

Developing Community Based Strategies For Responding to Conflict

*A Project Report
for
Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project
(BTAP)*

by
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That practitioner is John Mulligan (Breakthrough Consultancy) who devised and facilitated a programme of work to develop the capacity of BTAP, its board and staff and members of the community of Labre Park in developing strategies to respond to conflict. Through his commitment, openness and generosity, John continually adapted the programme to work where people were at and ensure he met the needs of individuals, the organization and a community within an ever changing environment.

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BTAP Board and Staff.

FOREWORD

This is a report of a ground-breaking pilot project to address conflict run by Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project in Dublin from 2012-2014. It is for Traveller organisations, their Boards and staff and others interested in exploring or embarking on projects to address tensions and conflict with their communities. The report will also be of interest to conflict professionals, policy makers and academics who are concerned with relationships and conflict in the community.

The report and recommendations will set out the context, stories and reflections on the conflict work undertaken at BTAP between 2012 and 2014. It will provide some detail on the principles, processes, practices and thinking which underpinned it. It will also provide guidance for Traveller projects or groups, who may never have undertaken any conflict work. It will provide greater understanding of the challenges entailed, of what is possible in dealing with Traveller conflict and how they might go about it themselves. This report outlines some worthwhile achievements - what worked well and not so well - and highlights the need for further research and the development of further resources for projects.

This project is indebted to the St. Stephens Green Fund who helped fund it, as well as the writing of this report. I would also like to acknowledge the support collaboration and financial assistance given by the Irish Traveller Movement and the Citizens Information Service, Ballyfermot to this project. The project could not have taken place without the vision and dedication of all the residents of Labre Park, the Board and staff of Ballyfermot Action Project and the many agencies and individuals who participated and gave so generously of their time and energy throughout the project. Lorraine McMahon, the BTAP Coordinator has been the driving force behind this project throughout and has provided valuable assistance in writing this report. Thanks also to Damien Walshe, Sarah Murphy, Damien Peel and Michael Kinsley for their assistance and feedback in editing the report. Any errors are my responsibility as are the views presented unless otherwise stated.

John Mulligan,

Breakthrough Consultancy, June 2015

“The wise man learns from others, the fool from his own mistakes”

“However, a wise fool is generous enough to let others learn from his failures”

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1 Introduction

1.1 Why write the report?

The main purpose of this report and recommendations is to meet a need expressed by many Traveller projects that have been grappling with the challenges and negative impacts of conflict, both within the Traveller community and with non-Traveller and agencies. The intention is to share the journey and learning from the project, provide some recommendations to support development, and offer guidance to resources and practices which we have found helpful in developing BTAP's capacity to deal with various types of conflict.

Chapter 2 focuses on what is and is not conflict and how we can talk about it. It gives some sense of the background to and the need for the Project at BTAP.

Chapter 3, the largest, contains the story of what we did and describes some of the models we used and how we applied them. It goes into considerable detail on some key elements of the learning journey and highlights issues arising so the reader can see from where and how the learning, conclusions and recommendations were generated. It is our view that the learning journey is a key part of the development of a conflict management system. Each project's learning journey will be different but cannot be avoided. It can be an uncomfortable and sometimes frustrating though ultimately worthwhile experience. It requires determination and resilience if our experience is anything to go by. We share our vulnerabilities and our successes in undertaking this innovative project so others may learn from our experience. We do so in the knowledge that those who are familiar with the complexities of dealing with conflict will understand how challenging it can be to break new ground. It is important to note that, while the project as such has ended, the work of addressing conflict continues at BTAP so the story contained here is best seen as part of a work in progress. "A lot done, more to do" to quote an infamous phrase.

Chapter 4 reviews some aspects of our experience, what worked and what did not, and highlights our learning and conclusions. Chapter 5 offers recommendations to guide staff and Boards of Traveller projects around the country who may be interested in developing a community-based capacity for responding to conflict in its various forms. It is expected these will be adapted and refined to suit individual projects needs and constraints.

The appendix complements the concepts, models and resources described in earlier chapters and provide additional guidance and resources that projects will find helpful. We hope our recommendations and resources will provide projects with firm foundations upon which they can develop and effective response to conflict.

2 Background and context of the project

2.1 What do we mean by conflict and how can we talk about it?

Being clear about what we mean by conflict is important from the outset. At a BTAP residents meeting where I had come to introduce the project and my role as project consultant, I mentioned that I was there to talk about conflict. As I continued to explain what the project was about, I noticed that almost all the men in the room had begun to leave. I was downhearted and perplexed by this as there had been considerable engagement in the meeting up to that point. Thankfully, when the meeting ended, one Traveller man kindly explained to me that the reason the men had left was because they thought we were going to talk about feuding. For them, conflict meant feuding and they wanted no part of it given their experience of a few short years before. So let's clarify what we mean before we go any further.

Feuding is one form of conflict, often chronic, ongoing, and intractable. Traveller feuds can appear dormant at times but can escalate rapidly or become violent and this kind of conflict can be very difficult to resolve. However, thankfully, not all conflict is like this and most of our everyday conflicts are easier to contain and prevent from escalating or resolve. By conflict therefore, we mean every day disputes and disagreements that lead to communication and relationship breakdowns and undermine the quality of family life, work and relations with neighbours and the wider community. Too narrow a definition of conflict can prevent us from recognising it until it has escalated. So we need broader definitions to aid earlier recognition and range of responses.

By conflict, we mean everyday disputes and disagreements that lead to communication and relationship breakdowns and undermine the quality of family life, work and relations with neighbours and the wider community.

Conflict occurs when our needs, values, beliefs and identity are threatened or undermined.

Conflict can escalate when we become defensive - fight, take flight, freeze.

Conflict occurs where we perceive that what is important to us - our values, needs, interests or identity - is threatened or undermined or where we perceive others to be getting in the way of us achieving our goals. Latent conflict, contention and opposition are all forms of conflict but they do not have to be escalated or protracted before we identify them as conflict, even though many use the word conflict to refer only to escalated conflict. In fact, the earlier we can identify that conflict is occurring or about to occur, that is before it escalates or spreads, the easier it is likely to be to prevent or resolve it.

When conflict escalates it can be painful but it also makes us more aware of mutual concerns, needs and problems that need to be solved. At its core, good conflict work is about finding effective ways of communicating and relating in order to meet needs and interests of all parties while maintaining relationships with and doing no harm to those who may oppose us. Conflict is natural and inevitable. We can learn how to handle it better.

The occurrence of conflict is both a danger and an opportunity. The danger is the risk of damage or destruction to all parties which motivates most of us to avoid conflict where possible. However, avoiding it also means we never learn to handle it better. So when it is unavoidable, as it often is, we are stuck and do not have the skills or the strategies to deal with it and get positive results for all parties and without doing material or psychological harm to one another. If we can overcome our fears and face conflict, we can learn healthier and more constructive ways of dealing with our conflicts, as individuals, families and communities, and access the supports that are available to do so. Having clear goals for conflict work and a shared vision of the outcomes we desire can help us work more effectively together to achieve them.

4 Popular strategies for resolving conflict

- **Power contests** – most powerful wins by use of force, strategy or resource
- **Rights contests** – the source of authority, law rights or rulebook is used to decide
- **Negotiation** – interdependent parties reach agreement by bargaining or principled negotiation
- **Collaborative Problem Solving** – me and you against the problem

There are many different ways that people go about resolving conflict. The most common are power based strategies where one side tries to force their solution on the other side. The stronger usually wins but the loser often seeks revenge or retaliates. Rights based methods are also power based where the power of law or rules is used to counterbalance use or abuse of other kinds of power. Both are coercive in the sense that solutions may be imposed without the consent of the other party.

Interest or need based methods are becoming increasingly popular and are often used as an alternative to formal complaint or legal procedures. These alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods are voluntary and usually entail parties working out their own solutions with the help of a trained neutral third party. Examples here include mediation, arbitration, restorative justice, etc.

In addition, there are a whole range of methods which are based on individuals, groups and communities learning how to improve their conflict management and resolution

capacity - how they communicate and relate to each other. These can include training courses in Non-violent communication, individual conflict coaching or community dialogue skills to mention but a few. Many of these will be outlined later in this report and the appendix.

2.2 The national context

2.2.1 Conflict - a national as well as local problem for Travellers

Conflict, specifically, instances of Traveller-Traveller conflict or “internal feuding”, was identified as a huge issue for members at the Irish Traveller Movement annual conferences in 2008 and 2009. Conflict had, and continues to have, a huge impact on Travellers in numerous ways. Directly, families are affected by violence, destruction of property, intimidation, stress and families forced to leave their homes. Children often had to leave schools and relationships that families had built up in a geographic area were destroyed. People’s mental health suffered from stress due to violence or the threat of violence.

Families who were forced to leave one area were often asked to rebuild their lives in a new area where local authorities are hostile to providing accommodation for “non-indigenous” Travellers. Travellers in these areas often feared that families fleeing conflict would bring trouble with them. Families, not directly involved in conflict, often feared for repercussions if the conflict broadened out. High profile instances of Traveller/Traveller violence received high media profile and were often spread widely via social media which adds fuel to stereotypes about all Travellers being involved in anti-social behaviour.

Travellers in Traveller organisations (staff, volunteers, management, Board members, participants on schemes, etc.) can be directly impacted by conflict in that members of their extended family may be linked to a feud which can impact on their participation within the project or working with families from “the other side”. Projects often fear for their members’ safety when violence erupts as certain families may be unable to access other sites in the area. Traveller organisations often do not have the resources, the training or access to professional support to respond constructively in crisis situations of escalated conflict what are often under pressure to do so which can leave them feeling helpless and incompetent and their credibility damaged.

While these are some immediate effects, there are further long-term effects that seriously undermine the ability of local and national Traveller organisations to carry out their work in a number of ways. Traveller organisations may have spent years working with the local community to develop collective views on the issues they faced. In the aftermath of conflict, collective action becomes very difficult. Creating collective spaces for discussions or bringing people together at meetings in certain locations becomes impossible due to fear or unresolved conflict. Trust between families can be lost. The provision of accommodation in the area is affected with families leaving accommodation and in some instances, accommodation being damaged or destroyed.

In late 2011, as it became clear that creating a national steering committee to focus on conflict was a non-starter, ITM began to explore other possibilities for realising the strategy. This led, in 2012 to exploration with Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project into a pilot project which might progress some of the ITM strategy.

BTAP had decided early in 2012 that it wished to tackle issues related to conflict and had already initiated work with the BTAP Board on how BTAP might address conflict. BTAP had already begun to design a project to build capacity among Board and staff and Board members. BTAP approached the ITM to seek support and the ITM Boards programme on conflict was developed in collaboration and an invitation to participate extended to other projects. ITM also agreed to provide some financial support for the parallel work on the BTAP project.

2.2.2 ITM Pilot programme: Transforming Tension and Conflict into Positive Change: Strengthening Board Practice

Funding was secured to work with the Boards of interested Traveller organisations to see how conflict management strategies could be embedded into the organisations; to work with Boards and staff to develop a greater understanding of conflict, its origins and how best Travellers and Traveller organisations can become conflict aware and competent.

This project started in October 2012 and finished in July 2013. Participants were made up of Board and staff members of the Irish Traveller Movement, Ballyfermot Traveller Action Project and Clondalkin Traveller Development Group. Training took place over 12 full day sessions and with each organisation tasked with project work and learning sets whereby participants met between sessions. The training was developed by and facilitated by Breakthrough Consultancy and hosted by BTAP.

This year-long Boards conflict capability training programme was envisaged as part of the wider BTAP vision around conflict as outlined in their funding application to the St. Stephen's Green Trust.

“The project we are seeking to embark on is breaking new ground within the community of Labre Park. Therefore, much emphasis will be placed on the process of exploring with stakeholders what we are aiming to achieve and of developing a mechanism for engagement and buy in of key stakeholders in particular Traveller men in Labre Park. If successful the project will provide a template that will be of significant benefit to similar Traveller communities elsewhere. Given the nature of the work involved the project will be a two year initiative.”

2.3 Background to this Project at BTAP

2.3.1 The Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project (BTAP)

BTAP is managed by a voluntary Board of Management of which over 50% are members of the Traveller community. The Board ensures that the organization has a clear strategy which is informed by the needs of the community, is well managed in accordance with best practice and gives direction to the staff on the delivery of priority objectives and on the overall allocation of resources.

The organisation is staffed by 2 core staff and supported by 2 participants through Community employment scheme.

BTAP have three core but interrelated aims:

- 1 **Organisational development:** To continue to develop an effective, independent and autonomous organization structure which is owned and lead by Travellers
- 2 **Programme development:** To provide a range of programmes and initiatives aimed at empowering Travellers to develop their skills, abilities and leadership capacity in order to address issues which affect the quality of their lives and their communities
- 3 **Challenging racism & discrimination & validation of Traveller culture & identity:** To address and challenge racism, discrimination and inequalities experienced by Travellers and work towards the recognition and validation of Travellers as an ethnic minority group and celebrate Traveller culture and identity.

Labre Park, in Ballyfermot, in west Dublin is the oldest Traveller specific housing in the country dating from 1967. Families living there include several families who had previously resided on lands at Cherry Orchard nearby prior to the development of Labre Park. Labre Park comprises 45 Traveller families of which 19 live in houses and 26 live in trailers on un-serviced ground while awaiting permanent accommodation.

Labre Park lies enclosed between an industrial estate on one side and huge electric pylons and an open canal without protective fencing flowing alongside on the other. Many residents have lived in intolerable conditions awaiting the redevelopment of Labre Park and until November 2011 were without access to basic facilities of water, sanitation and electricity. Some lived in such conditions until 2014.

Labre Park is the “invisible” community of Ballyfermot and the issues of marginalisation experienced by Travellers in the wider Ballyfermot community are further compounded for Travellers living in a site which is dilapidated and in need of urgent redevelopment. In 2008/9 the Labre Park community experienced a major conflict which resulted in substantial damage to homes and the community though much of what happened was overshadowed by publicity on other Traveller conflicts around the country during that period.

2.3.2 The need for the project

The need for the project in Labre Park from BTAP's local perspective was outlined in their funding application to St Stephen's Green Trust in 2012

"Inability to address conflict constructively has seriously undermined safety and negatively impacted on the quality of life of Travellers in Labre Park as well as amplifying the exclusion and discrimination against Travellers. It has also impacted on the way that BTAP can work collectively on issues affecting Labre Park. If conflict could be prevented or addressed in a more effective manner than is currently the case, then the achievements of the Board, progress made to date on improving the quality of life in Labre Park and the reputation of Travellers would not be undermined and undone by the impact of destructive handling of such conflicts and safety, inclusion and quality of life for Travellers in Labre Park could be greatly enhanced.

At different stages over the years there have been issues of anti social behaviour and conflict on site in Labre Park. The issues escalated to a point of crises in 2008-2009. Families stated that they did not feel safe living on the site at this time and feared for the safety of their children. BTAP and other agencies consistently called on DCC to meet in order to be able to discuss the situation and identify possible ways forward. Unfortunately, the Traveller Accommodation Unit within DCC did not agree to meet until we requested intervention from the city manager.

During this period of approximately eighteen months, eight houses were burned out and many families who were the core of the community had no option but to move out for the safety of their families. Over the past two years significant work has been done to address antisocial behaviour and ensure Labre Park was a safe space for families to live. However, the impacts from that period of time have left "deep wounds" within the community, where residents do not feel safe to get involved when an issue causing tension or conflict on site emerges.

The period of escalating anti social behaviour on site between 2008 and late summer of 2009 had left its mark on the site and people did not feel safe to be involved in any structure where decisions could be made that might not have the agreement of all residents and this could potentially reignite past or underlying conflicts within the community.

Given the fact that the redevelopment of Labre Park was back on the agenda of DCC, there was a need to begin to explore and address some of the identified concerns of residents and work with residents to build their capacity in responding to and addressing some of the issues of conflict in collaboration with key agencies and with the support of the relevant expertise. The time for such an initiative as we propose is now so that the material development of the site is enhanced and made sustainable by parallel development of residents capacity to address potential threats to progress, such as conflict has been in the recent past."

3 Working with conflict - what we did in Labre Park

3.1 Overview of work strands:

While there were different aspects to the project it was often difficult to fit what we did neatly under one heading or another. There were many overlaps. It was difficult to speak of work with the BTAP Board and staff without referring to the ITM Boards training programme and the boundaries of work with the Labre Park residents, the Traveller men and Traveller boys often blurred so it was difficult to be precise about which part of the project we were working on at times. The different aspects were often interrelated and interdependent. However the key strands of the work were less discrete than they appear in the following descriptions. For example, outcomes listed under one section will also have been partly achieved through the work done in another strand but are not duplicated in that part of the report for brevity sake.

In this chapter, we will describe the work done during the project under the following four strands:

- a. BTAP Board and staff and ITM Boards Programme (section 3.2)
- b. Labre Park residents and Traveller men (section 3.3)
- c. Traveller men/ boys and a local business(section 3.4)
- d. Interagency work and DCC (section 3.5)

For each strand we will:

- i Need for the focus/work
- ii What happened
- iii Approach, tools, processes and principles used
- iv The issues and challenges arising
- v. Outcomes/ evaluation

These accounts focus on selected aspects of the work done and what has been achieved rather than claiming to be a comprehensive piece of research. The successes, learning and shortcomings are also reviewed in the next chapter on reflection and analysis.

3.2 Work with Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project Board and Staff

This section will outline the work with BTAP Board and staff members. Following an overview of the need for this work, what we did will be addressed under the following three headings:

- Attendance at ITM Boards Training Programme - Transforming Tension and Conflict into Positive Action from September 2012 to July 2013.
- Board and staff training sessions - building the capacity of the organization to identify, analyse and respond to issues of tension and conflict - 2012 - 2014
- Board and staff team development, coaching and mediation sessions 2014

3.2.1 The need for work with the Board in 2011

BTAP, like many other Traveller projects, were struggling with the question as to what role Traveller Projects and their Boards in particular, should adopt in the face of the challenges of dealing constructively with conflict.

The conflict and destruction in Labre Park in 2008/9 and its aftermath was still having a major negative impact three years later on developments in 2011 despite significant progress in the meanwhile led by BTAP Board, staff and residents. The Board too was deeply impacted by ripple effects of the conflict. For some Board members, especially those living in Labre Park, raising contentious issues was taboo for fear of escalating tensions again. This meant that it was difficult to address some important issues openly and this avoidance undermined the morale, cohesion and effectiveness of the Board. The Board, with the encouragement of the BTAP Coordinator, decided that the time had come to develop the capacity of the Board to address conflict within the Board as well as the broader conflicts in the community. The following are main elements of the work with the Board and staff during the project.

3.2.2 Attendance by BTAP Board and staff members on ITM Boards Conflict Capacity Training Programme

What was done

One of the key initiatives in building the conflict capacity of the Board was through five members of the BTAP Board completing a 12 day training programme on Transforming Tension and Conflict into Positive Action between October 2012 and July 2013. Not all Board members were able to attend given that a limited number of places on the Programme were allotted to each organisation participating and the availability of Board members to attend.

The programme was attended by five members of the Board of management of BTAP, as well as by members from the Clondalkin Traveller development group and the Irish Traveller movement. This included Traveller men and women from Ballyfermot and Clondalkin as well as other counties in Ireland. The programme focused on developing skills and strategies for handling conflict and community based conflict management systems. The training was intended to be the beginning of a longer term process whereby organisations are expected to utilise the enhanced understanding of conflict, the tools and skills studied on this training to inform the development and implementation of local conflict management systems within their communities and embed this within the work of their organisation.

3.2.4 The programme outline

The 12 day programme focused on raising awareness and conflict capacity of participants. The early parts of the programme focused on building individual understanding and competence in conflict management using a variety of models and theory and skills practice. The mid-section of the programme focused on interpersonal conflict and the skills and strategies needed to improve the quality of communication and relationships. The latter part of the programme addressed the role of the Board in relation to conflict and what Boards of Traveller projects could do to manage and support those in their communities who were engaged in or affected by conflict.

The following is an outline of what was covered. Greater detail of the programme and a range of resource materials are provided in the appendices

“The Aims of the programme were to:

- extend participants understanding of conflict and its dynamics*
- support participants to become aware of their individual conflict styles and extend their conflict capability*
- equip participants with skills necessary to conduct a conflict mapping and analysis exercise in relation to the change they are seeking to bring about in their communities.*
- enable participants to be aware of the options for engagement and intervention in local Traveller conflict and be able to develop a strategy to respond constructively to the challenges posed by it.*
- develop participants skills to participate in/facilitate learning/ developmental/ difficult conversations and dialogues in their Boards, communities and other stakeholders*

Programme Content:

The following is an overview of the content of the programme

- Module 1 Understanding conflict: a new look at an old devil*
- Module 2 Self-awareness: managing your behaviour and responses*
- Module 3 Strategic options for dealing with friction and conflict:*
- Module 4 Interpersonal skills*
- Module 5 Processing group conflict*
- Module 6 Community conflict and culture*
- Module 7 Conflict monitoring and mapping*
- Module 8 Collective decisions and difficult conversations*
- Module 9 Role of the Board in addressing conflict*
- Module 10 Project reviews and improvement*
- Module 11 Developing a Conflict Management System*
- Module 12 Gathering learning and impact evaluation*

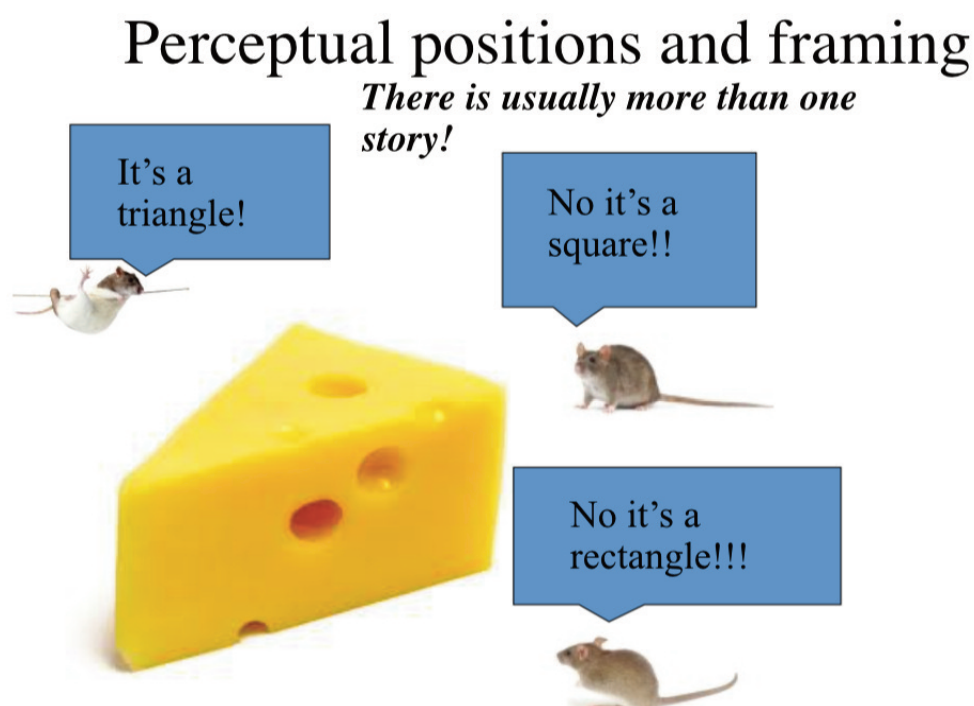
3.2.5 Approach, tools, processes used within the ITM training programme:

The programme was highly experiential and practical with short theory inputs. Sessions required a high level of participation and include skills training, dialogue, practical conflict work exercises and practice in community, collaborative action and participation in learning sets. Keeping a personal learning journal and refining and implementing the change project for each participating organization/agency continued throughout the programme. Participants were also expected to attend a smaller learning set meeting, within each of the three participating organisations, between each course contact day for the purpose of practice and learning consolidation.

Participants' experiences of conflict and the challenges they faced were used throughout as opportunities for learning and practice development. The assumption was that programme participants would develop a range of conflict skills and strategy and these would be applied in the context of their home organisations and communities.

A wide range of models and tools were presented and tested for addressing conflict at individual, interpersonal, group and community levels. Many of these are outlined in the resource materials in the appendix. Many of these tools and practices are referred to in the descriptions of work carried out in the various strands of the project. The following are some examples of these tools and practices.

One of the most common experiences in conflict is the seemingly incompatible stories about what happened as described by the different parties to the conflict. One person's story can appear to question the truth of the other's story and this can undermine trust between parties. It can be difficult to reconcile these stories unless we realise that no one story is capable of reflecting the whole truth and that all stories are needed for a full understanding of what is going on or what the problem that needs to be addressed is.



We all have strategies to address conflict whether we realise it or not or whether we use it with awareness and after consideration about its suitability for the situation at hand. For example, different stages of an escalating conflict need different approach. An escalated or crisis situation will require a different strategy to a latent or slowly brewing conflict. Three broad strategies - prevention, resolution or containment, which may later be refined or fleshed out, are a good starting point. Your processes of naming, noticing, framing and responding underpin your style and effectiveness in dealing with conflict. It takes considerable learning and practice to become skilful but commitment and action to develop these core skills is needed from the outset if you are to be effective in addressing conflict.

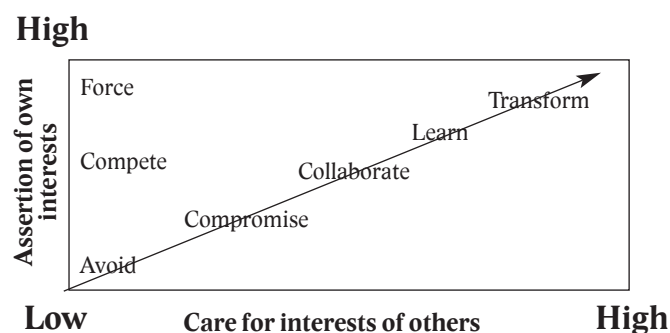
Conflict: Starting Points

Consider ways of Naming, Noticing, Framing and Responding to conflict that are helpful.

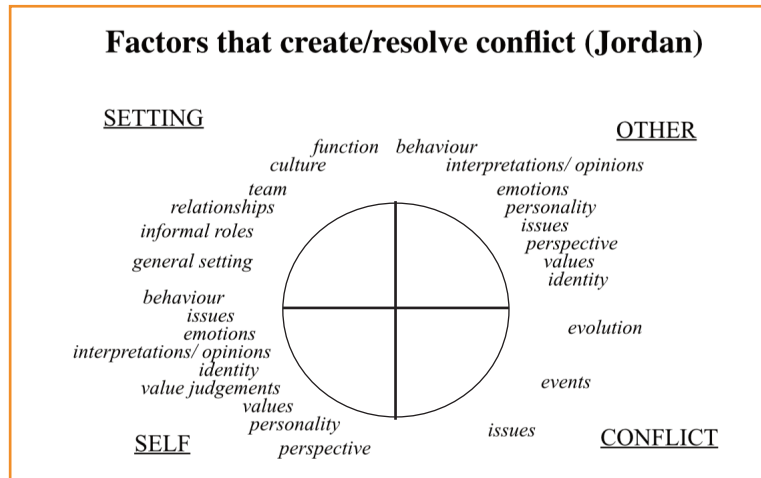
- Naming refers to what is and is not conflict
- Noticing refers to developing multi-level awareness
- Framing refers to interpretation of a conflict
- Responding refers to ways of preventing, managing, resolving or transforming a conflict

Thomas/Kilman's model (adapted in attached fig.) of conflict styles helps us understand that most of us have preferred behaviour styles which we use during conflict and these preferences shape our strategy. Some people like to force, some compromise, while others avoid or give in as their predominant way of dealing with conflict. Different situations require different behavioural responses so just using your preferred style will often not be enough to resolve a conflict. It is best to learn how to use different styles and when best to use them.

Your behaviour styles during conflict



In conflict, especially polarised or escalated conflict, it is easy to see your opponent as the source of all your problems. However understanding how the context contributes is crucial. Most of us fail to recognise how much the context in which the conflict is taking place causes or influences the conflict, how it evolves and resolves. Exploring the context as well as the perspectives of different parties and the issues that divide and unite can be highly beneficial in reaching a sustainable solution to the conflict. Thomas Jordan's model below emphasises the need to raise awareness and work on all 4 dimensions to help us deal effectively with conflict.



Currently there is a vast array of different approaches in use to dealing with conflict. Some are voluntary such as mediation and conflict coaching while others such as violence, court procedures and law enforcement may be involuntary. Some approaches depend on individual skills, some on the use of third party, trained professional expertise like judges or peacemakers. Some depend on laws or rules, are more formal like grievance and complaints procedures and the outcomes are decided by a neutral arbitrator, while others are informal and outcomes are more in the control of the parties to the conflict. We have a wide range of choices though the training course focused more on building conflict capacity and alternative dispute resolution approaches as these are less well known.

