CHAPTER FOUR


WORKSHOP CHARACTER AND CONTENT


In this chapter I want to give an idea of the style and content of the workshops I facilitate, the different contexts in which they take place, the different kinds of group with which I work, and the general purpose and ethos of the workshops. To do so, I have referred to, and used directly, written material developed in the course of my work.


**Overall approach: purposes and assumptions**


The stated purpose of the workshops, generally speaking, is to explore constructive approaches to conflict, and skills for handling it, in order to increase capacities for engaging in it and coping with it in positive ways, and reducing the violence associated with it. In practice, however, the purposes served by the workshops are wider. The following is a piece written during the early days of my research, in the Autumn of 1994, about work I had done before my inquiry officially began. It explains something of the way in which I understood the work I was increasingly being asked to do. It was written in response to questions from my friend and colleague Adam Curle, who was writing a book about grass roots peace work and ways in which it could be encouraged and supported. I tried to explain, for him, the purpose of the work I had done, with colleagues, in Belgrade; what I thought we were able to offer there, and my diffidence. Here is what I wrote, which he quoted (Curle 1995):


> '*I'm not sure that I knew, to begin with, why we were going, except that we were responding to a request for help (described as training) from people who clearly deserved and needed it. I remember my - our - own diffidence, our questioning of the likelihood of our having anything adequate to offer. At one level I still find it surprising that we apparently did; but I also feel convinced now that our visits* **have** *helped.*
>
> *Our process each time was to spend the first phase of the visit reviewing with the group their current situation and wants for our time with them, building together an agenda for the available days - an agenda constantly open to adjustment according to emerging needs.*

*What we have been able to offer has been, by our coming and our listening, recognition both of the importance and courage of the work being done by the group, and the need of those involved for solidarity and support. We have been able to share something of the emotions, try to understand the pressures and exhaustion, and offer encouragement and affirmation. This has in turn helped the group members to acknowledge and express their own feelings of pain and weakness, but also to celebrate their achievements and potential together.*

*We have in addition provided facilitation for the group as it sought to **become** a group, developing a common understanding of its purposes and deepening the relationships between its members - as well as working through conflicts and tensions. We have provided a framework for evaluation and planning, and the initial sharing of concepts and skills, which could be called 'training', was clearly of real importance to the group at the outset and provided a basis for the continuing self-development and external training and peacemaking work done by its members.*

*One other thing: the love and laughter and eating and playing which have characterised our times in Belgrade indicate the refreshment which has come to us all through this exchange. An exchange it has certainly been. I cannot begin to estimate the pleasure and learning that I have gained. But for our friends in Belgrade, this contact with the outside world has been a lifeline.'*

Rereading this I realise, not for the first time, but perhaps more clearly than ever before, that 'training' is a somewhat arbitrary word for a collection of functions of which a directly educational element is but one aspect - of greater or lesser importance or predominance according to the particular context. Whereas much of the work I do does have a clearly educational purpose, it is clear from this explanation of our work in Belgrade that the provision of emotional space and support can be an important - if sometimes unnamed - function of such workshops, and that the role they play in group formation can be of great value for future work and networking. Even when the participants are unlikely to meet again, they often carry a sense of support and community back into their own situations: a knowledge that there are others who share their aspirations and are working for the same purposes; people they have come close to, and who feel, for a time at least, like invisible companions.

I often feel embarrassed, re-reading things I have written about my work, by emotional phrases like 'love and laughter'; but at the time of writing they felt like appropriate expressions to use, precisely because of their emotion. (Maybe my embarrassment itself is what I would do well to question.) The 'refreshment', as I call it in this piece, that comes from the social aspect of these 'training' events, can be a much needed contribution; and for those isolated and oppressed by violent conflict, the sense of being connected to supportive others outside their situation offers

great psychological relief and support. However, the idea that the benefits of these workshops are exchanged between participants and facilitators, rather than bestowed by the latter, is borne out in my workshop accounts.

This applies not only to emotional support and satisfaction, but to learning about conflict; the 'sharing of concepts and skills called 'training'.' I have written at some length, in my Theory and Methodology chapters, about my approach to education and the role of the facilitator in training workshops. I sometimes put 'training' in inverted commas because it sounds prescriptive and suggests something mechanical - like teaching animals to do tricks. I use mostly  elicitive methods, while recognising that I have knowledge to share. I use my own knowledge in several ways. In the first place, the way I structure an agenda is based on my understanding of what is important in conflict and in empowering processes, as well as on what I have learned about the needs and interests of the group I am working with. Often the inputs that I make come in the form of presenting a particular 'model' for describing or analysing conflict processes and relationships. These models are then tested by the group in relation to their own experience. Sometimes inputs I make are supported by written 'handouts' - to save participants too much note-taking and provide the opportunity for later reflection on ideas. I suppose the way I act as a facilitator is also a form of input - often described as 'modelling'. Since groups working intensively together for some time usually generate their own conflict, and the groups I work with often reflect in their composition something of the external conflict going on in their region, conflict handling skills need to be practised for real by facilitator and participants alike. (I discuss 'experiential learning' extensively in Chapter Nine.)

The modelling I try to do is based on the values I hold, which inform my approach both to training and to conflict, which for the purposes of this research I have chosen to summarise as 'respect'. When I was explaining to Adam Curle (see above) why I had gone to Belgrade, I said my colleague and I were responding to a request for help from people who 'clearly deserved and needed it'. This personal value-judgement, qualifying my desire to support the choices and actions of others, reflects the fact that in doing this training support work I am led by my own values, and choose to work with organisations and individuals who, broadly speaking, share them.

The idea that third-party intervention, including training, should be responsive and supportive of local initiatives is, as I suggested in Chapter Two, a useful general principle, but needs to be balanced by the recognition that local partners will find it hard to know what to ask for if they have only a very vague idea as to what is on offer. However, both the decision to go and facilitate the workshop, and the agreeing of basic agenda elements with the group, can emerge through a consultative process; and the objectives of the workshop are agreed in advance, and made known to potential participants, if they are not part of the organising group. For instance, the organisers of the workshop I facilitated at Lake Balaton in Hungary (described later, in Chapter Seven), for women from different parts of former Yugoslavia, set out in their letter of invitation the following objectives, which I had drafted with them:

**'To become a learning community, using our own processes to discover what living and growing together entails, benefiting from the challenge and support we can offer each other.**

**To examine and strengthen our beliefs and values in relation to the way we live and act.**

**To increase our understanding of the things which damage and divide our societies, looking at the dynamics of conflict and violence and considering ways in which we can respond creatively.**

**To identify and develop the personal and group skills and resources needed for such creative responses.**

**To enjoy together a time of refreshment and renewal.'**

I have also developed the practice of (sometimes, especially for longer workshops) setting out my assumptions at the beginning of a workshop. These will vary from one workshop to another, and will include items which are specific to a particular workshop and group - as for example in the Harare, workshop whose full agenda is given below. I made a briefer, more basic list of

assumptions for the resource pack of an international organisation, to which I was one of the main contributors:

**'That the kind of learning we wish to promote is best facilitated by participatory, interactive processes which draw and build upon the existing wisdom and experience of participants, and by attention to the processes and interactions of the workshop itself and the workshop community.**

**That conflict usually has both personal/psychological and social/structural components; we wish to address both in our training.**

**That respect - self-respect and respect for others - is a value which can provide a sound and broadly acceptable basis for constructive approaches to conflict and for the training process itself.'**

(The inclusion of this last point by the organisation is an indicator, to me, that it is more than just a notion of mine - even if it came from me - but is a widely recognisable and useable idea.)

One key assumption which for some reason I have not included on this list, but which I always make explicit early in the workshop process, is that conflict itself is not necessarily something to be avoided; that per se it is neither positive nor negative, but simply part of life at every level. Since we live in relation to each other, we will inevitably (unless we remain static, frozen) at times rub up against each other, and sometimes meet head on. These clashes will be more or less vigorous or rough, and more or less uncomfortable or painful. The degree of friction which will be defined as conflict will be a matter of both personal and cultural interpretation. Since conflict is, almost by definition, uncomfortable to many of us, there is a tendency to think of it in purely negative terms, and to equate it with violence. Sadly, in all spheres of human interaction, from domestic to political and from local to international, conflict is often associated with violence and destruction, both physical and psychological.

