

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR PEACEKEEPERS AND PEACEBUILDERS HANDBOOK

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African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)
Private Bag X018, Umhlanga Rocks 4320, South Africa

Phone +27 (0) 31 502 3908

Fax +27 (0) 31 502 4160

e-mail: info@accord.org.za

<http://www.accord.org.za>

Written and developed by:

Ian Henderson (ian@thinkteam.co.za)

and

Cedric de Coning (cedric@deconing.net)

Editing, design and layout by Ian Henderson

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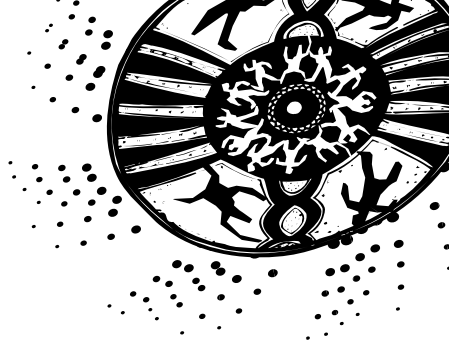
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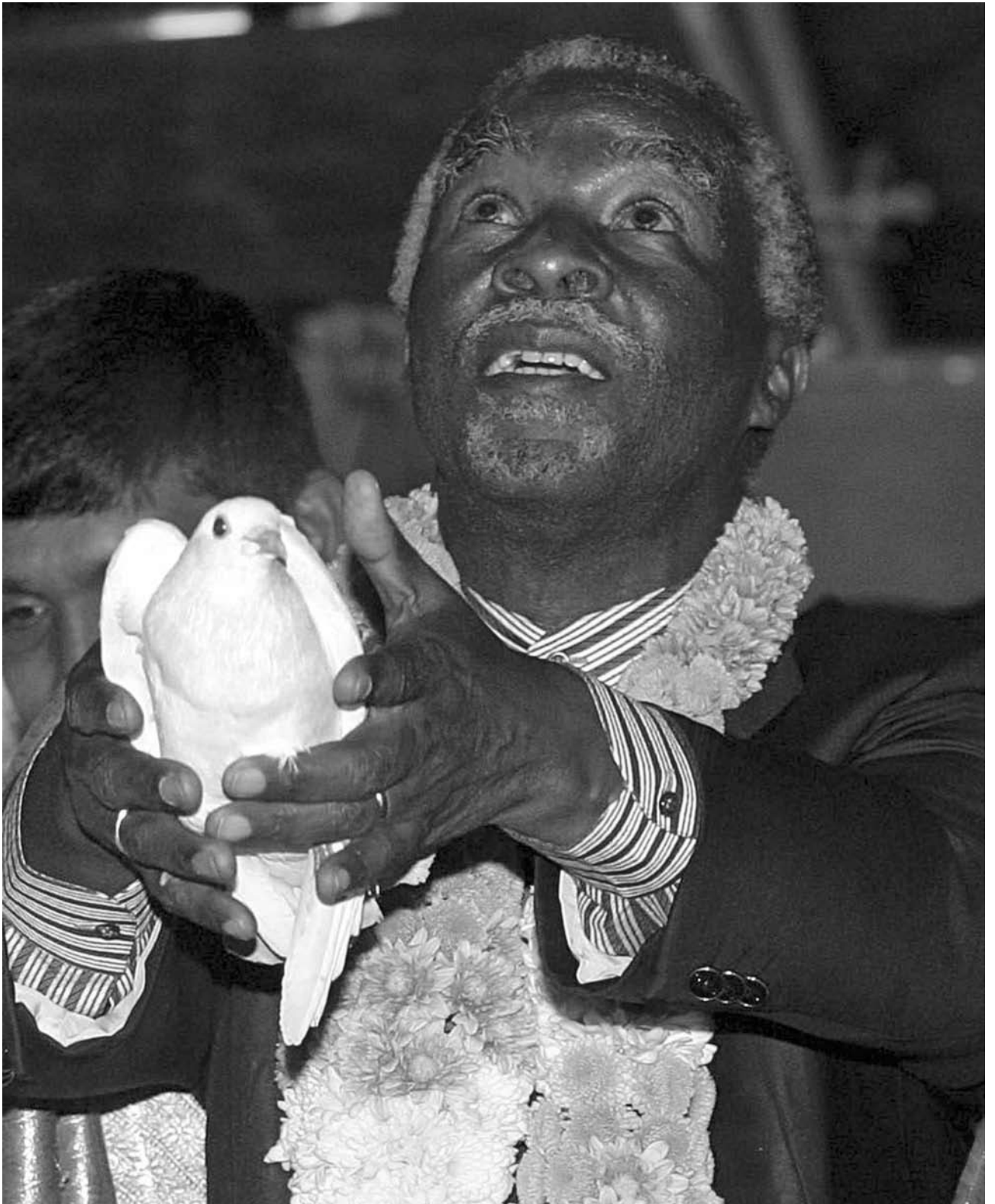
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President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa releases a dove symbolising peace at a cultural festival.