Responses to Conflict		
	Constructive	Destructive
Internal	Reach out – listen Explore all perspectives Explore needs/interests Create solutions	Gossip escalate threat Put down/humiliate others Retaliate/violate Win at all costs
External	Reflect on situation Delay responding Manage your triggers Be the change/learn	Avoid – cold-shoulder Blame/yeild resentfully Hide emotions/needs Self criticise/close to leaning

3.2.6 Issues and challenges arising

- a. The programme posed many challenges for participants. These included conceptualising conflict in a new way; changing attitudes to conflict and to those with whom they were in conflict; being asked to stop blaming and demonising their opponent, stepping into their shoes and finding out what was right or of value in their opponent's position and perspective; focusing on their own conflict triggers and assumptions as ways of de-escalating conflict. Participants were also asked to step out of the advocacy and social activist roles; to stop trying to change the other and to try changing their own story about the truth and meaning of a conflict. They were asked to take a neutral role and frame conflicts in a way which reflected the perspectives, values and needs of their opponents as well as their own side of the conflict. These were new, strange and sometimes uncomfortable territory for many. What made sense at a theoretical level was deeply challenging to put into practice in relation to those with whom they were in a polarised and escalated conflict. At times, just trying to see anything good about the opposition, much less have a constructive conversation with them seemed beyond the realms of possibility.
- b. Course participants found the course and the practices it promoted deeply challenging at a personal level. Just getting your head around the idea that much effective conflict work is, in fact, inner-work ran counter to popular wisdom. For example, raising your awareness, being mindful, changing the stories we tell about ourselves and others, emotional self-management, attitude change, suspension of beliefs, and so on, all of which are essential in preventing, resolving and transforming conflict, were clearly difficult for those strongly identified with a social change activist role. Changing the focus of your attention from what the other is doing to what you are thinking feeling and doing; from past hurts toward creating the future that works for all parties; and from unskilled to skilled communication was the daunting challenge faced by participants who wanted to learn better ways of dealing with conflict.
- c. Many found the programme too short for the level of challenge and ambition. There was a constant struggle to maintain the full attendance that the course required of participants, which made continuity and progress for the group even more challenging. The programme was adapted as we went along to adjust to attendance patterns but it adversely affected what could be achieved. While some had to travel from distant parts of the country to attend, even participants from BTAP found it difficult to maintain full attendance. This probably reflected the personal challenge of the programme, the new and counter cultural approach to conflict, the challenges of the group dynamic, and competing priorities in personal and professional lives, all of which were cited at different times when issues of attendance were raised. An important impact of erratic attendance was that there was less attention given to the organisational level of conflict work than expected.
- d. From a course management and facilitation point of view, there was considerable

difficulty in holding participants accountable for meeting the requirements of the programme in regard to attendance, completion of homework, and support meetings internal to each organisation to which each committed at the outset. The result was that despite some valuable individual learning, these tools and practices were not embedded in the respective organisations as we had hoped. It was also difficult to sustain momentum in the programme when different members were absent or could not attend for the full duration of the course day. Duplication of coverage for some or simply missing out on sections of the programme meant individuals did not benefit as much as they might have had the full requirements of the programme been met.

- e. In retrospect, the programme was probably too ambitious in what it aspired to achieve and early anxieties about the limited amount of time and resource available for the programme should not have been disregarded. At the outset the choice was - stay within the limits of what members of project Boards and staff could commit to, or not do it at all. It quickly became clear that having just one facilitator to deliver the programme as the budget allowed, was not enough to deliver the quality of course we wished for and a second experienced facilitator, Tricia McDonnell, was funded by Breakthrough Consultancy at their expense so it could proceed. It was an innovative pilot and a lot has been learned from doing it about individual learning, Board responsibilities in relation to management of conflict and how to improve the training provision in this area.
- d. It is clear from participant feedback that a different programme structure and better intake processes and expectation setting with each project and individuals attending would have addressed a range of issues including attendance which arose. Projects and individuals would have benefited from some taster experiences so they could have a better understanding of what they were committing to.

3.2.7 Outcomes/ evaluation

An evaluation of this programme as a whole is beyond the scope of this report so we focus here on BTAP attendees. The following are a selection of extracts from evaluations of the programme by BTAP Coordinator and course members.

“The high level of participation of the (BTAP) Board members has also resulted in opportunities been created where issues and dynamics of gender, family, rank and roles within Labre Park community and the broader Traveller culture are been discussed and explored in a safe space. The complexities and challenges of these discussions cannot be overstated. However, without this initiative the opportunities to begin a process of “unpacking”, raising awareness and deepening our understanding and analysis of these issues would not be possible.

Notwithstanding these and other challenges, the programme was viewed by all who completed it as a valuable extension to their understanding of conflict and provided with them with some useful skills and strategies to help them address conflict in different contexts. Much

learning has also been achieved through this pilot about what future conflict capability development programmes should include and how they should be run.”

“it has been subtle - I can’t explain it but I notice the changes though - it is a feeling shift and I also appreciate the difference roles make.”

“I was mainly an avoider - I have the courage to face conflict and am better at taking my own side now”

“I look at things differently now and get things done without having a row - proud of myself.”

“I feel a bit overwhelmed (I notice so much of it now) - has the whole job turned into dealing with conflict?”

“I am questioning which roles I take and how I carry them out”

“We have changed the rules of engagement with this innovative approach”

“I feel free now to be open about being on the board of management - before I was hiding this’

“It takes lesser resources/energy to achieve better outcomes”

“I have learned more about Traveller culture and prejudices”

“The discussion of the difference between what it means to have a conflict with a Traveller rather than a settled person was revealing”

“I found the role plays of real situations great - they became alive and real”

“I learned the benefits of a no-blame approach and focusing on impacts and consequences”

“I realised I am afraid of looking unprofessional”

“I found the conflict analysis tools really helpful”

“I am fiery and afraid of escalating so I keep away”

“I found questioning assumptions was very helpful’

“I need more training”

3.2.9 BTAP Board training sessions:

What we did

Learning on the ITM Boards conflict capacity programme was consolidated and extended by a series of training and development sessions facilitated with the BTAP Board and staff by Breakthrough Consultancy over the lifetime of the project. This training focused on enhancing understanding and developing a framework for monitoring and analysing issues of tension and conflict and creating appropriate response mechanisms. It also focused on issues of tension and conflict within the Board itself from time to time. These training sessions were complemented by mediation and conflict coaching sessions for individuals and subgroups at various stages.

Initial work with the BTAP Board consisted of training sessions on specific aspects of conflict work, both to bring those members who had not attended the ITM programme up to speed and to consolidate and integrate learning into the everyday work of the Board and project. Staff as well as Board members attended these sessions, they lasted about two hours each, some longer and they were often linked to Board meetings which needed to address other Board business. Sometimes the Board business displaced the conflict training session and changed the focus. Some sessions focused on facilitating discussion around managing funding cuts and the need to make difficult decisions within the context of reduced funding.

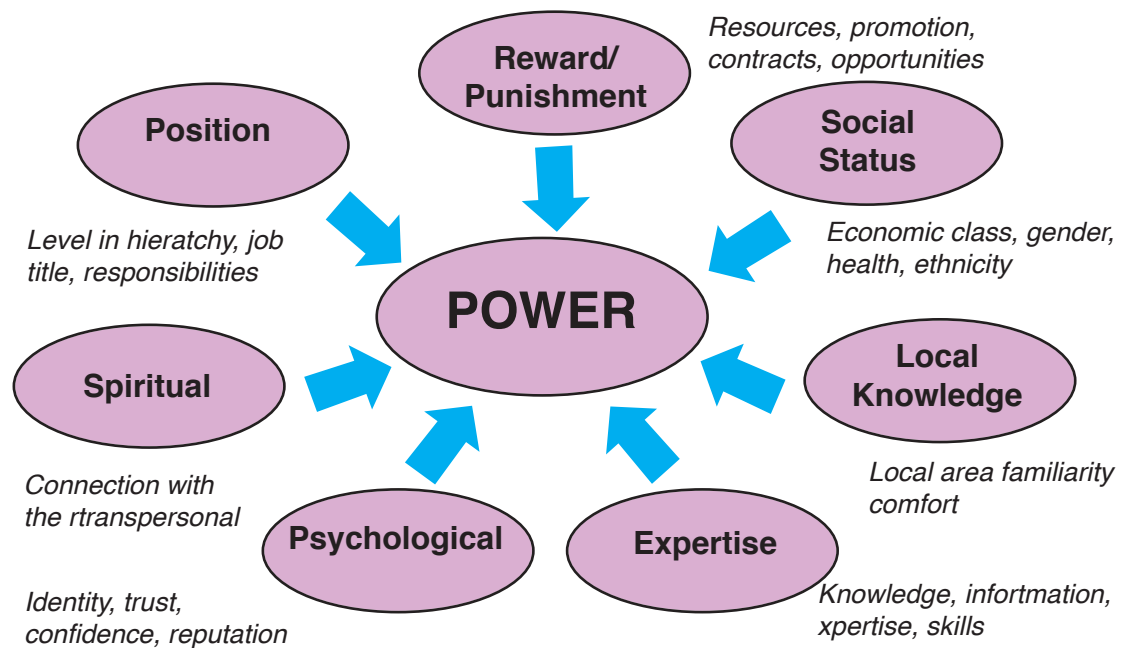
Early sessions focused on understanding conflict, awareness of personal ways of managing it, their conflict styles and building personal skills and strategies. These included being clear about the broader vision and purpose of conflict work, exploring the causes of conflict, how to manage triggers, assumptions and boundaries, reactions and consequences in conflict situations. We covered processes and skills related to escalation and de-escalation of conflict and how emotions are related to conflict and recognition of needs, values and identity threats. We practiced a range of tools for enhancing conflict communication including non-violent communication, responding to accusations, etc.

Later sessions dealt with rank and power as it appears in and causes conflict. We addressed awareness of different types of power, misuse and abuse of power and how to use our power for the better when in conflict. We raised awareness of verbal and nonverbal signals and behaviours which reflect high and low rank and the impact of power differences on communication and relating. This included studying the different power differences within the group of participants and how membership of mainstream and marginalised groups could make communication and relating as well as conflict more complex and problematic. We also explored the different kinds of rank attached to roles and how this can complicate communication with someone in a role and how the power associated with roles can be positively used and abused.

Imbalances of power, use and misuse of rank and privileges between and within Traveller families and between Traveller and Non-Traveller, were constantly in the background but only occasionally surfaced so they could be addressed directly. Awareness was raised around these issues in the training sessions for the Board of BTAP and the ITM sponsored training programme and in a mediation session between a male and female Traveller living in Labre Park.

These sessions highlighted differences in power rank and privilege related to gender, race and social status, between Traveller and non-Traveller on the Board of BTAP, employed staff and volunteers and so on. However, while these rank differences were felt acutely in many of these instances they proved explosive and difficult to talk about. They exposed use and misuse, even an abuse of power and rank triggering strong reactions, half consciousness awareness and painful memories for many. More often than not, there was too much to process given the available time and resources leaving a sense of unfinished business, discomfort and a reluctance to raise the issues again. This experience highlighted the need to prioritise, plan and ring-fence dedicated time for the board and staff to work through such issues. While the methods for doing so were available to us we struggled to find time to address them amidst competing priorities.

Sources of power and rank



It is risky and takes courage to confront or speak the truth to power (someone with higher rank and privileges) whether that power is physical, psychological or based on hierarchical or social position. Rank and power may be based on education, financial resources or insider knowledge, among other sources, and we need to remember that we can have low rank in one type of rank such education or financial resources while, at the same time, having high rank in another such as psychological, spiritual rank or local insider knowledge. Rank and the powers and privileges that often accompany it can be well used or misused -to put people down or lift them up. Rank and power, especially unconscious use of rank and power, often felt but difficult to recognise and articulate, is a major source of relationship conflict. The workshops encouraged participants to become more aware of different types of rank, their own rank, how it impacts on others and how to use it mindfully.

Conscious use of rank and power

- Most of us are unaware of our high rank and the privileges that go with it or the negative impact our use of them has on those of lower rank
- Rank is cumulative – the more rank/ different types of rank you have the greater the likelihood of unconscious misuse of rank, i.e. “rankism”
- Lack of rank awareness is often due to its being unearned – it is gifted, inherited e.g. by being part of dominant culture, economic status, race gender, or simply having good health
- The challenge is to recognise and use our rank and power for benefit of all not just self-interest.

In another 2013 training session we focussed on culture, cultural differences and values within the Board and staff groups. We explored a range of dimensions where cultural differences impact on the way we handle conflict. For example, we explored differences in reliance on non-verbal signals or verbal content when communicating, differing beliefs about how conflict should be addressed, unconscious biases and assumptions of different cultural groups, the strengths and vulnerabilities of our different cultural identities and roles and how these play out in conflict situations, etc. We discussed how our cultures differ in their orientation to time and responsibility and how these differences can cause conflict, especially where one culture imposes its standards on another. Even the way we interpret conflict situations differs between cultures and it can therefore be a challenge to agree on the best way to approach a conflict. Participants were asked to assess themselves across a range of cultural differences and to discuss how understanding these differences could help or get in the way of dealing with conflict.

Culture

- is more than dress, language, ethnicity
- is about lifestyle - how we do things around here.
- is made up of shared assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes of a group of people which gives rise to the characteristic behaviours of a group.
- influences the way we communicate, interact and conflict with one another.
- differences can cause conflict between groups

3.2.10 Teambuilding: Strengthening the BTAP Board through team-working

Some but not all of the Board members attended the ITM training programme which meant that not all at the same level of familiarity or comfort with concepts and processes used for addressing conflict. Of those who did attend, some were unable to attend the number of the training days so there was not a shared understanding or agreement among all Board members about how to address conflict. As a result the levels of familiarity, capacity and trust may not have been sufficient to deal with some of the conflicts which arose. For various reasons including the demands of other priorities the Board was not able to sustain its intended focus on conflict work in the later stages of the project.

It became clear that conflict capacity on its own was not a substitute for other required Board capabilities and leadership. While it may have made it a bit less stressful on individuals and relationships and was still needed, the problems on the Board were broader than a shortfall in conflict capability.

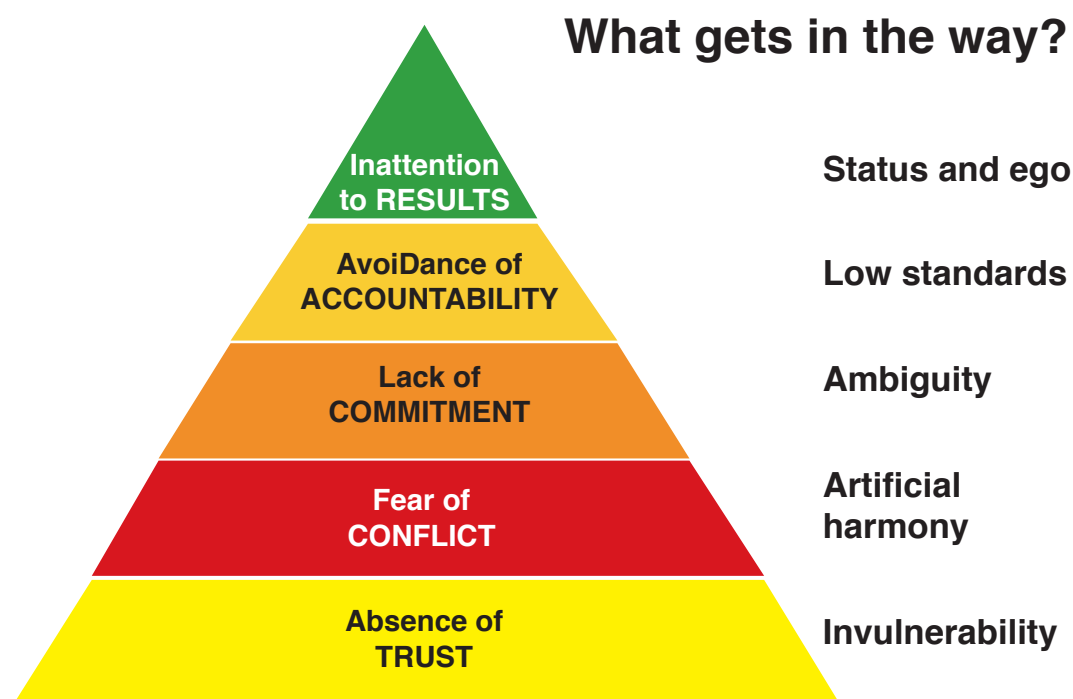
Towards the end of 2013, in a review of progress between Breakthrough and the BTAP

coordinator, it became clear that a different approach was required with the Board given the challenges they were facing and the difficulties being experienced in working as a Board. While the focus on and the need for developing conflict capacity was not abandoned, we felt that approaching it through a focus on teamwork would more directly address the needs of the Board. The agreement of the Board was gained to focus on teamwork of which conflict work was apart and a training session on teamwork arranged.

In the session, the relationship between teamwork and conflict work was explored as where a range of options for addressing shortfalls in Board teamwork. The characteristics of high-performing teams were reviewed and members reviewed their performance against criteria of effective teamwork. It became clear that the Board would need to make some changes if it was going to work effectively together on the substantive challenges facing it.

A key dysfunction the Board were having in working together were highlighted when only half the members turned up for the first training session above and the training session had to be repeated to accommodate the other half of the Board. Some members attended both sessions. The critical point was emphasised that everybody showing up at the right time and in the right place and ready for the action is an essential part of being a team - you cannot have a team/ Board without it. Trust, that you will show up and play your part, is a basic building block in Lencioni's model of good teamwork. However it is important to acknowledge that there was significant learning by board members about these processes that we were unable to capture or evaluate within the timescale of the project.

5 Dysfunctions of a team (Lenicon)



3.2.11 Individual conflict coaching sessions and mediation

Conflict management coaching: Considerable time was spent by the project consultant providing conflict management coaching around the issues and dynamics for both staff and Board at both individual and group levels. These sessions were focused on helping the various parties to decide how they wanted to handle the conflicts which had arisen. They included exploring triggers (feelings we have when something important is undermined or threatened), impacts of offending behaviour and assumptions that we hold. We also explored boundaries or lines that were crossed, and reactions to infringement of boundaries and consequences of our current ways of managing the conflict. Participants were helped to consider the conflict from the point of view of their opposing parties and the pros and cons of various options for dealing with the conflict. The model was also used to help individuals develop action plans for implementing their chosen solutions. This approach is fairly standard conflict management coaching practice.

Mediation: Despite individual coaching sessions, the conflict between Board and staff intensified and seemed to reach an impasse. An offer by the project consultant to mediate was accepted by Board and staff. Pre-mediation and mediation sessions were agreed between Board and staff.

The issues were identified and pre-mediation sessions with Board and staff were held and a first meeting between some Board members and staff took place to start the process. However, it was not possible for the Board to meet again with staff to complete the process before the summer recess and that meant there was no longer time to follow through on addressing them before this project came to an end. However, Board and staff committed to following up these issues within a different framework.

Core mediation steps

1. Intake / contracting/ outreach
2. Pre-mediation – private meeting/ preparation
3. Introductions – at joint meeting of parties
4. Individual story telling – uninterrupted time
5. Dialogue – explore mutual perceptions/ needs
6. Time out/ one party consultations (private)
7. Joint exploration of options/ problem-solving
8. Deciding best options and reality testing
9. Document, sign, monitor agreement

3.2.12 Approach, tools, processes and principles used in strengthening the BTAP Board through team building

Besides those described in the previous section, various methods were used over the duration of the project with Board and staff, many of which had been introduced to five members who had attended the ITM Boards Conflict Capability programme, and at the BTAP Board and staff training sessions. As mentioned earlier, not all Board and staff members were familiar or comfortable with all of the principles and models used though most were aware through with limited practice in applying core conflict tools and skills. An overview of the concepts, principles and tools used is provided in the appendices. A selected few will be mentioned here to give the reader a flavour of key theory and tools we used.

Arnold Mindell's work, called Processwork, was used to deepen our understanding of roles, rank and power, which help raise awareness around dysfunctional relationship dynamics, dealing with abuse and responding constructively to accusations and attack. Several were also practiced but all are too numerous to cover here in detail. The following key tools are highlighted in addition to those outlined in earlier sections. The resource guide in the appendix provides further information.

Conflict turning points: there are some key choices we could make to be more successful in dealing with our conflicts. These turning points, or "pivots" as conflict specialist Dr. Tammy Lenski calls them, suggest key ways that we can turn around a conflict that is escalating or stuck. If we can turn our attention from the past and toward the present and future we want to create we will likely have a better outcome. Telling ourselves and others the same stuck story over and over again is likely to keep us stuck - we can move on and learn what was important to us that was upsetting us so much and what we could do about it. We explored how to move away from blaming and trying to change the other person and see how we were contributing to the problem and what was in our power to do about the situation. These turnabouts helped us feel more in charge and empowered.

Conflict resolution/ transformation requires

We turn away from.....	Towards
1. Their "bad" behaviour	1. What is important to you (triggers)
2. Focus on the past	2. Focus on present and desired future
3. Blaming/ demonising opponents	3. How we contribute/ what we can do differently
4. Our stuck story	4. Learning its message

When exploring conflict we find ourselves taking different roles e.g. accuser, defender, oppressor, victim, etc. Often we are not aware of the role we are in. These roles shape our behaviour even if when we do not choose or want to be in them, some of which can be helpful while others are less so. It is highly beneficial when we can be aware of the roles we occupy during conflict, whether they were helping or limiting constructive resolution and intentionally choose ones which are. William Ury has outlined a range of helpful roles which we can learn to take consciously during conflict which will increase our chances of reaching a sustainable outcome. If we rigidly confine ourselves to one role we will come across as robotic or inhuman and this is likely to alienate and escalate. We learned how to switch roles as needed as well as being aware of the roles others were taking and how we are reacting to them.

3rd. Side Roles in working with conflict (Ury)

- Contain
 - Pecekeeper/Enforcer/Protector
 - Referee/Elder
 - Bystander/Witness
- Resolve
 - Mediator/Facilitator
 - Equaliser/Protector
 - Arbitrator
 - Healer
- Prevent
 - Provier
 - Bridge Builder
 - Teacher/Coach/Mentor

Negotiation was presented as a basic method of resolving conflict. Most have some experience of bargaining in a market or when trying to buy a car. You usually try to get the best deal you can and this is easier if you do not have an ongoing relationship with the seller. If you do, negotiation is a little more complex because getting a good deal has to be balanced with maintaining the relationship. We explored some of the skills of negotiation and how these could be used in dealing with conflict. We were only able to scratch the surface of this topic in the workshops and far more time would have been of benefit to appreciate the different strategies, skills and pitfalls that experienced negotiators can use. Mediation is, in effect, a facilitated negotiation so these skills are most helpful here also.

Negotiation: the oldest and a baseline ADR conflict resolution method

Negotiation is:

- a managed process to help people get what they want or need and achieve their goals
- about controlling the process so that you can have an impact on the outcomes
- a method of using communication and persuasion skills and strategies to influence others towards meeting your needs/goals

3.2.13 Issues and challenges arising in work with the BTAP Board

The challenges faced by the Board showed up the weaknesses in the Board's capability. The uncertainty surrounding the future and the increased workload was highly stressful for Board members and staff. These strains impacted negatively on services to Travellers and diverted attention away from building conflict capacity far more than had been envisaged at the outset of the project.

Not surprisingly, capability gaps, differences in role expectations and communication styles among Board and staff members surfaced in the midst of these difficult circumstances. Changes in Board membership at the outset of the project meant that the Board did not have time to settle in before being pitched simultaneously into unprecedented survival challenges and an ambitious developmental agenda around conflict management and the regeneration of Labre Park. Such a scenario as this was bound to generate tensions and conflict for any group of people faced with such challenges, especially a volunteer Board, and it did. Some of these tensions and conflict stretched Board members and staff to their limit at times, and sometimes beyond.

The very difficult decisions which the Board had to make, knowing that these decisions were going to make life more difficult for Board and staff, resulting in reduced services and opportunities for residents of Labre Park and reductions in staffing, meant that far more Board time and resources were taken up with such matters than had been envisaged at the outset of this project and which often impacted negatively on the time available for the planned actions.

Against a background of increasing need during the economic downturn, reduced staff resources and an increasing workload meant that the BTAP coordinator was less able to provide the level of support for the Board than heretofore. The Board found themselves with greater demands being placed upon them and less support and leadership than they may have been accustomed to, which exposed their vulnerabilities as a Board. The problems they faced were not made any easier when confronted with the unsuitability of BTAP offices as a result of health and safety concerns which left BTAP homeless for considerable periods of 2014. The strain fragmented the Board and intensified Board – staff tensions and disrupted relationships in the latter stages of this project.

Uppermost at the time was addressing the health and safety concerns of staff and providing suitable office accommodation and resources for staff to do their work. This problem incidentally, was not of the Boards making but sucked up an extraordinary and unexpected amount of Board and staff time and energy while at the same time creating conflict between them.

As the Board was struggling in the face of mounting demands, the level of engagement of Traveller members was declining. The challenges of providing resources and particularly suitable office space, required far more input from Board members, beyond that of attending Board meetings, than they were used to. The workload was falling to a smaller number of Board members, taking longer time than anticipated and in the meantime staff felt they were not being supported in the way they should have been as employees of BTAP.

To an outsider it seemed as if something like a role switch had taken place. The Board

seemed to have moved from a position of being supported in their work as a Board by the Coordinator, to one in which they were now being required to provide greater support the staff who, because of the cutbacks, could no longer provide the same level of support. This seeming reversal was experienced by both sides as disorienting and stressful. Old certainties could not be relied on, relationships and expectations were changing, and maybe this was not what either side had signed up for. Board and staff working relationships needed to be re-forged to take account of new realities at a time when pressures on the Board were unprecedented.

While the Board and staff were aware of some of these challenges early in the project, others were difficult to foresee as were their impact on the conflict work. Many of these issues are ongoing and currently being addressed by the Board and staff and therefore out of respect for confidentiality and sensitivity, some aspects of this work are not reported. Recommendations made are therefore tentative in the spirit of ongoing inquiry rather than conclusive. None the less, considerable work has been done with Board and staff and much has been learned even though it is still a work in progress. The following issues stand out as requiring further attention:

- **Attendance and Board capacity:**

The Board was clearly already struggling with issues of attendance on the Board; with knowledge and skills needed to carry out their roles as Board members; and even with building the capacity of Board members to carry out their roles. Problems of role capability may have been masked by conflict. There was an assumption that if they became better at dealing with conflict that the attendance at training events would improve and that Board performance would improve. Showing up consistently, and when needed, are fundamental requirements for Boards to work as intended. This was not being adequately achieved and requires further exploration. There were unresolved cultural differences in relation to styles of meeting, commitment to attend and management of time between Traveller and settled Board members that have yet to be resolved if the Board is to work effectively together

The Board had limited time to devote to conflict given the range and difficulty of pressing issues facing them, keeping in mind they were a volunteer Board. There was a constant struggle to get full attendance especially from Travellers. Non-Traveller members, for the most part, were more comfortable with the process and demands made of them. There was additional pressure is on Board members who were also living in Labre Park who felt that more was expected of them by fellow Travellers to prove their value. They felt they were seen by residents as more responsible for what was or was not happening in Labre Park, and more open to direct criticism when living in Labre Park if expectations of BTAP were not delivered. They felt more vulnerable because of where they lived and so were more affected when things did not work out in the way people wanted. There were clearly cultural and rank differences between Board members in relation to Board style and process which needed to be addressed.

In addition, there were competency gaps and experience differences among Board

members which impacted the way it functioned. While I did not witness the majority of the Board meetings, it appeared that expectations, particularly though not solely of Traveller members, were beyond their current capability, what was required for effective governance and the carrying out statutory responsibilities as an employer.

- **Expectations about how long it takes to build conflict capacity:** The project has exposed what now look like naive assumptions about what it would take to develop the level of conflict capability we hoped the project could achieve. It has demonstrated that it will take longer and require more resources and support to achieve it than the project consultant envisaged at the outset and that is even now difficult to quantify. On reflection, there were unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved within the time and the level of resource we felt able to access at the time. The view back then was that we needed to make a start even with the limited resources available.

As a result of the project, Boards will hopefully have a more realistic picture of the challenges, the resource requirements and what it might require from Board members. This will vary from project to project depending existing level of capability and the readiness of the Board to commit the development required before they sign up for it. Board members need to know there are no instant/ fast solutions for building conflict capacity. However, mediation and conflict coaching options, included from the outset, may help realise tangible conflict resolution results more quickly than was the case at BTAP.

Inability to dedicate the time needed to focus on conflict work because of the pressures of Board work meant they were unable to deal effectively with conflict when it arose. This may have been a knock on effects of poor attendance but resignations from the Board, overload and not prioritising conflict work also played a big part. This may suggest a lack of readiness for the conflict work, unclear guidance about what were the expectations of them in relation to the project or possibly the level of challenge or the quality or timing of training offered.