The movement of change increases existing friction, and in situations of injustice change is needed. In such circumstances, conflict will be a necessary outcome of corrective action. A strong concern with justice is something that I bring to the work I do, and which I usually discuss, in one way or another, with partners and employers, at the workshop planning stage. It

informs the mental frame and emotional energy I bring to my work, and is reflected in the way I think about what needs to be included in workshop content. The diagram presented in Chapter Two, with its accompanying text, under the title 'Stages and Processes in Conflict Transformation (elsewhere referred to as the 'snake' or 'stages' diagram) is an outcome of this concern: my way of meshing ideas about nonviolent struggle for justice with ideas about conflict resolution. It has become in itself a mental frame for agenda design, in introductory workshops intended to provide an overview of the different skills and components required for conflict transformation.

The thinking behind this diagram is based on the assumption indicated in my theoretical discussion: that injustice constitutes a form of violence, and is not simply to be accepted as the price for 'peace'. At the same time, I am strongly persuaded that violent struggle, whatever its goal, often becomes the major source of injustice and suffering in the affected region. That is why another assumption for the workshops that I facilitate (which, though not listed above, will have been implicit, if not explicit, in the pre-defining of any such workshop) is that its purpose is to explore nonviolent methods of conflict transformation. It will be clearly understood that it is not within the workshop's remit to explore violent options, or train for them.

Not only has the 'stages' diagram provided an excellent framework for my thinking in planning and structuring workshop agendas; it helps me to think about the situation and needs of the particular group I am going to work with, and where the main focus of our work is likely to be. It also acts as a kind of check list for what needs to be included. In the workshop itself, it can act as a tool for participants to look at conflict and violence in general, and help them to understand better the particular nature of their own situation(s) and its needs. It can also, I have come to realise, provide a framework for the *presentation* of the workshop agenda, making its rationale explicit and remaining (physically, on the wall) as a reference point at different times in the workshop. (That does not mean it becomes a kind of Bible. Reference points can be used to define differences as well as agreements.)

I have used the 'stages' diagram to provide my own mental framework for the next part of this chapter, in which I shall discuss a few key resources which regularly play a part in my

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workshops. They are best explained here by the use of the 'handouts' I have written to give out to participants at the end of the relevant session, as a record of what was presented for discussion and experimentation at some stage during the session itself.

**Active nonviolence**

The first such key resource is the set of three analytical models designed by Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr (1990) for use with those wishing to take action to overcome injustice: models which provide a framework for conscientisation and effective planning. The handout I have written includes a brief discussion of the philosophy and techniques of active nonviolence. Over the years of my research I have tried to reduce the philosophical part to what seem to me to be the essentials, using, as far as possible, everyday language, trying to avoid expressions like 'should' and to set a descriptive rather than prescriptive tone. I have also simplified what I write about nonviolent methods, reducing lists and typologies to a single paragraph. These changes reflect my wish to respect the variety of ways in which people feel and articulate their motivations, and the endless potential for imaginative and creative action, which may be discouraged rather than stimulated by ready-made categories. I felt that my own more practical list (which appears at the end of the handout) - a list of things to bear in mind when preparing for action - was more useful than theoretical distinctions between one form of action and another. Here is the text, with its accompanying diagrams:

### ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

**Notes for discussion: one person's understanding, based on her own reflections on the thoughts, writings and experiences of many.**

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'Nonviolence' can be defined as a philosophy, an approach to life, and to personal, social and international relationships. It is also the word used to describe the actions or behaviour based on this approach. Nonviolence is active, not passive, seeing individuals as responsible for themselves and for each other.

Commitment to nonviolence presupposes a belief - not necessarily religious - in the positive potential of the human condition, and of human beings individually and collectively: a belief that each contains the potential for good and has a conscience which can be touched; that the humanity of each demands respect, even when their behaviour does not; that respect, for self and others, holds the greatest power for positive change, whereas violence, in any form, leads to destruction and more violence.

The philosophy of nonviolence is based on the understanding that the outcome of an action will reflect the nature of that action; that in fact the action is itself an outcome. When people act, or react, violently, they perpetuate violence and violate themselves as well as the other. When they behave nonviolently, their actions already constitute, in however small a part, the makings of a new relationship or direction. Respect, therefore, in nonviolence, governs both the goals of action and the processes by which those goals are to be achieved.

To struggle to overcome violence is to risk harm. While in violent combat the harm is inflicted on the adversary, in nonviolence it is accepted, if necessary, by the nonviolent actors as a consequence of their commitment, in order to break the cycle of violence.

The aim of nonviolent struggle is to overcome violence and injustice rather than to win victory over an adversary, and to achieve an outcome which meets the fundamental needs of all concerned, so opening the way for long-term reconciliation.

MODELS FOR ANALYSIS, MOVEMENT BUILDING AND GOAL SETTING

- from the work of Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr:

Groups are usually brought together by a desire to change something, and defining what it is they want to change, naming the violence or injustice they wish to remove, is their first task in analysing the situation - an important task and one which can take a long time.

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**Analysing the situation**

In this model for analysis, the oppressive situation or injustice is depicted as an inverted pyramid, held in place only with the help of certain props or pillars, that is by particular groups or sections of society which by their passivity, action or collusion support the status quo. Once the injustice has been defined, it is the task of the group doing the analysis to name these pillars which support it.

The example seen below is that of peasants living in the Algamar region of Brazil, who, having no legal documents to prove their ownership had been evicted from their family land by multi-national companies. They defined the injustice as shown. (They included the wider definition of 'unjust rural structures' because their experience was part of a wider process of land confiscation.) They named themselves as the first pillar supporting the injustice, since they had remained passive and submitted to the eviction. Then they named the other groups responsible: the landlord (the multi-national company), the Church, whose hierarchy wished to align themselves with the rich and influential, the labour unions, who had failed to act for them, the state army, acting for a government which supported the multi-national's acquisition of the land, the company's private militia, used to intimidate the peasants, the political parties which had supported the government's policy or failed to speak up for historic land rights, the economic policy and system which preferred foreign investment to the needs and rights of the local people, and the international interests which exerted so much pressure on the internal affairs of Brazil.

**Fig.1**

**Building support**

Once the pillars have been identified, the group concerned can begin to consider how they can be removed or eroded. They must ask themselves why those they have named currently support the injustice and how they might be won over or persuaded to change. Realising they are at present small in number and relatively powerless, the group also needs to consider how to build support. In the second diagram, the Algamar peasants, who belonged to one Christian base community, are depicted as the centre of a campaign which will grow: first to include their most natural allies, the other base communities in their region; then, with their help, the Church at other levels, the labour unions and the press (who at this stage can be expected to be interested). With this much wider backing, the political parties can be approached, and those in other countries who could bring pressure to bear on multi-national companies and on other governments, at the same time drawing attention to any repressive counter-measures taken in Brazil.

Fig.2

It can be seen that those who appear in the first diagram as props for the injustice in question can also reappear as potential allies in the movement for change. When such a transfer of allegiance takes place in reality, a considerable shift of power has been achieved.

**Constructive programme**

It is not enough, however, for a group to know what it wants to get rid of - though it is a very good starting point. They also need to know what they want in its place. They need a vision, goals to work for, a new way of doing things that can start immediately, so that the new is being built before the old is demolished. This idea was central to Gandhi's understanding of nonviolence. He called it 'constructive programme'.

In the third diagram, the peasants' programme for the future begins at the bottom with their own local victory, then goes on to a process for developing their own efficiency and economic power, then to their inclusion in the political processes of their country and thence to a national campaign for land reform.

**Fig.3**

**METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION**

Dialogue, sincere communication, is the first approach and a constant intention for those seeking change through nonviolence. Even at times when dialogue seems a distant possibility, it remains the aim of all action taken.