1

How to Use This Handbook

If you are reading this handbook, it is likely that you are already involved in a peace operation of some kind, or that you are anticipating such a role in the future. This handbook has been designed as a practical guide, to assist you in dealing with conflict in a peacekeeping environment. It is aimed at all kinds of participants in peace missions – from military or police officers to civilian mission personnel and humanitarian aid workers.

The skills and approaches contained herein are generic – thus they are applicable whether you are coming from a military, police or civilian perspective. They are based on the core principle that, in the vast majority of conflict situations, a non-violent approach can be applied to dealing with conflict. This applies both to situational crises and to the resolution of long-term, deeply-seated conflict problems on a local, regional or even international scale.

This conflict management methodology builds on the experience of over a decade of conflict management training and experience in Africa, but is specifically designed to meet the needs of civilian, military and police peacekeepers in contemporary complex peace operations.

The handbook is designed to give you a broad-based introduction to all aspects of conflict management – from understanding, assessing and analysing conflict, through to the practical application of negotiation and mediation skills to intervene in conflict. It also looks at how important communication skills are in dealing with conflict, and offers some practical advice for working with interpreters.

However, this handbook is also intended to support your ongoing learning and study. There is much in the handbook that will only be touched on briefly, and you will need to read further to understand the concepts in more detail. There is a resources section at the back to assist you with this. You will find that repeated reference to the handbook will greatly assist your continuing development as a conflict management practitioner and mediator.



ABOVE: A child soldier in the DRC. A core priority of any peace mission is to secure the safety and well-being of vulnerable groups – especially women and children.

BELOW: Modern peace missions involve people from a range of different disciplines including military personnel, police and civilians, such as humanitarian workers. The buzzword is 'cooperation' – it is critical for all parties to work together to ensure the mission's success.



This handbook is intended primarily as a companion guide to an ACCORD experiential training programme – where you will learn much from your encounters with other trainees, as you put your learning into practice in a simulated environment. However, if you are not able to attend an ACCORD Conflict Management for Peacekeepers course, this handbook will still be of much use for self-study.

It is suggested that you use the handbook as a workbook – write notes to yourself, complete the exercises and reflect on your experiences. There is a lot of detailed information packed into these pages – feel free to skip some sections and refer back to them as appropriate. This is particularly true of the mediation section, since mediation is an advanced-level conflict management skill.



The most vital information in each chapter is immediately accessible in the **Overview** sections. In a few pages, the overview will put the information that follows in a framework. By reading all of the overview sections first, you can get a general sense of what we are trying to convey, and absorb the most important information. You can also refer back to the overview section frequently for revision, or when you need a quick reminder.