- **Cultural differences between Traveller and Settled Board members:** The amount of time and attention we were able to devote to this aspect of the work only scratched the surface of what was needed. There were significant rank differences and privileges arising from levels of education, employment, organisational experience and housing security and safety which separated Traveller and settled members. While there was little shortage of good will on both sides, these differences gave rise to different priorities and expectations, different ways of thinking and engaging in meetings, different attitudes and feelings, and differences in the severity of impact events had on their respective lives. These differences showed up in attendance, capability, levels of engagement, frustration with each other's attitudes and styles and ways of communicating and relating (or not relating), but needed more time than was available to us to unpack.

For example, settled styles of meetings rely more on agendas, minutes and written documents and reports while Traveller ways of organising tend to be more word of mouth, relying on face to face contact and memory. It is difficult to make these two

styles work together without one or other side feeling constrained or devalued. Mainstream culture favours those more versed in the settled style so there is a constant strain and drag on Travellers to move to a more settled style. The playing field is uneven and favours the settled members in this and many other ways which impedes full Traveller engagement and presents significant challenges for settled volunteers.

Worth noting also is that broadly speaking, there are different attitudes to violence in the Traveller and settled community in terms of the need for it and the permissibility of it. Some Travelers believe they need the option of physical violence to protect themselves, deter potential aggressors and punish offenders/ get justice and that it is permissible even obligatory to do so within Traveller culture. The State reserves to itself the right to use violence to protect and sanction offenders and this is for the most part respected by settled people and many Travellers. However, many Travellers feel they cannot trust the state to deliver protection and justice for them and can provide ample evidence they are being discriminated against by the state. Travellers, therefore, can often find themselves pulled between allegiances two different security systems, neither of which they can fully rely on to ensure their safety and protection. This tension between Traveller and settled cultures is problematic for managing and resolving conflict and remains unresolved tension for the community if not the Board.

Underlying cultural differences and attitudes here, in relation to centralised authority, leadership and enforcement of norms and rules could greatly enhance board cooperation and the development of a more culturally sensitive conflict management system.

3.2.14 Outcomes and evaluation

Some Board members also participated in the interagency meetings and we attempted to conduct business there while being mindful of conflict management and resolution principles learned and these are described below in the section on interagency work.

This work has enhanced the capacity of the organisation by:

- Developing our understanding of conflict and its dynamics
- Raising awareness and understanding of our individual conflict styles
- Equipped BTAP with the skills and necessary to conduct a conflict mapping and analysis
- Developing strategies to respond constructively to challenges of tensions and conflict
- Developing our confidence and capacity to participate in and/or facilitate difficult conversations/dialogues pertaining to tensions and conflicts.
- Influencing practices and approaches within the work of BTAP achieving better

outcomes – moving from “what they are doing wrong” to “ what we can do better”

- Broadening the overall expertise and skills base of the organization.

Comments from Board and staff on the conflict training and development work include:

- “It has increased my level of awareness around conflict and helped me to realise that conflict is not negative but natural, it’s how we manage it that can result in the negative”
- “Before the training I would go into a meeting trying to avoid conflict whereas now I focus on naming the issues and trying to find the way forward without blaming”
- “I used to go into meetings thinking it was us and them now I go in thinking of the issue and wanting to find a solution”
- “the sessions on rank and power were an eye opener for me”
- “Recognising my own triggers and being able to challenge myself has been a big part of the learning for me”
- “The conflict mapping was very interesting and I am keen to see how this work in practice”
- “The” not so merry go round” tool for analysing conflict was very practical and I found it very helpful even outside of work situations”
- “We went through the training and learned a lot from the workshops but could not always apply it when it was needed in the project”

3.3 Work with Labre Park residents with a focus on the engagement of Traveller men.

3.3.1 Residents and engagement in community meetings

This work focused on building, supporting and enhancing the engagement of residents in Labre Park in decision making processes affecting their lives. While Traveller women had been engaging in community development processes and decision-making, very few Traveller men did so at the outset of this project.

The main forum for this strand of the work has continued to be the resident meetings. As well as providing a forum for discussion of contentious issues, it provided an early warning system for monitoring tensions which had the potential to escalate and so was a key element in early recognition and prevention of conflict reaching crisis proportions. Regular residents meetings have been taking place and prior to the meetings there is

outreach work on site to inform all residents of the meeting and encourage attendance. In addition to increasing participation in residents meetings, a variety of initiatives were taken to engage Traveller men in community development activities in Labre Park.

Residents meetings were the main forum in which issues of relevance to those living in Labre Park were raised for discussion consultation and collective decision-making. Attendance by residents at these meetings varied from time to time depending on what was on the agenda, the level of morale and motivation and as we came to realise, the level of tension and conflict or threat being experienced by residents in Labre Park. Most meetings which related directly to the redevelopment of Labre Park, especially where there was news of movement taking place which affected residents, attracted large numbers. These meetings or jointly facilitated by the project consultant, John Mulligan and the BTAP Coordinator Lorraine McMahon, usually with the BTAP coordinator taking the lead role and project consultant providing support around the discussion of contentious issues. It was also used as an opportunity to gather and disseminate information.

Residents meetings usually had a published agenda and it was also open to anybody who wished to add to it on the day. A wide variety of issues were discussed ranging from how to access services to the redevelopment of Labre Park. Some issues recurred regularly on the agenda such as safety, horses in garden area, antisocial behaviour, dumping and so on. Right to reside, major clean-up, safety of children and elderly, service units, and vandalism of businesses and any issue which posed a threat to the redevelopment was of interest.

Numbers attending ranged from 50-60 down to as low as 5 or 10 at some meetings. Considerable effort went in to outreach work by the BTAP staff ahead of each meeting to engage residents and ensure they were informed of the agenda or to ensure its relevance. Meetings usually took place in the Civic Centre though for a period they took place in the old school in Ballyfermot due to problems with BTAP office accommodation which had an adverse effect on attendance at meetings for a period in 2014.

Labre Park does not have a recognisable or centralised community leadership though there are clearly members of the community who are feared and therefore influential, though not always in ways that is supportive of the community. Some Traveller women, both younger and older, are the most active in promoting development and community activities and taking on roles on the Board of BTAP. Among Traveller men there was a tendency to leave the community decision making to the women and to ridicule any men who got involved or gave up their time for the benefit of the community. While this was the case at the outset of the project, more men participated in meetings and community activities as the project went on. However, progress was slow and male leadership, in so far as it does exist, remains primarily within the extended family groupings.

Redevelopment of Labre Park was a central motivator in getting residents to attend meetings. Attendance waned when there was little or adverse progress with redevelopment as occurred in late 2012 and prior to Cluid Housing association showing interest in taking over the redevelopment from DCC in 2013. Likewise there was a rise and fall of interest dependent on progress in having sanitation units installed and at times when there was a threat to the survival of BTAP as a support organisation.

Contentious conversations:

At a Labre Park residents meeting of about 60 people early on in the project, the project consultant was asked to introduce the work of the project. When it was explained that he was there to work on issues of conflict the room quickly cleared of most Traveller men, such was the fear and sensitivity around any public mention of the word at the time. This was a bit shocking at the time and we did not understand what had happened until later when one Traveller man explained to us that people had automatically assumed that we were going to be dealing with feuding and there was no way they were going to discuss that in public. It quickly became clear that we had a major task on our hands to communicate a broader understanding of conflict work and how it could be a benefit to them.

Fearfulness about coming to and speaking of the residents meetings, especially during periods when there were tensions or trouble, was a constant challenge. Attendance levels at residents meetings were almost a barometer of the atmosphere and social tensions in Labre Park. This was true of Traveller men in particular who shunned any open discussion of such tensions or conflict in such a public arena and often in private too. Some directly stated that they would not come to residents meetings to discuss difficulties because they believed it would escalate into conflict.

This often meant that troubling and difficult issues did not get discussed openly and debilitating and sometimes poisonous atmosphere rumbled on in the background constraining engagement by Traveller men and heightening tensions between particular family groupings. The general tendency was to avoid conflict and that included any discussions that might make matters worse and this worked against engagement and collaborative working in Labre Park and particularly among Traveller men.

It was difficult at times even to get the issues at stake named and out in the open. These were often complex with strong internal and emotional responses which led to heated exchanges and were difficult to access and untangle in a public arena. The meaning of particular events and behaviour often remained hidden to those outside it unless sufficient trust had built up for those involved could share what was going on. This openness, more often than not, took place after the crisis was over rather than when it was happening which made constructive intervention at the time difficult.

Essential Dialogue Skills

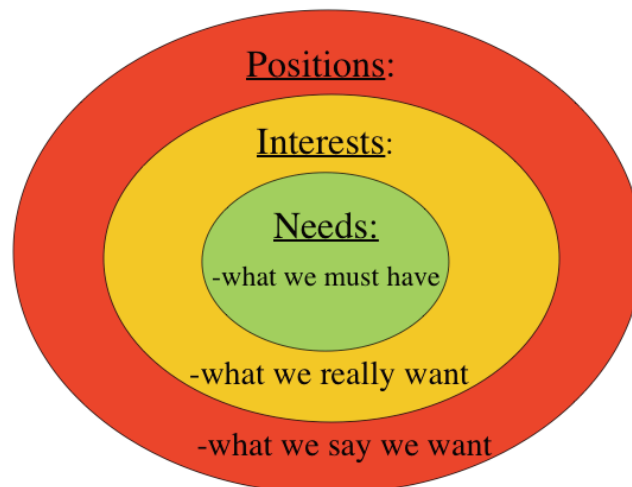
All are required for constructive dialogue

- **Framing** – focussing attention/neutral naming of issues to create safe space to speak
- **Advocating** – “this is my world/view/goals/interests, wants etc.” - stating, presenting, asserting, persuading to inform others
- **Inquiring** – “what is your world/view/goals/interests, wants etc.” - questioning listening, discovering, gathering information, to understand others better
- **Illustrating** – descriptive examples, factual evidence, (to clarify framing, advocacy and enquiry)

3.3.2 Approach, tools, processes and principles used in work with Labre Park residents

- **Contentious conversations** entailed facilitating many underlying processes supportive of healthy and constructive conflict to enable discussion and decision-making around the issues raised. These included raising awareness of contentious issues from different parties perspectives, the importance of hearing all voices, the challenge of making the un-discussable discussable, of increasing transparency and questioning assumptions, of balancing advocacy and inquiry, highlighting the need for listening skills, managing the heat of strong emotions, humanising and interrupting demonising of opponents, raising issues of power and identity in helpful ways.
- **Mediation** is basically a facilitated negotiation where opposing parties get together with a neutral mediator to work out solutions to their problems and conflicts of interest. This includes identifying positions and eliciting interests and needs; giving people uninterrupted time to speak and be heard, reframing topics presented as blaming and attacks, encouraging problem solving and compromise, holding people accountable for commitments made and providing feedback.

Uncovering needs in mediation



- **Conflict coaching** is concerned with helping an individual or group work out how best to manage a conflict or dispute before they engage with their opponents or where they want to change how they behave in a conflict. This includes clarifying triggering behaviours, i.e. those that threaten or undermine a person or group's values, needs or identity, exploring the impact of such behaviour, assumptions about the perpetrator's intentions, awareness and communication regarding boundaries, reactions to the crossing of boundaries, the consequences, and consideration of choices for managing the situation and the best ways of achieving your desired outcomes. (see the "not-so-merry-go-round" model in section 3.2)

- **Education and information dissemination** -on various issues of interest including how councils and agencies work, the needs and concerns of various groups within the community, e.g. children's safety and peace and security for older residents, community action and development processes, the challenges being faced by the Board, conflict - ADR and restorative principles processes and practices, and so on. We would also make occasional comments on and draw attention to communication processes that were working or not working during the meetings.

- **The shared vision** of the redevelopment of Labre Park was and remains a key motivator for community engagement which we consistently drew on as motivation for engaging residents and addressing other community development and related issues even when they were contentious and generated conflict.

- **Encouraging leadership** was constantly a background, and sometimes explicit, activity. Elements included building shared vision, planning small wins, modelling the way, challenging the process, strengthening others. We tried to model these leadership behaviours and encourage others to do likewise, mostly in subtle or informal ways.

- Outreach work to enhance communication and engagement was constantly needed which meant going to Labre Park rather than waiting for residents to come to offices. It meant initiating, consulting, encouraging attendance, relationship building, and convincing residents of the value of engaging in community development and representational processes.

3.3.3 The issues and challenges arising

Several initiatives were tried directly with the Traveller men that did not work. There were discussions with DCC and it was hoped that the parks section could level heaps of rubbish dumped in open field with a view to possible use as a recreation area. The possibility of using the cleared area as a handball alley was explored and let go. Quite a few residents were against the development of a handball alley as they feared that it would bring in unwanted outsiders to Labre Park to play which could create trouble.

One Traveller man informed me of reluctance to come to residents meetings for fear of getting into conflict - in effect getting polarised, drawn into a conflict and then having to take and hold a position and risking escalation or even violence, lose face or appear weak and leave himself open to being taken advantage of. In short, their way was to avoid conflict or losing face where possible and staying away from residents meetings was a way of doing this. This approach was shared by other men and detracted from the quality and follow through of decision making.

3.3.4 Outcomes/ evaluation

Positive outcomes of this work:

Regular residents meetings have facilitated the community to identify issues of collective concern within the community, how these issues have impacted on the

community and move to explore potential solutions to addressing same. Some of the issues discussed such as dumping, fires, horses destroying the green areas, etc., have in the past been recurring causes of tension and conflict on site and as such were “taboo” topics to discuss. However, through this work there has been a significant shift in the mindset and attitudes of residents in Labre Park and in particular this is becoming evident with the Traveller men reflected in their increasing willingness to discuss these issues. Residents in general have demonstrated greater willingness to engage in dialogue with each other and with the local authority and other key agencies about contentious issues. Traveller men have become visible again within the community and vocal in a positive way at residents meetings.

This dialogue has resulted in a number of long standing maintenance and environmental issues affecting the site being addressed as residents and the local authority reached agreement in addressing same. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that a more collaborative approach of doing work “with” residents rather than doing things for residents and this has resulted in greater levels of engagement and appreciation of the challenges and needs on the part of residents and Dublin City Council in particular.

Outcomes of this work have also included:

- Process of exploring the potential causes of the regular flooding in Labre Park during heavy rain has begun with residents and the local authority. Previously there was an attitude of mutual “blame” rather than a willingness to work together. Traveller men have engaged in discussions and site walks within Labre and the surrounding waste grounds and canal to begin to explore potential factors causing the flooding.
- Increased number of families from Labre Park attending resident meetings and engaging in decision making processes. We have moved from a place whereby there was little or no attendance to having a maximum participation to date of 21 families in attendance at any one meeting. This represents over 50% of Labre residents.
- Open dialogue between residents and between residents and Dublin City Council has resulted in the issue of overall security on site beginning to be examined resulting in a willingness to explore the reinstatement of the CCTV on site even for a period of time.
- An openness to identify and discuss issues impacting on the community such as dumping, fires, speeding etc. which in the past were “taboo” subjects and not for open discussion
- Enhanced confidence of residents to engage / participate
- Increased numbers of Traveller men willing to get involved in practical projects such as site clean ups, etc.
- Agreement that BTAP will have a base on site in Labre Park. This will initially take the form of a container type unit going into Labre. Through the redevelopment there will be a community facility and BTAP will then have a permanent base n site in Labre.

- Residents from Labre Park have been actively involved in meeting city councillors and TDs in relation to seeking to secure the redevelopment of Labre Park
- Enhanced relations with Labre residents and increased engagement of Traveller men also resulted in agreement between DCC and Traveller men in Labre Park to work in collaboration on the clean-up of the canal at the back of Labre and a “legacy” dump which had been escalating for over a decade.
- The work with the young Traveller men has provided us with a community based framework for responding issues of tension and conflict, a framework that can be used in many different situations.
- It has equipped BTAP with the capacity to carry out key elements of our work in a more strategic way as we have developed the skills and tools to de-escalate issues of tension and conflict and focus on the solution as evidenced by the work with young boys, residents and mediations.
- In securing funding to write up this process BTAP has been able to capture the learning from the work to disseminate within the membership of the Irish Traveller Movement and to make it available to any groups interested in similar work, it will hopefully have a ripple effect, encourage others to tackle the thorny issue of conflict and ensure that there is some legacy from this work.

It is also worth highlighting some outcomes specifically related to Traveller men here:

- Addressing of negative environmental issues affecting Labre Park and a major clean-up of the site and adjacent lands with the cooperation of the community and Traveller men in particular
- Street lights reinstated in Labre Park after three years of darkness. Contractors were able to go on site in Labre Park to carry out the necessary works with the support of residents and in particular the Traveller men ensuring that there was no interference with the contractors machinery and there were no fires on or around the site that would hinder the progress of work.
- Increased number of Traveller men engaged in the process through site meetings, resident meetings and individual dialogue with external consultant. Previous to this work Traveller men did not attend any meetings or participate in any discussions formal or informal re issues affecting the site.
- Traveller man living in Labre Park is now representing Labre Park on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Two Traveller men are now on the Board of BTAP
- Three Traveller reps including two Traveller men from Labre Park attended at meeting in Dail Eireann with 5 TDs. This is ground breaking in relation to the engagement of Traveller men and their willingness to be spokespersons for their community at such a meeting.

3.4 Traveller boys and business conflict

3.4.1 What was done

This section focuses on a significant piece of work which was undertaken with residents and a local business owner as part of the project. Although not included in the original project plan, an opportunity arose to work with young Traveller boys supported by their parents to resolve a problem between some residents of Labre Park and the owner of a local business. We framed the problem as a conflict between the young boys and the business owner and decided to apply our conflict learning to what was a serious problem not just for those directly involved but one which was having a damaging impact on the wider Traveller community in Labre Park and beyond.

Conflict framing and Re-Framing

- **Frames reflect our way of interpreting the world** – what we view as important. Different people or cultures frame events differently. Conflict framing needs to honour views of all parties. Biased framing puts some parties at a disadvantage or defensive.
- **Conflict framing** – “frames” (as in picture frame) raise or focus attention on a contentious issue in an unbiased way that invites further dialogue and creates a safe space to speak about it.
- **Re-framing** takes a provocative or blaming statement and rephrases it in such a way as to affirm the underlying intent or need, while discarding the escalatory elements or framing, in order to support communication and understanding of what is important between parties
- **Skilful framing and refining require considerable practice** – solutions depend on how we frame or reframe a problem.

Background and early meetings

One particular business, which had earlier experienced good relations with the residents of Labre Park, the regularity and the severity of the damage and disruption to the business was so severe that the owners indicated to Dublin City Council that they would no longer be prepared to pay the rates due on their premises unless something could be done to protect them. The Gardai had indicated that they were unable to prevent such break-ins despite their best efforts and were unable to prosecute offenders for lack of evidence. The business owner had also requested the assistance of local politicians, many of whom were supportive of plans for the redevelopment of Labre Park, and their support was now being undermined by the involvement of some residents of Labre Park in the vandalism and break-ins. The potential benefits for all sides of resolving this issue were high and failure to resolve it seemed likely to undermine progress being made in relation to Labre Park on several different fronts so the motivation on the part of BTAP to resolve the problem was high.

3.4.2 Initial inquiries and discovery

In the light of the threat to this vital support for the Labre Park redevelopment, BTAP, in conjunction with Breakthrough Consultancy, decided to prioritise what we framed for the purposes of addressing it, as a conflict between some residents of Labre Park and the owner of the business in question. With the help of a couple of local politicians, a meeting between BTAP, Breakthrough Consultancy and the business owner provided BTAP with some detail and extensive pictorial records of the break-ins and damage done to the business premises in question. It also included a verbal presentation on the impact on the business and an account of interactions between members of staff and residents of Labre Park, some of whom they were able to identify.

It was decided that, since nothing like this had been attempted in Labre Park before, that the project consultant and the BTAP coordinator on the basis of their existing expertise and relationship with the parties and familiarity with the approach to be taken, would plan and implement the intervention and engage others as needed. A strategy was therefore planned which included gaining agreement for the plan from residents, parents and young boys in that order and assuming we could get that far to work with them towards bringing the offending behaviour to a halt and maintaining a positive relationship with the business concerned.

3.4.3 Approach tools and Guiding principles

The following principles are drawn from a range of Alternative Dispute Resolution principles and in particular Restorative principles and practices.

Some ADR methods

- **Capability building** – e.g. assertiveness/conflict communication training and learning
- **Conflict coaching** – support to manage or resolve conflict
- **Negotiation** – hard, soft and principled bargaining
- **Mediation** – peer, face to face or shuttle, to forge agreement
- **Non-binding arbitration** – parties still decide whether to accept
- **Non-violent communication** – feeling/needs based interpersonal communication
- **Restorative conferencing** – focussed on repairing damage to victim and relationship with community rather than offender sanction
- **Dialogue** – mutual understanding and dlearning conversations
- **Worldwork** – multi level conflict transformation based on mindful awareness and deep-democracy principles.

- The emphasis was to be on finding a solution to the problem for the future rather than focusing on the past and establishing who was responsible.
- We would adopt a stance of “no blaming, no shaming, no coercion”. We would not be judges, apportion guilt (moral or legal), or shame anybody who was willing to engage with us regardless of what they may have done.
- However, to motivate engagement, we also highlighted the likely and potential consequences of the offending behaviour continuing on the perpetrators, the families, community, business and site regeneration prospects and the likely benefits to all of bringing it to a halt.
- The process would focus attention on the hurt and harm caused by the offending behaviour and its impact on victims
- The focus would be on preventing or repairing relationships and harm done rather than on punishing or compelling the offender to comply with rules, moral or legal.
- The process was voluntary and nobody would be forced to take part.
- The principle of appreciative inquiry, i.e. identifying and building on the positive, and focusing attention on what we wish to create rather than the problem of the damage done, typified the non-judgemental, compassionate stance we wished to take. This and the no-blaming principle had the intention of creating more open and less defensive conversations.
- A key strategy would be to raise awareness about what happened among all concerned and in particular the extent and severity of the impact of various actions by parties involved on others.
- Key aims for the intervention, on the part of BTAP, were to bring the offending behaviour to a halt and, if possible, to repair relationships between the parties and damage done.
- We also decided that our intervention would be guided by the principles of Alternative Dispute Resolution and that this was in addition to any formal or legal courses of action open to the parties involved. The process we initiated was therefore without prejudice, confidential to those participating and would not involve statutory authorities such as Dublin City Council or the local Gardai.
- We made it clear from the outset that the process we were facilitating was not aimed at getting people into trouble. Quite the contrary, it was aimed at pre-empting the escalation of formal or legal action by any of the stakeholders which could have more serious consequences for anybody concerned as well as for residents hopes for redevelopment of Labre Park.
- We also made it clear to all concerned that anything that we could achieve by working with residents of Labre Park might not bring the break-ins and damage to the business to a halt even if we were able to bring to an end any involvement of residents of Labre Park in such activity.

- The emphasis was on helping those parties involved to clarify what was needed to resolve the problem and create a solution themselves rather than being experts telling them what to do and how to do it.
- Our roles during conversations were to be awareness raiser, facilitator and mediator rather than advocate, accuser, or arbiter.
- We committed to maintaining confidentiality in all our conversations to those present at a given meeting except in relation to what was explicitly agreed would be shared with specified other parties and asked them to honour this agreement. (Confidentiality was on a word of honour basis and acknowledged that it could not be enforced)

3.4.4 Gaining agreement for project

The above principles were outlined, explained and discussed at a Labre Park residents meeting in April 2013. This discussion was preceded by a visual presentation of the damage done to the business premises over the previous months and the impact of the behaviour of some residents on the business and its staff. Many were taken by surprise at the revelations and some were shocked at the extent and regularity of it.

The negative impact of this ongoing damage and break-ins on BTAP's relationship with local politicians, Dublin City Council and Cluid, whose support was necessary for continued progress of redevelopment plans, was also highlighted.

3.4.5 Engaging the boys and their parents in the process

Initially, the BTAP Coordinator and project consultant made appointments with individual parents of the young people identified to discuss the involvement of their children in activities related to the business concerned. We explained the process and the principles to each parent, some of whom had not attended the residents meeting, and assured them of the confidentiality of these meetings and that neither they nor their children would be forced to do anything which they did not agree to.

The boys and their parents needed considerable reassurance that this was not about "ratting" or getting them into trouble, indeed it was about preventing that. We also stressed that we did not want to speak about anybody else except themselves and invited them to speak about their own part in any of the break-ins and the damage done.

The immediate outcomes of these meetings included a collective commitment on the part of the boys to refrain from entering the premises and damaging property or interfering with the business activities of the staff. They further agreed that they would be willing to meet the owner of the premises and acknowledge what they had done as well as entering a commitment with him to refrain from any further such activity. It was clear that the parents and more importantly, the boys themselves at a greater understanding of the impact on the consequences of their actions and were motivated to change their behaviour. They were also clearer about the benefits that could accrue from better relationships with the business owner and with the politicians and Dublin City Council.

3.4.6 Meeting between young boys, parents and business owner

A meeting between boys, their parents and the business owner was facilitated at the end of June 2014 in which the boys and their parents listened to the business owner speak about the harm done and its impact on his business. He also acknowledged the very significant shift in the behaviour of the boys and the positive outcomes for the business. There was a significant and noticeable shift in attitude towards the young boys and residents on the part of the business owner at this meeting and a greater willingness to be supportive e.g. to provide wood for heating purposes again as he had been doing in earlier years. The boys in turn committed to ensuring this situation continued. It was the first time the business owner had had a direct conversation with the boys and their parents and this was appreciated by all concerned and could potentially be the beginning of a more positive engagement between them towards maintaining a positive relationship.

3.4.7 Issues and challenges arising

Gaining traction and voluntary engagement of the boys involved parents was going to be a challenge from the outset. We knew we had to get the permission and support of the parents for this given the age of the boys. The visual evidence of the damage done to the business, presented to the residents meeting proved decisive in this matter when linked to the serious threat it posed to the redevelopment of Labre Park. Our explanation of our proposed approach fitted with resident's values and the meeting strongly supported our proposal. We named and shamed nobody but agreed to approach those involved in private and the meetings were voluntary and would remain confidential all of which again aligned with Traveller values. The trust in both facilitators, but especially the pre-existing relationship with the BTAP Coordinator, enabled us to gain traction and engagement quickly and highlights the value of project staff themselves having conflict capability.

It was critical that we communicate the principles of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) and the nature of the process we were inviting the boys to be part of to the community, the parents and the boys and great care and time was taken over this. The alignment of the process with Traveller values and culture and the maintenance of clear boundaries between our process and legal and enforcement authorities such as the Gardai and the Council, meant we quickly got buy in for the process. Of course, the latter remained an option if our process did not work but potential parties understanding and trust in this separation was critical to the voluntary engagement we needed for the process to work. Some examples of how we did this are as follows.

The framing of the offending behaviour had to be done in such a way as to honour the needs and interests of each side without making it into a charge or an accusation as might occur in a legal proceedings. Had we framed the dispute as a charge or an accusation of vandalism and law breaking as it was presented to us by the local businessman, the effect would have been to elicit defensive behaviour and perhaps non-cooperation from the accused. In the event, we reframed the dispute in terms of a conflict between the businessman who needed to run his business and the residents who needed to have the redevelopment of Labre Park take place. The actions of the businessman were threatening

the redevelopment and the actions of Labre Park residents were threatening his business. We saw the possibility of a win-win solution which we eventually achieved, within this framing which would not been possible if we had presented it as a charge to be answered. Reframing skills are essential to successful conflict resolution.

Because of our upbringing, most of us are steeped in moral and/or legal notions of right and wrong, rules and laws and our system of retributive justice, which focuses on what the offender is doing wrong, and punishing him or her when they are found guilty. We find it hard to step out of that mindset and into a restorative one that focuses on repairing harm done to and relationships with victims. It takes some time to unlearn old habits of blaming, shaming, judging and coercing (usually associated with our legal system of retributive justice) and reorient to the different way of thinking and acting required by restorative practices for dealing with conflict. Even people trained in restorative practices (see appendices) can sometimes slip into a retributive attitude especially when they encounter denial or resistance to taking responsibility on the part of the offender.

