they influence conflict? What are the informal mechanisms at the community level, such as local dispute resolution processes? How does leadership function within institutions?		
Deep Social, Political and Economic Structures and Culture: How does the economy work? Who gains and who loses? What are the social structures of inclusion/tolerance, exclusion/prejudice? How does governance work—on paper and in practice? What cultural beliefs and practices aggravate or diminish conflict?		

EXAMPLE: LEVELS OF POTENTIAL CHANGE IN [FICTIONAL COUNTRY]

FACTORS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS	CHANGES NEEDED	POTENTIAL APPROACH(ES)
Individual/Personal Factors: What attitudes, behaviors, perceptions, and skills do people have that feed into conflicts or reduce them? What evidence do we have?	Problematic attitudes of citizens towards police	Police-community dialogue processes
Individual Relationships: What are the patterns of individual interaction across group lines? Where do people interact/not? Are there friendships among individuals in different groups? How strong are such relationships? How do leaders at various levels of society relate to larger groups of citizens? What are the points of interaction?		
Group Relationships & Social Norms: How do different groups in society relate to each other? Are there deep divisions—and, if so, along what lines? Are there links or tensions at the leadership level? What social norms support conflict or mitigate it? How are people organized or mobilized? What is the degree of polarization/alienation across groups?	Reconcile hostile groups, deal with past atrocities	Intergroup dialogue + mediation of specific claims/redress. Establish new norms of behavior.
Institutions (formal and informal): How do schools/universities, police, armed forces, justice system, transport, government administration, banks/finance and other institutions function—and how do they influence conflict? What are the informal mechanisms at the community level, such as local dispute resolution processes? How does leadership function within institutions?	Too much influence of military on politics and policies	Grievance procedures, community policing Revised/enforced military code of conduct.
Deep Social, Political and Economic Structures and Culture: How does the economy work? Who gains and who loses? What are the social structures of inclusion/tolerance, exclusion/prejudice? How does governance work—on paper and in practice? What cultural beliefs and practices aggravate or diminish conflict?	Zazu minority group systematically excluded from social/political/economic life.	Enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and constitutional provisions for representation. .

MAPPING OF CONFLICT USING SYSTEMS THINKING[11]

What is it? *A method for analyzing conflicts as* **systems**, *showing the dynamic interactions and connections among factors and actors in causal loops. (For additional information, see* ***Appendices B and C****.)*

Increasingly, peace practitioners treat conflicts as complex human systems, rather than static lists of issues, factors and actors. Factors and actors do not stand alone; they interact in ways that are also constantly changing. Systems mapping allows us to show the connections—and how one factor is a cause of another, and is also the result of another factor or set of factors. The resulting conflict map is a useful tool for developing intervention strategies.

Purpose:

- *To understand and display graphically the connections and interactions among conflict factors and actors;*
- *To consider alternative ways to intervene to change the system;*
- *To provide a way to trace potential effects—intended and unintended—of conflict intervention strategies;*

When to use it:

- *As an additional step, after you have performed several other analytical exercises;*
- *As a precursor to strategy building; and*
- *As a tool for considering possible positive or negative effects of a conflict prevention or resolution program.*

Variations in use:

- *It is possible to use the mapping process at different levels of conflict: at the community, province/state, national and regional levels.*
- *One can also analyze a particular sector or issue—or the influences on a particular constituency, such as youth or women.*

How to Do It

Conflict mapping using systems thinking can be a rather complex, difficult and time-consuming process. The approach described below is a simplified process using a set of diagrams developed in advance.

Step One: Analysis of Causes of Conflict

Note: In some instances, the context is not seen as one of "war," "conflict," or "peace." For instance in the context of truly early prevention efforts, people may not recognize that the area is under threat of violent conflict. In post-accord or post-election situations, people may think that the country is at peace, relatively speaking. In those situations, it may be necessary to recast the discussion. One possibility is to start the analysis process by developing ***a vision for the kind of society people want***, in as specific terms as possible, and do a three-box analysis of factors moving toward the vision and holding it back. In one instance, you can use the concept of ***"consolidating***

[11] Adapted from the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, MA, USA. www.cdainc.com

the peace," asking what it would take to ensure a lasting peace. In another case the challenge was defined as ***"unity and reconciliation."*** The three-box analysis was then performed in relation to that vision—what is moving us towards a lasting peace, and what factors (obstacles) are impeding that vision?

The goal of this stage is to identify the major factors and actors that are at play in the system. This can be done using any analysis methodology, tool or framework, provided that it generates factors related to:

- Factors for conflict;
- Factors for peace, or resilience;
- Key actors and their motivations and interests. (Key actors are actors that are necessary for a peace agreement or to sustain peace, or have leverage—positive or negative—with important constituencies for peace or conflict.)

A good analysis of factors will also look at different dimensions of conflict (or peace)—structural dimensions (concerning systems, institutions and underlying factors that can lead to conflict), attitudinal dimensions (perceptions, psychological dimensions, etc.) and behavioral dimensions (fairness/equity, discrimination/favoritism, exclusion, sexual violence, etc.). Systems analysis helps to understand the connections and linkages between these different dimensions of conflict and peace; an initial analysis should therefore identify factors that relate to these different dimensions.

The "three-box" analysis tool can be used to sort through factors and actors.[12]

Factors for Peace→	**PEACE**	**← Factors against Peace/for Conflict**	**Key Actors**
What are the factors in the situation that exist now that can be built upon to promote movement towards peace? What currently connects people across conflict lines? How do people cooperate? Who exercises leadership for peace and how? (These are not things you *want* to exist or that you would like to see—they must be true *now*.)		What factors are working against peace or for conflict? What factors, issues or elements are causing conflict and/or dividing people, and how?	Which individuals or groups in the situation are in a position to strongly influence the conflict—either positively or negatively? Who can decide for/against peace? (Note: these are **not** necessarily targets/participants, such as women, youth, or religious leaders. We may be interested in engaging with those groups, but they are not always "key" in the situation.)

Note: It is possible to use other analyses to build these lists. For instance, Dividers and Connectors Analysis presented above can be used to start the listing of forces for and against peace, recognizing that "Connectors" and "Factors for Peace" are not exactly the same thing, as Factors for Peace is a broader category. That is, there may be some Factors for Peace that would not appear on a list of Connectors. Similarly, Factors against Peace and Dividers have a lot of overlap, but are not exactly the same.

[12] The "three-box" analysis is an adaptation of a classic force-field analysis, which elicits "forces" for/against the desired goal. We have used "factors" instead of "forces" for consistency of language.

Step Two: Identify Key Driving Factors of the Conflict

Based on the initial listing of Factors against Peace, identify the ***key driving factors*** of the conflict. What are the major driving major driving factors, both negative and positive, in the conflict? Use the list and group discussion to determine which of the factors listed can be considered a key driver, using the following definition:

> ***A driving factor is "a dynamic or element, without which the conflict would not exist, or would be completely different."***

Step Three: Reword/Reframe the Key Driving Factors

Work with the items that have been identified as Key Driving Factors, using the following suggestions:

- *Factors* should be things (nouns) that can increase or decrease, both observable items (water, shelter, heat, armed forces) and intangibles, such as feelings, attitudes, and relationships. They can also be either short-term/urgent matters or longer-term structural issues. Important note: avoid disguising your favorite "solution" as a factor. "Rule of Law" is not a factor, but "crime rate" might be. Trauma healing (or its lack) is not a factor, but "traumatized population" could be.
- Similarly, dig beneath big categories to more specific issues. If you have identified "governance" as a key factor, explore what it is about governance that is of concern. Is the conflict factor about exclusion from decision making, human rights abuses, arbitrary use of power, corrupt practices?
- Important *actors* are not the same as your chosen "target" group or selected "beneficiaries" or "participants." You may decide to work with a group (say youth or women), but that does not automatically make them a significant conflict factor.