Public action is needed when those in power are unready to enter into dialogue, in order to raise public awareness of the nature of the injustice and to build support for the campaign. It can take the form of marches, street theatre, leafleting, vigils, fasts; sit-ins or blockades, or other actions which have a direct effect on what is being done, or symbolic actions against some specific manifestation of the injustice. These actions sometimes entail civil disobedience or the deliberate contravention of laws related to the injustice. Noncooperation with the unjust policy can also be a powerful form of resistance - for instance if seamen refuse to carry nuclear waste and dump it at sea, or if consumers decide to boycott certain goods. Different lists have been made of categories of nonviolent action, but whatever the action, the following points will be relevant:

> * Actions are most likely to be effective when they are based on sound analysis and strategy, with careful estimation of their likely effect.

> * Imagination can be a powerful aid to communication; it is not enough to be rational: people need to be awakened if they are to be changed.

> * If actions are intended to attract media attention, careful thought needs to be given to how they may be interpreted and presented. Who are the intended recipients of the message and what will be the likely effect on them?

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**\* The quality of detailed preparation for the action will be a major factor in determining its likely outcome.**

**\* The inner preparation of participants as individuals, and the unity of their purposes and actions as a group, will be help them behave in the ways they have chosen.**

**\* Participants need to have calculated the likely and  possible costs of their action and to be prepared for them, both morally and practically.**

As I re-read this last list of points, I see that it remains quite prescriptive tone - as if I knew what was needed; my next thought is that I do know these things, from long experience, and that I want to stand by what I have written! As far as I have been able to judge, these materials and the processes which they offer have never been other than useful to workshop participants. They are often the occasion for real excitement, as participants apply the models to their own situations and find their experiences taking form and becoming more recognisable - capable of naming, managing and changing. In my experience of working with groups, these really are 'tools for empowerment'.

Discussing violence and nonviolence is more challenging in some groups than in others. I think it is appropriate for it to be challenging. It is a hard issue. Sometimes I work with groups and for organisations with an explicit commitment to nonviolence; at other times, although it is understood that violence, as a response to violence, is not our business there may be participants who have supported or been engaged in violent struggle of one form or another, and whereas they have come to the workshop to explore other options they may be quite sceptical, and at some level quite hostile. This will emerge from some of my accounts. The use of the Goss-Mayr models takes the whole group beyond debating and into testing. Usually they work through from analysis into action planning, and sometimes into a role-play of some particular bit of the action.

**Group formation and dynamics**

Thinking about groups and their effective working is an essential component for work on empowerment and movement building. It is also relevant for the workshop itself, and usually forms part of the agenda. I often begin a workshop with a discussion of what, on the basis of participants' own experience, makes groups work well, and we use these ideas to formulate our own groundrules for working together. The groupwork that participants engage in to test out these models for empowerment provides one opportunity for tasting the energy and the difficulties which can come from the group work as such, and for practising facilitation skills.

**'Conflict Resolution': problem-solving**

To structure thinking about the 'resolution' stage of conflict, I often use a diagram called 'the iceberg' (though a colleague recently suggested that 'the mountain' might provide a more positive image'). It is one which I first learned from Tom Leimdorfer (a fellow Quaker) when I worked with him in secondary schools. I have elaborated on his model little, so that it carries the what I consider to be the most important elements of 'problem solving' in the top section. (For instance, it did not originally include 'reframing', or 'evaluating'.) Another change I made was to replace the original words from the middle ('Communication') section, 'Separate the person from the problem', with, 'tackling the problem, not attacking the person'. I made this change because I learned in the Lebanon the truth of what I had read: that in many cultures (and probably in my own), the person and the problem cannot be separated. And I replaced the 'win-win' label at the tip of the iceberg with the words 'inclusive solution', because, as I explain in my handout text, I find the phrase 'win-win' over-simple, and rather too jolly sounding for serious situations.

This model can be introduced in one go, or developed stage by stage in the course of a workshop. Either way, I find it a useful framework in which to develop with participants the idea of a co-operative approach to conflict, once it is ready to be solved (ie once relative power parity exists, and a will to move towards a mutually acceptable solution: the 'conflict resolution' phase of the 'stages' diagram.

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Here is the diagram and the accompanying text:

The tip of the ice-berg, showing above the waterline, represents the goal of the problem-solving approach to conflict resolution; an 'inclusive' solution - one which is acceptable to all parties, meeting the needs and concerns of each. Such an outcome is often described as a 'win-win' solution. I prefer the term 'inclusive' because I think 'win-win' can suggest something rather simple and easy in which everyone gets just what they want - which I don't think is real. On the other hand, its implied reference to the opposite and very familiar idea that a conflict must always have winners and losers is a useful one to make.

The major part of the ice-berg, hidden below the waterline, represents the attitudes and efforts, skills and processes, which will be needed for such an inclusive solution to be reached. At the base is 'Affirmation', explained as 'self-respect and respect for others'. This includes a recognition of the needs, rights and

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identity of each person or group involved in the conflict. In real life, this may be a hard requirement, and the respect which can be found initially may be grudging or purely notional, emanating more from a sense of necessity than from any positive impulse. Feelings may be running high and prejudice may be strong. It may require the efforts of mediators to make any kind of respect seem remotely possible and to generate enough trust for dialogue to begin. But without such a basic recognition and valuing, it will be impossible for the parties to take each other and the process of problem solving seriously -or indeed to communicate effectively, which is the first need for problem solving.

Communication, then, forms the next layer of the ice-berg. Constructive communication both a symbolic and practical form of respect. It both enhances respect and helps to build an understanding of the nature of the conflict and the needs and perceptions of the different parties to it. The two sides of communication are indicated on the diagram: careful, empathic listening and sensitive, assertive speaking (most importantly, speaking in the first person, in terms of own needs and perceptions, rather than in the second person, in terms of accusations).

On the basis of respect and the opening of constructive communication, co-operation in the search for a mutually acceptable solution becomes possible. 'Co-operation' is therefore the heading for the next layer of the ice-berg, and the basic processes of problem solving are mentioned: reframing the conflict; shifting focus from positions to interests; generating options for contributing to a solution; evaluating and selecting from those options; reaching agreement on a settlement 'package' and how it is to be implemented. Since both analysis and imagination will be required in the problem solving process, those two words are written down the sides of the iceberg.

**Other handouts; work related to communication**

I have developed many handouts during the last four years, for instance on conflict dynamics, communication in conflict, reframing, and mediation, as well as one on groups and what they need to do their work well. To begin with I used other people's handouts, with acknowledgements; but as I became increasingly uncomfortable with what I felt to be the unhelpful cultural assumptions, the over-simplification and cheerfulness, or the over-prescriptive tone of the materials I was using, I decided I needed to write my own. At the cost, sometimes, of writing in a somewhat complicated style, I have tried to make them more modest in tone and in

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the claims they make, and to focus on attitudes and intentions more than on prescribed techniques. This has applied particularly in the case of 'communication skills'. The handouts I had seen tended to be characterised by counselling terminology, and techniques which seemed more appropriate for the consulting room than for 'normal' human interaction. I wanted something that was more general, and concentrated on attitude, and the importance of simply listening, and of sensitivity and respect even in assertiveness. Most of my handouts have been changed more times than I can count, because to fix ideas on paper, however tentative the language - particularly on vast and subtle subjects like communication - is to give them more definition than is helpful or warranted. On the other hand, participants seem to want something written, and to find it helpful to have something to refer back to, to refresh their memories of what has been said and done.

In addition to using experiential exercises in communication, I often explore with participants some of the things which block it; among them some of the feelings associated with identity and belonging; prejudice and the ready recourse to stereotyping, which close minds and hearts against engagement with what is actual and particular - in circumstances, groups and individuals. I try to encourage participants to bring into awareness some of their norms and assumptions and take a critical as well as appreciative look at some of the groups they belong to - seeing that their belongings are multiple, forming a complex pattern, and are susceptible to evaluation and choice. I also introduce exercises which provide an opportunity for participants to explore the ways in which they deal with strong emotions in themselves and others, to increase both empathy and self-awareness.