3.4.8 Outcomes and evaluation

- Some very significant and tangible outcomes of this work are apparent. A business owner, who was experiencing break-ins, vandalism and incidents of anti-social behaviour on an almost daily basis, now has a situation which is almost free from any incidents and the accompanying costs and disruption to staff and business.
- There have there been no convictions, evictions or anti-social behaviour orders against any of those boys who took part in the initiative which seemed highly likely prior to the process.
- Potential barriers to redevelopment have been avoided and Cluid and Dublin City Council are progressing redevelopment plans.
- Politicians have also been able to take some credit for initiating the relationship and process between the business owner and BTAP. The boys have had their contribution recognised and rewarded in terms of leisure activities provided by BTAP, as well renewed commitment to provide social activities and further support from local youth services including ABLE and BASE in Ballyfermot and Exchange House.
- As a result of the work with the boys and the interagency, credibility and confidence in BTAP increased among interagency, local businessman and local politicians. BTAP has been able to demonstrate that, with appropriate resources, an alternative way of dealing with tensions and antisocial behaviour can and does work in a way that can benefit all concerned. Apart from a weekend over the Halloween period in 2013 and another in early 2014 there were no issues affecting the business concerning Labre Park. As of autumn 2014 there have been a couple of other incidents during the year but nothing like the difficulties experienced in 2012 and early 2013.

- At this time of writing, BTAP is currently engaging with other businesses in the area who are experiencing difficulties to explore the possibility of conducting the same or a similar process in collaboration with them. The possibility of using Alternative Dispute Resolution methods in partnership with the Gardai, the association of businesses, other agencies together with BTAP using an integrated conflict management approach is being explored as of November 2014.
- This work provided an opportunity to work directly with young Traveller men in relation to conflict which we believe has enhanced relations with the young men to support and encourage engagement in other initiatives. The opportunity for this specific piece of work was not foreseen when planning the initial conflict work. However, as it arose at a time when BTAP had undertaken significant work on building our own capacity to address issues of tension and conflict we made the decision to prioritise this as part of the conflict work. In that sense BTAP was more prepared to recognise and take positive action when this opportunity arose as a result of their preparation. From BTAP's point of view, the outcomes have been far beyond anything that we could have anticipated. There is no doubt that the process we undertook which was informed by the training attended was a key factor in the outcome achieved.

3.5 Interagency Work: Transforming tensions and conflict between service providers and stakeholders

3.5.1 What was done

One of the goals of this strand of the project was to develop mechanisms to enhance collaborative working with key agencies in responding to issues of tension and conflict in Labre Park because, at the outset of the project, existing working relationships with some agencies were viewed as an impediment to delivering effective services to Travellers supported by BTAP.

Early in the project, BTAP took the view that the Interagency Traveller Group convened by Dublin City Council, was not facilitating the provision of the support needed by Travellers in the Ballyfermot area. The assumption was that the collective services attending the interagency group did not appear to have a shared understanding of what they were there to achieve and the belief was that the way they were working as a group was getting in the way of the group achieving its goals. BTAP felt that the Interagency Group had a key role to play in both the management of conflict system being proposed for Labre Park and in the redevelopment of Labre Park itself which BTAP had been led to believe by the Traveller Accommodation Unit was about to take place.

It's probably fair to say that relationships between BTAP and the Traveller Accommodation Unit (TAU) of Dublin City Council were at an all-time low and it was difficult to see how any progress could be made on the redevelopment of Labre Park. Considerable background work with the assistance of politicians at a local and national level was undertaken by BTAP to expose poor and unprofessional working practices by key

Council staff. This took some months and it was clear that bringing to bear political pressure would also have a part to play in the conflict management system between stakeholders as well as Alternative Dispute Resolution methods.

It was apparent, at this time, that there was reluctance on the part of DCC to call meetings of the statutory TIG which they were obliged to do. BTAP therefore decided that it would host its own meetings of interagency service providers in order to achieve its aims, and in particular, to form part of a system for managing conflict within Labre Park as well as between residents and other parties in the locality. There was no intention here to take over the statutory duties of the local authority but rather to establish an issue-based, solution oriented problem-solving group which would address issues in relation to Labre Park and seek ways to address the different types of conflict facing residents.

The intention was that this meeting would bring together just those who needed to be present to address the specific issue under consideration rather than a regular meeting which required the attendance of all services as a matter of course such as is the case with the statutory interagency meeting hosted by the DCC. The advantage of this arrangement to BTAP was that it could call meetings when they were needed, focus the agenda on issues of importance to BTAP and it was able to take control of the facilitation of meetings so they could be conducted in a more constructive manner. These were to make a significant difference in the months to follow and all present felt the meetings were more productive and enabled more effective collaboration between those present.

Around the same time, there was a change in personnel in the DCC Traveller Accommodation Unit. BTAP saw this as an opportunity to create a very different kind of relationship with the TAU to the contentious and often unsatisfactory relationship which had existed to this point. BTAP took the view that it was important to move away from the adversarial, complaining, blaming, fault-finding approach which had characterised its relationship to the previous administration in recent times, much of it in response to the perceived failure of DCC to deliver on their obligations regarding Traveller accommodation. This took some practice but in time was to create far better relationships, a sense of partnership and tangible outcomes.

So BTAP convened an interagency group to address the problems faced by Travellers in Labre Park and to address the tensions between the various stakeholders as they arose. The intention behind the BTAP interagency structure was to create a collaborative relationship which would be future and solution-focused, where shared goals could be established and open discussion could take place about contentious issues while maintaining respect for each other. It would include developing a greater understanding of each other's strengths, limitations and resources as well as the context within which we had to operate.

It was also an opportunity to put into action the skills and strategies related to friction and conflict that we developed through the ITM conflict training programme to improve communication and relationships between stakeholders.

Previous Interagency meetings had been under the control of DCC staff and chaired by them whereas now the role of the facilitator or chair of the meetings was not clearly

defined. The meetings were in fact chaired by the coordinator of BTAP but fulfilling this role in a neutral way was incredibly difficult because she also needed to be able to advocate on behalf of Travellers. It was therefore decided to propose the project consultant as chair and facilitator of the meetings which would mean that the coordinator of BTAP was free to represent Travellers unencumbered by the chairing role and other stakeholders did not have to suffer from an absence of, or biased, chairing. This proposal was accepted by those attending the interagency meetings and contributed to better tempered and more productive meetings as well as helping relieve the unpleasant atmosphere.

3.5.2 Work with Dublin City Council: TIG, SPCC and LTACC

A key outcome from the conflict work with the organisation has been the very significant shift in our relationship with Dublin City Council (DCC). This was greatly aided by a change in our own mindset and approach at BTAP whereby we have moved from a stance of “what the DCC are doing wrong” or not doing, to one of “what we need to be doing differently”.

This shift in approach at BTAP was the driving force behind securing a review of the Local Traveller Accommodation Committee which resulted in changes to the terms of reference and operating procedures. One of these changes was developing and consolidation links with the Housing Strategic Policy Committee which has been a fundamental gap within DCC, and other Local Authorities across the country, in relation to transparency and accountability for delivery of the Traveller Accommodation programme.

In considering what we needed to do differently BTAP met with the representatives from the other three Traveller organisations represented on the LTACC to discuss what we were thinking about re “doing things differently”. In explaining some of the work we had been doing through the conflict training and the resulting shift in our mindset from “what the DCC were doing wrong” to “what we need to do differently”, other representatives began to see that there could be merit in this approach and agreed to look at what we could do differently together.

This resulted in us preparing a joint presentation for the housing SPC meeting whereby we focused on the impacts on Traveller families and children across the city from the non-delivery of targets within the previous TAP. We moved away from blaming and focused on making a series of recommendations for moving forward. The presentation took considerably longer than usual to prepare as it was critically important that all reps were fully comfortable with this new approach. We also coordinated the development of two short videos (1 minute each) featuring Traveller men and women talking about the preference and need for Traveller specific accommodation and the impacts on the lives of Traveller families through the non-delivery of agreed actions of the TAP’s.

The approach proved to be very effective. It was evident by the responses and questions asked that many of the councillors present actually heard for the first time the gravity of the situation for Travellers living in intolerable conditions. This was not the first time the information had been presented to councillors, but presenting it in a way which focused on

impacts, and suggesting potential solutions for moving forward rather than accusations, meant that the message could be heard more easily.

Further cooperation between all Traveller representatives on the LTACC led to the resignation of the Chairperson, who had lost the confidence of all Committee members. This collaboration was a significant turning point for our work within the LTACC. It very clearly demonstrated that by moving from blaming and into seeking to understand offensive behaviour and highlighting its impacts, we achieved much more. It also demonstrated that working in this way together gave individual reps much more confidence within their role. Our request to make a second presentation to the Housing Strategic Policy Committee in November 2013 was accepted and proved to be very effective in achieving change and enhancing the possibility of improved outcomes for Travellers.

With the assistance of some local politicians, we also secured a motion being put forward to DCC for its full council meeting on 24th March 2014 which was for DCC to formally recognise Travellers as an Ethnic Minority group and to reflect this in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018. The motion was passed and DCC was only the second local authority in the country to do so. This preceded the Oireachtas Committees report published on April 17th recommending the Irish Government to formally recognise Traveller Ethnicity.

3.5.3 Approach, tools, processes and principles used in working with DCC and Interagency group

Political lobbying and holding agencies accountable: BTAP is a small organisation with limited resources. A considerable amount of staff time was being taken up with trying to get statutory agencies to do the job they were supposed to do which was a major drain on resources that could have been put to better use. The BTAP coordinator was quite skilful in terms of lobbying political support at local and national levels both to advocate for Travellers rights and to hold agencies accountable for their obligations. Relationships had to be built with local politicians to represent the interests of Travellers across a range of issues and most importantly the redevelopment of Labre Park. This led to a change in strategy for the redevelopment of Labre Park and the initiation of what proved to be successful engagement with Cluid Housing Association for its redevelopment. Without doubt, political lobbying can be effective in resolving conflicts and it needs to form part of the toolkit that goes to make up an integrated conflict management system.

Appreciative Inquiry: At the risk of over simplifying it, appreciative inquiry is a theory and practice which holds that what you give attention to becomes a reality. If you keep focusing on the problem you will give energy to and consolidate the problem. If you focus on the solution and the outcome that you want to achieve you will manifest that. Appreciative inquiry recommends that we focus on the positive, and what is working well and a vision of what it would be like if we had achieved our goals. Change follows the direction of attention. The more we give attention to a solution focused approach, rather than a problem focused one, the better the chances of success. Taking this stance shifted our focus from having our complaints heard to envisaging and creating the kind of future

we wanted for Travellers in Labre Park and the kind of relationships we wanted to have with Dublin City Council and other agencies.

Dialogue: Dialogue is different from discussion which tries to build arguments for one side or the other and persuade or beat down the arguments of the other side to convince them of the value of your position. More often than not it is advocacy, followed by advocacy, followed by counter advocacy, followed by counter advocacy, and so on. Opponents content to listen as little as possible for fear they might give credence to their opponents point of view. Dialogue on the other hand balances advocacy with inquiry, “this is my worldview or perspective of what I want”, accompanied by “what is your world view or perspective or what you want?” Difficult challenges require powerful conversations and these conversations require the abilities to advocate and to inquire as well as abilities to frame issues in ways that encourage conversation rather than shut down. They also require of us the abilities to illustrate and give concrete examples and share how we come to our conclusions. In any meetings, we invited and encouraged these practices as well as trying to model them ourselves.

Roles and relationships: Roles are bigger than us in that another person can occupy that role too. Yet roles do not define us as human beings, we are more than the role that we occupy at a given time and we can occupy different roles at different times. Some roles are formal and more lasting such as policeman, mediator, teacher, while others are more temporary, informal or even momentary, such as critic, sympathiser, defender, etc. Being in a role shapes how you behave and limits what you can say. Though essential it can makes us slightly less human, especially if we become too identified with or feel trapped by the parameters of the role. Awareness of the roles we occupy and the constraints which they put on us can help smooth communication between people.

Such awareness can also help us to choose whether we want to speak from that role, step out of it, switch to another role if it helps us to communicate and relate better to other parties. For example, when BTAP decided to step out of the complainer and accuser roles they were adopting in early BTAP hosted interagency meetings. This helped communication and made for more effective meetings. Likewise, relieving the BTAP coordinator of having to perform advocate and chair roles at the same time, by letting the project consultant occupy the role of chair, made a considerable improvement to the way the meetings functioned. It helps to let people see our human side, even remind people it is a human occupying the role, lest they begin to treat us as less than human when we are performing a role on behalf of our organisations. We cannot be reduced to a role; we occupy many roles. We are also human and vulnerable even if we have a uniform or power.

Rank and power: rank and power, their use and abuse, are a constant source of conflict. Learning to use power well requires that we become aware of the rank and power that we do have as well as the privileges that go with it. We are more inclined to be aware of the power that we don't have than what we do and that makes us more liable to misuse or abuse it even if we are not aware that we are doing so. Speaking the truth to power has always been a challenge particularly for the marginalised and those who were discriminated against. But challenging misuse and abuse of power can itself be done in an abusive manner which may in turn escalate a conflict.

To use power well we need both awareness of the rank and power that we have and the meta-skills (the quality of the way we use our skills and power) we use in exercising it. In conflict we tend to demonise our opponents, to treat them as less than human, which gives us permission to behave badly towards them. If we can act in a compassionate than respectful manner towards our opponents they will be more likely to reciprocate and treat us in a humane way, are messages are likely to be better heard and we may be able to retain good relationships as well as achieving our goals. Greater consciousness of our rank and power helped us to access more of our resources and expanded our choices leaving us feeling more empowered and influential. Meeting those with greater rank and power than ourselves from this place helped us to be more effective in achieving the goals of BTAP.

Conflict pivots: Tammy Lenski, a professor of conflict studies in the U.S., suggests that there are three crucial turning points that we need to be aware of and to enact if we are to be successful in dealing with conflict.

Firstly, you pivot away from your stuck story and towards its message. You need to understand that your story is not the whole story but that your story contains a message for you about what is important to you and you need to communicate that.

Secondly, you pivot away from their behaviour towards your conflict hooks. This means that you look at your triggers and your reactions to identify what is being threatened or undermined by the other person's behaviour. You need to manage your own triggers so they don't interfere with your ability to communicate and relate.

Thirdly, you pivot away from the past and toward the now. Conflicts get resolved in the present not in the past and solutions are about creating the future you desire in the present time, not about changing history.

The stories that we tell ourselves and tell others are only part of the story and they can keep a stuck in the past, feeling victimised, powerless, and angry and believing that other people should change so we can get what we need. These concepts have been most helpful to us in taking back our power and concentrating on what we can do rather than what we cannot do to achieve what is important to us, to BTAP and to the residents of Labre Park. Promoting conflict work entails putting these pivots into practice in our own attitudes and behaviour and showing others the way to do it as well.

3.5.4 Issues and challenges arising:

Entitlement to reside in Labre Park was a regular and recurring source of contention. This became even more problematic as the prospect of redevelopment loomed nearer. Many families have lived in Labre Park for a long time some as far back as 1967 when Labre Park opened. Others have moved out and moved in at various times so the issue of who was entitled to live there was an open question. Residents wanted to have a say in who was entitled to live there, especially following the events of 2008-2009, which left a legacy of fear.

Eventually at residents meetings, it was agreed by residents that DCC would be the sole decision-maker and they needed to be informed when, or preferably before any new

trailer was moved on site. This was intended to take away the pressure that was being placed on people to sign petitions to allow certain families live in Labre Park or to accept families who had moved in without permission to reside. Families who had objections could make their views known directly to DCC or to BTAP who would convey them to DCC.

This agreement was conveyed to DCC, who readily agreed to implement it as it was in line with their standard policy. However there were times when this policy was not implemented, sometimes for good reasons such as concerns for and safety of children. However it led to tensions between BTAP, DCC and residents on an ongoing basis which sometimes got resolved and sometimes did not as removal or entitlement to reside procedures were delayed for considerable periods. While the agreement removed one kind of pressure on residents, it also left them vulnerable and dependent on the TAU to implement policy quickly. When this did not happen there was a noticeable downturn in the engagement of residents in residents meetings and other community activities.

Solution focused meetings: On a number of occasions, the solution orientation of the meetings appeared to be weakening. A review of these meetings helped to clarify the frustration which was building up around these recycling of old issues seem to occur when people appeared to reach the limitations of what they could achieve within the constraints of their role. We decided that in these interagency meetings we needed to maintain the solution-oriented focus and create a climate of openness whereby various stakeholders could acknowledge and have the contextual and role constraints, within which they worked, respected. Appreciation of each others' situation could be done while not losing sight of the problem which needed to be resolved and not giving up until the problem was resolved, even if that required more than fulfilling the requirements of our roles. The remit that this interagency grouping aspired to was to resolve the problem not just to do our jobs.

This led to more open discussions. Respectful exchanges and collaboration as well as innovative thinking which went beyond role boundaries and responsibilities and in several cases managed to break the impasse and generate creative ways of addressing some seemingly intractable problems. These discussions often entailed surfacing some of the limiting assumptions we were making and by reframing from blaming or shifting responsibility for the problem, new possibilities opened up and there was a greater sense of relief and achievement among members of the various agencies present.

3.5.5 Outcomes and evaluation

Key developments in working with agencies include:

- There have been consultations with Cluid housing to explore the possibilities of their involvement with the redevelopment of Labre Park. While these discussions are at a very early stage there is innovative thinking in relation to rebuilding a sustainable community and including social enterprise initiatives within Labre Park for and with the Traveller men.
- Labre residents have reengaged with the Ballyfermot Garda Community Forum attending three meetings to date.

- Through dialogue, agreeing actions and follow through there has been a significant shift in the nature of relationship between DCC and Labre residents. With residents willing to go to and refer to DCC in a more open way when issues emerge on site rather than requesting BTAP and other agencies to intervene on their behalf.
- Dublin City Council workers and contractors have been able to go on site and conduct their business without fear of intimidation following commitments from residents to support this.
- There is now a more effective operation of the LTACC including a mechanism for greater collaboration between Traveller organisations and the Traveller Accommodation Unit (TAU) within DCC in relation to the development of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2014-2018. This resulted in meaningful collaboration between the TAU and local Traveller organisations in carrying out the Housing needs assessment within the Traveller specific accommodations across Dublin City.
- This new approach has begun to deliver better outcomes for Travellers in relation to accommodation as evidenced by the HSPC outcomes in 2013.
- The work with DCC, developing links with the Housing Strategic Policy Committee and influencing the shape of the Traveller Accommodation programme (TAP) 2014-2018 has underpinned operating procedures and working relations for at least the five year life of the TAP. Moreover, we have completed a process that can be replicated by other Traveller groups across the country.

4 Reflection, analysis and learning - What worked, what did not work and what we learned.

4.1 What did not work so well

4.1.1 Development of a conflict monitoring tool

As part of work with Board and staff, a monitoring tool for identifying and reporting on conflicts was developed though it was never fully implemented. The intention was to provide an evidence base which would inform the priorities and the focus for future conflict work which to be carried out. The monitoring tool is still too detailed and complex for the purpose which it was intended to serve and has not been included in this report as it needs further refinement and testing to be effective.

The purpose of the tool is to record issues of tension and conflict pertaining to Labre Park and inform analysis, devise appropriate responses and monitor outcomes. This is a brief overview of the core areas for data collection. Each of the areas also has a number of sub headings within each.

- Type of offending behaviour
- Incident description
- Location of incident
- Who is making report/notifying of issue/conflict
- Who are the parties to the conflict/issue
- Frequency of issue (is this a regular occurrence/ never happened before)
- Action required
- Action agreed / next steps
- Outcomes

4.1.2 Aspects of work with the Board and staff

From the beginning of the project in 2012, the members of the BTAP Board, who are all volunteers, were under constant pressure to address a range of issues raised by drastic changes in funding structures and reduced resources. Their decision not to merge with other Traveller organisations or the local Partnership Company and to remain independent has meant a struggle for survival and a constant challenge to ensure funding to provide resources for staff and services that will be familiar to many readers. Most importantly, from the point of view of this project, it created a new set of pressures and challenges for the Board that were not anticipated when the Board committed to the project.

Despite considerable learning, there were varying levels of awareness and conflict competence among Board and staff members which made resolving some issues more difficult than we had hoped would be the case following the planned training. Training alone was therefore not sufficient for the Board and staff to handle conflict both because there was not enough of it and because it needed additional coaching and mentoring and that would have required more volunteer time and resources, both of which were in short supply.

Development of conflict skills by Board members did not match the demands made on them by the conflicts which they encountered. On reflection, we were too ambitious in hoping this could be achieved within the timeframe of this project. Also we did not give sufficient consideration to the additional demand the project would place on volunteers who were, in some cases struggling to fulfil their Board roles and responsibilities Board.

4.1.3 Aspects of work with Traveller men

Getting collective agreement from Traveller men in Labre Park was difficult and so it was challenging to build up momentum behind a particular activity or direction. Some liked the idea of a horse project but others had no interest. Some supported the idea of a handball alley within Labre Park while others felt it would attract unwanted people into Labre Park. It was hard to get agreement on most things among the men and despite feedback that there had been the significant progress toward the engagement of Traveller men outlined above. Progress on collective engagement was slower than hoped for and individual freedom remained more important for most Traveller men than the need for group alignment and the value of collective action. However, some initiatives that were started but not completed during the project may bear fruit after the project ends. E.g. a men's health project which has now gained some funding resources, may yet take place.

4.1.4 Development of an integrated conflict management system

Have we created a community based conflict management system?

The answer is not yet! But we made some good progress and learned more about what may be needed to do so. It was difficult to build an integrated conflict management system when basic building blocks were not in place. The project was too ambitious in that regard but we are now much clearer about what the building blocks need to be. Low levels of Board competence or capacity was often a cause of conflict and the challenge of creating a conflict management system exceeded the Board capacity and resources of those concerned and creating the dilemma - do you focus on the Board management skills or the conflict skills? There often was not time or energy for both or there was a divergence of views as to which should take priority. Sometimes it was a chicken and egg situation. The answers and the problems were clear but the organisational and personal resources were just not there to implement the solutions or learn within the time constraints. Learning about conflict has undoubtedly taken place among those attending the training programmes but transfer of learning has not been as significant as hoped. Learning from the project suggests more focused training and practice is needed for the shift in attitudes, conflict consciousness and

embedding of skills and strategy in the every-day functioning of BTAP is achieved. On reflection, it needs a better paced and staged approach to suit the readiness of the Board and staff as well as their capacity to devote time and energy to the process.

4.2 What worked

4.2.1 The challenge of bringing conflicts out into the open

It took considerable courage to bring contentious issues into the open and work on them while they were going on, even with the help of facilitation from the project consultant. Some of issues which arose in Board and group training sessions were later worked on in one-to-one sessions with Breakthrough staff in mediator and conflict coaching roles rather than their more usual facilitator or trainer roles. However, time and support was finite and more was needed to overcome natural fears of Board members of surfacing latent conflicts which were undermining progress. Work on these issues was made easier by the structure and container afforded by the training programmes as well as the available expert facilitator and mediator support.

4.2.2 Pivotal role of the BTAP Coordinator:

The BTAP coordinator played a key role in the adoption and championing of the conflict project. She was a leading figure in establishing the ITM Boards training programme and her foresight in establishing the BTAP project in parallel with the ITM Boards training reflected a level of readiness and understanding of the challenges of tackling conflict as well as a commitment to seeing it through. Her attendance and leadership at every training session and creativity in applying the methods she was learning in various contexts was a powerful model for others involved with BTAP. This demonstrates the need for such leadership in order to embed new approaches to conflict within the work of a project.

Substantive mentoring and coaching support was given to the BTAP project coordinator during the project, building on skills she already brought to the table, meant that, of all the Board and staff members, she was the most able and ready to apply the conflict skills and strategies covered in training sessions. Other Board and staff members did not have the same level of support in applying what they had learned despite benefiting from some additional coaching and mediation sessions to address specific problems. Our experience confirms the necessity of conflict champion who most embodies the conflict skills and practices but brings substantial community development experience and communication skills to the table even before the project begins. This may not be possible for every project but having such a champion, who holds the vision for the project and is highly committed to learning and leading on it, will greatly enhance chances of success.

4.2.3 Introducing new ways of working with conflict to the community:

This project was about introducing new ways of tackling a range of behaviour and goals which create tensions and conflict impacting on the community. Residents more generally, in particular Traveller men, did not trust what we were suggesting to begin with

- we had to demonstrate its effectiveness. It was a chicken and egg situation - to make it work we needed people to trust in the process and to get people to trust the process they needed to see that it worked - a difficult balancing act.

Crisis situations or hotspots provided the opportunity to build trust in alternative ways of dealing with conflict with families in Labre Park. Gradually the combination of work with the BTAP Board, increasing familiarity with John Mulligan through his regular attendance at residents meetings, and with models and practices for addressing we were able to offer the restorative resolution process to address the conflict between residents and a local business. This provided the first major demonstration of the benefits that could be achieved from using Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and made significant advances in building trust in what we were trying to achieve.

4.2.4 Applying Restorative principles and practices:

The unexpected opportunity arose to work restoratively in relation to a conflict between some of the younger residents in Labre Park and a local business. The aim here was to gain the agreement of parents and young boys to work in this conflict on a “no blame, no shame, no coercion basis”. The intention was to bring the damage being done to the business to a halt, prevent escalation and repair the harm done to property and relationships as well as to the wider community.

Many of these goals were reached through the process and this was acknowledged at a meeting between the boys, their parents and the businessmen towards the end of this project. It is worth highlighting how the operation of the “no blame” and focus on “victim impact rather than the behaviour of the perpetrator” i.e. Restorative principles, helped to mobilise residents and gain support for the intervention. Perhaps more importantly, from the point of the project, it demonstrated the alignment between Restorative practices and Traveller culture by the relative ease with which the approach was adopted by the community.

4.2.5 Being ready to act when conflict arises in the community:

We were able to take the opportunity to work with young boys, their parents and the local business because the project was ready to take advantage of it through the training and having the expertise available to recognise the opportunity and the know-how to initiate a suitable process as well as trust and a relationship with known facilitators. This preparedness to act when the opportunity arises is dependent on the development of conflict capacity in advance of the difficulties or conflicts arising. Not all projects will have such a high level of expertise available in the early stages of this development as was the case here. However, a combination of access to a mediator from a local voluntary community mediation or restorative practices group together with a project worker who has already built up a trusting relationship with the families concerned, such as happened here, could work effectively and be affordable. It is therefore important that projects see the importance of and take action to build partnership arrangements with such local community services.

4.2.6 Shifts in relationship between BTAP and DCC:

The arrival of a new DCC Director of Housing marked the beginning of a significant change of relationship for the better between BTAP and DCC. This coincided with this shift in strategy and attitude on the part of BTAP arising out of the conflict training programs. The new director of housing at DCC wanted to move on from the past, focus on the future and committed to taking action on issues that were within her power to address or be clear when and why they could not do so. BTAP, for its part decided to try and repair and improve the relationship with DCC and in particular the Traveller Accommodation Unit (TAU), take a more collaborative and solution focused approach and apply the principles and practices emerging out of the training programs to their interactions with the Council and other agencies.

Later in the project, the situation improved still further with the replacement of the head of the TAU, who likewise brought a more positive attitude and constructive approach to the problems faced by residents in Labre Park. This highlights the necessity of working on the quality of relationships with stakeholders and partners which underpins healthy conflict work and productive working relations. This is aside from and separately from working on the tasks and conflicts that need to be addressed.

Hosting BTAP's own interagency meetings in response to a dysfunctional DCC TIG working group was a way of challenging our tendency to be dependent and to complain when things did not go the way we wanted or live up to our expectations. We looked at our choices, took power into our own hands - began running meetings the way we wanted them to go rather than trying to reform an organisation we felt was not serving the purposes for which it was needed. We did not always manage to live up to our aspirations, but we declared them and tried to hold ourselves accountable for delivering on them. We kept them under review, learned about them as we went along and adjusted the way we worked in the light of practice.

4.2.7 Redevelopment of Labre Park as a major driver and container for the conflict work:

Redevelopment provided a solid platform for the project to address conflict and a strong motivating force for engagement by residents. Progress was closely watched and residents meetings which address any aspect of the redevelopment proposals were very well attended. Any threats to it were a cause for concern and there was considerable collective effort to show a united front in support of the redevelopment.

This shared and high priority goal made it possible to bring up contentious issues relating to antisocial behaviour, dumping, the state of the site, entitlement to reside and so on and these were linked in to the positive or negative impact which they would or could have on redevelopment prospects. This highlighted for us the importance of having an overarching shared identity and purpose to drive the project such as this. The absence of such a project would undoubtedly have made it far more difficult to achieve the levels of engagement reflected by resident's participation in the project. The fact that topics, which were previously "taboo" subjects, could be discussed in residents meetings without

escalation or retaliation was seen as major progress towards addressing such problems.

4.2.8 Breakthrough facilitation roles

In this project I held several roles, project consultant, trainer, facilitator, coach, mentor, mediator, researcher, and so on. My strength was that I had expertise and professional qualifications in all of these roles but it may also have been a weakness of this project in that my energy has been spread too thinly and across too many roles. The challenges of coming into Labre Park as external facilitator were daunting. I was not sure how acceptable I would be to the residents despite having much to offer around the issues of conflict. Working closely alongside the BTAP coordinator I slowly began to build relationships, though with some families and individuals more than others. Over the period of the project, residents became more familiar with me, mainly through my engagement in residents meetings but also through vital outreach work with Traveller men in Labre Park referred to earlier.