Guidelines for Naming Factors

- Use nouns or noun phrases rather than verbs.
- State factors as things that can be scaled up or down. You should be able to talk about the "level of," "amount of," "size of," or "number of" the factor.
- Actors (e.g. "the military") and sectors (e.g., "justice") are not factors. Their specific behavior or problem dynamics could be a factor. For instance, "human rights abuses by security forces" or "access to justice" could be factors, as they can increase or decrease.
- Combine factors that represent the same kind of information (e.g., "morale" and "job satisfaction" or "participation" and "inclusion"), but *don't* be too general.
- Focus on the most important variables. A good test is to ask if the factor was increased or decreased significantly, would that have a big effect on the issue or situation being mapped?

There should be no more than five to seven driving factors—otherwise, there is a risk of falling into the analysis trap of being too comprehensive without prioritizing or identifying factors that have greater influence on the system because they affect so many other parts of it. The purpose at this stage is to identify those factors that are drivers of system behavior.

Step Four: Select from Common Systems Patterns

It is possible to generate a systems "map" from the beginning. However, this can be difficult and an intimidating task for people who are new to this process. Therefore, use of "common conflict patterns" is a helpful short cut.

Look at the list of common conflict systems presented in **Appendix B**. Read through the full set of common patterns and then identify which one (or two) fits the situation you are dealing with. The list of key driving factors you have already identified in Step Three should be helpful for this task, as you should be able to find similar factors in the common conflict systems—although they might be worded slightly differently.

Step Five: Adapt the Common Conflict System(s) to Your Situation

Work with the common conflict system(s) that you have selected and adapt it to your situation. Change the language of the factors or add others, if needed. As you do this, work on flipcharts or a number of sheets taped together and posted on the wall.

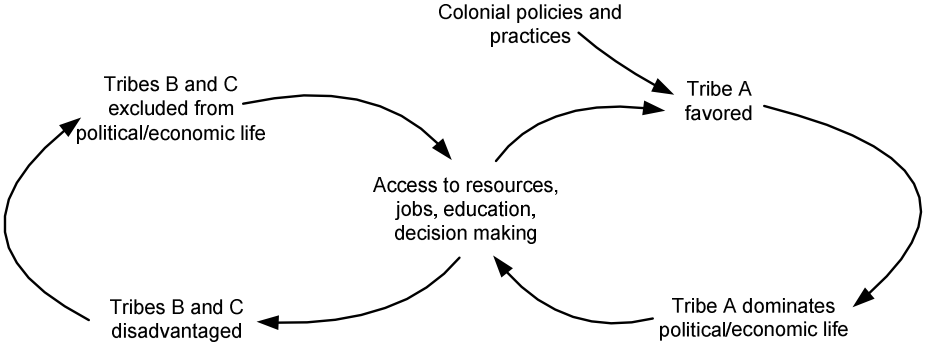
If you have several key driving factors that do not appear in the common pattern, discuss where those could be placed on the "map." Can they be integrated directly into the pre-existing map? Or do they need to be part of a separate "loop" that then intersects with the existing systems map?

Keep working until you have adapted the map to your situation and you have integrated all of the Key Driving Factors into it.

Step Six: Tell the Story of the Conflict

As one way to test whether the conflict systems map "works," use it as the basis for telling the story of the conflict. Pick a starting point and describe how one factor leads to another in a logical fashion. A "story" to explain the drawing below (adapted from the "success-to-the-successful" model) might start something like this:

"Well, it all started with the colonial power, which manipulated ethnicity to set up one tribe as dominant over the others and giving them privileges and power. At independence, the dominant tribe took over, and they have been in charge ever since. They have systematically excluded other groups from economic and political power…."



Most systems maps, particularly at a national level, will be much more complex than this simple drawing. See some examples in **Appendix C**.

The resulting systems map can be used as the basis for discussing where and how to intervene to create changes in the conflict system.

ALTERNATIVE FUTURE STORIES (SCENARIOS)[13]

What is it? *Classic scenario building is a quite elaborate set of steps for future planning. This exercise is a simplified version, that helps to indentify how a conflict situation might evolve, based on your understanding of the key drivers. The scenarios can then serve as the basis for planning actions or programs that account of these possible futures.*

Purpose:

- *To project current conflict dynamics into the future, to think about might happen;*
- *To permit planning for both positive and negative outcomes; and*
- *To provide an opportunity to think about how to encourage movement in positive directions and avoid the worst outcomes.*

When to use it:

- *As a step in program planning*
- *As a way to engage groups that are doubtful about the need to address conflicts*

How to Do It

1. Review the Key Driving Factors of the conflict, as identified in previous exercises (such as systems mapping). Post these clearly on a flip chart or black/white board.
2. Divide the participants into several small groups. Assign a set of factors to each group, and ask them to imagine how those factors might evolve and change over the next five years. "If we consider factors associated with exclusion and marginalization, how might those change over the next five years? What might happen?" Or: "We identified issues regarding corruption and mismanagement of resources as a key driver; how might that develop over the next five years?" (Note: these should only be plausible ideas, not wild imaginings.) If possible, each group should come up with at least two, perhaps three alternative future "stories" about the key factor(s).
3. Ask each group to report back to the plenary—to tell their alternative stories. Then discuss how the different stories and factors might fit together? Do the possible futures for several factors add up to a reasonable scenario? Can we see two or three overall future directions?
4. Give people some time to think about the emerging future stories, to let them "sink in." Take a break, go for lunch, or set the stories aside until the next day.
5. Come back to the stories; again divide into small groups based on the two or three major future stories or scenarios. Ask each small group to address these questions:
   - What excites us or worries us about this story?
   - What could we do to either make sure that this story comes about—or prevents it? What are people doing already with what success? What additional efforts might be needed?
   - Given who we are, what is realistic that we could do? What should we advocate that others do?

Report back to the larger group and engage in a discussion about the programming and advocacy implications of the exercise.

---

[13] There is a fair amount of literature and fully developed techniques of scenario building. This is a simplified version. See Bibliography in Appendix E for further references.

EXAMPLE OF SCENARIO WORK: The Mont Fleur Scenarios in South Africa [14]

Scenario thinking as a way of approaching the future is increasingly being used as a tool for strategizing in private and public sector organizations. The "Mont Fleur" scenario exercise, undertaken in South Africa during 1991–92, was innovative and important because, in the midst of a deep conflict, it brought people together from across organizations to think creatively about the future of their country.

The purpose of Mont Fleur was "not to present definitive truths, but to stimulate debate on how to shape the next 10 years." The project brought together a diverse group of 22 prominent South Africans—politicians, activists, academics, and businessmen, from across the ideological spectrum—to develop and disseminate a set of stories about what might happen in their country over 1992–2002.

Summary of the Scenarios

The scenario team met three times in a series of three-day workshops at the Mont Fleur conference center outside Cape Town. The team foresaw four possible outcomes depending on the answers to three crucial questions.

- Will negotiations result in a settlement? If not, a non-representative government will emerge.
- Will the transition be rapid and decisive? If not, there will be an incapacitated government.
- Will the democratic government's policies be sustainable? If not, collapse is inevitable; if the new government adopts sustainable policies, South Africa can achieve inclusive democracy and growth.