The concept - and practice - of reframing is, to me, of great utility and therefore importance. I have already listed, in Chapter Two, the forms of reframing which I see as particularly important for problem-solving in conflict. One excellent tool for reframing, and one form of conflict analysis, which I very often use in workshops, is 'needs and fears mapping': an exercise, like those above, designed for use in real life, but also an excellent training tool because it can be so powerful in shifting perspectives and reframing not only *a* conflict, but conflict itself.

**Conflict analysis and 'mapping'**

I took the idea of this kind of mapping from Cornelius and Faire's 'Everyone Can Win' (1989), but have rewritten the text, for the reasons outlined above. I have also prefaced it with some general remarks about conflict analysis. Here is my handout describing the exercise. I invite participants to draw their 'needs and fears map' in any way they like. I cannot adequately acknowledge the value of this exercise, and will always be grateful to its originators.

## ANALYSING CONFLICT

**Conflict and confusion often go together. Understanding what is happening is one step towards discovering what can be done to move things forward. Analysis can focus on the causes of a conflict - or what led up to it - or on the current situation (or both). It can concern itself with practicalities, 'facts', or emotions (or both).**

**Although acknowledgement of what has happened (or is perceived to have happened) in the past is often important in the long-term resolution of a conflict, shifting the focus from the past to the present and future is also an essential step towards resolving it. One form of analysis which bridges the gap between emotions and practicalities, and which helps in focusing on the future, is as follows:**

1. **Listing the different parties to the conflict - all who have some stake or involvement in it. (Sometimes the list is longer than might at first have been expected.)**

2. **Finding a definition of the issue or problem which is, or you think would be, acceptable to all those involved. (Not always easy!)**

3. **Trying to think what are (a) the needs and (b) the fears of the different parties that have been listed. (Sometimes the fears listed are just a negative way of expressing the needs; but asking about them often elicits more deep seated concerns, which might otherwise have been overlooked.)**

These elements can be arranged diagramatically, with the definition of the issue in the centre, and the names of the parties, with their different needs and fears, arranged around it.

This exercise does not in itself attempt to deal with the different relationships of the parties to each other or to the problem; nor does it address the question of power. Nonetheless, in spite of (or perhaps also because of) its simplicity, it can be extremely illuminating. It can be used by anyone wishing to understand a conflict better: a concerned outsider, or one or all of the parties, separately or together (or both), with or without a mediator. In the end, of course, it is impossible to know the needs and fears of others without asking them; but to begin to think in these terms is already a step towards empathy - and away from demonising the other.

To focus on needs and fears can also help free those in conflict from a preoccupation with fixed positions in relation to it, and to focus instead on the interests they have which will need to be addressed in any future agreement. In addition, listing needs and fears often reveals the multiplicity of those interests and the need for several, or many, ingredients to be included in that agreement. By including all parties' points of view in the definition of the problem, and by considering the needs and fears of each, this exercise helps frame the conflict as a shared problem which will need a common solution. If it can be done by the parties together, it can constitute a first, major step in co-operation.

The use of a rather simple diagram to help analyse complex situations of conflict may appear counterproductive. In practice, as suggested above, the mere attempt to understand a conflict in terms of a small number of simple elements may highlight exactly how complex certain aspects are. For example, many conflicts have not just one problem or issue, but many. Agreeing on a formulation or definition of the issue or issues may be half way to finding some solution. In social or political conflicts, parties are often not homogeneous or united, but have factions, leaders and followers, core members and supporters etc. To recognise these complexities gives the opportunity for designing appropriate strategies for response - which is the objective of such analysis.

Mediation

Although the attitudes, behaviours and choices of the actual parties to a conflict are primary, third parties can play a range of constructive roles in support of its positive transformation, acting either as advocates for one side or as impartial facilitators of communication between the parties. Those identified with one side may also choose a bridge-building role, which can be vital, rather than adopting a deliberately and simply partisan position or joining in the action for one side.

I try to help workshop participants to explore these options for action, and their constraints (see 'roles' text in Chapter 2). Somehow 'mediation' has come to symbolise or stand for conflict resolution more generally. Not many people end up as mediators of political conflicts in any formal sense, but most play that kind of a role, in some way and in some context, at different times in their lives, and in some form; and in socio-political conflicts mediators can operate at different levels to important effect; so I often give some time to thinking about and trying out mediation. (I have developed an accompanying handout which I sometimes use.) Mediation role-plays provide an excellent opportunity for testing listening and assertiveness, and practising empathy: skills which are of importance across the range of constructive roles and behaviours in conflict. Recently I began also to explore with groups the question of how to help parties to reach the point where mediation seems a possibility - which is often in practice nine-tenths of the task. The relationship between leaders and their constituency is also a key area for exploration. The preparation of constituencies for negotiation, and somehow including them in the process, constitutes another whole area for 'conflict 'resolvers'. In a general workshop these issues can only be touched on; but in a recent, more specialised workshop, I had chance to reflect on them more, and see how crucial they are.

**Recovery and Healing**

The healing processes which need to follow political settlement -and which will have been begun through the efforts which led to it - usually constitute the final topic of the general workshops that I facilitate. I often ask participants to think about their own experience of what can enable them to begin to recover from severe hurt and rebuild their lives and relationships. Working as I currently do with people who have suffered greatly in the violence and turmoil of what was

Yugoslavia, who have in some cases lost most of what they had ever counted on, I sometimes doubt the likelihood (if not the possibility) of real recovery at any level - personal, social, material or political. It is hard to image that the damage to the psyche, both individual and collective, can ever be repaired; but then I know so many who seem to have performed miracles, and who find their own new meaning through helping others to recover. The human will to make sense of life and to go on living it seems to be both deep seated and resilient. I recently wrote some notes - very tentative - listing some of the things which, if I listen to others, seem to help. I am still influenced by the thinking of Ron Kraybill (1996), which I outlined in Chapter Two. I have used the word 'reconciliation' in the heading, because I am writing about a social as well as individual process. The word reconciliation names the restoration of relationships. It is the outcome and the enabler of individual healing; the reweaving of the collective fabric, which makes manageable - and eventually even tolerably comfortable - the interactions of daily life.

Here is the 'handout' I wrote. (I hate that word. It sounds as if these matters of life and death could be encapsulated neatly on a sheet of paper and dished out to people.) I notice that despite my efforts not to be prescriptive, it still has a normative ring.

## RECONCILIATION AFTER CONFLICT

**There must be countless definitions of reconciliation. Mine represents relatively modest ambitions: a return to relationships which are relatively comfortable and constructive, characterised by tolerance and a degree of mutual respect or acceptance, and providing the conditions for co-operative co-existence.**

**The establishment of such relationships presupposes a sense of justice. Unjust relationships constitute a hidden form of conflict. In situations where the powerful oppress the weak, that injustice needs to be rectified - which is likely to mean confrontation and struggle. The struggle may be undertaken violently or nonviolently, and either way may provoke a violent response. However, the spirit of active nonviolence has a power of its own. Its purpose is to uphold life and dignity, rather than to attack or destroy them. It can help transform the dynamics of violence and lay the foundations for a respectful and inclusive society.**

For peaceful relationships to be restored, or forged, after violent conflict is particularly difficult. Human dignity has been negated and the seeds of hatred are everywhere. The following are some conditions which seem essential, and some processes which could help.

* The cessation of physical violence: an end to any attacks or fighting, and guarantees of future safety.

* Discovering, as far as possible, what happened (eg whether someone is dead and where they are buried - and, more contentiously, who killed them and in what circumstances).

* The hearing and acknowledgement of different perspectives on what has happened in the experience of different groups or individuals.

* Negotiations to address present and future needs, so establishing some sense of justice. This may include new political arrangements, a redistribution of power and resources, or specific acts of reparation which provide some material compensation and recognition of wrongs done.