4.2.9 Taking on a mediator role:

Partly because of the focus on conflict capability building, partly because it was not part of the plan and victims reluctance to have us do so, we did not take a direct approach to addressing such conflicts by contacting the offending individuals or families. A mediation service and how to access it would need to have been communicated more formally at an earlier stage in the project. In retrospect, such a service could have been valuable on several occasions had it been established early on and given time to build up trust in and understanding of the service.

Shuttle mediation was used in one boundary dispute and achieved a satisfactory resolution. Use of this process sidestepped the Traveller men's fear of face-to-face confrontation and habitual styles of communication. It also avoided mutual triggering which got in the way of resolution. However, while it resolved the boundary issue very well, it did not address mutual triggering or the men's ability to communicate face to face without escalation.

The potential value of third party intervention value is far greater than this project was able to deliver given that its focus was more on building capability than providing a mediation service.

4.2.10 Addressing our fears of intervening

In the early stages of the project I was somewhat fearful of certain families who had a reputation for antisocial, criminal or intimidating behaviour. In retrospect, I could have been more direct in approaching these families in the role of mediator or Peacemaker. Interestingly, when I made such an offer in the later stages of the project it was not taken up. Some Traveller men were protective of me and expressed fear that I would be attacked by these men and boys, some of whom were from outside of Labre Park, if I approach them directly.

We had not made it explicit with residents that we would be offering a community

mediation service as part of the project. Had we done so, it would have made it easier to approach people engaging in offensive behaviour with a greater degree of credibility. In such a recognised and well publicised role, I would be less likely to polarise or create a barrier to offenders whose behaviour was creating problems for others. It is important to remember that approaching offenders in a mediator role is to invite them to voluntarily participate in a mediation process and therefore poses no threat nor is it coercive in any way.

4.3. Learning and changes

4.3.1 Pressures on the BTAP Board:

Progress throughout 2014 was slowed considerably by problems with BTAP office space which made them uninhabitable for a considerable part of the year. This became a sizeable barrier to the delivery of services, escalated tensions between Board and staff and landlords during a time when Board membership was severely depleted. Due to reductions in resources and staff time, the BTAP coordinator was no longer able to provide the level of support to the BTAP Board as she had previously given. In addition, the Board faced the extensive difficulties in ensuring satisfactory office space for BTAP, which placed an unexpectedly heavy burden of work on the voluntary Board. Without their accustomed level of support, the Board struggled with the added workload, reduced number of Board members, and pressure from staff to ensure satisfactory working conditions. This resulted in the Chair having to cover a number of obligatory roles.

These experiences highlighted the very difficult job and responsibilities of the Board, the capabilities needed for the Board to perform effectively and the tensions and conflict which could be created by unexpected events which were beyond the existing capacity of a voluntary Board. These events have the potential to create a conflictual environment in which formerly good working relationships between Board and staff members can fragment adding to the strain on all concerned. Ensuring effective Board functioning and maintenance will have the effect of preventing some kinds of conflict while in other situations the conflict can be an indicator of the need for change and development on the Board.

4.3.2 Are we expecting too much of volunteer Boards?

In 2013, following government restructuring of the funding of Traveller organisations placed great pressures on the Board and staff at BTAP. In the face of major cutbacks, lack of funding, decisions about the future independence or alignment of BTAP with partnerships, the tenure of staff, etc., the very survival of BTAP as a Traveller organisation were at risk. This crisis sucked up inordinate amounts of time from the volunteer Board of BTAP and amplified tensions between Board members. This also impacted on the amount of time that could be allotted to working on a conflict management system and the creation of a steering group.

It seemed like too much was already being asked of this group of volunteers since many of them were already attending ITM's conflict programme for Boards as well as engaging with the funding crisis and the demands of this project conflict. This placed an inordinate amount of stress on Board members and particularly those who are living in Labre Park who were impacted by the rollercoasters of hopes, losses and the tensions of living in that environment. The challenges of being Board members while also living in Labre Park, created additional tensions for them that were not experienced by other members of the Board. Overload experienced by the Board is a key cause of conflict both within the Board and with project staff and needed to be resolved.

However, all of this again raises the thorny issue of resources to help build governance capacity and capability which is clearly in short supply. While such Board development is desirable, we have to ask if it is possible given the constraints and, if not, "what then do Boards do?". Has there got to be an acceptance that they do the best they can in the circumstances and continue to muddle along even if in an inefficient and less effective way?

4.3.3 Challenges of Traveller engagement on the Board of BTAP:

This was a problem at the outset of the project and despite some progress, remains a significant challenge at this time. The challenge was exacerbated by the major challenges faced by the Board during the period of the project and by the ambitious workload taken on by volunteer members of the Board who are also attending the conflict training programme and follow-up conflict training sessions at BTAP. This issue is likely to require significant attention from the Board in its own right, once current challenges have been surmounted. It may necessitate a review of roles on the Board, the capabilities required to carry them out, and the expectations of Traveller representatives, especially those living within the confines of Labre Park.

The culture of Travellers tends to emphasise respect for elders while younger Travellers, who have much to bring to the community by way of education and skills, find it harder to be influential while remaining respectful of traditions. Despite significant gains, Labre Park is struggling to engage and maintain the interest and commitment of such young people and maintain their involvement in community development. A youth worker to engage and develop leadership capacity among young people, especially young Traveller boys is sorely needed in Labre Park.

4.3.4 Engagement of Traveller men:

While significant but slow progress was being made on engaging Traveller men in residents meetings and site clean-ups, engagement at a broader level was slower than anticipated. Apart from those meetings concerned with redevelopment, engagement mainly came from a few men leaving the majority of men in Labre Park disengaged from residents meetings. The exception to this was of course the work between the young boys and their parents and the local businessman.

It was clear however, from the major clean-up of the site in which many Traveller men

of all ages took part that Traveller men were more willing to engage in activities that were meaningful and that involved physical activity, in that case working with machinery was an added attraction. It also demonstrated some of the abilities and skills possessed by Traveller men living in Labre Park and practical and physical engagement in the clean-up helped to strengthen the relationship between the Traveller men, the DCC and the Breakthrough consultant,

On earlier occasions, such clean-ups would have been completed by council workers with little engagement from the local community. On this occasion close collaboration, facilitated by the interagency meetings, ensured that the work was done in collaboration “with” rather than “for” the community. The improved relationship between BTAP and DCC enabled greater coordination of the contribution they could be made by the community as well as that of DCC. How it was done mattered just as much as the fact that it was done. The outcome was not just a task done from the DCC point of view, it resulted in greater community engagement and collaboration, a sense of pride in their achievement, ownership of the cleaned up site and motivation to keep it so.

4.3.5 Conflict and cooperation around shared spaces in Labre Park:

In some ways, the state of the small garden facing onto the Kylemore Road became a symbol of how things were going in Labre Park. The management and care of shared spaces has and continues to be problematic in Labre Park. In good times, in the community was working well together the garden looked well cared for. At other times when the atmosphere was tense, morale poor, cooperation low, garden fencing would be damaged, horses illegally grazing would soil the garden and rubbish would be dumped in it. Several clean-ups, the removal of horses and the mending of fencing were carried out successfully by the residents supported by the DCC over the period of the project only to slide again into a cared for state as motivation declined, maintenance ceased and enforcement of bylaws on horses failed to be followed through.

This raises questions about care of shared spaces, what kind of community Labre Park wanted to be, the lack of cohesion and shared responsibility among residents of Labre Park, and possibly whether care of shared spaces was even a high priority for formerly, if not currently, nomadic culture. With a few notable exceptions, the assumption was that it was somebody else’s job to clean up and maintain the garden as well as other shared spaces. It is left to a few to take pride in how these shared spaces looked and to maintain them as a shared resource for residents. These few were often ridiculed for their willingness to take on such responsibilities and were not supported which left them demotivated and less willing to lead.

Dublin City Council carried out two major clean-ups of the river and an open area at considerable cost which was greatly appreciated by residents yet dumping still remains an unsolved problem and agencies, Council, Gardai and residents have not been able to bring a halt to it. However, flooding in Labre Park is no longer as severe since the river was cleared of rubbish. Residents generally remain downhearted about the level of community cooperation possible without strong enforcement by Gardai and the Council of laws prohibiting dumping.

4.3.6

The challenges of reporting ASB and criminal behaviour left many residents feeling powerless. Residents were fearful of confronting such behaviour directly for fear it would escalate into serious conflict. Gardai and Dublin City Council could not take action without evidence and identification of the perpetrator. A combination of cultural values and fear of retaliation from perpetrators deterred any residents from reporting directly to the council or Gardai. CCTV cameras, which could gather such evidence, were either too expensive to run or sited in positions where they could not provide the required evidence.

4.3.7 A shift of power in relation to the TIG:

the hosting of an interagency group by BTAP was empowering and gave them significant control over the agenda and the conduct of meetings. This allowed BTAP to create a shift in the culture of these meetings and helped to make them more relevant to the needs of Travellers in Labre Park. It helped to remove to some degree the sense of frustration, powerlessness and dependency on DCC. BTAP Board and staff members were able to apply their learning from the conflict training programs to the conduct of these meetings with some success and felt more empowered as a result.

Frustration with the conduct of Traveller Interagency Groups is widespread throughout the country. The possibilities opened up by this initiative at BTAP seem worthwhile and may be worth replicating elsewhere. They may also be able to provide a steering group for an ICCMS as originally envisaged though this was not attempted at BTAP. Further research is needed here to see if this is possible and a best use of agency and other resources.

4.3.8 The time it takes to bring about changes in beliefs and practices:

This project has again highlighted the amount of time it may take for shifts in understanding of what is conflict, attitudes to conflict, fear of conflict and willingness to engage in conflict to take place. Feelings of reluctance, background trauma from lived experiences and cultural conditioning reinforce the fear of conflict. Against such a background, it is difficult to believe that a different way is possible. It is like being asked to walk on water or the first sailors' fear of falling off the edge when asked to sail round the world when the common belief was that the earth was flat. It requires you to suspend fear and belief, to trust in a new way, long enough to give it time to work. Add to this the need for instant solutions rather than slow change of culture at a time when their culture itself is threatened. It is a lot to ask of most Travellers.

As the project was being delivered we realised that the real challenge would be to embed conflict prevention, containment and resolution principles and practices into the everyday work of the project. Just learning about these or having a few skilled practitioners using them was not going to be enough to make the difference we had hoped. It was not just the Board and staff who had to believe in and practice them, it would take the majority of the residents getting behind alternative ways of dealing with conflict to make it work for

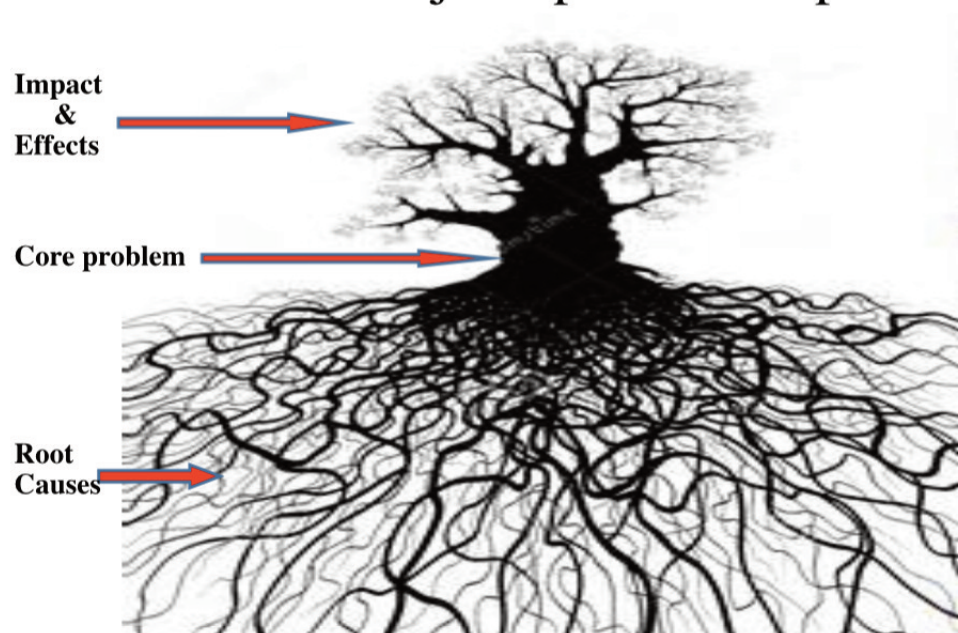
the community. Training programmes would not be enough. It needed to be modelled and seen to work by the community.

4.3.9 Use of collective community based tools for working on conflict:

Without wishing to detract from all that was achieved through the residents meetings, we did not give sufficient attention to a community-based analysis of conflict and developing ownership of a conflict management strategy by the community. While residents were probably not ready for such a direct approach at the outset, we could have made greater use of a range of tools for the engagement of the community in addressing conflict, especially in the later stages when trust had been built. This could have been a powerful but non-confrontational method of getting the community to develop its own understanding of conflicts it was experiencing.

By getting them to work “on” these conflicts rather than “in” them - getting on the balcony rather than the dancefloor, so to speak - it could have both helped them gain more distance and perspective and a greater sense of ownership and control over them. It would also have been more in tune with the community development values and approach which they were more familiar and comfortable with. However, it remains to be tested in practice.

The Conflict Tree: joint problem exploration



4.3.10 Providing third party resources:

Future development of an Integrated Community-based Conflict Management System (ICCMS) would need to include a credible third party Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) structure and resource for residents. This could help demonstrate the benefits of ADR approaches and support the development of conflict capacity. While each project may not have the resources to develop such capacity, it may be possible to have access to such expertise through free voluntary community mediation services, or collaborate with organisations that have the necessary expertise. Providing such a community based mediation and conflict coaching service is also a way of building community conflict capacity as well as demonstrating its value. Existing voluntary community mediation services provide wonderful training and development opportunities for improving third party intervention skills through observation, supervised mediation sessions and sharing and learning sessions and this model could be used here either as part on a voluntary service in partnership with local community mediation service or by making it part of a Board member or project worker's role.

4.3.11 Highlighting preventative and containment work:

While we did not define it as such, much of the work we did was also preventative. Outreach work helped us to monitor the emerging hotspots and conflicts which were brewing and enabled us to contain them and intervene before they escalated further and had a more damaging impact. While not defined as part of a conflict management system, community meetings undoubtedly formed a valuable element in preventing and containing conflict in Labre Park. Conflict capacity building programmes also have a strong preventative impact.

Gardai, the Junior Liason and Garda diversion schemes, the DCC TAU and ASB (anti-social behaviour) units, and Ballyfermot ABLE and Family Base organisations played important, if less visible roles in preventing and containing rising tensions and conflict during the project.

DCC reporting processes which did not require having to provide identify the reporter eased the problem of early identification of offences. Identification by witnesses is still a barrier to successful prosecution but we had to keep in mind that prosecution is not the same as duty to protect and assure the safety and security of residents which still remains problematic and only partially resolved.

Torn allegiance to two cultures, Traveller and settled remains a difficulty and further research is needed to explore how this might be successfully addressed.

4.3.12 Towards a more culturally sensitive approach to conflict:

How can we bring in traditional Traveller approaches and strengths such as bargaining, dealing, negotiating and elder arbitration and peace making? While not wishing to encourage or support violent approaches, some of the principles of fair fighting such as the setting up of a formal encounter, respect for agreed rules, the need for a neutral

referee, are relevant and can be built upon. We could have done more to build on culturally familiar forms of engaging in conflict resolution rather than trying to replace them. I would have needed to spend far more time learning about these to begin with rather than coming in as the expert and teaching new conflict resolution skills and strategies.

As project consultant, I formulated the key problem as lack of awareness of and capability in the relatively new methods of working with conflict and this was, at best, just part of the story. To gain greater engagement and consideration of these approaches I would have needed to build from what was already there by way of dealing with conflict and I did not have enough understanding or valuing of what already exists to do so. This learning could make incorporation of new methods easier and be more respectful of Traveller ways and identity.

4.3.13 Racism and discrimination:

While we addressed some aspects of racism, discrimination and marginalisation in the ITM Boards Conflict Capability programme, and more peripherally in the conflict and culture sessions, it did not get the focussed attention it merits in this project. Racism, prejudice and discrimination were never far from the surface in many of the conflicts we addressed and were explicit in others. However, the focus of the project has been on building individual, project and community capacity to address conflict rather than addressing the broader and more systemic causes of conflict experienced by Travelers whether in Labre Park or elsewhere. Its omission as a major theme in this project should not be taken as a dismissal of its centrality, importance or impact on conflict related to the Traveller community.

4.4 Conclusions

4.4.1 Capability building approach:

This was an innovative pilot and there was little precedent or research for such a community based undertaking. We did not understand what would happen when the “theory hit the tarmac”. The project, as conceived, probably over-relied on a capacity building approach and not enough on relationships and embedding the learning in practice. When we tried to implement the vision, the gaps in our thinking, capacity and our resource constraints began to show.

4.4.2 Adapting to circumstances:

We adapted in the midst of the uncertainty. To use a bridge metaphor - we built the bridge as we moved out on it; only when we had built some of it could we see where we needed to go next. We worked with the residents meetings far more than we had planned as that seemed to be paying dividends. We needed to adapt better to the pressures the Board were under. We grasped opportunities to do various conflict coaching, mediations and worked with the Traveller boys and business introducing restorative practices that were not

in our initial plan. We changed the way we were approaching the interagency challenge and hosted a BTAP interagency group instead.

4.4.3 Conflict monitoring and causes of conflict:

Even now, using the evidence we have gathered informally, we can be more focused on the conflicts we want to prioritise and address. However, we still lack a sufficient evidence base to guide our strategy and a better conflict monitoring and recording system needs to be implemented. This demonstrates the need to be setting a similar project over a more realistic period of time at least 3 years.

We have a rough analysis of the causes of conflict which emerged over the duration of the project though this is by no means comprehensive and includes proximate as well as more systemic ones. It does not include broader causes such as racism, poverty, marginalisation and discrimination though these are without doubt contributing factors to conflict experienced by residents of Labre Park.

4.4.4 Elements of an Integrated Community-based Conflict Management System (ICCMS)

We set out with the broad intention of creating an integrated conflict management system. As already acknowledged, we did not achieve as much as we had hoped but we now have a far better understanding of the elements needed to create one such as:

- 1 An ICCMS champion:** with vision/ leadership / and team development for Board
- 2 Board and staff commitment to creating an ICCMS:** project planning, training, communication and integration strategies.
- 3 Funding generation and strategy development:** Secure the level of funding that is required from the outset
- 4 Board and staff capacity training and peer coaching** focus on Non-Violent Communication training, Conflict Coaching, Restorative practices, Mediation)
- 5 Project hosted Interagency Group** - Solution focused including as needed only - Gardai, JLO, Local Authority Social workers, local youth services, Local Authority tenant Liaison Officers, Anti-social behaviour units, Council Traveller Accommodation Units.
- 6 Individual conflict capacity resources:** e.g. ITM web based materials, work books, video shorts, podcasts, articles, links to open source web resources
- 7 A conflict monitoring system:** to gather data and aid strategy building
- 8 An administrative structure and contact point:** for processing requests, providing information and advice about services offered and referral
- 9 Collective community based tools:** for engaging residents, enhancing problem ownership and empowering community in working on conflict

- 10 3rd party intervention service** - mediation, facilitation, conflict coaching.
- 11 Partnership building:** with local community mediation, conflict coaching, and restorative practices service
- 12 Advanced 3rd party training:** - NUIM mediation training, restorative justice training, Dialogue Facilitation, Processwork
- 13 Access to national resources:** such as ITM law centre, Pavee Point, Free Legal Aid Centres, Alternatives to Violence Project, Midlands Traveller Community Mediation Initiative, Restorative Justice Services, Facing Forward, Community Law and Mediation, South Dublin Mediation Services, Local Authority Peace 4 programmes (border counties and Northern Ireland only), The Kennedy Institute (NUIM), Community Relations Council Northern Ireland, European Network against Racism Ireland,

4.4.5 Other key findings worth highlighting include:

- the damaging effects and consequences of unresolved conflict on individuals, families and the Traveller community in Labre Park and their relations with the wider community.
- the need to extend our understanding of conflict, e.g. to illuminate communication and relationship breakdowns in different contexts.
- the benefits of developing a community-based approach to managing and resolving conflict
- the importance of integrating conflict awareness and capacity into the everyday work of the project
- the necessity of combining a variety of methods for working with conflict in the community rather than over-relying on a single approach.
- the need to allow sufficient time to develop and embed conflict awareness and practices within Traveller projects
- the requirement for leadership from project Boards and staff in prioritising and committing to community-based conflict work and modelling good practice
- the need to find better ways to address tensions arising from culture and rank differences between Traveller and settled members of project Boards and how they impact Board and project relations and performance
- the value of developing a partnership approach together with other stakeholders to create an integrated community based conflict management system.
- the need for adequate resources and structural support over a period of years to contain, prevent, manage and resolve a range of conflicts at community level.

5 Recommendations

A wide range of recommendations are made here arising out of learning on the project. The goal remains one of enhancing the organisation and community's capacity to address conflict in Labre Park. The process is one of building a framework for an Integrated Community-based Conflict Management Strategy (ICCMS) and to guide projects working with conflict - towards a sustainable community based response. However, it is more likely that some rather than all of these recommendations will be adopted by local projects but it is hoped they will provide a starting point for projects so they do not have to "reinvent the wheel" so to speak. The recommendations will also have some relevance for national organisations and agencies who work with and support Travellers and may also be of benefit to other local communities who wish to address conflict.

5.1 Planning

- A Prioritise leadership and board development and integrate conflict work closely with leadership and teamwork on the Boards. Ideally this would be linked with leadership and board development activities taking place at national and local levels such as the ITM/Community Action Network leadership development programme for Traveller leaders and a renewed strategic approach to Board and governance of Traveller Projects, including selection, induction and development.
- B Agree a code of practice/ a set of values/principles for dealing with conflict (such as those outlined in resource materials in appendix), which embody the aspirations the project has for how it will address contention and conflict.
- C Conflict proof each aspect of project work such as advocacy and social activism, interpersonal relations, processes that address harm done, relations with mainstream community including racism and marginalisation, capacity building and leadership development. This is to ensure that the work of the project is brought into line with declared values and code of practice.
- D Build in specific healthy conflict practices, in line with declared code of behaviour, into the everyday activity and work of the project, monitoring and continually refining practice. A selection of individual practices is outlined in the resource materials in appendix. These can be supplemented by expert third party help developed within the project or accessed through partnerships built with local voluntary mediation services. Projects may need to start small with a few key practices and gradually build from there.
- E Identify an ICCMS or "conflict capacity champion" to lead the project and coordinate activities. Ideally a member of staff or a Board member or, better still, both work together to drive the project.

- F Facilitate the Board and staff to learn more about conflict and consider the various options available to it, e.g. through discussion of some aspects or all of this report.
- G Board decide on their strategy for addressing conflict or at least the next steps. Projects build this strategy into their planning over three to five year period addressing conflict prevention, containment and resolution capacity and services for members. (See appendix)
- H Board considers what the role of the Board should be in relation to conflict while keeping in mind the capacity and readiness of the Board to undertake such a project - see guidelines
- I Restorative principles practices should form a central platform for the delivery of community based conflict management services given their alignment and affinity with Traveller culture and values.
- J Review what kind of capacity building programme is needed and how it can best be implemented in light of existing levels of commitment and resources to include desired awareness and skill sets, staging, timescale and pacing allowing time for personal conflict skills, attitude and values and principles to be consolidated in advance of bringing this back to the community.
- K A nationally accessible Boards conflict capability training programme is developed for project Boards and Staff, possibly a restructured multi-media version of the one led by Breakthrough, which is resourced and ideally accredited possibly as a 2 year development programme.
 - a Phase 1 to focus on grounding in non-violent communication, restorative practices and peer conflict coaching skills
 - b Phase 2 focus on negotiation, mediation, restorative conferencing and facilitating contentious conversations
 - c Phase 3 focus on developing and implementing integrated conflict management systems

5.2 Resources

- A Projects need to be realistic about what time and energy can be committed by Board, members and staff, taking account of existing workloads, and what will be required to achieve goals of such a project and avoid underusing valuable resources. While projects and resources will differ and this report will provide a head-start, 3 years is a more realistic estimate of the time needed to consolidate and embed practices in an integrated community-based conflict management system, based on our experience.
- B While this report describes how we used a variety of conflict models and tools and a range of resources that can be used to guide policy and practice in dealing with conflict are available in the appendix, though greater detail

may be needed to enable the reader to implement. More detailed guidance and workbooks are planned to assist projects implement the models, tools and practices outlined here.

- C It is strongly recommended therefore that ITM and Breakthrough build on what has been achieved by sourcing sufficient funding to develop existing and further materials to publication standard and for the provision of interactive, web-accessible e-learning and audio visual materials, blogs, etc., on the ITM website to better equip Traveller organisations and their members deal more effectively with conflict at all levels.
- D ITM seek resources to employ a project worker over a period of 3 years to support the development of integrated community-based conflict management systems with in Traveller projects and maximise use of web accessible e-learning materials, blogs, etc., in support of individual and projects' learning and conflict capability development.
- E Train Traveller volunteers and project staff members as mediators on Traveller specific training programmes such as that being pioneered under the Roma and Traveller mediator training initiative currently being implemented in several EU countries.

5.3 Implementation

- A All Board and members attend Board a conflict capability training programme together having considered what will best suit their needs. In this way the Board will then have a shared learning experience and transfer of learning back into the project will be less difficult. Board members and staff must realise that such learning and skill development requires substantial individual commitment to learning and practice to build capacity and embed these practices in a way that will bring tangible benefits. Turning talk and insight into practice takes time and considerable effort over a number of years.
- B Consideration needs to be given as to how mediation and conflict coaching support/service can best be provided given what resources can be accessed locally on a partnership basis or can be developed in a timely manner to address conflicts which are beyond the personal conflict capacity of participants. This will give participants time to learn more about conflict work and develop their capability while at the same time enabling them to demonstrate the value of the methods through some real progress on particular conflicts.
- C Introduce and use structured methods and tools to enable greater collective awareness, engagement and ownership of tensions and conflict and their role in development and empowerment of Traveller communities (see examples of collective tools outlined in appendix).

- D Clarify and communicate the pathways available to members of the community for dealing with conflict through the project and how to access them. These should include resources provided through but not necessarily by projects from their own resources
- E Use a conflict monitoring tool to help raise awareness of conflict vision and aspirations, successful practice and focus of implementation actions. Use monitoring tools to focus on solutions rather than problems and to expand awareness of achievement rather than capacity deficit in line with appreciative inquiry principles and practice. Consideration should be given to the setting up of a local Traveller organisation hosted Traveller interagency group where it is felt that services to Travellers; in particular where the prevention, containment or resolution of conflict would be better served than in the Local Authority run Interagency group. An independent chair is also desirable, at least to begin with.
- F Review relationships with state agencies and local authorities and explore how dysfunctional or adversarial type relationships and Traveller advocacy could be improved by the application of positive conflict communication principles and practices.
- G Explore with interagency group how recurrent asocial and offensive behaviour could be addressed using solution oriented approach and by combining different approaches in an ICCMS such as residents meetings, different ADR mechanisms, social workers safety forums, JLO diversionary schemes, Gardai, etc.
- H Projects approach or invite local community groups or businesses impacted by Traveller related anti-social behaviour to explore and participate in addressing mutual needs and shared problems.
- I A clear and accessible administrative structure and communications strategy is needed to process requests for assistance, coordinate services and disseminate information about services and how the community can access them.

5.4 Review/monitoring

- A Agree how it will monitor and hold itself and its members accountable for implementing and consolidating of the values and principles so identified, perhaps using an appreciative inquiry model/ cycle which monitors and builds upon successes in practice implementation rather than incidents of unresolved conflict.
- B A national review and monitoring structure to support ICCMS projects around the country is recommended to negotiate high level agreements in relation to gaining buy-in and support for ICCMS between agencies,

Traveller organisations, and government bodies as part of the new Traveller and Roma inclusion strategy.