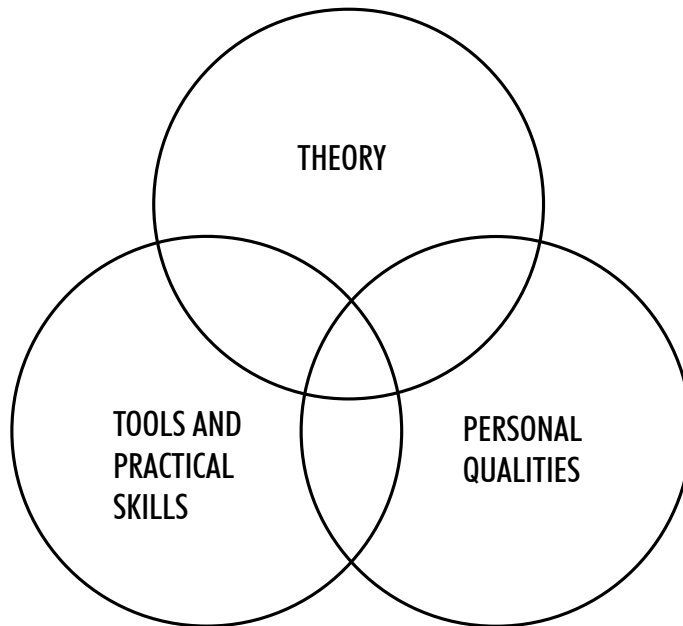
Throughout the handbook you will find action-oriented **How To** sections that offer practical steps on what to do when dealing with conflict, for instance, the steps to follow when negotiating. You may wish to memorise these sections, or even copy them and keep them near to hand as a quick-reference guide.



The **Theory** sections are designed to give you background information, to help you understand the theory behind our practical approaches to conflict management, and to guide you towards further study. While this handbook is primarily a practical guide to dealing with conflict in the field, we also offer some theoretical understanding to deepen and broaden your knowledge, and encourage further growth and education. The list of resources at the end of this handbook is designed to assist you to start exploring this exciting field further.