* Culturally appropriate processes for the personal healing and reintegration, both socially and economically, of those traumatised by the conflict - both victims and perpetrators of violence.

* The rediscovery by individuals and groups of their identity and place within the new context, with a degree of confidence which can allow for the admission of imperfections and diversity.

* Apology and forgiveness, or joint acts of mourning, confession or purification.

* Acknowledgement of interdependence and the re- establishment of sufficient trust for the different groups to risk getting on with the day to day job of living together.

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**This collection of ideas comes from a variety of sources and cultural viewpoints. It can simply provide a starting point for discussion in the light of the experiences and viewpoints of others.**

I notice that the modesty of those closing lines is different from the tone of the opening paragraphs. This difference reflects the conflict between the attitude of diffidence I want to maintain and my underlying zeal for certain viewpoints and values. I regularly use disclaimers like this to overcome the difficulty!

The question of values is the final topic in this review of workshop content. Values are implicit in everything that is said and done in a workshop, and it is sometimes useful - and respectful - to make them explicit, and to wrestle with the dilemmas they pose. Sometimes I ask participants what conflict outcomes they see as desirable: what they want to be left with when it is over. This would seem a practical way in to the discussion, but can in practice be a hard question to grasp (or explain). An apparently more abstract form, which in practice seems easier for participants to enter into (presumably because the form is so strong) is John Paul Lederach's allegorical exercise (1995). It is based on verse 10 of Psalm 85:

'Truth and mercy have met together, peace and justice have kissed.'

Participants are asked to choose the value they think most important in conflict, and gather in corresponding groups. They discuss together why this value is of paramount importance to them and choose a representative to speak in the person of that value:

'I am Truth (Mercy etc.). In the midst of conflict I am of the greatest importance because ........... I feel closest to (Justice etc.) because ............ I feel most threatened by (Peace etc.) because......... '

Each representative speaks and is questioned by the listeners from the other groups. Members of their own group may speak in their support. The discussion gradually broadens and becomes less formal, as the relationships of support and tension between the different values emerge. Through

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the exploration of their relationships to each other, the meanings of the values themselves are clarified.

I said the exercise was borrowed from John Paul Lederach, and gave the reference; but what appears above is my version of what I learned not from his book, but through working with a colleague who had worked with John Paul. I would not take an exercise out of a book and use it myself, unless I had seen or experienced it in action - just as I see any written materials as secondary in training.

**Approach to the selection of workshop content and to the use of manuals and resource packs**

I have indicated, in some detail, the major content elements of the work I do with groups. On occasions where the agenda is not pre-planned, these elements provide a range of resources, tools and processes to draw on as needed. I know that any selection of ideas and exercises will be personal, even if the criteria on which it is based seem to make sense and would be recognised by others. I also know that what works for one trainer will not work for another. I refer above to my role in the compilation of one organisation's resource pack for trainers and others. The editor who did the final work made a good job of a very difficult task, and drew on the personal perspectives of a good many people. Although I personally cannot take ideas out of manuals or resource packs, I recognise that others find them useful, if only as a reminder of what they have already experienced. The following was the introduction I wrote for what was originally planned as a small manual, before the editor had been found and the project enlarged. These paragraphs summarise much of my thinking about workshop planning and facilitation, outlining some considerations which I find important. I think they show that although I have an established body of models and exercises which I find helpful, I do not wish to suggest that they are somehow *the ones* to use.

**The materials this manual contains have been tried and tested in different continents; nonetheless they come from the repertoires of particular trainers and represent only a**

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tiny fraction of what must be available across the world. They are intended to offer what may be a possible starting place for some, to develop, adapt and add to with experience; for others, an additional resource for work already established. It is our hope that the manual itself will grow and change, as new insights and resources become available to us. The usefulness of any given item will depend on context: questions of culture, the nature and purpose of the event being planned, the particular participants and the composition of the group, the style and abilities of the facilitator.

The needs and possibilities of different workshops will vary according to the participants and their backgrounds and circumstances: Who are they? What are the challenges they are facing? What is their level of experience, in training and in action? Do they already know each other? Will they be working together in the future? Are they seeking an opportunity to build some general skills and understanding, or to focus on a particular task or problem? Do the participants come from conflicting groups?

If the group is a pre-existing one it can be expected to have common needs and priorities, which the trainer can discover beforehand, or at least at the beginning of the workshop. Is there a particular conflict, or part of a conflict, in which they are involved or wish to play a role? What are their possibilities and choices? Do they mean to be active as partisans or as non-partisans? What stage has the conflict reached? If it is at an early stage, or is still latent, should the attempt be to prevent it or engage in it? Or is it in full swing, or ready for resolution? Or is it time for healing and social reconstruction after some kind of settlement? The answers to these questions will determine whether the main focus should be on, for instance, group building and campaigning skills; or on bridge building and problem solving, and the skills of negotiation and mediation; or on dealing with the after-effects of trauma and processes for reconciliation, and co-operation for the future.

If the group is not a pre-existing one, but will be brought together by invitation, those who plan the workshop should have a good understanding of the general context and needs of the locality or region, and the kind of people for whom the workshop is intended. A clear description of the character and purposes of the workshop should be given to potential participants. It will be important for the workshop leaders to have as much information as possible, in advance, about the composition of the group and the participants' background, experience and needs, as far as they can be identified; but in any circumstances a trainer should be ready to adjust the agenda during the process of the workshop, since the group will have its own emerging needs and dynamics.

**Of course, workshops vary in length, usually more according to what is possible than what is ideal. It is often hard to decide how best to use the time available - including how to balance work and rest. The kind of information we have outlined above will help in the setting of priorities. The venue chosen or available will also have an effect on what can be done and how. For instance, temperature and other matters relating to physical comfort need to be borne in mind when the length of sessions is being decided, and the number of small groups that participants can be divided into may be determined to some extent by the number of rooms available.**

**It is usually highly desirable to have more than one trainer/facilitator for any workshop, to share the work and responsibility, give each other support and feedback, and complement each other's skills. They will need to know each to be sure that they can work effectively together, and to have planned or at least considered the agenda together.**

**Agendas can be designed to maximise participation, to draw on and help shape the learnings from participants' own experience, offering frameworks, ideas and information, as well as opportunities for practice, experiment and reflection. They can also be designed to provide variety, in terms of the size of group worked in (plenaries, pairs, small groups), as well as the type of activity and energy required, in order to keep participants engaged at every level.**

(I did not explain here the use of games. Although I do not use them in all my workshops, they can play an important role in group-building and in keeping participants awake and engaged - as well as just being fun. For a discussion of their use, see the account of the Geneva workshop presented in Chapter Six.)

**A sample agenda**

The following workshop agenda (used in Harare) appeared in the Resource Pack IA eventually produced. It illustrates in a nuts-and-bolts way how the content elements outlined above may be brought together, and some of the processes I use. The uncertainty of style and mix of syntactical

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forms indicates, I think, my own uncertainty and discomfort about the whole exercise of trying to fix on paper, as a kind of a pattern, something which, in my experience, cannot and should not be fixed in advance - only described afterwards. Re-reading it now, I am almost overwhelmed by a kind of disgust with what seems now the prescriptive impression given by setting out an agenda in this way. (The use of the word 'leader' is particularly disturbing. It crept in from another version of the agenda which I prepared for another organisation, which for some reason preferred the term.) I had felt the same unease at the time I prepared it for publication, but was persuaded by others that it could be useful, and made my peace with myself by prefacing it as follows:

**The following sample agenda is based on the experience of one workshop lasting six days. The original agenda, now slightly modified, was planned with a particular group in mind - in this case not a pre-existing group, but one drawn together for the week. The participants were all women and trainers, from different parts of Africa, and the purpose of this workshop was to provide an introduction to some of the ideas and approaches of conflict resolution which, together with their own training skills, would enable them to run their own conflict resolution training workshops, or to incorporate some elements of conflict resolution training into their other training work.**

**This agenda outline may provide a useful source of ideas - even, in some cases maybe, a model to start from - for those planning similar events. It should not, however, be regarded as a blueprint, as the way of doing things, and it is certainly far from exhaustive in content, even for a general and introductory workshop. With all those qualifications, we hope it will be of use.**

I then continued:

**Here is the agenda itself. Times, of course, could be different, and in any case never work out as planned; but estimating them gives a point of departure and acts as a feasibility check for what can be reasonably included.**

**(Note: Although there is likely to be more than one facilitator, I have used the word in the singular in most places, to refer to the one operating in a given moment.)'**

I considered whether or not I should reproduce the agenda here as it appears in the manual, with all the times, including breaks, marked. Although it takes a lot of space like this, it gives a feel of the rhythm of the workshop; so I have decided to leave it intact. (Timing and rhythm are important for facilitators, and I wanted this sample agenda to be useful. Timing comments and suggestions appear in the text from time to time.)