After considering many possible stories, the participants agreed on four scenarios that they believed to be plausible and relevant:

- *Ostrich,* in which a negotiated settlement to the crisis in South Africa is not achieved, and the country's government continues to be non-representative
- *Lame Duck*, in which a settlement is achieved but the transition to a new dispensation is slow and indecisive
- *Icarus*, in which transition is rapid but the new government unwisely pursues unsustainable, populist economic policies
- *Flight of the Flamingos*, in which the government's policies are sustainable and the country takes a path of inclusive growth and democracy

The group developed each of these stories into a brief logical narrative. A fourteen-page report was distributed as an insert in a national newspaper, and a 30-minute video was produced which combined cartoons with presentations by team members. The team then presented and discussed the scenarios with more than fifty groups, including

[14] Excerpted from Adam Kahane, *Deeper News, Volume 7, Number 1, Global Business Network [undated]* http://www.gbn.com/consulting/article_details.php?id=35

political parties, companies, academics, trade unions, and civic organizations. At the end of 1992, its goals achieved, the project was wrapped up and the team dissolved.

Results from the Project

The Mont Fleur project produced several different types of results: substantive messages, informal networks and understandings, and changed ways of thinking. The primary public output of the project was the group of scenarios, each of which had a message that was important to South Africans in 1992:

- The message of ***Ostrich*** was that a non-negotiated resolution of the crisis would not be sustainable. This was important because elements of the National Party (NP) government and the business community wished to believe that a deal with their allies, instead of a negotiation with their opponents, could be sufficient. After hearing about the team's work, NP leader F.W. de Klerk was quoted as saying, "I am not an Ostrich."
- ***Lame Duck's*** message was that a weak coalition government would not be able to deliver and therefore could not last. This was important because the nature, composition, and rules governing the Government of National Unity (GNU) were a central issue in the pre-election negotiations. The NP wanted the GNU to operate subject to vetoes and other restrictions, and the ANC wanted unfettered "winner takes all" rules. *Lame Duck* explored the boundary in a GNU between compromise and incapacitation.
- ***Icarus*** warned of the dangers of a new government implementing populist economic policy. This message—coming from a team which included several of the left's most influential economists—was very challenging to the left, which had assumed that government money could be used to eradicate poverty quickly. The business community, which was worried about *Icarus* policies, found the team's articulation reassuring. The fiscal conservatism of the GNU was one of the important surprises of the post-election period.
- The simple message of ***Flight of the Flamingos*** was that the team believed in the potential for a positive outcome. In a country in the midst of turbulence and uncertainty, a credible and optimistic story makes a strong impact. One participant said recently that the main result of the project was that "We mapped out in very broad terms the outline of a successful outcome, which is now being filled in. We captured the way forward of those committed to finding a way forward."

The second result of Mont Fleur was the creation of informal networks and understandings among the participants—an influential group from across the political spectrum—through the time they spent together. These connections were standard for this forum period, and cumulatively provided the basis for the subsequent critical, formal agreements.

The third result—the least tangible yet most fundamental— was the change in the language and thought of the team members and those with whom they discussed their work. The Mont Fleur team gave vivid, concise names to important phenomena that were not widely known, and previously could be neither discussed nor addressed. At least one political party reconsidered its approach to the constitutional negotiations in light of the scenarios.

APPENDIX A: Types of Questions[15]

The ability to ask well-crafted and intelligent questions is a valuable skill. Asking the right questions elicits useful responses, helps gather critical feedback and information, and often prompts people to think profoundly. When our colleagues, partners, community stakeholders think more deeply than before, new ideas, new answers and new possibilities emerge. We all use many different types of questions in our day to day life and in our work. To begin with, conflict analysis team members should be able to distinguish between categories of questions, some of which should be used during a data gathering conversation and others should be avoided.

AVOID:

- **Closed questions** are limited by default because they invite a "yes/no" answers and do not encourage the speaker to provide more details. Example: "Do you think the colonial administration deliberately promoted conflict?" Avoid defining answers. Example: "Do you think that was democratic or authoritarian?"
- **Leading questions** attempt to guide the respondent's answer. These should be avoided altogether in a listening conversation. Example: "Would you agree that the economic development projects carried out by our partners have been helpful in strengthening your community?"
- **Multiple choice questions** are often used in written surveys and are not usually appropriate in an interview for conflict analysis.

USE:

- **Open questions** start with *what, how, when, where, who* and invite the speaker to describe things. Examples: "What did your community do to handle conflicts in the period before the war?'' (descriptive) "How do you feel about efforts to promote dialogue among groups in tension?" (exploring attitudes / feelings) "How could land issues be handled more effectively?" (application / suggestion)
- **Icebreaking questions** can be helpful, depending on the context, in starting the conversation with a small talk to build rapport. Examples: "How has the harvest been this year?" "How long has your family lived in this community?"
- **Probing / follow-up questions** seek to draw out additional information and details. Examples: "That's really interesting, can you tell me more?" "Could you describe a situation when you felt engaged in the decision-making process?"
- **Theoretical / hypothetical questions** can help the person to offer additional opinions, conclusions and recommendations by offering a new scenario in which to apply their experience. Usually these questions start with the words: *Imagine... Suppose... Predict... If..., then... How might... What are some possible consequences…?* Example: "If there were a more inclusive decision making process, what might the effect be on the main conflict issues?" "If you were to advise a local government administrator about how to minimize this conflict, what would you tell them?" "What are some possible consequences if land and resources issues are not dealt with more effectively?"

The question types listed below provide some ideas on how to move a conversation beyond simple descriptions to higher and cumulative levels of analysis.

[15] This appendix is adapted from the *Listening Manual*, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, draft 2010.

Evaluative / Judgmental	One might begin a conversation by noting: - "You have seen various efforts to resolve these conflict issues…" Questions to follow this opening may be: - What do you think have been the impacts of those efforts? - How do you judge the impacts/outcomes of these efforts? - What do you see as the pluses and minuses of these many efforts for your society / community? - How do you feel about these many efforts? - In your opinion, what is the appropriate and useful for outsiders to do in this country? What is the right role for foreigners? - How would you interpret the recent changes in the community consultation process?

The next two types of Questions – Evidence and Clarification—are useful for following up an opening such as this. There is some similarity between these two types of questions. However, there is an essential difference that matters as one tries to hear—really hear—and understand and assess the implications of the ideas that are offered. Evidence questions are used to find out why someone thinks the impacts are as they have said, asking them to tie their judgments and opinions to some facts/experiences, that is the evidence that underlies their opinion. On the other hand Clarification questions are used to be sure the listener really understands what the person means.

Evidence	- What do you see happening here? - Would you say more about that? - What is your experience that makes you see this way? - Why do you think that is positive? Negative? How? For whom? For how long? - What factors do you think led to that? - How did that make you feel?
Clarification	- Could you explain what you mean? - Am I right that what you are saying is…? - Let me be sure I understand you right – do you mean….?
Analytical	- Why did "x" result when "y" happened? - Why did that person think that "x" was good/bad when another person thought it was bad? - Why do you think "y" happened? Why did it happen then? - Why do you think those factors led to that outcome?

Application	- When "y" happens in your situation, what impact does it have on you, your family and your community? - What can be done to improve the situation? - What can be done to make the positive impacts from these actions have lasting effect?
Abstract / Hypothetical	Abstract questions are getting at how people understand connections among things; how they understand causation. - What advice would you give to someone like you in another country (or in another community) who was going to deal with similar issues? - If you were to start over again, how might you act differently in relation to assistance in order to get better outcomes? - In general, if "x" happened, would "y" also happen? (if followed this with "Why" – this would be an analytical question)

Ideas for Practicing Good Questioning Skills

- Brainstorm with your colleagues how you would phrase questions to get beyond the specific issues to broader problems, larger impacts, effectiveness of peace efforts and the expectations people have. You may decide to record suggested questions on a board or flipchart. Remember these should not be seen as a questionnaire or interview protocol, but simply to serve as a reminder of the type of questions the team wants to focus on.
- Use role plays! Practice forming and asking questions appropriate to the local context. Practice listening skills through these role plays. You may want to use "fishbowls" with some participants doing role plays in front of the group to use as an example for feedback and discussion.