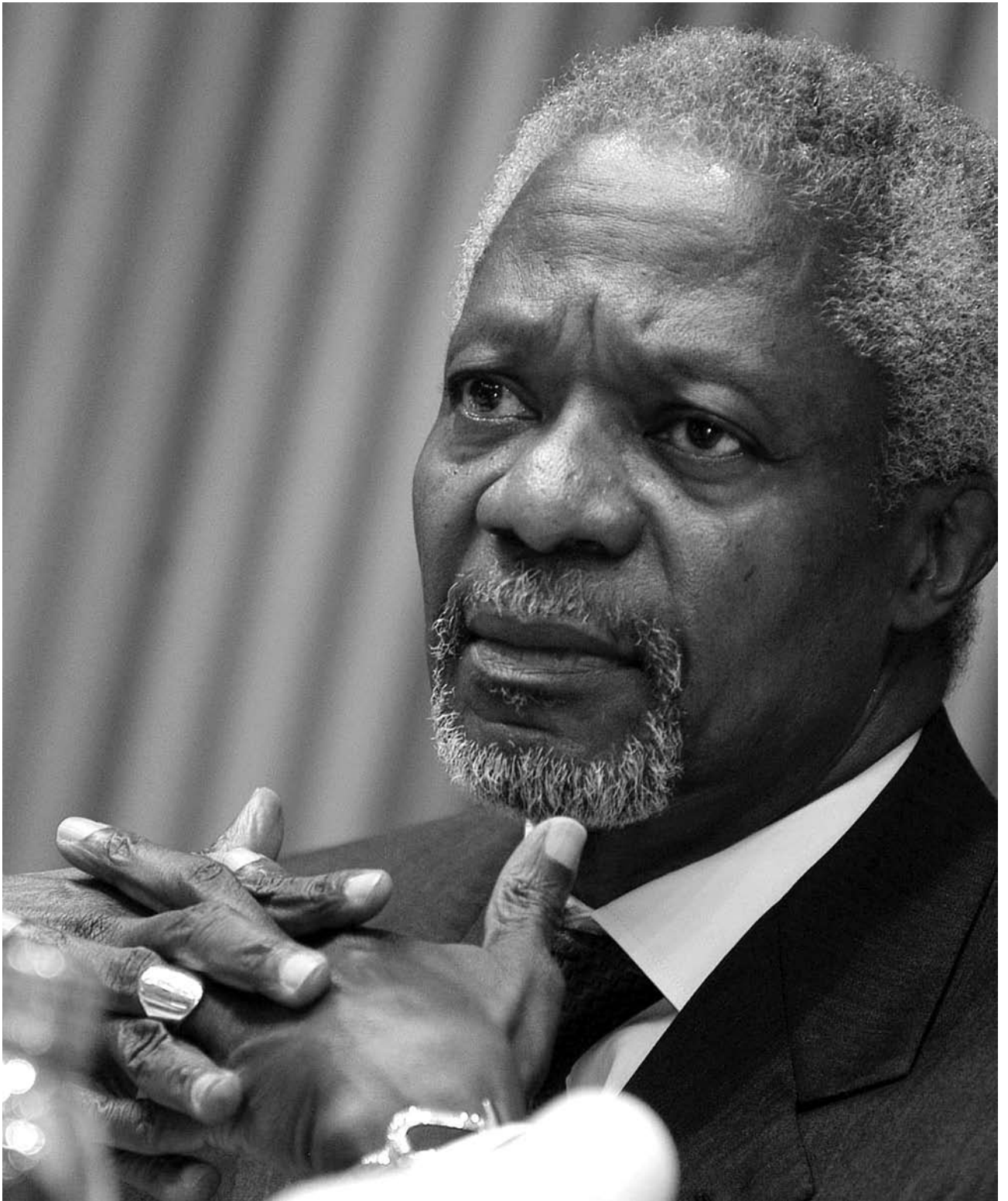
The Learning Process

Conflict management is a life skill, not just a theoretical exercise. Learning to become an effective conflict manager is thus a multilayered and multifaceted process – which includes learning theoretical knowledge, together with skills and practical tools. It will also challenge you personally, and will require growth and change in the way you see yourself and the way you see your world. This ‘learning map’ can help you to record key information that has made an impact on you as you work through this handbook. **Theory** refers to principles, concepts and ideas; **Tools and Practical Skills** describes practical approaches to resolving conflict – things you would do; **Qualities** are the internal attributes, such as compassion, openness and understanding, that you need to develop and enhance to be effective at intervening in conflict.



HOW TO USE THE LEARNING MAP

Make a copy of the map on a large piece of paper, and write key information that seems important to you in the circles, or with arrows running into the circles. If one circle seems empty, then think about which areas you need to focus on to develop that area.



He has been criticised by some, but Kofi Annan has done much as an African head of the UN to put African issues on the global political map.





2

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of intra- and interstate wars has changed dramatically. On the one hand, a more positive understanding of peace – focused on social justice – has emerged. On the other, violent conflict has increasingly impacted on civilians, with a dramatic associated increase in the scope of humanitarian tragedies. This is forcing the international community to change the way it responds to conflict. We are witnessing a shift in the type of interventions undertaken by the United Nations (UN), and by regional bodies such as the African Union (AU).

Peacekeeping is thus a concept in flux, as the world within which it operates changes rapidly. This chapter is designed to equip those entering the peace mission environment with a functional understanding of key concepts and terms such as conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

KEY THINGS TO LEARN

- Get a grasp of the political landscape within which peacekeeping does its work
- Understand key concepts in peacekeeping
- Understand the importance of coordination in a peace mission



The New Conflict Paradigm

As in so many other fields, the changing world order has fundamentally altered our perception of peace and conflict. During the Cold War era, our understanding of peace and conflict used to focus on the absence of war in the context of the nation state. The end of the Cold War allowed a more positive understanding of peace – as an individual centred presence of social justice – to reclaim the stage.