**AGENDA FOR A ONE WEEK CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP**

**First evening:**

**7.00pm**
**Welcome and opening remarks.**

**7.20pm**
**Participants meet in pairs, with someone they do not already know, taking it in turns to tell their partner about themselves for three minutes. Participants then return to the big circle and introduce their partners to the whole group. (They will be given not more than two minutes each to do this, since the intention is not to try to repeat everything from the paired introduction.)**

**8.10pm**
**Break**

**8.30pm**
**Participants meet in threes for ten minutes and, dividing the time between them, take it in turns to share their hopes and fears for the coming week. When the participants return to the whole group, the facilitator collects these hopes and fears on a big sheet of paper and responds as appropriate. (What is important is that people's feelings and expectations have been articulated, which will help them to relax, and that the workshop facilitator has been made aware of them. If there are any wholly unrealistic hopes, or unfounded fears, they need to be dispelled.)**

**9.00pm**
**The facilitator outlines the week's agenda (see overview above of workshop content and agenda), first setting out the assumptions on which this workshop will be based: that the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and practical aspects of the group's deliberations and experiences will be woven together, since they are inextricably linked;**

**that the group will become a community of learning, using participatory methods, drawing on the experience and wisdom of each person, and working in an informal and relaxed atmosphere;**

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that analysis and imagination are both important, and that laughter and gravity are complementary;

that the agenda which has been prepared is intended as a framework for the development of understanding, skills, resources and commitment, and that it can be changed as the workshop goes along;

that the group's own experience of working together will provide important material for learning, and, when it seems particularly relevant or necessary (for instance, if there is a conflict), what is happening in the group may, for a while, become the focus of its work.

that in all discussion, evaluation and feedback, training processes and issues will be included, as well as 'content' (including feedback on the helpfulness and cultural appropriateness of written materials).

[Most if these are regular assumptions of mine, if not always made explicit. (I would not, I now realise, include anything about laughter and imagination, in explicit assumptions for a mixed workshop). Some, like the last one, are specific to the Harare workshop, and really more in the nature of expressions of intention or promises than assumptions. Their presentation at the beginning of the Harare workshop was an opportunity to make explicit things which might otherwise have been unclear or have been overlooked, or remained as unvoiced questions. Re-reading these assumptions now, I am aware (not for the first time, but more sharply than before) that they make no mention of teaching as such. The question of what role I should and/or do play in this regard is one thread in my reflections. Respecting the existing knowledge of participants is one thing: disregarding my own is another. Dissembling, pretending to work only elicitively, while in practice giving an important place to my own input, would be something else again. I hope that is not what I have been doing. At all events, my behaviour as a trainer comes under close scrutiny and is the subject of much reflection in coming pages.]

This presentation is followed by questions and discussion.

9.45pm
Explanation about base groups to be formed next day for support,  evaluation, feedback and ideas (also, if appropriate, one day's responsibility for opening and closure, room tidying, time-keeping, games etc.)

9.50pm
Closure.

First morning:

9.00am
Opening (eg with a song or game), announcements and agenda review.

9.15am
After noting the importance of groups in social movements for change and within the workshop itself, the facilitator asks participants the question, 'What behaviours have you noticed in groups you have belonged to, or meetings you have attended, that

have been helpful or made things difficult?' Participants' responses are written on large paper under the two headings, 'helpful' and 'unhelpful'. What other things could a group need to be effective? These lists are then discussed and those agreed to be important used as the basis for a set of 'ground rules' or working agreements for the rest of the workshop to which all participants can commit themselves. It is explained that such agreements provide a basis for trust, assuring participants that their needs will be met and making it clear what they can contribute to the effective working and learning of the group. Elements of such a working contract are likely to include respect for agreements on time and procedures, respect for all participants and their contributions, even when there is disagreement, speaking one at a time, and not to taking an undue share of the time available, and honouring requests for confidentiality.

(The sheet [a handout included in the manual] on 'Groups and what they need to do their work well' could be given out at this point.)

**9.45am**
Formation of base groups (with a geographical mix, but the possibility of managing without external help for translation).

(I do not explain the purpose of these base groups at this point in the text, but they are important both for providing a small, mixed group for getting to know others and for belonging, when participants are new to each other and away from home. They also provide for an excellent form of evaluation, as will be seen at the end of the day.)

**10.00am**
The facilitator asks participants for words which spring to mind when they think of conflict, writing them on large paper. Are all these words negative? In the subsequent discussion conflict is recognised as and inevitable part of life, particularly in relation to difference and change, with positive and negative potential, according to how it is approached and handled.

Participants are asked what they see as desirable outcomes of conflict. These are seen to include both practical matters and relationships. The relative importance of these two elements will vary with the context: for instance, in a family one may put up with a good deal in order not to risk harming a relationship, while in a political context material issues may take precedence.

**10.15am**
The facilitator asks what are the things which help or hinder in a conflict, and writes up participants' suggestions under those two headings.

Input by facilitator (which is likely to confirm participants' own suggestions and ideas) about respect - for oneself, for others and for life itself - as the fundamental value at the heart of nonviolence and all work for human rights, democracy and peace. The building of healthy relationships and the solving of problems can happen only on the basis of the affirmation or recognition of the intrinsic value of all concerned. (Here the iceberg diagram is drawn and the words filled in on the bottom layer and tip.)

As the list of helps and hindrances will have suggested, the most vital expression and promoter of respect is good communication (the second layer of the iceberg). The healing power of attentive and respectful listening is hard to overestimate. (See sheet on 'Communication and conflict'.)

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**10.30am**
**Break.**

**11.00am**
**Introduction to listening exercises.**

**11.05am**
**Not listening:**
**In pairs, participants take it in turns to speak about something of importance in their lives , for instance, 'My family', or 'An important event in my childhood', or 'A conflict which has affected my life'.  The one who is not speaking but being spoken to makes it clear in every way possible that they are not listening. The speaker tries to keep going for two minutes; then the roles are reversed and the 'listener' becomes the speaker. Afterwards there is quick reporting back to the whole group about what it was like not to be listened to, and what made it clear that the 'listeners' were not listening (and therefore, by implication, the signs of attentive listening).**

**11.10am**
**Silent listening:**
**In the same pairs and on the same subject, the speakers talk for three minutes, the listeners giving their whole attention, listening silently, then reflecting back what they have heard (two minutes). The speakers have one minute to make any corrections or additions to the listeners' account; then the roles are reversed. All return to the whole group and discuss how this second exercise felt.**

**11.30am**
**Listening for 'facts' and feelings:**
**In new groups, this time of three, the participants choose one speaker and two listeners: one to listen for the 'facts' of the account and one to track the feelings they observe in the speaker as the account progresses. The subject for the speaker is 'An important thing that happened to me when I was at school' (for instance). The speaker has up to five (or three\*) minutes to talk, then the listener for 'facts' has three (or two) minutes to reflect back what she heard and the speaker a minute or two to say how accurate this was. The listener for feelings then gives her account, again with three minutes (or two) to do so, and  with a further one or two minutes for the speaker to respond.**

**(\* use the shorter times if running late.)**

**11.50am**
**The whole group  reconvenes to discuss the exercise and what has been learned from it.**

**12.00 noon**
**In the whole group, participants consider ways in which a listener can respond or intervene verbally, both helpfully and unhelpfully. The facilitator collects ideas from participants and writes them up under the two headings. (The 'Communication and conflict' sheet can be referred to as appropriate, and cultural issues discussed.)**

**12.30 lunch.**

**First afternoon:**

**2.30pm**

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**Assertive speaking:**
Input: When things happen that we do not like, we can remain silent, acquiescent, passive, or even say appeasing things which deny the pain or anger that we feel; we can be aggressive, attacking with our words; or we can stand up for ourselves (or someone else) respectfully - be assertive. We probably all do different things in different situations. What do we do when we are assertive? Ideas are written up. (See sheet again as appropriate.)