5.5 Sustainability

- A Projects need to focus on accessing and building partnerships with local voluntary mediation and restorative justice/practices services such as Community Law and Mediation, Southside Mediation Services to mention but a few. Likewise projects can benefit from partnerships with local and national organisations such as the Friends Alternatives to Violence Programmes, Facing Forward (restorative justice), Midlands Traveller Community Mediation Initiative, the EU Roma mediator training initiative, NUIM Kennedy Institute, ITM, Pavee Point, among others.
- B Projects may need to consider how best to participate in and contribute to national conference of Traveller organisations to review this report, share learning and discuss how it might be advanced and determine future action and or research needed.
- C Projects consider the viability of small Traveller organisations and their ability to host an ICCMS and how partnership between smaller local Traveller organisations might lessen the vulnerability and share workload and resource requirements needed to deliver local conflict related services and project development.
- D Conduct further research on Traveller sensitive ways of working on conflict that take account of non-state and State allegiances. For example, to inquire into how existing Traveller cultural structures and values can be clarified and strengthened in ways which support and respect both Traveller identity and state laws.
- E Structural support is needed to create a sustainable Integrated Community-based Conflict Management Systems. ICCMS holds the potential to create mutually supportive, complimentary and parallel pathways of retributive justice that delivers mutual benefits for agencies and Travellers and the wider community. Reliance on charitable funding and projects own resources will not be enough to deliver the vision. It requires statutory and agency buy-in and funding to be sustainable in the long-term to achieve its potential.

TOOLKIT:

Resource Materials for Conflict Work

Conflict is natural and inevitable.
How we respond to it is not.
Our response can be,
constructive or destructive.
The choice is ours.

John Mulligan 2015

TOOLKIT I

Goals of conflict work with Travellers

General goals of conflict work and Traveller specific goals

- i Conflict work was framed broadly as an aspect of personal, organizational / community development through focusing on the opportunities which arise when there is communication and relationship breakdown between people.
- ii It was aimed at improving the quality of life, work, relationship and wellbeing of people viewed from a holistic perspective of interrelatedness

Conflict is viewed as both a danger of loss and destruction and an opportunity to:

- iii reduce suffering/stress/threat/de-escalate tension
- iv negotiate for what you want / meet needs/solve problems and disputes /cooperate to add value
- v repair harm/strengthen communication, relationships
- vi learn and grow as individuals/ groups/community
- vii change/transform situation – create better community – social justice/equity
- viii go to war – forcibly acquire/dominate/block, protect/bring down, make other suffer/revenge

TOOLKIT II

Theories and concepts of conflict

There are times, in most situations, when it appears that there is no conflict. For most people the absence of conflict is usually preferable. We view conflict as a natural and inevitable part of communication and interaction between people with diverse views and values. However, not everybody agrees as to what constitutes a conflict. The approach taken here is more “western”, from a cultural perspective, in so far as it tries to be more explicit about the underlying dynamics of what we call conflict so we can make what is often non-verbal discussable. This section of the resource materials encourages readers to get on the “Balcony” to gain distance, perspective and understanding of conflict while later sections suggest actions that can be taken on the “dancefloor” i.e. in the midst of the experience and interaction.

Balcony and Dance-floor

- **Two kinds of awareness/perspective**
- The **dance floor** is where the inter-action happens, feeling influencing, interference, movement, etc.
- The **balcony** is the perspective you need to have to see the patterns, the flow, the bottle-necks, the opportunities, the threats, what may be needed by the whole
- Intervention/action inquiry requires that you can **fluidly switch between perspectives** – gathering information, raising awareness and utilising it continually

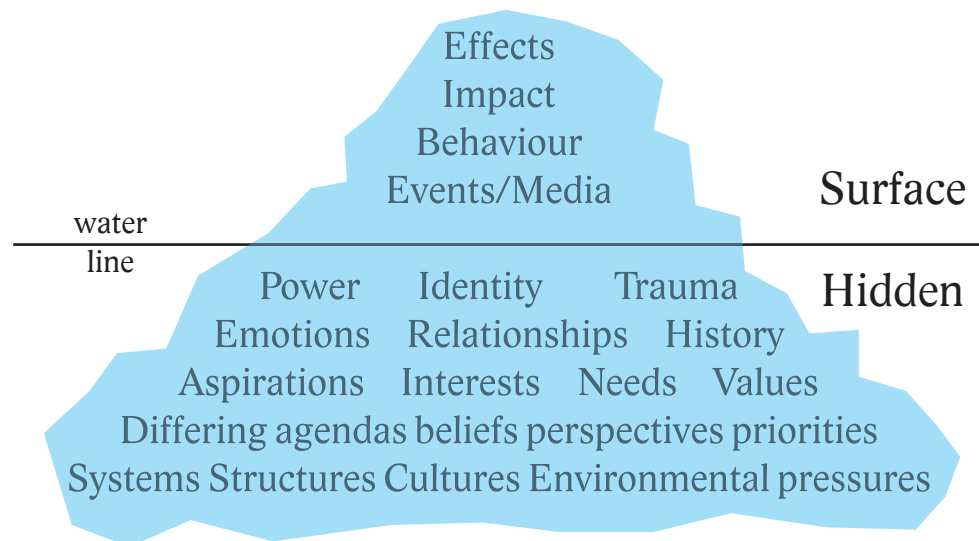
Conflict is both a danger and an opportunity. We strive to manage the risk while trying to take advantage of the opportunity. Conflict is not necessarily harmful or destructive but how we respond to conflict often can be. Our beliefs and attitudes toward conflict shape the way we handle it. To increase our possible range of constructive responses to conflict we usually need to expand our ways of understanding conflict and its dynamics. This overview of theories and concepts will help improve our ability to recognise and talk about it. It will help you describe, explain and predict what happens during conflict and therefore be more prepared to respond constructively when it occurs. Our goal is to promote healthy or constructive responses to conflict which will result in better communication and relating between people and groups.

Conflict generators: - Intra-personal, interpersonal, cultural, structural, and systemic

Issues, types and levels of conflict:

Issues addressed over the course of the project included vandalism, anti-social behaviour, boundary disputes, policy development, uncontrolled dogs, right to reside, roles and responsibilities of the Board, attendance at meetings, horses, dumping, dangerous driving, dumping and clean-up of site, sanitation units and repairs, nature of working relationships, team work, Traveller-settled culture differences, use of shared spaces, horses, service provision,

The Iceberg: Conflict Drivers

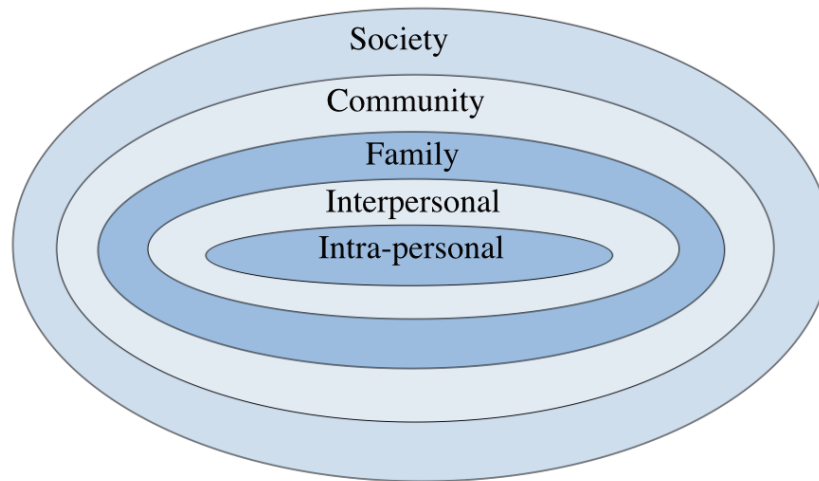


Types of conflict addressed during the project included - intra and extended family disputes, conflicts between Traveller and Traveller, Traveller and country people, staff and Board members, team conflict on Board; conflict between project and agency, young Traveller boys and business, staff - letting agency tensions, young people and elderly; between workmen and children, residents and council, young boys- youth services.

Different conflict levels: Besides identifying conflicts with respect to the people involved in a conflict, we can identify different levels at which conflict takes place such as interpersonal, inter-family, interagency, etc. Some that we worked with included residents meetings - open dialogues re policy and strategy, turning complaints into action. We worked at organisational level - i.e. internal to the Project between staff, Board and members. We also worked at a systems level - BTAP to- government and local authority and agencies through interagency work, political lobbying, collaborative work with other Traveller projects and NGO's.

The following provides a way of categorising types and levels of conflict so we can distinguish between generic levels and be clearer about the strategies needed to work at different levels. Multi-level interventions may be needed simultaneously to achieve sustainable solutions to complex conflicts where different levels are interrelated. Sometimes work at one level may be enough for a mutually satisfactory outcome and you will need to work on a number of levels in parallel.

Interconnected levels of conflict



- i **Intra-personal conflicts:** Most of us have internal conflicts which influence or distort the way we communicate and relate to others. For example, we may be having difficulty deciding between opposing courses of action; we may be fearful of challenging somebody on whom we also depend; we may be conflicted when faced with the choice between transparency and keeping something hidden. It is important that we find a way to address such internal conflicts as, unacknowledged or unresolved, they tend to result in double or confusing messages to another party or create intolerable stress and anxiety within ourselves when triggered in conflict situations.
- ii **Two-party or interpersonal conflicts:** Perhaps the most common everyday type of conflict we encounter. A simple definition of interpersonal conflict is - a situation in which interdependent people express differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals.

However there are many definitions of conflict each emphasising different aspects or elements that are relevant to resolving it. The following definition highlights different aspects of such a conflict which can help us understand and address it.

An interpersonal conflict is a condition between people:-

1. who have or appear to have incompatible goals (**positions**)
2. whose jobs or roles are interdependent (**structures/roles**)
3. who have cooperative and competitive interests (**inner conflict**)
4. whose interests are at risk (**needs/ values/identity**)
5. who experience interference in meeting their needs from each other (**cross a line/ transgress boundary**)

6. who view events differently (**perceptions/interpretations**)
7. who feel upset/angry (**feelings/impact**)
8. who believe the other to be at fault (**beliefs/assumptions**)
9. who act in a way that creates a business/ performance problem (**behaviours**)
10. who believe they can influence or initiate change in favour of their interests (**power**)

Some aspects in this definition will be more important than others in any given conflict and it will often require that a combination will be required to make satisfactory progress. It is important to keep in mind that the focus here is on the interpersonal and not all conflicts can come to a sustainable resolution without also addressing communal, contextual and intra-personal dimensions which are often revealed in the process of working on the interpersonal dimensions.

Project members who have undergone some training and learned how to apply these concepts will be able to make a significant contribution to the management or resolution of interpersonal conflict. Trained third party mediation or conflict coaching may be necessary where conflict competence of the parties involved is less than the challenges posed by the conflict.

- iii **Group or family conflict:** Different group or family members may have different levels of involvement in a conflict. Some may want to be directly involved in its resolution and some not so consideration will need to be taken of those directly as well as indirectly involved or impacted by the conflict. Ideally, it is best to have everyone, who will be involved in implementing any solution, participate in its creation to ensure ownership and follow through.

Many of the aspects of interpersonal conflict outlined above are still relevant to group or family conflict and there will be additional considerations to address the more complex group dynamics brought about by the needs and interests of all parties involved as well as the wider context. Greater emphasis will be placed on bringing to light the nature of different relationships between parties directly and indirectly involved and their potential for helping or hindering the process of dealing with a conflict.

External assistance may be needed in the form of conflict coaching, facilitation or mediation but staff with some additional training will be able to make valuable contributions to the process.

- iv **Intergroup, community, organisation conflict:** What is true for interpersonal and group conflict will also be highly relevant at this level. However in addition to the interpersonal and intra-group/family dynamics, the identity, roles, culture, and structures of the various communities and organisations will need to be mapped out and ways of working with them included in your strategy for approaching the conflict as well as the issues and interests of the various parties and stakeholders..

At this level, there will be a focus on leadership and representation and indeed much of the work may take place between the leaders and representatives of the various

groups or parts of the organisation depending on the size of the population affected. There will be much greater emphasis on understanding roles and relationships and their interaction while keeping in mind that people occupy roles and carry them out (see section on roles in Guide). Considerable care will also need to be taken to ensure that the relationship between representatives and those they represent is functioning effectively

Understanding the context, its contribution and impact on a conflict, while relevant at all earlier levels outlined above, will receive much greater attention here. So too will forces, stakeholders and potential supports external to the given context. This is often beyond the resources of most projects and will require external expertise and support to address it effectively. In the case of this project the interagency approach and seeking of political support to achieve goals are examples at this level.

- v **Systemic - multiple stakeholder/national or international:** at this level issues will be large in scale and scope and will entail exploration and analysis of multiple factors which cause, escalate or maintain the conflict as well as potential opportunities and solutions prevent, contain, resolve or transformed the conflict. Such analysis, planning and implementation may range across peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building.

While the concepts of peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building are extremely useful, particularly in the context of dealing with violent conflict, work at this level is likely to be beyond the resources and capability of most Traveller organisations. Contributions at this level, from a Traveller project's point of view, are more likely to relate to support of national or international Traveller / rights advocacy organisations in their efforts to create an inclusive and just society for Travellers. For example, BTAP's hosting of, and participation in the Irish Traveller Movement's pilot project training programme for Boards of Traveller projects "Transforming tension and conflict into positive change - strengthening Board practice" was an example of engagement at this level.

- iv **Multi-level conflict:** Most large-scale or intractable conflict such as feuding has several inter-dependent layers. For example, individuals and families directly involved, extended families, local projects, community groups and support agencies, national Traveller organisations and government. Widespread problems such as housing, racism and discrimination will need to be addressed at all these levels, often in parallel. Addressing them at one of these levels only, will not lead to a sustainable resolution therefore analysis and strategy to address complex and widespread conflict will need to be created that include interventions and engagement at all levels.

One of the key purposes of this section has been to review and to extend your understanding of conflict beyond the more limited view which just associates it with violence, feuding and escalated conflict. A broader understanding of conflict creates more options for intervening in conflict. It increases our ability to choose an approach or strategy most appropriate for the particular type, stage of the conflict cycle, scale of conflict and skill level of Traveller organisations. The earlier we can anticipate or recognise a conflict is beginning to happen, the easier it is to intervene

and the better the outcome is likely to be. With this purpose in mind, additional and more wide-ranging definitions of conflict from the work of Kenneth Cloke are included in the appendix to widen our attention and what we need to recognise as conflict beyond the more popular definitions.

Causes of conflict: Causes of conflict are often multiple and are likely to be analysed and prioritised differently by different parties to a conflict whether they are directly participating, indirectly involved or impacted by it. Agreement on the causes tends to evolve through dialogue and mutual understanding. Perceptions of the causes of conflict often change over the course of the conflict and its resolution. These may include interference in the meeting of goals or needs, a desire for equity and justice, attack, oppression or abuse by either party, threat to one's identity or interests, and so on. Our theories of conflict shape the way we experience, interpret the meaning of a conflict and act in response. We may be aware or unaware of the theories we are applying. Sometimes switching the theory or lens through which we view conflict can open up new choices and possibilities which were not seen through the lens of other theories.

Conflict and Difference

Differences of perspective, culture, values, and goals hold a potential for, but not necessarily a cause, of conflict. Conflict here can refer to arguments, disputes, fights or wars, i.e. to a range of ways of relating in which there are different levels of tension, escalation, scope and scale of conflict. Conflict can be latent or polarised, hidden or open, surface or intractable conflict with deep roots. A useful distinction is made between intensifying conflict, which aims to make conflict more visible with a view to initiating non-violent change, and escalating conflict which entails increasing provocation, abuse, violation and or violence.

Conflict and change

Conflict is about change of one kind or another trying to happen, often it is thinly disguised or overt attempts to change the other party or parties. Ghandi also exhorted us to "be the change we want to see". He emphasised that we too need to change ourselves in order to resolve a conflict whether interpersonal, group or systemic. Key types of changes needed related to resolving conflict include changes in awareness, attitudes, behaviour and context, all of which are needed to bring about sustainable solutions to conflict. Most definitions and approaches will acknowledge all four elements.

Conflict, violence and force

Violence is seen by some as a way of influencing or ending a conflict. However, for the person on the receiving end it may be the beginning of a revenge and retaliation cycle which escalates conflict. Conflict and violence are different. For example, a basic definition of conflict is a relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have incompatible goals or values or experience interference from each other in pursuit of their goals. Violence consists of actions, words or structures that cause physical, material, psychological, structural or environmental damage. Conflict is inevitable, violence is not. Violence as a way of resolving conflict tends to be inefficient, often costly in the long term and most conflicts are resolved without it. This distinction between violence and conflict is essential as, for many people, including Travellers, they are seen as synonymous and this deters them from engaging in conflict work. Violence is far less likely when non-violent pathways are available to resolve a conflict.

Violence for most people means forcing, beating, injuring, maiming or killing, that is *physical violence*, whether in the wider social or global arenas or in domestic settings where the violence may be more hidden. However, *psychological violence* such as sexual harassment, emotional blackmail or shaming, is no less real, though it may be less obvious, and though inflicting significant harm and suffering, may go unnoticed or lead to further violence if unaddressed. These can include mental torture, intimidation and racist attitudes. Besides physical and psychological violence we can also have *structural or institutional violence* whereby one or more groups are unaware or deliberately ignore the needs and interests of another other within a given community or state or at a global level with the intention or effect of giving some groups advantage while marginalising or threatening the identity or livelihood of others. These different kinds of violence are all interconnected and likely to cause and sustain conflict.

There are also those who believe that violence is a way of bringing about change and getting what you want. Many justify the use of force as a last resort to prevent abuse and oppression. While most believe in the need for *protective use of force (violence)*, by legitimate authorities such as the state and as a last resort, putting the latter principle into practice can be highly problematic and contentious in certain contexts. There is a thin line between protection and oppression, between legitimate and abusive use of force and it is very difficult line to tread.

Many others take a totally *non-violent* stance and believe that in no circumstances can violence lead to a just outcome. Most people will choose a non-violent approach in preference to a violent one. It is easy to condemn the use of violence and often harder to see the value underlying violent response, yet that is what we need to do if we are to be effective in resolving violent conflict. This opens the way to finding a non-violent path to achieve the value or need.

Many social activists believe that coercive use of force is possible and sometimes necessary whilst still refusing to harm other people or relationships by use of violence. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Arab Spring movements for civil rights, are often cited as examples of how this can be achieved.

It is important to emphasise, therefore, that constructive and healthy conflict work will sometimes appear to be creating conflict when it is only surfacing conflict which is already there in latent or hidden form. Surfacing or intensifying conflict is sometimes needed in order to get issues on the agenda, or even get to the negotiating table, with powers that may be unwilling or reluctant to do so to resolve a conflict. The challenge of surfacing and intensifying without escalating or becoming violent, faces all social change efforts as was demonstrated by the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s.

Where use of force is needed to contain destructive conflict, protect or maintain an agreement, it is usually more acceptable and likely to succeed if a neutral third party acceptable to both sides occupies this enforcer role rather than a party to the conflict or someone who has a vested interest in a particular outcome. Otherwise there is a real danger of escalation and further damaging relationships and prospects of resolution.

A helpful distinction is often made between three sequential stages in resolving a substantive conflict, i.e. Peace-making (ending hostilities and creating agreement) and peace-keeping (monitoring and enforcing the agreement) and peace-building (undertaking

activities designed to address the causes of conflict and promote sustainable resolution) Settlement (peace settlement)is the term usually used to indicate the goal of bringing violence to an end. This usually represents a point of minimal agreement between antagonists is the beginning of creating a safe space or peaceful environment for dialogue whereby the conflict can be addressed and resolved.

TOOLKIT III

What project boards can do

Project Boards and Conflict Management (work in progress)

What the Board can do:

1. **Educate itself** about the everyday nature of conflict and its relevance, impacts and the potential benefits to Board and community of addressing it.
2. **Prioritise working on conflict** in Project's policy, strategy and work-plan, create steering group to lead it.
3. Steering group **build shared vision** with Board of outcomes you are trying to achieve through conflict work (with outside help where needed)
4. **Set community expectations** - how you will engage with them, naming the issues, keeping them informed.
5. **Deepen Boards understanding** of conflict dynamics and analysis of issues, approaches for preventing, managing and resolving conflict.
6. **Develop policy and action plan:** agree priorities, strategy, and milestones for implementing plan
7. **Disseminate information** on action plan - identify confidential designated person(s) as access point.
8. Members **show leadership** in promoting vision, modelling conflict competence
9. **Create a safe space** within community for Travellers to work on conflict
10. **Identify challenges / manage risks** entailed in dealing with them.
11. Prepare to handle potential challenges, attacks and criticism / **develop own conflict competence**
12. Action learning – **monitor and gather learning** as initiative continues, adapt as appropriate and share learning
13. **Speak out/ advocate conflict management vision and good practice**, be at the forefront, use own position and power, support/ encourage members to pick up challenges
14. **Integrate conflict work** perspective within everyday community development activities of project
15. **Raise awareness of services and agencies** regarding their role in creating/sustaining conflict and invite collaboration around creation of an integrated community conflict management system.

16. ***Celebrate successes and best practices*** in addressing tension and conflict and benefits to community and parties.
17. ***Liaise with National organisations*** for support and partnership in advocating and campaigning for policy/practice changes.

How the Board can do it:

- Clarify the Traveller Project Board and staff's role in supporting the addressing of friction and conflict - e.g.
- Get communities to define and prioritise issues that give rise to conflict e.g.
 - Estate management issues
 - Safety issues
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Dumping
 - Accommodation
 - Racism
 - Refusal of access to public premises, shops, etc.
 - Intimidation/ abuse/ threat/ harassment
 - Domestic violence
 - Damage to property
 - Criminal/ behaviour
- Monitor conflicts
- Analyse types, scale, regularity and impact
- Report anonymously and gain support of community to address them
- Inform ITM/ National Traveller organisations to inform national strategy and support policy.

Steps for approaching escalated conflict

- Inform of project policy, intake process and roles - manage expectations - especially around legal obligations/ethics.
- Stay safe, neutral, supportive keep communication open, no judgement, hear stories, gather information confidentially.
- Assess own/ project capability to fulfil chosen role - refer as needed.
- Deescalate - take the heat out of conflict - listen, inquire, identify needs
- Assist person(s) in considering options and preferred pathway to manage conflict

- Activate processes - conflict analysis, support, conflict coaching, agency support, etc.
- Refer if beyond capacity or capability
- Provide dialogue/ mediation support or link to community mediation service
- Monitor and evaluate process and outcomes/ refine process

Preventing conflict and conflict escalation (project)

- Monitor
- Have designated person
- Create organisations policy and roles and pathways for addressing conflict
- Raise awareness of organisations policy, values/principles, and good practice for working with conflict.
- Disseminate conflict process options and pathways information to community
- Build relationships with all in community
- Organise training and resources - capability building for Board and community
- Develop/ support culture sensitive and appropriate methods for addressing conflict within Community.
- Engage Board/ community in structured analysis and strategy development around selected priority community conflicts
- Develop staff ability to use and apply selective Alternative Dispute Resolution processes, e.g. restorative practices and non-violent communication.
- Host/ organise/ facilitate awareness raising dialogues on contentious issues e.g. accommodation, Traveller- settled relations, racism and discrimination, etc. for Travellers and between Travellers and settled population
- Build in conflict perspective in day to day community building activities

Managing conflict

- Build rapport and trust/ clarify proposed role(s)
- Do outreach work to inform, engage and support all parties (with permission)
- Deescalate - take the heat out of conflict - listen, inquire, identify needs
- Assist parties in considering options and preferred pathways
- Activate processes - conflict analysis, support, conflict coaching

- Provide dialogue/ mediation support
- Raise awareness of local community resources and partner local community mediation/ restorative justice organisations to address Traveller or Traveller - Settled friction and conflict
- Assemble/host/chair interagency solution-focused group to address tensions and conflicts.
- Build community based conflict management system over time
- Develop crisis or emergency conflict management process for addressing escalated conflict

Resolving conflict (individual)

- Self-help resources
- Discuss options with designated person/ project support worker/ seek neutral 3rd party help
- Peer mediation, restorative practices and/or conflict coaching (if available)
- Expert mediation, facilitation and conflict coaching (local voluntary mediation services)
- Community based methods and dialogue (e.g. residents meetings, community conflict analysis processes, Alternatives to Violence Projects)

Transforming conflict

- Point of contact for assistance/ triage system/ choice of options/ referral point
- Initial discovery process where needed to aid triage assessment
- Help create frameworks/ processes and procedures within which they can be resolved
- Ensure access to resources for capacity building and expert intervention
- Raise awareness of structural violence and discrimination where applicable
- Model transformative principles and practices

Develop a community based conflict management system

The following are a range of elements and pathways that might form part of a community based conflict management system:

- Triage system - i.e. diagnosis, assessment and guidance re what approach to use
- Crisis management containment strategy to de-escalate

- Dispute specific processes - mediation/negotiation (interactive), conflict management coaching (individual) (peer coaching and mediation)
- Non dispute specific conflict coaching/ counselling (peer-coaching)
- Contentious issues forum to anticipate and prevent conflict escalation and agree way of addressing issues
- Restorative justice/ reconciliation process to repair damage to relationships and rebuild trust where crime or violation has taken place. Victim offender conferencing
- Agencies - processes and procedures including interagency and accommodation and estate management structures as appropriate
- Community Elder review/arbitration scheme
- Voluntary community mediation schemes
- Garda/ neighbourhood watch/ safety forum/ ASB orders/ community liaison
- Courts/ legal system as needed/ last resort
- Capacity building - educational programmes and resources.

TOOLKIT IV

Different ways of handling conflict

Our range of response options tends to reflect the diversity of theories and models of conflict that guide our responses. We should not expect that any one theory or model will enable us to respond effectively to all conflicts, so use of multiple tools for analysing conflict is recommended. Possible responses, depending on the circumstances, may require a combination of approaches such as suppression and prevention of conflict, conflict settlement, management, resolution and transformation, just to mention the more common strategies. Analysis and experience will help us decide which is best in a particular situation. Here we look briefly at the main strategies we used. Many different models have been highlighted within the main body of the report and these complement what has been written there but will not be repeated here to avoid duplication.

3rd. Side Roles in working with conflict (Ury)

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| • Contain | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pecekeeper/Enforcer/Protector• Referee/Elder• Bystander/Witness |
| • Resolve | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mediator/Facilitator• Equaliser/Protector• Arbitrator• Healer |
| • Prevent | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provier• Bridge Builder• Teacher/Coach/Mentor |

Some people may *suppress disagreement*, dispute or open conflict believing that the absence of conflict is best for the group or community, and this may be helpful temporarily. Paradoxically, suppression may also lead to violent conflict because it tends to close down the very channels for grievance and dissent to be heard and dialogue take place on issues of injustice or threat. Others may believe that openness and transparency and dialogue between parties about the issues, contentious though they may be, are the best way to resolve matters. However, some parties may be disadvantaged or it may be unsafe or damaging for them to bring matters out into the open in certain contexts, so transparency may not be advisable in some situations.

Yet others may believe that *preventing conflict* is best and can be achieved by identifying the causes and potential for conflict, addressing the underlying needs and aspirations of people and building capability of people to resolve it. *Containment of conflict* entails stopping it from spreading or escalating to a point where violence, whether physical or

psychological, begins to take place. It is an attempt to limit the damage being done and may require the intervention of third parties with the authority/ credibility to influence parties or security forces who have the power to restrain. **Settlement** of a conflict focusses on bringing war and violence to an end. The aim at this stage is not to resolve a conflict but to bring a halt to destruction and motivate opposing parties to consider options for further non-violent engagement.

Conflict resolution takes settlement a step further by addressing the immediate causes, grievances and the underlying needs and interests of the parties. Sometimes the term **negative peace** (associated with settlement), is used to indicate the absence of violence while the pursuit of **positive** or sustainable peace associated with conflict resolution, seeks to build sustainable relationships and agreements that meet underlying interests and needs. Conflict transformation takes this trajectory farther and refers to the creating of positive personal and relationship shifts and bringing about systemic changes in the social or organisational setting which go far beyond resolving issues in dispute and address the roots of the conflict.

TOOLKIT V

Theories that explain and guide conflict work

There is no one prescription or theory that is best in all situations. Each situation will need to be assessed and analysed and an appropriate theory or combination of theories applied to create your strategy for dealing with the particular scale and level of conflict in focus. We are therefore recommending the understanding and use of multiple theories and approaches to conflict rather than limiting yourself to your preferred theory.

While advocating the use of a variety of theories and practices, it is also worthwhile having a set of **core values** that express and guide the project's approach to conflict work and encompasses use of a range of theoretical and practical interventions. For example BTAP adopted the values of “no blaming, no shaming, no coercion” and “empowerment” - getting people to generate their own solutions) amongst other Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) values and principles to guide its work. Commitment to values such as non-violence, resolving matters through dialogue and humanising the enemy were also made explicit at different times throughout the project. It is important to keep in mind that different parties may have different theories and interpretations which may undermine a collaborative approach. Agreeing and emphasising shared values will be helpful in overcoming this difficulty.