Most peace researchers are, however, more comfortable with studying conflict than peace. As a result, the study of peace has been intrinsically linked to how we understand violence. For most, peace is still defined as the absence of violence, but our understanding of violence has considerably developed and broadened over the years. For Johan Galtung, for instance, violence does not only mean direct physical violence, but also structural violence, cultural violence and environmental violence. He has broadened the concept of violence beyond direct physical violence to include institutional or systemic violence caused by an unjust system such as apartheid, the cultural legitimisation of violence against others, and violence to the environment. Peace should be understood holistically as a state free of violence in all these spheres. (Galtung, 1985: 141-158)

Our understanding of conflict has also changed. In most of the conflicts that have occurred since the end of the Cold War, the traditional distinction between soldier and civilian has become almost irrelevant. In the new conflict paradigm, civilians have become both the targets and the instruments of war. The growing impact of civilians on conflict and, indeed, of conflict on civilians, has resulted in almost all post-Cold War conflicts being closely associated with massive humanitarian tragedies.

The changing nature of conflict has also changed the way in which the international community has responded to conflict. In the 21st century, the focus of international conflict management is increasingly shifting from peacekeeping, which is about maintaining the status quo, to peacebuilding, which has to do with managing transitions (Barth Eide et al, 2005). Most UN peace operations since 1989 have, in effect, been peacebuilding operations in that their focus was on supporting the implementation of comprehensive peace processes, which included classic peacebuilding tasks such as Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), justice sector reform, organising elections, training and restructuring new police forces and facilitating the transition from interim to transitional, and eventually to democratically elected, governments.

The development from peacekeeping to peacebuilding has emerged as new, mostly civilian, dimensions were added to traditional military peacekeeping mandates. These new dimensions were aimed at assisting the host country to sustain the momentum of the peace process, by supporting transitional arrangements; establishing new, or reforming existing, national

institutions such as the defence force, police service and the judiciary; assisting with the organising of elections; supporting constitution drafting processes; and facilitating restorative justice initiatives. The civilian dimension of peace operations is thus closely linked to the peacebuilding nature of modern complex peace operations.

The United Nations has identified four major areas of action in pursuance of peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Preventive diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out, peacemaking and peacekeeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained, and peacebuilding is aimed at preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. These four areas together represent the UN's comprehensive response to violent conflict and its holistic approach to peace.

Throughout this introduction the terms 'peacekeeping', 'peace operations' and 'peace missions' are used to refer to UN and AU field missions that may incorporate all four of these spheres. In fact, in Liberia, Sudan or Burundi, and in most of the new UN and AU peace missions, all four of these dimensions are addressed simultaneously. The one does thus not necessarily follow on the other, nor do they occur in a specific sequence. Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding should thus rather be seen as different dimensions – each focusing on a slightly different angle – of the same peace process or conflict management system.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Violent conflict is inevitably political. Even in cases where competition over scarce resources – for example, water – is the primary cause of the conflict, the parties would normally have organised themselves in some kind of political formation to affirm their claim to the resource. In order to manage that dispute, one needs to find a political solution that will satisfy all the parties to the dispute, that even if all their interests are not being met, they

UN AREAS OF ACTION TO PURSUE PEACE

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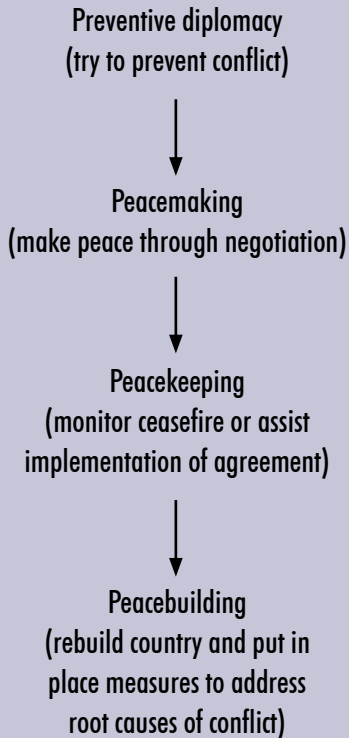
Preventive diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out.