**2.50pm**
**Assertiveness exercise:**
In pairs, participants tell their partner of an incident in which they either appeased or were passive, or were aggressive, asking their partner to play the role of the other in that situation so that they can re-live the moment and see if they can respond assertively this time. After this brief re-enactment and a short discussion of how it went (ten minutes altogether), the tasks are reversed, and the other has the chance to describe and re-enact an episode from her experience, and to discuss her efforts and receive her partner's feedback. This is followed by brief discussion in the whole group. The 'Communication and conflict' sheet is distributed.

**3.20pm**
**Game.**

**3.25pm**
The facilitator introduces (if it seems useful/appropriate to the group) the conflict styles sheet as an aid to self-awareness and choice.

**3.35pm**
**Obstacles to constructive communication:**
A diagram is drawn on the flipchart of a speaking head and a hearing head and the line of communication between them. The group is asked to suggest some of the things that will affect, in the first place, what words emerge from the speaker (such as preconceptions, state of health, size of vocabulary) and, in the second place, the way the hearer receives those words. Participants' ideas are written across the respective heads. Then they are asked what factors in the circumstances or context of the conversation will also have an impact (for instance, privacy or the opposite, noise levels, other activities), and these ideas are written in the space between the heads. From this exercise it will be seen that communication is a complicated matter, and that allowances have to be made accordingly.

**4.00pm**
**Break.**

**4.30pm**
**Questions of identity and prejudice:**
Participants are invited to look at the question of identity and belonging. Each is asked to make a list of as many groups as she can think of to which she belongs or which help to form her identity; then to select the three which she considers most important and to write by each of the three something about it that makes her feel proud, and something about it that makes her feel uncomfortable or ashamed.

**4.45pm**
Participants are then asked to share these lists with one or two others (and if there is time go on to tell each other about occasions when they have been, on the one hand, victims of prejudice or discrimination and, on the other hand, guilty of them).

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**5.05pm**
**Individuals share with the whole group anything that they choose to, discussing, as appropriate, questions of difference, justice, and the need both for critical awareness, and respect and sensitivity, in relation to our own cultures and those of others.**

**5.30pm**
**Brief evaluation in whole group and closure, followed by base group meetings. (These could also take place immediately after supper.)**

**8.00pm**
**(Or as soon as convenient after supper) Base group representatives for the day meet with the workshop leaders to give feedback and ideas.**

**Second morning:**

**9.00am**
**Opening, announcements, report on base group feedback and agenda review.**

**9.15am**
**Dealing with strong emotions:**
**Coping with anger is a difficult and important element in responding constructively to conflict, whether as a direct participant or as a mediator. Participants are asked to remember an occasion when they were faced with an angry situation and to take up a position at some point on an imaginary line across the room, one end of which represents total satisfaction with the way they responded, the other total dissatisfaction. They are then invited to explain why they are standing where they are: what was it about their response that seemed helpful of less so?**

**10.00am**
**In pairs, participants discuss their own difficulties with, and resources for, coping with strong emotions, in themselves and others (15 minutes), then bring any points they choose to the whole group.**

**10.30am**
**Break.**

**11.00am**
**After a brief discussion on the dynamics and stages of conflict (see sheet), the leader fills in and explains the third layer of the 'ice-berg': the phase of co-operation between the parties in the search for a solution to the conflict; one which will include - meet the basic needs of - both or all parties.**

**The concept of reframing is explained (see sheet), along with the importance both of clear analysis of the conflict, and of imaginative thinking to generate options for resolving it; also of care in the evaluation and implementation of any agreement (including subsequent monitoring - see later sheet on mediation). This explanation is followed by questions and discussion.**

**11.30am**
**Game.**

**11.35am**
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**Analysing conflict :**
**Input (see sheet), including the idea of 'needs and fears' analysis. Discussion. Participants then work in groups of six or so to use this method to analyse a conflict with which one of its members is familiar. The member concerned outlines the conflict, with the help of questions from the others, and the reporter 'maps' it on large paper for presentation to the whole group.**

**12.30pm**
**Lunch.**

**2.30pm**
**Groups finalise work; presentations and questions; comments on the process.**

**3.30pm**
**Game.**

**3.40pm**
**Third party roles in conflict:**
**The facilitator collects on large paper words that describe the different roles that third parties can play, under two headings: positive and negative. These lists are then discussed.**

**4.00pm**
**Break.**

**4.30pm**
**Mediation is briefly explained as one of the positive functions open to a third party who opts for a non-partisan role (rather than, for instance, one of advocacy for one side). Discussion follows on mediation in its different forms, based on participants' own experience and knowledge.**
**4.50pm**
**The leader asks, on the basis of this explanation of mediation, what are the functions of a mediator and the qualities she or he will require? The responses are listed on the flipchart and discussed. The sheet on mediation is given out.**

**5.10pm**
**Discussion on the possible relevance of mediation to the cases used for needs and fears mapping.**

**5.30pm**
**Brief evaluation and closure, followed by base group meetings.**

**8.00pm**
**Base group representatives meet with workshop leaders.**

**Third morning:**

**9.00am**
**Opening, announcements, report on base group feedback and agenda review.**

**9.15am**
**Preparation of mediation role-play: several (if the leader feels the groups will be able to manage them without her/his help) based on the cases used for 'needs and fears'**

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analysis and done in the same groups. If the leader's facilitation is going to be needed, one 'fishbowl' role play can be done instead, with a chosen scenario and a few volunteer participants, and the rest of the group observing. In either case those chosen as mediators facilitate a face to face meeting of the conflicting parties, with the aim of co-operative problem solving. The setting and form of the meeting should be discussed with participants, and cultural considerations taken into account. (The observer or facilitator/observer role is important in itself. See sheet for instructions.)

**9.35am**

Let the role-play run for twenty to thirty minutes, then stop, whatever stage the mediation has reached. Participants de-role and all go through the process of feedback and discussion.

**10.30am**
**Break.**

**11.00am**
Injustice and oppression, made possible by extreme inequalities of power, have to be addressed if conflict is to be resolved. The leader presents and explains the model, 'Power and conflict resolution' (see sheets) and this presentation is followed by discussion.

**11.30am**
Oppression is a form of violence and can be combated violently or nonviolently. In small groups participants discuss experiences of violence : their own violence, the violence they suffer in their own relationships and at different levels in their society. What forms does it take? How are these different forms connected? The ideas which emerge are written or drawn on large sheets of paper, for instance in the form of a web. (This will encourage the group to appoint a facilitator and a scribe.)

**12.15/30 pm**
**Presentations of work groups' work.**

(Note: If time runs out, this discussion of different forms of violence can be done in plenary at the beginning of the next session.)