APPENDIX B-1: INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMS THINKING[16]

Systems thinking is a way of understanding reality that emphasizes the ***relationships among a system's parts***, rather than the parts themselves. Systems analysis helps to identify dynamic relationships among different factors and has the potential to help bridge the gap between analysis and programming by including analysis of points of leverage and approaches for interrupting or changing the system. It is particularly helpful for understanding long-standing or recurrent conflicts about which multiple, and often contrasting, analyses exist. Systems thinking examines the dynamics between the structural causes, proximate causes and triggers of conflict and integrates both causes of conflict and the actors and their agendas and behaviors.

Systems thinking does not replace other tools and methods of conflict analysis. Rather, it supplements traditional conflict analysis methods. It can simplify analysis and help identify key driving factors and underlying structures. Identification of key factors and structures helps to set priorities and identify important gaps in programming.

What is a system?

A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something. It consists of three things: elements, interconnectedness (that is, ways in which the elements affect each other), and a purpose.

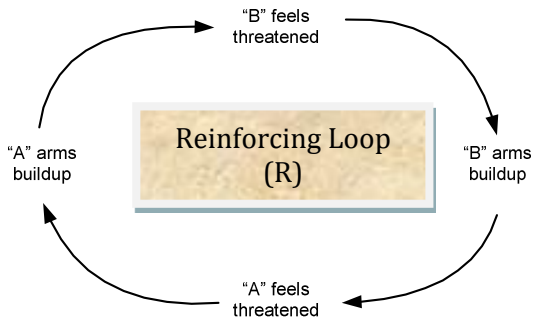
What are important characteristics of systems?

The defining characteristic of a system is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, you just can't "add up" the parts to get a whole (e.g., Peace Writ Large). The parts together produce an effect that is different from what is produced by the parts separately. The way they interact and affect each other determines how the system as a whole behaves.

- *Interconnectedness.* A system consists of elements—things, tangible or intangible, and relationships or connections that hold those elements together. It is important to analyze not only the elements of a system (which generally are more easily noticed because they can be seen, felt or heard) but also the interconnections among them—how they relate to and affect one another. Otherwise, as the saying goes, one might miss the forest for the trees.
- *Purpose.* The purposes of a system are not necessarily the same as human purposes, and they are not those intended by any single actor. They are the often implicit goals that the system is geared, intentionally or unintentionally, to achieve, and can only really be understood by looking at how the system behaves.
- *Dynamic causality.* An essential insight of systems thinking is that cause and effect relationships are not linear. In other words, the relationship between causes and their effects is neither unidirectional nor always direct. When X causes Y, it is also possible that Y causes (or at least influences) X in turn. The chain of causation from X, how it connects to other elements in the system, will often lead (or "loop") back to and affect X, and often in unexpected ways.

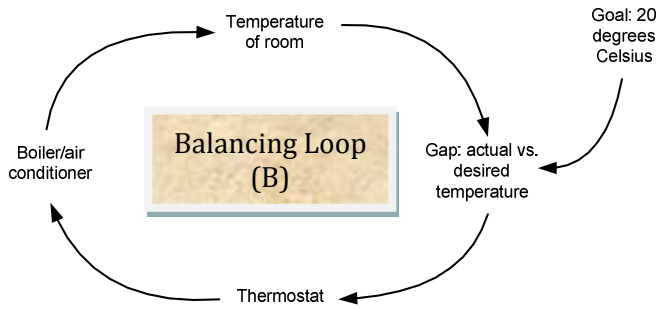
[16] From Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

- *Feedback loops.* A feedback loop is a chain of causal connections from a factor or element that comes back to affect that element. A ***reinforcing loop*** refers to a dynamic in which all of the factors tend to build on each other, each one contributing to or even augmenting the overall dynamic. An example is an arms race:



If A feels threatened or insecure, A may purchase and build up arms to protect itself. This causes B to feel threatened, and to respond by building up its own arms. B's action in turn causes A to feel even more threatened and invest more in defense systems. And the story continues. This is a classic escalation loop—a reinforcing feedback loop, or vicious cycle, that is self-perpetuating.

In a ***balancing loop***, the dynamic serves to return to a state of equilibrium or to counteract the dynamic of a reinforcing loop. A thermostat is an example.



Maria wants to keep her house at a comfortable room temperature, so she sets the thermostat to 20 degrees. When the weather gets cold, the temperature of the room drops, and a discrepancy between actual and desired temperature develops. The thermostat recognizes this, and activates the heater to bring the temperature back to 20 degrees. When the temperature of the room reaches 20 degrees, the heater shuts off. This is a balancing feedback loop—it limits growth, brings an element back to equilibrium.

- *Delays*. Systems are characterized by time delays—that is, the effects of various causes or elements often take time to play out (and therefore are not always visible). Delays often cause decision makers to overreact or underreact. In the thermostat example above, it may take a few minutes for the thermostat to feed information to the boiler and a few minutes for the boiler to heat up. If Marie does not take this into account, she may raise the thermostat further when she perceives that the room is not warming up immediately. Ten minutes later, the room is 25 degrees; Marie overreacted because she did not take account of the delay.

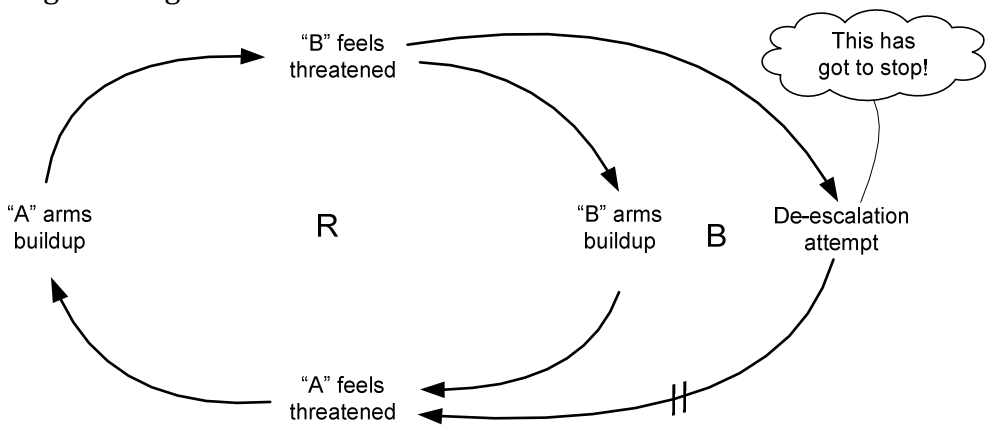
- *Mental Models:* In addition to other kinds of factors, important elements of a systemic conflict analysis are the mindsets of ways that people think—called "mental models" in the systems thinking world. These often determine how and what we perceive, and are a powerful yet hidden aspect of a system. For example, a mental model underlying a struggle for power might be "kill or be killed" or "we will not survive if we do not dominate."

Basic Building Blocks of Systems Mapping

The text above describes several characteristics of systems. When mapping (diagramming, drawing, charting) systems, there is a commonly accepted set of symbols used to show the interactions among factors and actors.

- *Key driving factors* are framed as variables, or things (nouns) that can increase or decrease.
- *Cause and effect relationships* are usually depicted using arrows connecting factors/actors.
- *Reinforcing loops* are marked with an "R" in the middle.
- *Balancing loops* are marked with a "B" in the middle.
- *Time delays* are indicated by a double line or cross-hatch mark on the arrow [//].
- *Mental models* are shown as thought bubbles or "clouds" connected to a factor or arrow.