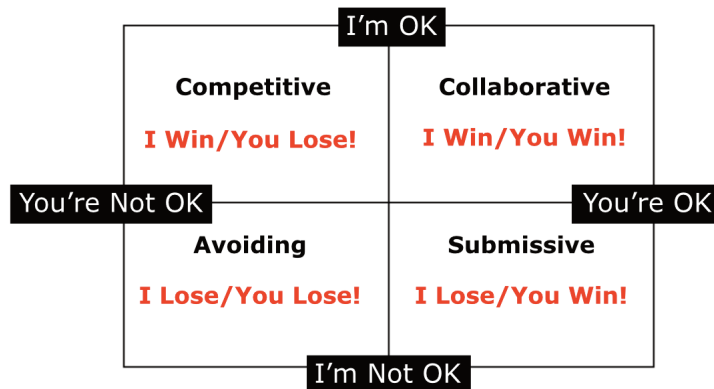
Community Relations theory assumes that conflict has resulted in a breakdown in communication and relationship caused by mistrust, hostility and ongoing polarisation between different groups within the community -possibly rooted in historical loss or grievance, ongoing competition, perceived incompatibility or interference between them. The goals of work based on community relations theory are to:

- reduce hostility and improve communication and mutual respect, understanding and collaboration between conflicting groups
- promote greater appreciation, acceptance and integration of diversity in the community

Negotiation theory assumes that conflict is caused by inability to negotiate, perceived incompatibility between positions taken and a “zero-sum” or win-lose view of conflict being adopted by conflicting parties. Negotiation offers ways of resolving conflicts without recourse to violence though not always without coercion. Preparation, skill and constructive attitudes are needed to negotiate sustainable solutions. Mediation is a facilitated voluntary negotiation. The goals of work based on negotiation theory are to:

- assist conflicting parties to identify issues at stake, clarify needs and interests underlying their positions and explore options and possibilities that could meet key needs and interests of all parties.
- facilitate parties build and commit to implementing agreements that meet the key needs of and deliver mutual gain for all parties.

Outcomes of different styles & attitudes



Human Needs theory assumes that conflict is caused by unmet needs or interference with the meeting of basic human needs – for example food, shelter, sex, safety, belonging, self-esteem, identity recognition, development, participation, freedom and autonomy. The goals of work based on human needs theory are to:

- assist conflicting parties identify and share their unmet needs, and generate options for meeting those needs
- create agreements that can reduce mutual interference and meet the basic human needs of all parties.

Identity theory assumes that conflict is caused by feelings of vulnerability, injury or threat to identity, arising from ongoing marginalisation and oppression, unresolved past loss and suffering and internalised oppression. The goals of work based on identity theory are to:

- explore individual / collective identity and ability to communicate significance, values, boundaries; expand sense of identity and ways of identifying themselves.
- enable conflicting parties to identify threats and fears they hold in relation to each other; build mutual empathy, respect and understanding through dialogue.
- create agreements that honour the core identity needs of all parties.

Intercultural Communication theory assumes that conflict is caused by tensions or misunderstanding based on cultural differences e.g. values, economy, language, worldview and communication styles, etc. Intercultural communication theory values all styles of communication and appreciates the benefits which diverse styles can bring as well as the challenges raised by communicating across cultures and styles. The goals of work based on intercultural communication theory are to:

- weaken mutual negative stereotyping and re-humanise opponents
- expand conflicting parties knowledge, understanding and respect for each other's culture and stories
- improve intercultural communication and mutual collaboration.

Conflict Transformation theory assumes that conflict is caused by inequality and injustice

reflected in the imbalance and misuse of power in relationships, access to resources, prejudicial or unequal social, cultural and economic systems, structural violence, etc., which continually disadvantage certain individuals, groups or communities. The goals of work based on conflict transformation theory are:

- create structures and frameworks that level the playing field and bring about greater levels of equality, justice and economic and social wellbeing
- facilitate shifts in relationships and attitudes among the conflicting parties that reflect more sustainable interaction between parties, e.g. positive use of power, mutual respect, inclusion and interdependence.
- enable personal growth and development which facilitates transformation at other levels and builds empowerment and capacity to create, engage and implement a shared vision of the future.

Learning and Development theory assumes that conflict is caused by a lack of awareness, understanding and conflict competence. Self-awareness, mindfulness, resilience, emotional and communication competence, values and attitudinal development, relationship skills and strategy are needed to behave humanely and constructively amidst the complexity of interactions entailed in various types and scales of conflict. The goals of work based on learning and development theory are to:

- understand conflict dynamics and develop awareness and capability to respond flexibly and constructively to the variety of behaviour encountered in various conflict scenarios e.g. how to negotiate, handle accusations, put-downs, etc.
- develop awareness of the diversity of personality and communication style, identity and culture, rank and power signals and how these can help or hinder conflict communication and relationships in different contexts.
- clarify our values, identity, rank power and privilege, attitudes and meta-skills, and their impact; enhance our self-acceptance and ability to continually learn, adapt and relate.

Human Security theory suggests that conflict arises from insecurity due to the lack of an enabling environment for human development. Where violence or the threat of violence makes meaningful progress on the developmental agendas impractical, enhancing safety and security for people is a prerequisite. Human Security theory shifts the traditional top-down, emphasis on the role of the state in creating security to a bottom-up focus on the security and development needs of individuals and the communities (rather than the security of the state) and on the roles of non-state actors in creating security. The goals of work based on Human Security theory are:

- creating safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats and freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety and their lives
- taking preventive measures to reduce vulnerability and minimize risk, and taking remedial action where prevention fails to enable individuals and communities progress developmental agendas

Racism and discrimination: The theory of racism highlights the presumption of

superiority of one race over another and discrimination and marginalisation of the perceived inferior race on the basis of race or ethnic identity. Racism is a particular form of oppression and discrimination against people on the grounds that some inherited characteristic, for example, colour, religion or culture makes them inferior to their oppressors. The presumption of inferiority is used to justify exclusion, mistreatment or exploitation of the inferior race by the superior one who have a sense of entitlement to privileges and access to resources denied to the inferior one. Such mistreatment and marginalisation is a major and systemic cause of conflict experienced by the Traveller community at the hands of the mainstream settled society which devalues Traveller culture and identity. Racism amplifies and aggravates other kinds of conflict and ability to resolve them by undermining Traveller esteem and identity and restricting access to the resources and support required to address it. Challenging racism is a constant drain on scarce resources for Travellers.

While racism is often associated with discrimination on the basis of colour, racism focussed on a hatred of another group's culture or ethnicity is sometimes harder to identify clearly as racism where the victims are white, as in the case of Travellers. However the power relationship, which is one of domination and oppression, is the key to identifying the reality of racism in these situations.

Culture: Culture reflects what is valued and not, shapes our perceptions, and our identities - who we are in the world and in relation to others. Culture is often what everyone in a group knows but outsiders do not. A given culture will often have strong norms, which resist change, about how conflict is supposed to be handled by members. These rules of behaviour may be transmitted orally rather than in written form making them more difficult to access for the outsider. As such, culture can exert influence in imperceptible ways, largely below the surface and can be tricky to recognise, especially from inside a given culture except when you cross the line of generally accepted behaviour. Cultures therefore, though powerful, are often unconscious and influence conflict and attempts to resolve conflict in imperceptible ways. The question "does a fish know it is in water?" is often asked to raise awareness of the pervasive influence of culture. The fish certainly notices when they are out of water and likewise we become more aware of aspects of our own culture when we encounter or live in another.

No comprehensive description can ever be formulated about a particular group's culture as it is constantly evolving. Culture is elastic and knowing the cultural norms of a given group does not predict the behaviour of any given member of that group who may not conform to norms. Such simplification, often negative in the form of stereotyping, can be experienced as an insult or threat to identity. Since culture is so closely related to our identities - who we think we are, what is important to us, and how we see and interpret the world, it is always a factor in conflict. Cultural awareness can help minimise the potential for misinterpretation and devaluing of another's culture, particularly minority cultures, and the potential for conflict arising out of such behaviour.

Culturally based conflicts are not just about territorial or boundary issues, material interests or access to resources. They are also about acknowledgement, defence of, and legitimization of different identities and ways of living, being, and making meaning. Culture is inextricable from conflict, though it does not cause it. When differences surface in families, organizations, or communities, culture is always present, shaping perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes. For example, the culture of the dominant group is often seen to

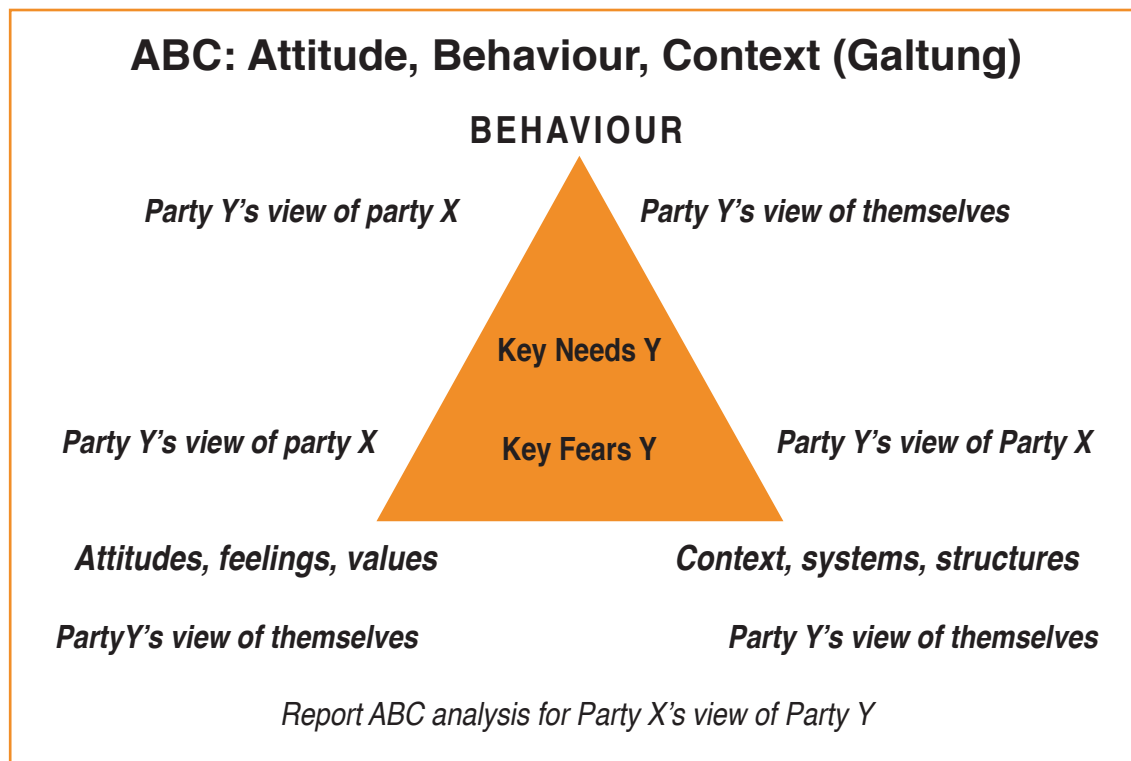
be the "natural," "normal" way things are done. We only notice the effect of culture when we encounter behaviours that are different from our own culture. When we do, there is a tendency to label them as inappropriate, strange or aberrant. It can result in the minority or marginalised culture constantly having to explain or justify its world view or customs to the mainstream. The potential for conflict is obvious but just trying to resolve it on an interpersonal level without addressing the cultural dimension is unlikely to achieve a sustainable outcome.

TOOLKIT VI

Collective Models and Tools for Conflict Work

Conflict analysis: we engage in conflict analysis in order to widen our understanding of the conflict, how it happened and to create the strategy we might use to change things for the better in the future. Several tools for analysing conflict are offered here including needs and interests' analysis, force-field analysis, attitude, behaviour and context analysis, and so on. It is likely that a number of these tools will need to be used for more complex conflict rather than relying on just one though it is important to choose those most appropriate to the conflict in question. This resource tool section offers collective tools the next is more focused on individual skills and practices.

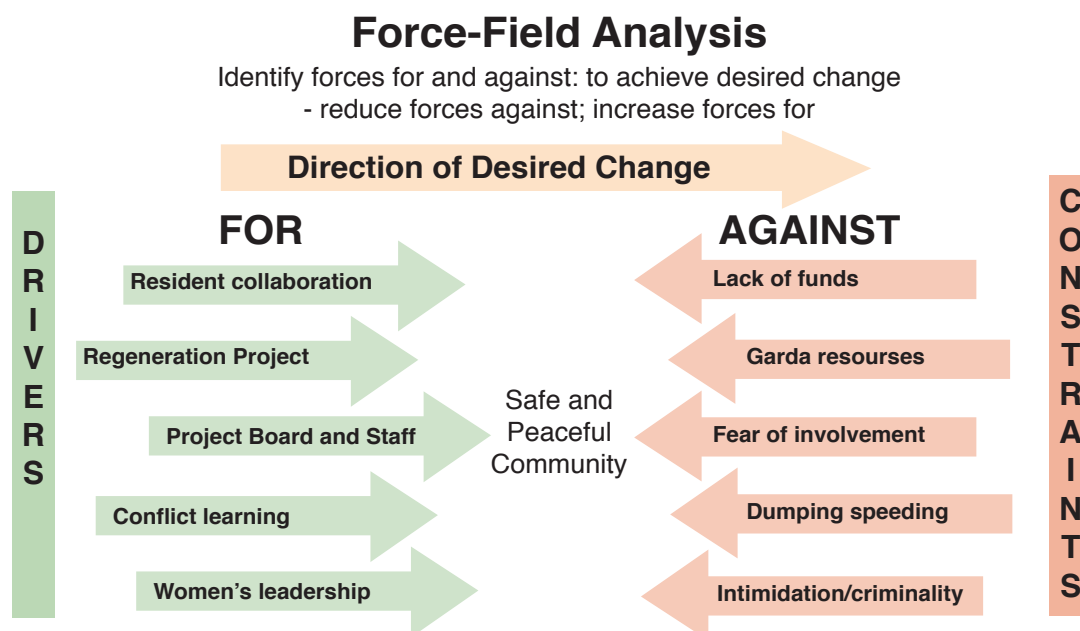
ABC mapping: Attitudes, Behaviours and Context (ABC) mapping is a collective way of raising awareness about a conflict and building mutual understanding among parties. The ABC of each party to the conflict can be mapped to include each stakeholder's view of themselves and that of other parties with regard to each of the three elements. This is both helpful in raising awareness of each stakeholder's perspective, how these influence each other and how these relate to the needs and fears of each party. This analysis may suggest starting point and changes that may need to happen. It is best done jointly with parties to the conflict or each party can create its own map and then share and discuss with other parties.



Issue identification and framing: Framing refers to how we describe and raise an issue at the centre of a conflict or frame the problem. If we describe or frame it in a biased way, that is, in a way that favours or blames one side rather than the other, then the blamed or less favoured one is likely to react negatively or not engage in dialogue which makes dealing with the conflict more difficult. Neutral description or framing of a conflict situation in a way that firms both perspectives is more likely to create a welcoming space for dialogue and resolution.

Positions, interests and needs (onion analysis): when in conflict, positions are the stance we take in public for all to see and hear and usually include our solution to the conflict. Underlying our publicly adopted position is our interest – and we would like to happen or to achieve possible. Still deeper are our most important needs which must be satisfied if sustainable resolution the conflict is to be achieved. Resolving conflict usually requires that we move from holding onto public positions and focus on meeting underlying interests and needs.

Force-field analysis: is particularly useful for analysing larger scale conflicts and to identify ways of creating progress in the desired direction. This way of mapping assumes that there are forces for particular direction in a conflict and forces against or resisting it. It assumes that change in the desired direction can be achieved by strengthening the forces for and lessening the forces against.



Interrelated levels of conflict (Pyramid) When we work with complex or protracted conflict we usually need to adopt a multilevel approach. For example, on a personal level we may need to work on our own racist tendencies, at a community level we may need to shape behaviours and policies that prevent racist behaviour and limit its impact, at a societal level we may need to conduct antiracist campaigns and negotiate with government to legislate against it and promote equality.

Problem identification & causes and effects analysis (Tree analysis): When analysing complex conflict we usually identify an issue or problem which is a priority to address. It can be helpful to view the central issue as the trunk of the tree, with the roots representing the causes, the branches and leaves representing the effects or the impact. The tree metaphor can be used to extend our awareness by filling out a tree-diagram with core issue, causes, and effects. This method is usually helpful when the core issues are unclear to parties and as a way of sharing differences in perspective or interpretation.

Negotiation: negotiation is probably one of the oldest forms of nonviolent conflict resolution. Different forms include competitive bargaining or zero-sum (fixed pie) negotiation; principled or collaborative negotiation which focuses on meeting mutual interests and needs; and integrative negotiation which focuses on expanding the “pie” - creating new value and benefits, i.e. going beyond the simple meeting of needs or interests. The strategies and skills entailed in these different types of negotiation often need to be learned and practiced in order to be an effective negotiator when conflict arises. Learning negotiation skills can greatly enhance our ability to resolve conflicts amicably.

Basic types of negotiation strategy

- Bargaining or competitive/propositional, zero-sum, win lose.
- Principles, cooperative, need or interest-based, win-win, relationship maintaining.
- Integrative, transformative, adding value - increasing the size of the cake, relationship enhancing.

Mediation is a facilitated negotiation process

Prevention, containment, resolution: are three broad strategies often referred to when intervening in complex conflict and which are relevant to ordinary everyday conflicts as well. Prevention usually means creating the conditions whereby conflict is less likely to arise and so is relevant before conflict escalates or after it has been resolved to ensure that it does not recur. Containment refers to efforts made to stop the conflict escalating, spreading or becoming violent and to limit its negative impact. Resolution seeks to address the causes of the conflict and build new relationships and agreements that support the meeting the needs of all parties. Project board, staff and members will need to consider how they will implement all three strategies.

Stages of escalation: when developing an intervention strategy for conflict, it is helpful to analyse what stage of escalation is present. Conflict can be latent, openly polarised, or at an impasse, different kinds of intervention and skill levels would be needed at different stages. Usually, the earlier a conflict is recognised and addressed the better the chance of achieving a sustainable solution. Glasl’s model of escalation is particularly helpful here as our various versions of the conflict cycle. (see also de-escalation in section 6 below)

Levels of conflict escalation (Glasl)

Self-help possible			3rd party ADR intervention needed					
			Arbitration or litigation					
Positions taken	Positions polarise	Act not talk	Deploy conflict tactics	Loss of face personal	Threats as strategy	Limited harmful blows	The goal is to hurt/destroy	Mutual destruction

A conflict cycle: is a way of portraying the generic progress of a conflict in relation to twin aspects of intensity and time. At the early stages intensity and emotion are low. As people become more aware of the conflict and take up positions, the conflict escalates to greater levels of intensity and polarisation and may even erupt in psychological or physical violence in certain situations. There may be a crisis and a stalemate at this point with little progress being made. The conflict then begins to de-escalate in intensity, often because antagonists tire or find a way of beginning to address their differences. There may also be a recurrence of intensification before temporary or sustainable resolution requires and intensity recedes. Parties can separately draw up conflict cycles from their particular perspectives and then share them to enhance mutual understanding and identify strategies appropriate to the phase of conflict cycle currently being experienced. They may also do it together where appropriate though cycle phases experienced by opposing parties may be quite different from each other.

Awareness raising (side taking): During conflict, and often due to the breakdown in communication and relationship between parties, there is a dearth of awareness of each other's perspectives, values, needs and interests. Awareness-raising is a critical element to almost all methods for dealing with conflict and it needs to be done in such a way as not to escalate the conflict and in ways that make it easier for each side to listen and respond. Side taking is a key skill often referred to as standing in the other person's shoes. However, this is only one aspect. It also means strengthening your ability to take your own side as well as taking the neutral position and that of the other. Doing so enables you to change attitudes and perspective and may entail a sense of vulnerability as you allow yourself to be influenced by emerging awareness.

Power/rights struggles and ADR approaches: Many conflicts are characterised by power and rights struggles in an attempt to get the other side to give them what they want. Power and rights struggles can be costly in material and relationship terms and can be long drawn-

out and often ineffective and inefficient in producing a sustainable resolution. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an umbrella term for a range of processes that provide an alternative to power and rights struggles. Processes are voluntary, based on dialogue, negotiation or arbitration; are future focused and give greater control over solutions to the parties themselves. They include approaches such as mediation, restorative justice, joint-problem-solving and so on.

Risk assessment: there are risks attached to any attempt to resolve conflict. For the parties involved and for those who intervene, the general intention is to minimise or avoid harm to any party. This will usually involve identifying risk factors and some kind of a formal or informal risk assessment related to options and strategies for intervention. While essential in larger more complex conflicts, it is common to many forms of interpersonal and group conflict in the form of a reality check and exploration potential pitfalls or consequences of proposed actions. Fear of losing what we have or of making things worse in relationships can often deter us from taking the risks usually needed to build trust or resolve a conflict. Risk assessment can help us distinguish what feels risky from what is really at stake or being risked so we can take calculated risks, i.e. ones that minimise the downsides while opening the way to resolution.

Influence and stakeholder management: Part of any negotiation process entails being able to influence and persuade other parties to meet your needs and help you achieve your goals. This will mean identifying those who hold power and influence in relation to the issues and the parties in conflict as well as deciding how best to approach and influence them in the direction you desire. The greater the understanding you have these parties and what is important to them as well as how best to communicate with them, the greater the chance you have of gaining assistance and collaboration in achieving the outcomes you desire. This will involve building a mutual relationship, however temporary, with the various stakeholders which often entails understanding and helping them to meet their goals were possible.

Stakeholder analysis

<p><i>High Power, Low interest</i></p> <p>Try to keep them satisfied, but don't overload them with information</p>	<p><i>High Power, High Interest</i></p> <p>The most critical group, fully engage them and address their interests</p>
<p><i>Low Power, Low Interest</i></p> <p>Keep them informed, make sure no issues are developing, don't become negative force</p>	<p><i>Low Power, High Interest</i></p> <p>Monitor, consult, represent, inform</p>

Balancing relationship maintenance and goal achievement: when in conflict there is often a tension between achieving goals and maintaining satisfactory relationships post conflict. Sometimes achieving goals can be at the expense of relationship, and sometimes maintaining the relationship comes at the expense of meeting our needs or reaching our goal. Even when the relationship post conflict is not important to us, we are to some extent dependent on the other party with whom we are in conflict to meet our need, so the manner of our relationship until our need is met will require attention. How we handle aspects of relating such as power and rank, dignity and respect, advocating and enquiring is likely to have a significant effect on the outcomes we will achieve.

From dependency to interdependency: dependency of one kind or another is common to most conflicts. If we could meet our needs on our own we would not be in conflict with our opponents. In conflict, we often act as if we are more independent than we really are, not wishing to show our vulnerability. In conflict, the challenge is usually to find ways of being interdependent without losing our autonomy or loss of face (dignity).

Dialogue: a continuum of ways of communicating might look like – monologue – argument – discussion – conversation – dialogue. The implication of the continuum is that dialogue can be the most helpful form of communication when in conflict, in so far as it tries to go beyond one way communication, winning/losing an argument and the adversarial nature of discussion. It facilitates the sharing of information and seeks to generate something new that was not there before the exchange began. Fluid use of skills such as advocacy and inquiry, by-standing and following, leading and opposing are key moves in effective dialogue. One without the others will not bring about sustainable solutions.

Learning conversations: a specific form of dialogue aimed at sharing information and enquiring more deeply in order to understand the issue, the context and each other rather than to resolve the conflict. An opportunity to learn can be experienced as less risky than a negotiation in that you neither have to offer nor accept compromise and so there is no winning or losing only learning together. It is an agreement to learn together and usually entails, hearing the others story and telling your own, exploring other perspectives on the conflict (getting on the “balcony”), exploring assumptions and sharing relevant information. It usually takes place with the assistance of a facilitator who helps make sense of it and harvest the learning generated.

Learning conversion principles (Clarke et al)

- 1 Questioning our assumptions/beliefs** – enables us to hear, see, and treat as significant new information and so expands behavioural options
- 2 Committing to genuine partnership** – builds trust, helps understand each other, takes account of others interests
- 3 Sharing all relevant information** – creates transparency, informs others of their impact, helps surface limiting assumptions/beliefs

Restorative practices: Our main system of justice is retributive in the sense that it seeks to determine who is guilty or not of breaking laws and imposes sanctions or punishments for such breaches or crimes and pays little attention to the victim of those crimes. Restorative justice, on the other hand, emphasises the restoration of harm done to the victim and to repairing relationships between victims, offenders and community. Restorative principles and practices have much in common with those of restorative justice but when implemented are not necessarily part of a formal justice system but can be applied in family, school and community. (see also section 9)

Conflict monitoring: Conflict monitoring focuses on gathering information about the range and types of conflict, the regularity of the occurrence of certain types of conflict and their impact. It also monitors risk indicators which reflect the presence of latent conflict and signs which may predict possible escalation of conflicts. As such a monitoring device is an awareness raising tool for the community which also provides the organisation/ community with an evidence-base for prioritising the kinds of conflict which need to be addressed and for the development of a strategy to address it.

TOOLKIT VII

Individual conflict skills and practices

Conflict Pivots: pivots are changes you can make in your orientation that can help you resolve a conflict. Pivot away from your stuck story (the one you keep telling yourself) and discover the message in it; pivot away from their “bad” behaviour towards your own hooks/trigger (what is important to you - your needs and interests); pivot away from the past and toward the present and how you create the future you want, or at least as much of it as possible.

Perspectives and stories: There are many stories and perspectives besides your own. Being able to step outside your perspective, get off the dancefloor of conflict and onto the balcony can help you work on a conflict rather than just in it. Standing in your opponent’s shoes of those of a bystander can enrich your understanding and ease conflict.

Inner-work: refers to a range a personal development practices which help us work on conflict without engaging with other parties to the conflict. It may be done as a form of self-help or with the assistance of a coach; focus on inner conflict or aspects of interpersonal or group conflict which disturb us, a focus on questioning our assumptions or clarifying our goals and what is important to us.

De-escalation: Taking the heat out of conflict or de-escalation is an essential skill when dealing with intense, polarised conflict. There are many skilful ways of doing it, most of which take practice. The most fundamental is removing or lowering the level of challenge or threat to the opposing party. E.g. backing off literally and figuratively (at least temporarily), lowering your voice, accommodating their needs, etc. Inquiring into their feelings and needs and what they would like done in order to meet them is a powerful method of taking the heat out of conflict and making a positive connection with opponents proposed by Marshall Rosenberg in his book Non-violent communication. Other methods such as picking up accusations, managing triggers and acknowledging rank differences and their impact are mentioned elsewhere in this section of the resources.

How to de-escalate a conflict

- Stop attacking/retaliating
- Stop escalation activities – blaming, fault finding
- Engage in trust building actions – good will gestures
- Listen first talk later – demonstrate openness to learning
- Acknowledge suffering and underlying needs/interests
- Manage your own triggers and respect boundaries
- Pick up accusations – acknowledge 2% and harm done
- Acknowledge rank differences and their impact on other
- Review and check out assumptions
- Humanise – recognise their humanity rather than demonise
- Innerwork – practice side taking, role switching, work with your disturbance, pick up their message and energy

Picking up accusations: Picking up accusations and responding to them is a key skill in preventing escalation of conflict and usually entails defending against the accusation when needed and then picking up how the accusation might be true and admitting it even if only 1 or 2% is true. It may or may not result in an apology to the victim but usually entails a commitment to change behaviour and attitude in a way that addresses the needs underlying the accusation.

Role taking and switching: We occupy many roles but no one role defines who we are. We are bigger than any role we take or are given. Yet roles can suck us in and constrain our behaviour, especially if we are unconscious of the role(s) we occupy from moment to moment. Role taking can take various forms and these have a significant impact on our communication and relationships. For example we may have formal more stable roles such as manager, parent or nurse. Equally, we may have informal roles such as helper, oppressor, bystander that can be more temporary. We may also have internal roles such as inner child, critic, victim, etc. Communication can be confusing and there is no clarity about which role we are speaking from or when we occupy more than one role simultaneously, as in feeling victimised and we are also occupying the role of manager. Which role should we speak from? Making the roles we and others occupy explicit, switching roles when necessary, and awareness of role switching can greatly improve conflict communication.

Advocating and inquiring: these are two fundamental forms of communication and both are essential if conflict communication is to be effective. At its simplest, advocating is about presenting my view of the world, what I want, how I would like things to happen; inquiring is about asking what is your view of the like, do you want, how would you like things to happen?

Truth: when in conflict, people can spend much time trying to establish the truth, usually with a view to determining who is right and who is wrong. The truth, if there is a single truth, is often impossible to establish that there are many stories and all are needed to build a shared understanding of what happened. Not all stories have to agree in a conflict situation; indeed it would be surprising if they did. It is important that they are all listened to and heard as all stories are needed for a sustainable solution.