Peacemaking and peacekeeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained.

Peacebuilding is aimed at preventing the recurrence of the violent conflict.

These four areas together represent the UN's comprehensive response to violent conflict and its holistic approach to peace.

STAGES IN THE PEACE PROCESS



PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

Preventive diplomacy is not limited to the pre-conflict stage, but continues throughout steps to deal with conflict, as the conflict flares up and new conflicts emerge.

have achieved the most fair, just and sustainable settlement to their dispute possible under the circumstances.

The UN and AU responses to conflict, in its simplest form, are first to prevent conflict (preventive diplomacy); if that fails, the next step is to make peace (peacemaking) by gathering all the parties around the negotiation table; if a ceasefire or an agreement is reached, the UN or AU would often deploy a peacekeeping mission to monitor the ceasefire and otherwise to assist with the implementation of the agreement; and lastly, the UN or AU will assist to rebuild the country with a specific focus on addressing the root causes of the conflict, so as to ensure that the conflict does not reoccur (peacebuilding).

As said above, this would be the UN or AU peace process in its simplest form but, in reality, many of these dimensions are in progress at the same time. Preventive diplomacy, for instance, does not only occur in the phase before violent conflict breaks out. There would be various efforts to prevent instances of violent conflict, and an overall effort to keep the peace process on track. Similarly, many conflicts are not singular events. Instead, they go through cyclical phases and, although the UN and AU may be busy with implementing a previous agreement, a new conflict may break out. Peacebuilding may thus be a post-conflict activity in theory, i.e. it occurs in a later phase of a peacekeeping mission, once stability has been restored. In reality, however, conflict may break out again and the peacebuilding efforts underway at that point may become preventative, in that they are aimed at trying to stop the reoccurrence of the conflict.

CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

Everybody would agree that prevention is better than cure, and almost every conference, seminar and international meeting held over the last decade or more that has discussed peacekeeping would have stressed the importance of improved preventative action. It is easier said than done, however, and despite many attempts to come up with an improved preventative response, very little has been achieved to date.



UN peacekeepers patrol in Buedu, Sierra Leone, in July 2002. Sierra Leone, known for some of the decade's worst war crimes, was keeping a fragile peace as its neighbour Liberia spiralled into more intense fighting. Liberia's rebels had waged an insurgency for three years, but had recently stepped up attacks against President Charles Taylor's government. The heavy toll on civilians in the fighting posed a threat to the stability of other countries in the region, including Sierra Leone. There were about 50 000 refugees in Sierra Leone, according to the World Food Programme, and 100 000 internally displaced people in Liberia. Sierra Leone, which at the time had the UN's largest peacekeeping mission, with 17 300 troops, was recovering from a ruthless 10-year war.



The cost of war is high: refugees crowd along the banks of the Akagara River at the border of Rwanda and Tanzania in May 1994. Hutu refugees fled to Tanzania in order to escape reprisals by Tutsi rebels.

The preventative process works as follows. Various early warning systems and mechanisms indicate that a certain situation is about to get out of hand. The UN or AU reacts by focusing more resources on the trouble spot. These include increased humanitarian assistance, and perhaps more focus on human rights monitoring and education, if that is appropriate. At the overall diplomatic level, the UN Secretary-General or the Chairperson of the AU Commission is likely to dispatch a fact-finding mission or a special envoy. These actions are designed to focus special attention on the problem by dedicating certain specific resources to it, and by creating the impetus for special reports on the situation to be developed for the Secretary-General and the UN Security Council – or, in the case of the AU, for the Chairperson of the Commission and the Peace and Security Council. The special envoy or fact-finding mission visits the conflict situation and surrounding countries, meets with as many of the relevant role players as possible, and makes an assessment of how the UN or

AU can best try to alleviate the problem. The UN Security Council or the AU Peace and Security Council then formulates a response that covers as wide a range of actions and areas of action as possible. These may include various humanitarian, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction actions, perhaps a specific human rights monitoring and education programme, and normally a peacemaking role for the special envoy.