The following drawing shows all of these elements:



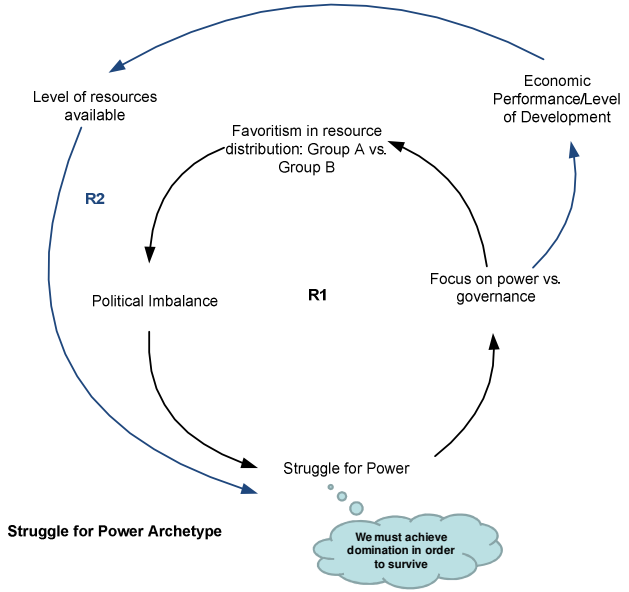
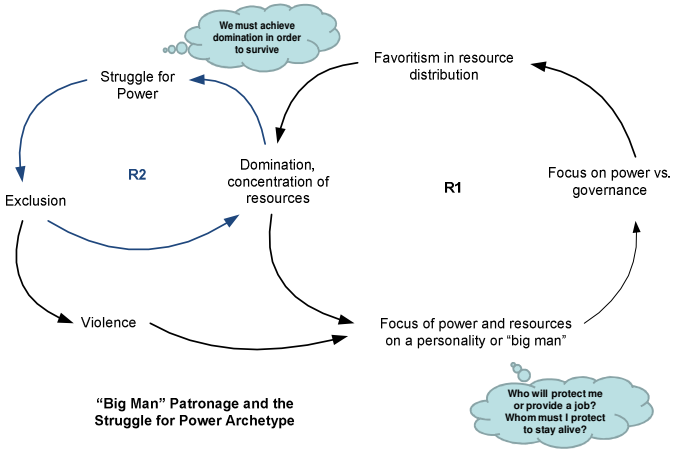
There are additional elements that can be added to elaborate the map, but these are the basics—and all that is needed in most circumstances. The systems archetypes that follow use this kind of notation.

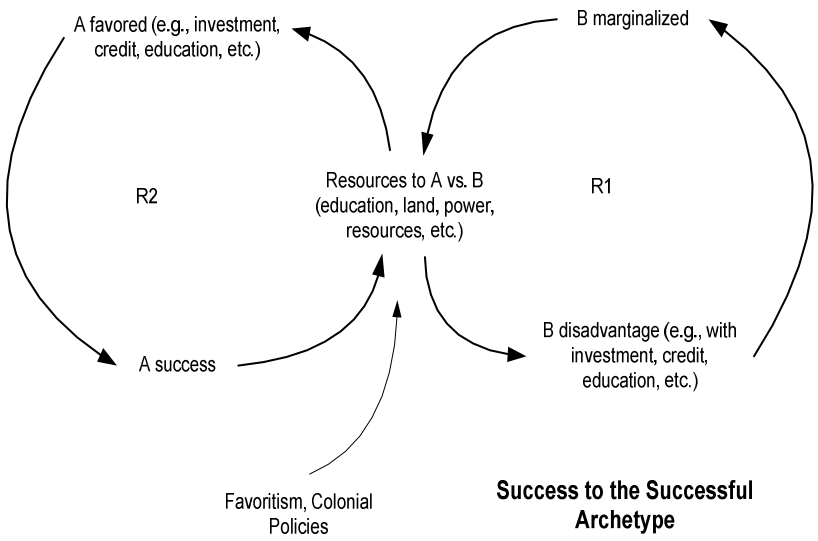
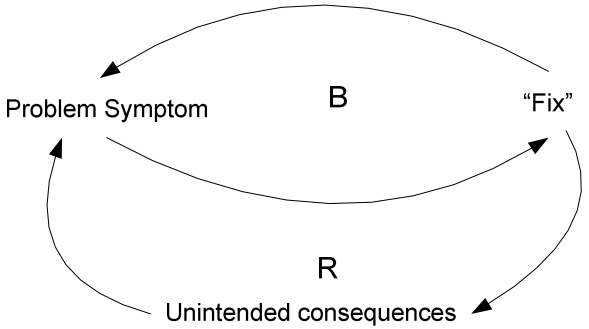
APPENDIX B-2: COMMON CONFLICT SYSTEMS

The pages which follow present a series of diagrams of conflict systems, using systems thinking mapping techniques. These common patterns (or "archetypes") are based on analyses of numerous conflicts around the world. Most societal conflicts reflect one or more of these common models—usually with some adaptation or adjustment.

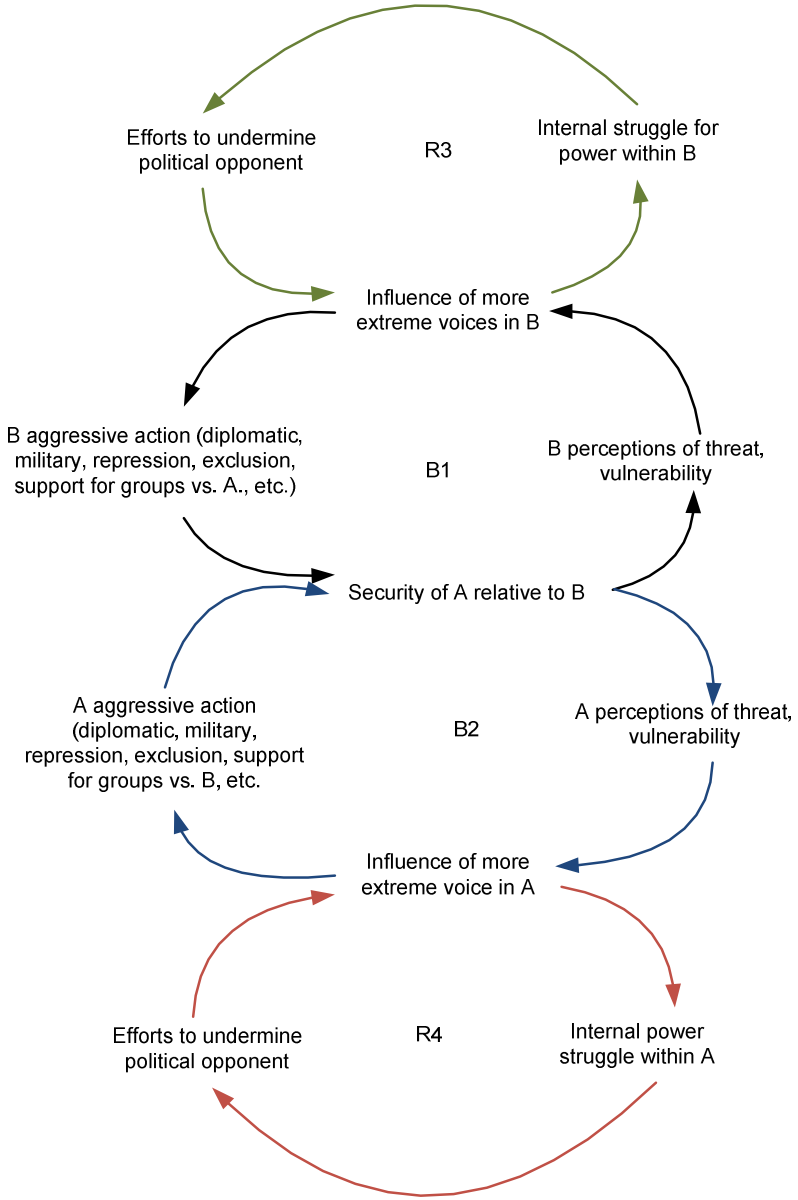
A BRIEF GUIDE TO COMMON CONFLICT SYSTEMS