The not so merry-go-round: This model deconstructs the recurring and self-perpetuating cycle of conflict and is particularly helpful in clarifying how you wish to manage and respond in a conflict situation. Pays particular attention to our goals, what we want to change in the way we manage conflict, identifying triggers, the impact of offending behaviour and the assumptions we make about the perpetrator. The model guides us to explore boundaries that were crossed, our reactions to the crossing of that line and the consequences of our reactions. This is usually followed by exploring the options available to us, how we would like to implement our chosen strategy and how to address the obstacles or challenges we might face. A reference for Cinnie Noble's book on Conflict Management Coaching is in the reference section below.

Rank, power and privilege: rank may be derived from different sources – physical strength, social status, intellectual ability, health, wealth, gender and so on. We may have high rank for example stemming from a position in an organisation, but no rank because of gender. Cumulative rank across a range of the above ranks will probably determine whether we are seen as having high or low rank. However rank is always relative and fluid and often

determined by context. For example a professor of military armaments is likely to have less power in a city backstreet when faced with an uneducated youth wielding a gun. Rank is accompanied by different kinds of power and privilege and can be a source of much conflict when used unconsciously, misused or abused as often happens during conflict.

Rank as a signifier of power

Rank is about relationships:

- is relative and contextual
- is accompanied by privileges
- is a measure of excellence/signals authority
- often entitles and limits
- is a source of pride and shame
- indicates position in hierarchy
- implies capacity to influence
- often creates conflict when misused
- we tend to struggle for it and hold on to it
- it is addictive

Double signals/messages: double signals or messages refer to unintended communication and incongruence between signals and messages in different communication channel. For example we say is different from the message conveyed by our body movement or voice tone. The unintended message or incongruence is often outside our awareness picked up by the other party and can cause confusion and mistrust. Drawing awareness to particular signals and double signals can deepen the conversation and the meaning behind both the intended and the unintended communication and helps to restore trust and clarity.

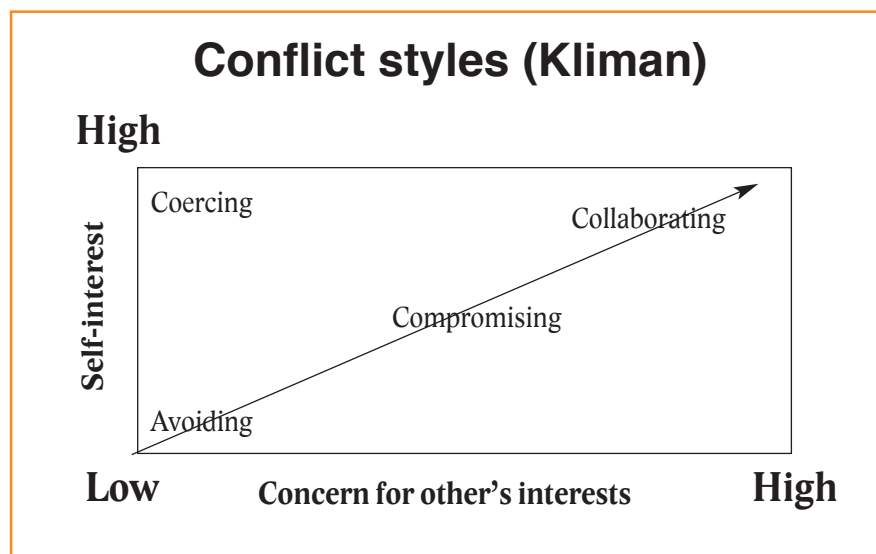
Different levels of reality: in trying to comprehend what happens in conflict it is useful to use the concept of different levels of reality. Consensus reality refers to what is agreed and measurable. Non-consensus reality refers to what is felt, what is subjective and what is dreamlike but no less real such as atmospheres, emotions, internal criticism. The third level of reality is the essence level – a common ground that connects us all. The essence level can appear at non-consensus and consensus levels of reality but remain hidden or be distorted at these levels and need to be unfolded. For example we can look for the good intention or what is of value at the heart of oppressive behaviour and seek better ways to express it.

High dream low dream states: in relationships and various situations we have high hopes, aspirations or dreams that reflect how we would like things to be. However we often have not clarified what these high dreams are, or even that they exist, to ourselves or shared them with others. When not met, they can often be a source of conflict, disillusion or even despair and we may even attack or blame others for not helping us realise them even though we never informed them of our hopes and expectations. Low dream reflects a state of loss or despair that we will ever reach or high dream and fear of this state, as it is so painful, may impede or prevent us from pursuing or high dream. We often settle for something in the middle between high dream and low dream, never quite satisfying but never quite so painful as the low dream. Clarifying in communicating our high and low dreams for relationships in situations can relieve much conflict and free up our energy to pursue our high dream.

Meta skills and attitudes: managing, resolving, or transforming conflict requires a range of skills such as those outlined above. However, just as important is the manner or the quality of the way these skills are used. For example we may be skilful negotiators but if we use the skills without empathy or compassion we are likely to be less successful in achieving sustainable outcomes. Other meta-skills include beginners mind, guesthouse attitude, eldership, and treating our opponent in conflict as a teacher. These meta-skills are attitudes are outlined further in the guide.

3rd side roles are roles that we can take which help manage or resolve a conflict, typically a mediator, facilitator or conflict coach. However there are many other helpful 3rd side roles we can occupy such as bridge builder, teacher, provider, healer, witness or referee, each reflecting a different set of skills and priorities. If we are aware and skilful enough, we may even be able to step into some of these roles temporarily when we are parties to a conflict provided we do it transparently and notice the feedback we are getting as to whether it is helpful or not.

Conflict Styles: we each have our preferred conflict style and there are different ways of describing such styles. Thomas/Kilman describes 5 such styles as coercive, avoiding, accommodating, compromising and cooperating. Being aware of ones preferred style and developing competence in all five styles enables us to adapt our style to the requirements of the interaction rather than confining ourselves to our preferred style, especially where circumstances indicate it is not needed or effective.



Alternative Dispute Resolution: These are a range of alternatives to legal, rights or rules based approaches such as mediation, restorative justice, reconciliation, etc. which emphasise parties resolving issues based on a set of principles and practices surrounding each method and which emphasise moving parties from- positions to needs and interests with the aid of a third party interventions.

Restorative practices: Restorative justice is often contrasted with retributive justice where the emphasis is on establishing guilt or innocence for breaking laws and rules; and the imposition of sanction or punishment for breaking them. Restorative practices in contrast emphasise the importance of the victim's experience, of repairing the harm done and restoring the relationships and ripple effects of the damage done with the perpetrator and the community. Restorative practices emphasise the values of no shame, no blame, no coercion and storytelling as means of increasing empathy, understanding victim impact and promoting restorative dialogue. It may include victim offender conferencing and will generally have input into the process from the community who are also seen as the victim of crime or offending behaviour. (see section 10 below for fuller exposition of restorative practices.)

Blaming: is a natural process of shifting responsibility away from ourselves which provides temporary relief from stress. It may also avoid the challenge of responsibility for the situation though unfortunately at the expense of the other party which can escalate the conflict or undermine trust. Shifting the focus of blaming interactions towards exploring impact and contribution of parties and picking up accusations can help avoid escalation and create a more constructive dialogue. Another way of dealing constructively with blaming is to frame the "situation" as a barrier that is preventing all parties from reaching their goals (i.e. blame the situation rather than each other). What this does is to change the "geography" of a conflict from "them against us" position to a "you and I against the barrier or problem" scenario. This "blaming of the context" provides relief from personal blame and shifts parties to joint problem-solving which opens up new possibilities for cooperation and change.

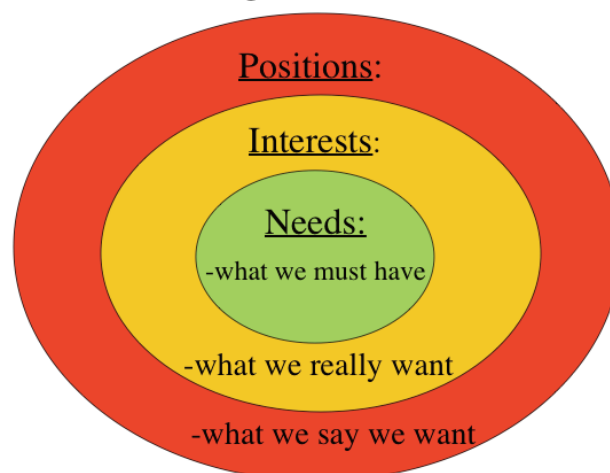
Search for essence: Offensive or hurtful behaviour can be the cause of, or escalate, a conflict and it can be hard to understand why someone would do that to us. We often tend to attribute malevolent motivation to such behaviour, equivalent to the level of hurt we feel or damage done. This may result in defensive/ self-protective or retaliatory behaviour (fight, flight, or freeze) that can escalate a conflict. We can break this cycle of negative attribution and escalation by pausing to ask "what is right or of value in their offensive behaviour?" E.g. underlying revenge/ retaliation is often the desire for equality. Or we can ask what could the positive intention motivating the offensive behaviour have been? Here we are making a distinction between the intention or the essence of a particular behaviour and the damaging impact. Behaviour which has a harmful impact may still have had a positive intention at the essence level from the perspective of the perpetrator. If we can figure out what this is we can explore - "what would have been a better way of achieving it without giving offense or doing harm? Such a skill can be of enormous benefit for de-escalating a conflict or when reflecting on it, to help rebuild a damaged relationship.

Integrated Community-based Conflict Management System (ICCMS) is a multi-level, stakeholder partnership/ interagency approach, solution focused, and focused on improving and transforming communication and relationships. It proposes an integrated combination of approaches and collaboration between stakeholders which is focussed on addressing breakdown in communication and conflict and uses occasions of conflict for learning and development purposes as well as achieving sustainable outcomes. The approach is more familiar in an organisational context and its potential for application in the community has been explored through this project at BTAP.

Mediation - is a facilitated negotiation or conversation where parties to a conflict come together with the aid of a neutral third party, the mediator, to solve a problem and create an agreement which will meet the needs and interests of all parties to the conflict. It is usually a voluntary and confidential process. The aim is to create win-win rather than win-lose solutions as the latter increase the likelihood that the conflict will recur or escalate. Mediation usually takes the form of separate pre-mediation meetings with each party followed by face to face meetings where parties converse and address issues together. Sometimes shuttle mediation is used where parties cannot or will not meet face to face for whatever reason. The mediation is a voluntary process and may be ended by any party including the mediator and may or may not result in a signed agreement.

A core process used in mediation is to clarify the needs and interests underlying the positions people take when in conflict. It is often hard to move people from positions (i.e. their solution to the problem which usually takes little or no account of what the other party wants). However, if the underlying needs and interests can be separated from the positions taken, it is often possible to meet both sets of needs even when they appeared incompatible when presented in “position” form.

Uncovering needs in mediation



Re-humanising the demon: As conflict escalates and we become more polarised, we tend to dehumanise our opponent and treat them as a role, for example, as an oppressor, an abuser or an enemy and lose touch with their humanity which alienates them further and makes dialogue more difficult. Reducing the person to a role dehumanises them and blinds us to the fullness of their humanity, their vulnerability and what is of value about them. As the conflict escalates, it is more and more difficult to see them as human, particularly if they have harmed you or damaged your interests. Part of conflict work is to reduce polarisation and reconnect with each party's humanity. Focusing on impact and harm done can be a first step in reconnecting with each other as human beings rather than somebody who is seen as a role (perhaps a role we have little empathy for if not antagonism to regardless of the person occupying it) rather than a person in it.

Meta-skills: meta-skill refers to the quality of the way we use our skills, i.e. the attitude which informs the use of our skills. Sometimes if the attitude conveyed in our non-verbal communication is right we may be able to communicate well even if our language skills are not as strong as we would like. Meta skills such as compassion, kindness and openness to learning or treating our opponent in conflict as a teacher, can greatly enhance communication and relationship even in the midst of intense conflict. Arnold Mindell's Processwork approach demonstrates how eldership, beginner's mind and the guesthouse attitudes can be of enormous benefit when dealing with conflict.

Reframing: Reframing is a communication skill which takes out the toxic elements of a communication while, at the same time, highlighting the underlying interests and needs of the person communicating, who may be unable or unwilling to do so. For example, "you are heartless, even an animal would show more care for others than you do" might be reframed as "you need to be cared for and would like me to show you that I care about you, is that right?" This is often used when you are being blamed, accused or attacked instead of a defensive response as it demonstrates to your opponent that you are listening and want to understand what they need or what is important to them. Key elements of the method are - leaving out the toxic elements; reflecting the feelings expressed; and inquiring as to whether the need or interest you identify, is what they are actually needing. (a reference for Rosenberg's book "Compassionate Communication, the language of Non-Violent Communication" is given in the reference section.)

TOOLKIT VIII

Alternative Definitions of Conflict (Clove)

Our thinking and beliefs about conflict shape the way we act. The way we understand, define or frame a conflict shapes the options available to us to tackle it. If we define it too narrowly or frame it in a way that is offensive to the other party it makes it far more difficult to work constructively with it. With this in mind Kenneth Clove reminds us that a conflict may be understood in a wide variety of ways that can suggest many different options or strategies for working on it. It may be that several are needed to achieve a sustainable outcome. There is no one right way of defining a conflict. The following list from Clove suggests different ways of raising awareness about, analysing or interpreting a conflict. Some may be more relevant than others in any given situation.

- “ • *Conflict represents a lack of awareness of the imminence of death or sudden catastrophe.* As the parties become more aware of the finite quality of each other's lives, their conflicts become less important.
- *Conflict arises wherever there is failure of connection, collaboration, or community, an inability to understand our essential interconnectedness in the universal beauty of the human spirit.* Everyone behaves in ugly ways when they are in conflict, hiding their essential beauty and interconnectedness. When they notice these qualities, their conflicts tend to diminish. When they act together, their conflicts become mere disagreements.
- *Conflict is a lack of acceptance of ourselves that we have projected onto others, a way of blaming others for what we perceive as failures in our own lives. It reveals the need to hide behind roles and masks that do not reflect our authentic feelings so we can divert attention from our mistakes.* People escalate their conflicts by not being authentic. As they accept themselves more fully, they become more accepting of others.
- *Conflict represents a boundary violation, failure to value recognise our own integrity or the personal space of others.* As people recognise and respect each others' boundaries, they experience fewer conflicts.
- *Conflict is a way of getting attention, acknowledgement, sympathy, or support by casting ourselves as the victim of some evil-doer.* If the parties secure the attention, acknowledgement, sympathy, and support they need, they experience fewer conflict as a result.
- *Conflict represents a lack of skill or experience at being able to handle a certain kind of behaviour.* As the parties become more skilful in responding to difficult behaviours, they cease being drawn into conflict.
- *Conflict is often simply the continued pursuit of our own false expectations, the desire to hold on to our unrealistic fantasies.* When the parties give up their false expectations of each other, they surrender the conflicts they have created by trying

to get the other side to become somebody or something they never were.

- *Conflict represents a lack of listening, a failure to appreciate the subtlety what someone else is saying.* As parties listened closely to the metaphors and the hidden meanings of the conflict, they discover its true content, and feel less like counterattacking or defending themselves and more like responding constructively.
- *Conflict is often a result of secrets, concealment, confusions, conflicting messages, cover-ups, and what we have failed to communicate.* Conflict hides in the shadows. When one of the parties throws light on it, it disappears.
- *Conflict represents a lack of skill, effectiveness, or clarity in saying what we feel, think, or want.* When the parties are able to tell each other clearly and skilfully what they need, they are often able to have their needs met without creating conflicts.
- *Conflict is a way of opposing someone who represents a parent with whom we have not yet resolved our relationships.* If the parties can recognise that the other person resembles or is behaving like someone from the family of origin, they may see they are really angry with someone else.
- *Conflict is the sound made by cracks in a system, manifestations of contradictory forces coexisting in a single space.* Many interpersonal conflicts represent the points of weakness in an organisational or family system. If the parties address these weaknesses, the conflicts they create usually disappear.
- *Conflict is the voice of the new paradigms, the demand for change in the system that has outlived its usefulness.* The need for change always announces itself in the form of conflict, including increased interpersonal conflict. The introduction of needed changes often reduces the level of conflict in an organisational or family system.
- *Conflict represents an inability to grieve or say goodbye, a refusal to let go of something that is dead or dying.* Many divorcing couples and surviving relatives get into fights as a way of saying goodbye to each other, or as a way of mourning someone they loved.
- *Conflict is a way of being negatively intimate when positive intimacy becomes impossible.* Most parties prefer anger over indifference until they are really ready for the relationship to be over. This is because anger strips away their masks, permitting negative intimacy that results in boundary violation.
- *Conflict is the expression of one half of a paradox, enigma, duality, polarity, or contradiction.* Many of the conflicts people experience are actually polarities in which each person plays the role of yin while the other plays the role of yang.
- *Conflict is often a fearful interpretation of difference, diversity, and opposition, which ignores the essential role of polarity in creating unity, balance, and symbiosis.* As the parties learn to see their differences and disagreements as sources of potential unity or strength, the conflicts tend to disappear.
- *Conflict is a result of our inability to learn from our past mistakes, our failure to recognise them as opportunities for growth, learning, and improved understanding.*

Conflicts are often simply a request for authenticity, emotional honesty, acknowledgement, intimacy, empathy, and communication from others – in other words, they flow from the desire for a better relationship.”

“What is common to all these definitions is that our conflicts begin and end with us, as well as with the systems in which we operate. They have little to do with our opponents. As mediators, we can assist the parties in defining their conflict in alternative ways that allow them to perceive its deeper, more accurate meanings. We can define their conflict as a story, a culture, a set of better conversations or nasty words, or just feeling stuck. Through a dangerous process of definition, recognition, and acknowledgement, paths open to personal and organisational transformation. Each definition allows parties to redefine their conflict at a deeper level than would be possible, based on the surface issues over which they are arguing. To realise this in practice, we need to understand it in theory.”

From: Mediating Dangerously: The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution by Kenneth Cloke

TOOLKIT IX

Principles and practices in conflict work

A: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) principles/ practices

- Empowerment - the emphasis is on parties negotiating and/or cooperatively working to find a solution to the problem acceptable to all parties rather than an imposed solution or one generated by others.
- Focus on the creation of a “win-win” solution for future through dialogue rather than sanction for past infringement.
- Interest and need focused rather than rules or rights based e.g. reframing positions as interests, recognition and acceptance of differences.
- Based on building/ rebuilding mutual trust and understanding.
- Raising awareness of impact and moving from accuser/ defender roles, as in legal and rights based processes, to joint problem-solver/ negotiator roles.
- Voluntary and confidential processes - “no blaming, no shaming, no coercion”.
- Use of neutral third party roles - awareness raiser, peace maker, facilitator, mediator, conciliator, conflict coach or sometimes arbiter.
- Exploration/ clarification of best/ worst alternatives to a negotiated solution
- Widening range of options and choices - “increasing the pie size” rather than zero-sum, “fixed-pie” or (win-lose) approaches to create sustainable solution - e.g. brainstorming and reframing.
- Joint evaluation of options - exploring pros and cons of each option from perspectives of all parties involved.
- Addressing relationship and communication goals as well as material outcomes as needed
- Maintaining confidentiality of information shared during process (confidentiality based on a word of honour/ trust (breach may result in termination of process)
- Respect for persons and commitment to process - e.g. separate persons from behaviour, listening without interruption, recognition of needs of all parties in solution creation, commitment to implement agreements.
- Power balancing - e.g. equal time to speak and be heard during process, voluntary agreements only.
- Attitudes of curiosity, willingness to learn, explore assumptions, new perspectives and re-framing of conflict.
- Seeking common ground and workable/ sustainable agreements based on voluntary commitment to implementation.

B: A Personal Good Practice Guide

(for constructive conflict communication and mediation)

1. Clarify what the other party did (or did not do) that upset, hurt or offended you.
2. Inform the other party how their behaviour impacted or affected you
3. Say, from your point of view, what line or boundary was crossed by the other party that “went too far” and what they did or said that crossed that line.
4. Communicate what is important to you that is at stake, threatened or damaged (noticing what triggers you into heated reaction can be a good pointer to what you value)
5. Find out what matters to the other parties and what is it about this that is important to them?
6. Enquire what you may have done or said that offends or creates difficulty and what impact your behaviour may be having on what is important to them.
7. Listen so you get a better understanding of their perspective, your behaviour and your impact on the other parties even if you do not agree with what is being said.
8. Notice any assumptions you or the other party may be making and check them out
9. Where possible, pick up any criticism/accusations against you, defend against them as appropriate and then see if there is 2% or more that you can admit to that may have contributed to the current difficulties.
10. Clarify in advance of the conversation/ mediation what it is that you need at this point to resolve the issues and/or move on.
11. Make a request of the other party as to what you would like them to do that would help meet your need and bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion.
12. Notice and acknowledge shifts in attitude and understanding that ease tension and problem-solve or negotiate as appropriate.

C: My Top Twenty: Principles for Healthy Conflict

1. **Awareness:** widen attention to process/signals to resolve and transform conflict
2. **Reality:** value all levels - consensus reality (what is agreed), subjective - (what is felt/experienced though not agreed) and essence (common ground that unites).
3. **Deep democracy:** honour all voices - all are needed for best/sustainable solutions - raise awareness of all sides of the conflict story
4. **Field:** seek to understand the context and the diverse forces and motivations at play in the system.
5. **Partnership:** respect dignity, build trust and strengthen relationship - you and me against the problem rather than against each other.
6. **Power and rank:** recognise power and rank differentials and their impact and use multiple powers, ranks and privileges for benefit of all

7. **Restoration rather than retribution:** Raise awareness of impact of offense and focus on repairing harm done rather than punishing perpetrator
8. **Framing:** neutral framing (rather than blaming) of conflict honours all perspectives and creates welcoming space for dialogue to take place
9. **Transparency:** share all relevant information - transparency raises awareness and supports trust building
10. **Triggers:** observe, process, manage reaction - communicate underlying needs, interests, identity, values rather than infringement.
11. **Assumptions:** surface, articulate and test assumptions, interpretations, intuitions, beliefs.
12. **Boundaries:** notice, raise awareness, respect - cross mindfully if you need to.
13. **Attitudes:** be curious, compassionate, open to learning; no blaming, coercion or shaming, demonstrate eldership (support for all sides).
14. **Transformational shifts:** from single to multiple perspectives; positions to interests/needs; from past to future; from blame to owning contribution; from intention to impact, from what they did to what I can do.
15. **Role Awareness:** notice the role you are taking/ being given (formal or informal) - choose and switch as needed. Practice “the third side” roles and conscious use of side-taking.
16. **Empowerment:** move above the choice-line - seek out options and possibilities, choose and influence the outcome
17. **Accusation and attack:** inquire into accusation; defend if needed, then admit the 2% or more that is true; acknowledge or repair harm where possible. (THEN) what is right about your offending behaviour?(draw out its positive value or intention)
18. **Containment:** deescalate - listen, empathise, speak to feelings, elicit needs and interests of parties (meet where possible), pick up accusations; acknowledge damage/hurt (repair if possible).
19. **Feedback:** notice and be guided by feedback - e.g. seek verbal feedback; remember - non-verbal support and resistance are important messages too - inquire to understand them better
20. **Dialogue:** generative dialogue requires a balance of *advocacy and inquiry, by-standing* (offering perspective) and *following* (supporting), *pacing* (getting alongside) and leading. Don't forget *framing* (highlighting an issue in a neutral way that invites attention and exploration) and *illustrating* with concrete examples.

TOOLKIT X

A Brief overview of Restorative practices

Restorative principles have much to offer us in changing the way we think about and resolve or transform conflict. They offer us an alternative to the regenerative cycles of blame, revenge, punishment, retaliation and relationship damage associated with the way we tend to deal with crime and conflict. Restorative justice defines crime not as an impersonal offence against the state but as a violation of people. A restorative approach considers the harm caused by the offence. It focuses on building or restoring the relationship and repairing the damage done rather than punishing the offender for breaking the rules/ laws.

The Restorative approach shifts the primary focus towards the needs of the victim rather than those of the state and also includes those of the offender. Being invited to take responsibility for the harm caused in the presence of the victim, their family and one's own significant others (family or friends) is not easy for an offender. However, being given the opportunity to express remorse and make amends in communities has proved to be significant factors in preventing re-offending. In this way, restorative meetings can also help re-engage the community in responding to crime and in building relationships rather than leaving it to authorities to impose justice.

The assumptions and principles evident in our current justice systems underpin much of our understanding about how to deal with conflict and, while valuable to a point, they undermine and impede creative resolution and transformation of conflict and often result in deeply damaged relationships with at least one, if not all parties, dissatisfied with the outcome. We can do much better.

Current justice practices assume that there is such a thing as "the truth"; that the adversarial presentation and challenging of evidence will enable the judge to discern this truth and establish blame or guilt. Further, it is usually followed by an infliction of pain or punishment on those deemed to be loser or offender. These assumptions include the idea that those who do wrong should be punished and that the threat of punishment is required to ensure that potential wrongdoers comply with society's rules. Such assumptions may be the best we can offer within a Justice system tasked with sorting out conflicts among those unwilling or unable to sort them themselves but they are inhibiting and a barrier for those who wish to successfully resolve contentious issues in a more constructive manner.

These assumptions permeate our way of thinking about how to deal with conflict. The search for "truth" predominates and, like our legal system, is usually conducted by the adversarial manner. Of course, in our everyday conflicts, the truth usually means "our" truth, which is usually different from others "truth". "We are right and they are wrong – one of us must be wrong and I know that it is not me". - But there are no unbiased judges in our everyday conflicts. "Truth" assumes some omniscient perspective, which is undoubtedly beyond our less than god-like humanity. We need to remember this if we are to learn how to creatively resolve and transform our conflicts. The best we can hope for is to represent our perceptions, values and interpretations – our window on reality, which if we admit as much, allows us respect those of others. (This is not meant to be a criticism of

the necessary work of judges – merely to point out the limitations of the mindset and the need to go beyond it in our quest for better ways of dealing with conflict).

Such win/lose and punishment/ victor takes all mindsets lurk in the background of our consciousness, and are regularly enacted in our homes and institutions. They form the cultural backdrop and guide to our expectations of outcome. Is it any wonder that we shy away from dealing with conflict? These mindsets are deeply ingrained in our culture and reinforced on a daily basis every time our judges or those in positions of authority and power hand down their judgements. We need to surface and change them if a more responsible and less damaging way of dealing with offence and conflict is to be found.

Restorative principles and practices focus on reparation and relationship not the attribution of blame and punishment. Offence is defined as a violation of a person or group rather than of the rules/ laws. This makes it more personal and draws one into relationship, triggering a different kind of response and way of thinking to the defensive one required to prevent or minimise retribution. In focusing on the future of the relationship it offers the offender the possibility of reparation rather than the prospect of suffering meaningless punishment for a past that cannot be changed.

Restorative principles emphasise dialogue and relationship building rather than defence; restitution and respect for the victim rather than the pale satisfaction of revenge or infliction of “just deserts”. It offers the offender the opportunity to redeem their dignity and self-esteem by taking responsibility for their offences and their impact and engaging in its repair. Such an approach builds community through successive iteration and addresses the more difficult challenge of facing societal inequities through such dialogue rather than marginalizing them in the court system.

Restorative practices give an opportunity for all those affected by an offence to meet, listen to each other’s stories and explore ways forward that might repair some of the harm caused by the incident. These interventions, including mediation, family or victim-offender conferencing and healing circles, differ according to setting and purpose but share certain essential steps. i.e. Everyone affected by an offence, behaviour, a conflict situation or a problem affecting them, has the opportunity to talk about what has happened, explain how they have been affected by it, describe how they are currently feeling about the situation and what they want to do to repair the harm caused.

In summary, advocates of restorative practice believe in the capacity of human beings to resolve their own problems and disputes if they are given the opportunity to listen to each other in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Restorative practitioners and advocates believe in the importance of accountability and responsibility; in the possibility of conflict transformation in which pain, fear and hatred can abate and leave room for forgiveness, understanding and compassion; and in which guilt or denial give way to remorse and a desire to make good the harm caused.

Applying restorative values and principles in a criminal justice, educational and other contexts is not an easy task. Where blame and punishment are the traditional responses to conflict and wrongdoing, the culture of the institution itself needs to change not just people’s behaviour. A core shift in the way we think about offence and our responses to it is needed to bring about this change. This has been described as a paradigm shift and it is in its early stages. It will take time and commitment for it to become as potent an advance

in dealing with conflict as our adversarial justice system was in its time.

Besides a change in our understanding and attitudes, successful Restorative interventions require certain skills on the part of the facilitators or mediators and, will be helped considerably if these same skills are being developed in all members of the community likely to be involved in dealing with offence and conflict.

Our experience in this project has demonstrated that Travellers are comfortable with the values and principles of the Restorative approach and that it aligns with Traveller culture. Because of this Restorative practices are less likely to generate resistance therefore making it more likely to be adopted and used with appropriate support.

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