**12.45/1.00pm**
**Lunch.**

**Afternoon free.**
(Possibly an optional evening session for small group mediation role-plays.)
**Fourth morning:**

**9.00am**
**Opening, announcements, report on base group feedback and agenda review.**

**9.15am**
The facilitator offers a definition of violence as destructive action which oppresses, exploits, diminishes or harms another or others, whether physically or

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**psychologically, by personal, social, political or economic means, noting that power is in itself neither positive nor negative, but that violence is negative by definition.**

**The facilitator continues with brief input on options for responding to violence. The impulse to react violence is a healthy one: to remain passive (or appeasing) in the face of violence is to allow its perpetuation; to be aggressive or respond with counter-violence is to enter into the violent dynamic; to respond assertively, without violence, is to stand up against it while introducing a different dynamic. This third option can be described as active nonviolence.**

**Presentation on the philosophy of nonviolence. (See sheet.)**
**Note: This presentation is intended to *describe* an approach, not to prescribe it.**
**Discussion.**

**10.00am**
**In groups of five or six, participants share insights and sources of inspiration for nonviolence - own experiences and beliefs, people, relationships, reading etc. - and problems, obstacles, questions that come up.**

**10.45am**
**Break.**

**11.15am**
**Important ideas and insights from the groupwork are shared in the whole group.**
**11.40am**
**Song or game.**

**11.45am**
**Presentation of models for the analysis of unjust/ oppressive/ damaging situations, for building support, and for planning and building an alternative future. (See sheets.)**
**Discussion. (Note that these models can be used in the planning of any concerted action for change, and at whatever stage of a conflict. For instance, they could be used in a campaign to create the political will to end a conflict.)**

**12.30am**
**Lunch.**


**Fourth afternoon:**

**2.30pm**
**Formation of groups which choose a situation known to one or more of their participants and analyse it, using the models.**

**3.30pm**
**Presentations of groups' work.**


**4.00pm**
**Break**

**4.30pm**
**The leader introduces a discussion on methods of nonviolent action, inviting participants' stories and discussion. Some categories and guiding ideas will emerge and can be summarised. (See sheet.)**

**5.30pm**
Brief evaluation and closure, followed by base group meetings.

**8.00pm**
Base group representatives meet with workshop leaders.

**Fifth morning:**

**9.00am**
Opening, announcements, report on base group feedback, agenda review.

**9.15am**
Recap on methods of nonviolent action.
Groups continue to work on yesterday's cases, making a plan of action for the first three months of a campaign, and planning one action in some detail.

**10.30am**
Break.

**11.15am**
The groups prepare a role-play, focusing on a brief episode contained within their action plan, to test ways of handling some particular challenge they envisage and the usefulness of concepts/skills covered in the workshop thus far. The role-play runs for only a few minutes (see sheet for instructions), so that there is time for thorough feedback.

**12.15pm**
Reports in plenary of the groups' plans and role plays and the learnings from them.

**(Note: The use of the above half session for role-plays will depend on how time has gone up to this point. In training for trainers, this time might alternatively be used to focus on training issues.)**

**12.45pm**
Lunch.

**Fifth afternoon:**

**2.30pm**
Recovery, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation:
In small groups, participants share experiences: what has been needed, what has made it possible, or impossible, for them or those they have known (both individuals and groups) to let go of pain and anger and move on? What are the similarities and differences and differences between the needs and responsibilities at the individual and at the group level?

The groups make pictures or diagrams on large paper to represent possible routes to healing and reconciliation.

**4.00pm**
Break.

**4.30pm**

**Presentation of groupwork, followed by plenary discussion of what is needed for healing to take place, particularly at the social and political levels.**

**6.00pm**
**Brief evaluation of the day and closure.**

**7.30pm**
**Supper and party.**


**Final morning:**

**9.00am**
**Opening, announcements and agenda review.**

**9.15am**
**In threes or fours (or in base groups) participants discuss how they evaluate the workshop overall and its relevance for their lives and work; also how they will begin to use what they have learned and what future support would be valuable.**

**10.00am**
**Collecting and discussing ideas in plenary.**
**10.45am.**
**Formal thanks and a chance for all participants to thank each other personally, followed by some final song or exercise or symbolic closing.**

**Each participant has the chance to speak very briefly about what she has learned, how she has changed, what the week has meant to her. This may be combined with some kind of symbolic exercise.**

**11.30am**
**Workshop ends.**

Note: This final session can be extended or contracted according to the time available. The crucial components are overall evaluation, connecting the week to plans for the future and to life and work back home, together with psychological closure and leave-taking.'


To this agenda I added the following notes:


**'One alternative ordering of these agenda elements is to begin with the 'Power and conflict resolution' model, using it as the framework for the week, and working from the topic of groups and what they need to make them work (tied in with the group formation stage on the model), through questions of violence and nonviolence, and analysis and action strategies, to the section generally understood as 'conflict resolution' (using the 'iceberg' model by way of introduction, and incorporating communication skills) and finally to recovery and healing.**

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**If a group's most urgent preoccupation is with questions of power and justice, the order just described makes a lot of sense, because it begins where they are. If there are likely to be tensions between different groupings among the participants, for instance along ethnic lines, it could be important to take questions of identity and stereotypes relatively early on, and to consider which topics and processes will help build trust in the group. [Here I spoke with my experience of the Balaton workshop in mind: see account later.] If participants were all concerned with one overall situation which had by and large reached the 'recovery' stage, that could be a reason for starting at the end of the conflict resolution stage in the 'Power and conflict resolution' model, and allocating more time to this post-conflict phase. In other words, the arrangement of the different elements in such a workshop should be shaped according to the estimated needs of a particular group, and modified as the workshop progresses.'**

## Agenda ordering

Finding the right ordering for a particular workshop seems important to me. I want to start from the point of most immediate concern; but in a geographically mixed group, there may be no one such point, and the choice is therefore somewhat arbitrary. In such cases, I try to sense whether the overall emphasis is on 'conflict resolution' or 'nonviolent action' and choose my starting point accordingly. I would like to have more opportunities to focus on particular aspects of this overall menu. For instance, I have never had time to give what felt like adequate attention to the question of post-conflict recovery. Recently I have begun to work in Croatia, helping those working in fragmented societies to tackle some of the problems associated with refugee return. I find, however, that a situation which is, at the macro level 'post-conflict' is, at the micro-level, often at the stage of entering into conflict; so that even here the training menu  needs to include a wide range of topics and skills.

## Evaluation

I shall return to the question of overall usefulness of training workshops in my concluding chapters, when I look at the question of evaluation. At this point, however, I would like to focus,

briefly, on specific forms of workshop evaluation and on the need throughout workshops, and at the end, to ensure that participants have the opportunity and encouragement to evaluate their learnings in relation to their own experiences, lives and circumstances. This is important to the trainers and organisers, so that they can try to adjust and develop their work in response to what is really needed or useful. It is also important for participants. It is a way for them to maximise the usefulness of what they experience in a workshop, identifying what makes sense to them, what is enabling. It also helps them to develop their skills for evaluating and giving feedback (skills which are practised also in relation to exercises such as role-plays).

In the early phase of my research I used largely plenary evaluation processes during workshops: some simple process at the end of each day, like inviting comments to be written up under the general categories of 'positive', 'negative', and 'ideas for the future'. While it had the advantages of spontaneity, simplicity, and involving (theoretically) the whole group, in practice this process tended to involve some more than others, and to leave the facilitator(s) often with multiple and contradictory demands in an undigested form. I therefore began to use, more often, the 'base-group' system mentioned above, whereby all participants were drawn in to small group discussion, and invited to contribute to a more considered summary, which was then presented to the facilitators by one group member (or two). This exercise seems to enable participants to produce very serious and useful evaluative feedback. It also provides practice in group process, including finding consensus and acknowledging differences of opinion. It gives an opportunity for practice in representation and the use of feedback skills, since even facilitators need to be affirmed as well as shown how they can do better! It gives the facilitators more consolidated feedback than they would get in a quick plenary session, and a summary of all the group feedback can be presented to the next morning's plenary, along with the facilitators' proposals for responding to it. (See Geneva account in Chapter Six.)

This same system can provide the basis for a final evaluation within the workshop, with the base-group meetings followed by an extended plenary session. In addition, individual written evaluations give an opportunity for participants to reflect at leisure, and free from social pressure. (See, for instance, Harare account in Chapter Eight.)

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This review of workshop evaluation procedures brings me to the end of this chapter. I hope that I have given the reader an adequate idea of the nature of the workshops I facilitate: the concepts and processes they embrace, and the approach - both to education and to conflict - which informs them.