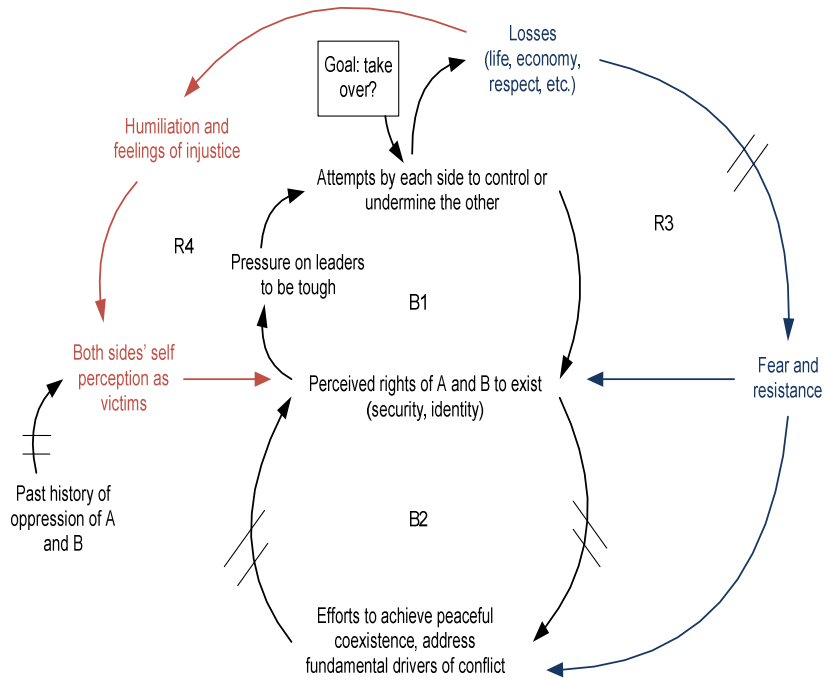
ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Exclusion Quick fixes undermine the system's ability to implement lasting solutions. This archetype helps explain why dominant groups/ governments become "addicted" to exclusion. It also helps explain why it is so difficult in the long term to agree on or implement a real long-term resolution.	1. Can we shift attention from the "quick fix" of exclusion to the fundamental solution? Is there a societal vision that could motivate a sustained effort to achieve that resolution? 2. Can we reduce dependence on exclusion as an answer to perceived threats? Change the reward structure for exclusion? Mental models? 3. Are there other "quick fixes" with fewer negative side effects on the ability of the parties to address needs in the long term?	
Favoritism Not all corruption and patronage leads to conflict, but sometimes it does. In this archetype, favoritism leads to or exacerbates concentration of power. Worsening government performance due to favoritism depletes resources available to share and increases political stakes to control government (to claim ever diminishing resources) increase. The dominant try to stay in power to protect those privileges, resulting in resistance (eventually violent) by those excluded.	1. Are there "weak links" that can be broken in the vicious cycle (e.g., if government performance did not necessarily have to lead to depletion of resources)? 2. Is there a different goal one could set for a factor that could lead the dynamic in a different direction? 3. Is there a balancing loop that could mitigate favoritism?	

ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Struggle for Power This archetype describes a situation in which elite power struggles dominate the political context and result in violence. It is essentially a variation on the previous one. Here the power struggle is driven by political imbalance; favoritism is a tool to maintain political domination. The struggle for power is reinforced by favoritism and by diminishing economic performance/ increased scarcity of resources. A variation is the ***"Big man" Patronage*** archetype. Here there is not merely a struggle amongst elites, but "big man" control of power and resources unleashes competition for favor with (or replacement of) the "big man" as the only way of survival and access to resources.	1. Are there leaders within the "big man" or elite group interested in governance? 2. Are there accountability mechanisms (e.g., new flows of information or feedback) that can make it more difficult to use power for favoritism? 3. Are there ways to change the rewards or the stakes in the system? Are there ways to create other means of survival than the public sector or "big man" favoritism?	 Struggle for Power Archetype  "Big Man" Archetype

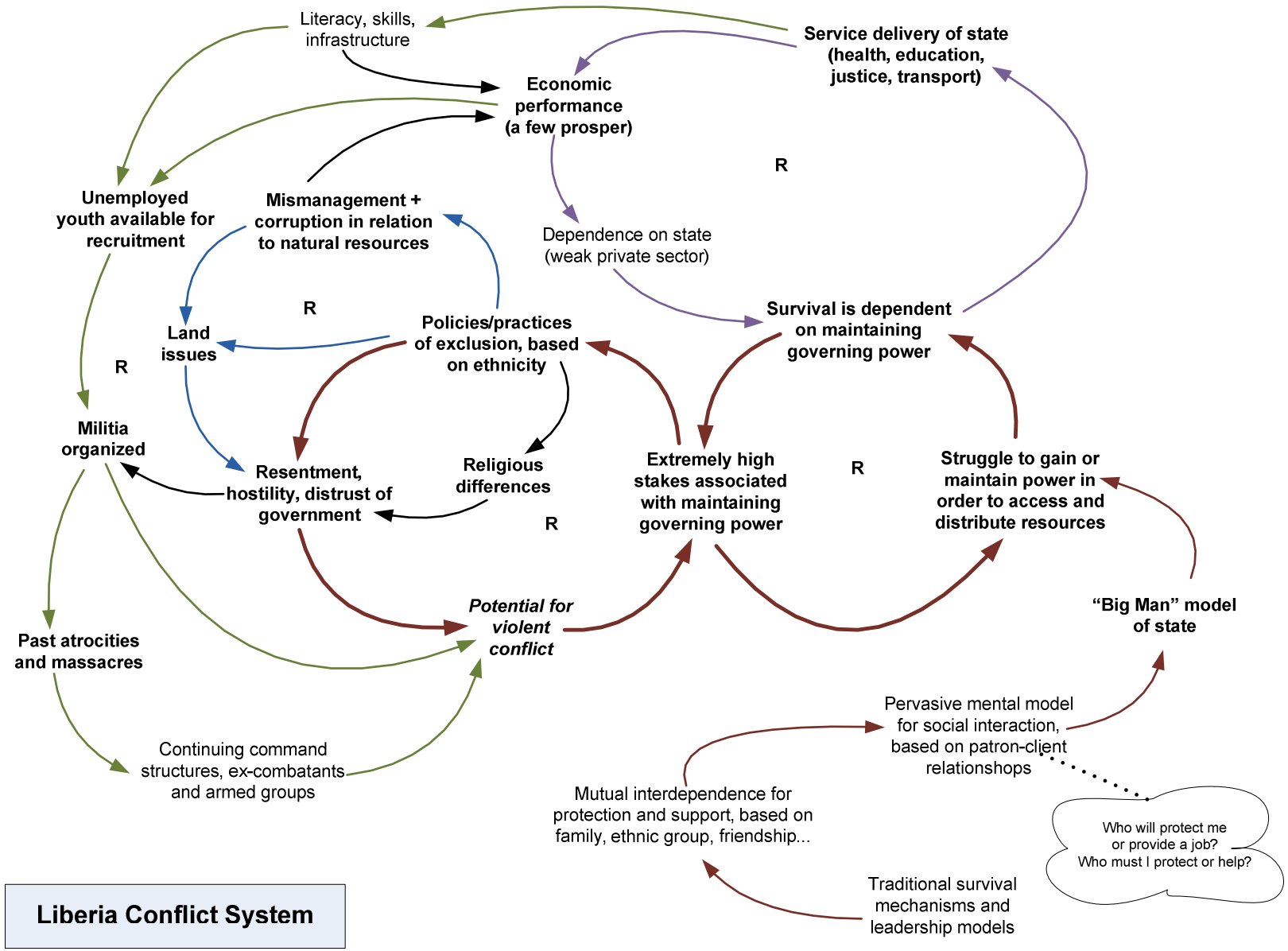
ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Success to the Successful The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This archetype suggests that success or failure may be due more to initial conditions (e.g., distribution of resources) than intrinsic merits. It can help explain the perpetuation of marginalization (or of domination) even when efforts are made to address it.	1. Are measurement systems and criteria for rewards set up to favor the current system? 2. What can be done to level the playing field? Redefine standards for rewards? For defining success? 3. What feedback loops can be put into place to prevent one group or party from dominating completely (e.g., like antitrust laws in the economic realm)? 4. Are there ways the disadvantaged can diversify and not compete directly with the "successful?"	 **Success to the Successful Archetype**
Fixes that fail A party takes action to "fix" a problem symptom, and temporarily it does. But the "fix" worsens the problem in the long term. This archetype may be at play when a problem a party (or intervener) thought they were addressing is getting worse than before.	1. Can we map out potential side-effects of an action before we act? 2. Can we identify underlying causes of the problem symptom and work to transform those? 3. Can we cut or add links in the causal map?	 **Fixes That Fail Archetype**

ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Mutual Threat and Vulnerability (Escalation) When two parties are trying to protect and restore tolerable levels of security through coercion or power-based means, they can create a vicious cycle that of escalation that ultimately makes them less secure. This archetype explains how rational (in the shorter-term) actions by each party, based on "zero-sum" measures of security, lead to escalation and negative outcomes in the longer term.	1. Can we identify the relative measure that is pitting the parties against each other? 2. Are there ways of negotiating a "disarmament" or a way out of the action-reaction dynamic? 3. Are there ways to help the parties respond differently to the perceived threat? 4. Are there larger goals that can encompass both parties' goals? 5. Can the parties become more away of delays that may be distorting the nature of the threat?	 **Escalation**

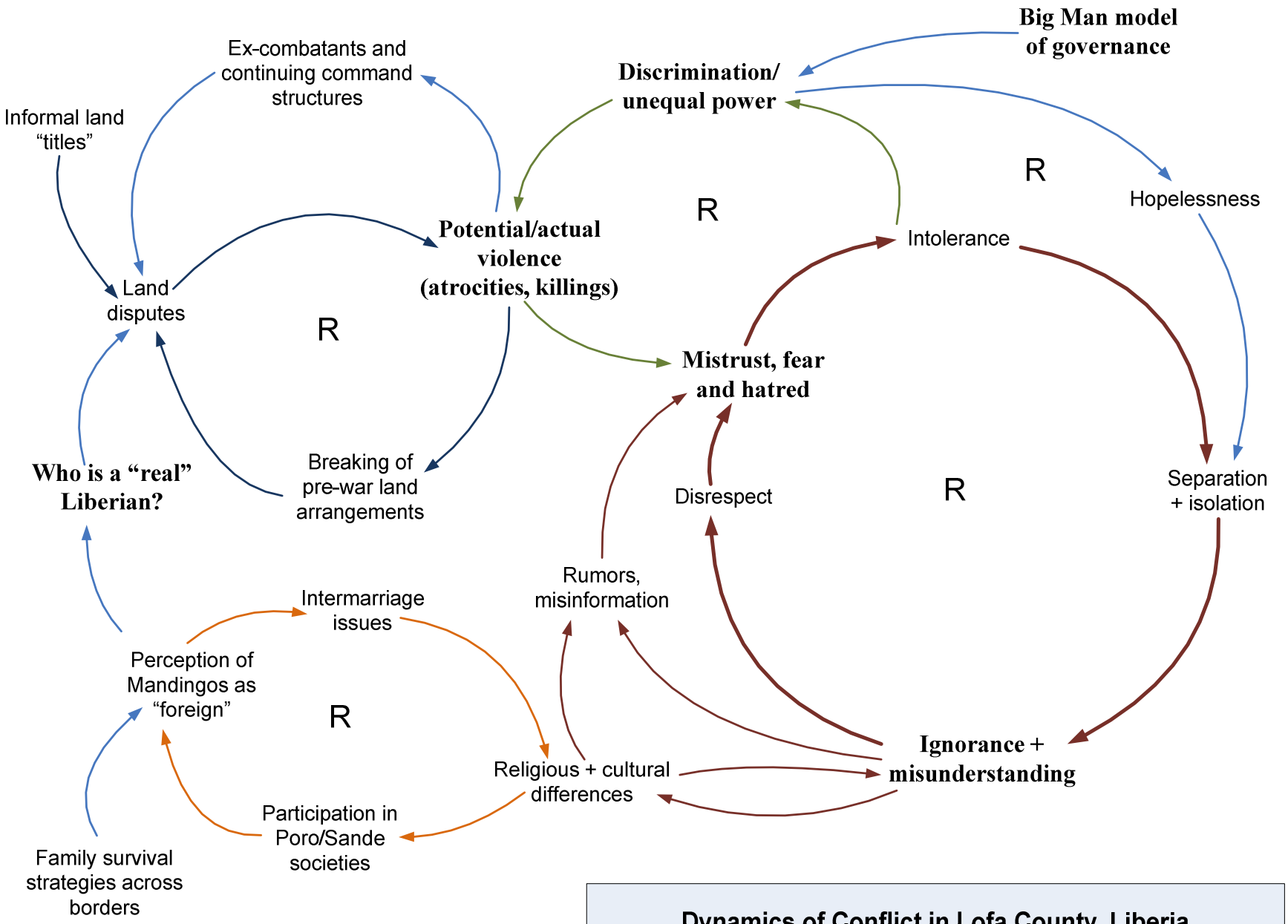
ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Ethnic Outbidding and Escalation This archetype describes how the mutual threat and vulnerability escalatory dynamic can be driven by *internal* political competition within one or both parties, rather than issues between the parties.	In addition to the questions for the Mutual Threat/Vulnerability archetype, consider: 1. Are there internal leaders who are interested in transforming the conflict? 2. Are there ways a balancing loop (information, mobilization, etc.) can mitigate the influence of the more extreme voices?	

ARCHETYPE-APPLICATION	INTERVENTION QUESTIONS	ILLUSTRATION OF ARCHETYPE
Protracted identity-based conflicts This archetype has the same structure as the Exclusion archetype. A shorter-term "fixes" to security threats lead to side effects (e.g., hatred, mistrust, etc.) that undermine the parties' ability to address the fundamental issues in conflict. The parties become "addicted" to confrontation. The "exclusion" dynamic could easily evolve into this.	1. Can we shift attention from the "quick fix" of retaliation and containment to the fundamental solution? Is there a different vision or goal that could motivate a sustained effort to achieve that resolution? 2. Can we change the short-term reward structure for exclusion? Change mental models? 3. Are there other ways to respond to perceived threats in the short term that have fewer negative side effects on the ability of the parties to address needs in the long term? 4. Can one party reduce threats (or actions that are experienced as threats) to the other side? 5. Can the international community hold parties accountable for their contributions to the conflict?	

APPENDIX C: Sample Systems Maps of Conflicts



Liberia Conflict System



Dynamics of Conflict in Lofa County, Liberia

APPENDIX D: Resources for Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis

Definition of Gender (GPPAC Gender Policy, Annex V[17])

Gender is an organizing principle of social life, connected to other principles like class, race, age, ethnicity, etc. As an organizing principle it 'acts' in all spheres of social life, in families, in communities, in organizations, etc. As such gender is a tool for analysis that helps us to understand (or to formulate questions) on the following levels:

- The activities as performed by women and men. Their tasks, roles, responsibilities.
- The degree in which women and men have access to and control over resources, rights and voice
- The (expected) behavior of women and men, their acting, speaking, clothing, etc.
- The (power) relations between women and men, women and women, men and men.
- The self image of women and men

Challenges in Data Gathering (See Part I, Section III)

Gathering gender-sensitive data for conflict analysis can be impeded by factors which are specific to the gender dimension of the information needed. Especially in societies where cultural rules are strongly linked to gender roles, it can be difficult to obtain data about or from all members of society. For example, it can be against cultural practices to speak to women in the family directly, which means that interviews with women will not be permitted. The perspectives of youth on the conflict may be valued less than those of elders within a society, so that young people may not be ready or allowed to speak.

There is no one solution to this issue, since it is often deeply rooted in the customs and practices of a society, and it also depends on the particular situation of conflict. Finding a way to obtain all the information relevant for conflict analysis therefore requires a thorough knowledge of the values and communicated role models which form the basis of the society in question, as well as knowledge of how they are playing out in the context of conflict. Once you have this core of information you can engage to find a creative way of gathering data that reflects the gender dimensions of the conflict.

The examples below can provide some first ideas to develop your own approach:

The two links below are descriptions of examples for engaging local leaders published on the website of New Tactics (www.newtactics.org) where an online dialogue on engaging male and female peacebuilders in gender-sensitive peacebuilding was organized in May 2011. The examples are more focused on changing practices than on gathering information but nonetheless, an important attitude change is valid for both. One includes a list of steps that had been taken to gain the support of local leaders, which is adapted below.

[17] Dorine Plantenga, "Working Definition: Gender as a Concept." Working definition formulated as input to the GPPAC Gender Policy, 2011. Based on several publications of the author.

1. Engaging locally respected leaders to end customary practices that violate human rights: https://www.newtactics.org/en/print/2959

2. Engaging local leaders to become women's rights and victim advocates: https://www.newtactics.org/en/print/3811

List of steps from example 1:

- ***Research:*** extensive research was conducted to understand the underlying beliefs, superstitions and practices.
- ***Building relationships with local organizations***: NGOs from the local communities where the practice of […] was present were important partners.
- ***Consultations and Open Forums***: the Commission and local NGOs, who were members of the community and spoke the local language, set up meetings and open forums with the victims and the perpetrators of the practice. Everyone – the victims and perpetrators – share their viewpoints.
- ***Engaging local leaders***: local leaders—Chiefs and Queen Mothers—were approached to support the effort.
- ***Offering Alternatives***: alternatives give space for transition. If change is too rapid people will likely revert to the practice within a short period of time. An alternative to the human servitude involved in the practice was suggested – such as the offering of an animal instead of a woman or child. Rehabilitation for victims is also necessary – counseling services and reunification with family – and vocational training for livelihood.
- ***Negotiating for release***: locally respected leaders helped to negotiate the release of the women and children who were victims of the practice by applying pressure to perpetrators and providing a liberation ceremony to assure the beliefs and superstitions upholding the beliefs were addressed for the community.
- ***Media assistance***: liberation ceremonies were covered by the media in order to broaden the public education process. The public could see the support of the local leaders for ending the practice.

See Bibliography in Appendix E for additional resources on gender-sensitive conflict analysis.

APPENDIX E: Bibliography of Resources for Conflict Analysis

Resources for Conflict Analysis

Do No Harm Program, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, MA, USA *Resource for conflict-sensitive programming, including dividers and connectors analysis. See website:* www.cdainc.com

Fisher, Simon, Jawed Ludin, Steve Williams, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, Richard Smith, and Sue Williams. *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 2000. *Includes multiple field-tested tools for conflict analysis. Has been translated into Spanish, French, Indonesian, Russian, Dari, Arabic, and Khmer, although obtaining copies may be difficult in some cases.*

Kahane, Adam, "The Mont Fleur Scenarios: What will South Africa be like in the year 2002?", *Deeper News, Volume 7, Number 1,* Global Business Network [undated] *http://www.gbn.com/consulting/article_details.php?id=35*

Kahane, Adam, *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities,* Berrett-Koehler Publishers; 2nd edition, 2007. *Resource for scenario planning.*

Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt, and Hal Culbertson. *Reflective Peacebuilding: A planning, monitoring, and learning toolkit*. The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame and Catholic Relief Services/USIP, 2007. *Good overview of conflict programming. Download from:* http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/reflective_peacebuilding.pdf.

Lederach, John Paul and Janice Moomaw Jenner, editors. A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm, Jossey-Bass, 2002. *A series of articles on the roles of intervenors in conflict, including tools for analysis.*

Leonhardt, Manuela. *Conflict Analysis for Project Planning and Management,* 2001. *Description of conflict analysis tool developed for GTZ. Available at:* http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-conflictanalysis.pdf

Mayers, James. "Stakeholder power analysis." 2005. *Stakeholder analysis tool.* Download from: www.policy-powertools.org

Meadows, Donella H. *Thinking in systems: A primer*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008. *Excellent and understandable introduction to systems thinking.*

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Working draft for application period*, DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2008. *Annex 4 contains an annotated listing of all of the major frameworks for conflict analysis, including NGO and donor frameworks. [Final publication forthcoming 2012.]* http://www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf

Reflecting on Peace Practice Program, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, MA, USA. *Training manuals based on CDA's practitioner-oriented research. See website:* www.cdainc.com/rpp

Schirch, Lisa. *Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning Handbook.* Unpublished DRAFT, 2011. *Presents a range of "lenses" for viewing conflict. Available directly from the author only (Lisa Schirch, Eastern Mennonite University).*

Slotin, Jenna, Wyeth, Vanessa, Romita, Paul, "Power, Politics, and Change: How International Actors Assess Local Context," International Peace Institute, New York, 2010. *Analyzes the assumptions and motivations underpinning the use of various assessment frameworks and tools developed by bilateral and multilateral actors to assess governance, conflict and fragility.* http://www.ipinst.org/publication/policy-papers/detail/294-power-politics-and-change-how-international-actors-assess-local-context.html

Resources on Gender-sensitive Conflict Analysis

Anderlini , Sanam Naraghi, "Mainstreaming Gender in Conflict Analysis: Issues and Recommendations," The World Bank, Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction, Paper No. 33, February 2006. *Pages 19ff of the document provide gender-specific indicators for conflict analysis of different sectors and categories.*

Moser, Annalise, *Gender and Development,* Vol. 15, No. 2, Gender Research Methodologies (July, 2007), pp. 231-239, Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Plantega, Dorine, "Gender, identity, and diversity: learning from insights gained in transformative gender training," *Gender & Development*, Volume 12, Issue 1, Special Issue: Diversity, 2004. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1355207041000172650 6

Schmeidl, Susanne with Eugenia Piza-Lopez, *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action,* International Alert and Swiss Peace Foundation, June 2002. Gender & Conflict Early Warning: *Provides a list of examples of gendered indicators for early warning, as well as a list of gender-specific root causes, proximate indicators and intervening factors/accelerators.* http://www.swisspeace.ch/topics/further-topics/gender-and-peacebuilding/gender-and-peacebuilding-resources.html and look for download OR http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/INTLALERT_genderandconflictearlywarning

UNIFEM*, Solomon Islands Gendered Conflict Early Warning Project*, January 2006 (report written by Annalise Moser). *This resource includes a list of indicators developed for a project and when or at what stage they become relevant. It also provides an example of a successful project including lessons learned.* http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/UN/unifem_earlywarnsolomonislands_2006.pdf

UNIFEM, "Gender and Conflict Analysis," UNIFEM Policy Briefing Paper, October 2006