All of these actions are aimed at preventing the conflict from escalating or, if a violent conflict has already broken out, are designed to limit its impact on innocent civilians, and to try and stop the violent hostilities as swiftly as possible. The special envoy, supported by a number of political affairs and support staff, is thus essentially busy with diplomatic-type activities that engage the various parties and other relevant actors, such as civil society, neighbouring countries and organisations, in dialogue. This is likely to take the form of shuttle diplomacy and may, in some instances, include some form of mediation or joint negotiations, with the aim of achieving some kind of formal agreement.

Successful conflict prevention is not often reported, because the situation was averted or resolved before it became violent – and thus newsworthy. It is also difficult to say that a situation would have become violent before it actually happens, and it is thus very difficult to say for certain that a specific initiative was successful in preventing conflict. It is generally agreed, however, that many conflict situations could have been avoided had there been timely preventative intervention, and everybody is in agreement that prevention is much more effective – and much cheaper – than peacekeeping.

The dilemma with conflict prevention is that the political will to allocate the necessary resources to prevention is often lacking, because the decision makers are not yet convinced of the seriousness of the situation until it is too late. Very often, the political leadership in a country about to experience conflict is unwilling to read the early warning signs themselves, and their friends in the international community are too embarrassed to act against the wishes of the country's leadership.

PEACEMAKING

The UN or AU would describe peaceful diplomatic efforts towards achieving a ceasefire or peace agreement as peacemaking.

The immediate focus is on achieving an agreement that will end the hostilities. Once that has been achieved, more time and effort can be dedicated to achieving a comprehensive peace agreement over a longer period.

PEACEKEEPING

Peacekeeping is the monitoring and facilitation of the observance of a ceasefire agreement. It includes assistance with other aspects, such as some form of election or popular consultation, human rights investigations, humanitarian relief and/or the rebuilding of certain state and physical infrastructures.

Civilians are increasingly involved in UN peacekeeping missions.

In exceptional circumstances, the UN may deploy a preventive force (preventive deployment) even before violent conflict has broken out, as it did in Macedonia in the earlier days of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. In this case, it appeared highly likely that the conflict would spread to Macedonia, and the UN decided to deploy a force on the border to act as a deterrent. This approach was successful in that particular set of circumstances, and the conflict did not spread to Macedonia. This was the only case of a preventive deployment until now, but it is not unlikely that this tool may be used again in future, provided the necessary political will exists to undertake this potentially costly – both financially and politically – step.

Preventive diplomacy is not, however, limited to the pre-conflict stage. In any conflict situation – either prior to, during a formal peacekeeping mission being deployed, or even after a mission has withdrawn – there would be various instances where a smaller dispute erupts within the larger conflict. This may be between two of the parties, in a certain zone or location within the larger conflict area, or even between two allies – as was the case recently between Rwanda and Uganda, when a dispute erupted between their forces within the Democratic Republic of Congo. In such cases, a dispute will require special attention by the UN to prevent it from escalating into violent conflict or, if violence has occurred already, to prevent its further escalation. There are many ways in which preventive diplomacy can be undertaken, and many actors – civilian and military – that can play a role. At its core, however, it requires a person, or persons, with political and diplomatic skills who can negotiate (or perhaps mediate, depending on the circumstances) with all the parties to the conflict, to de-escalate the tensions or achieve an agreement to resolve the specific issue at hand. This may be a land dispute between villagers in East Timor, a dispute over the use of a bridge between Serb and Albanian residents in Kosovo, or a dispute over the position of a border crossing point between Ethiopia and Eritrea. But, large or small, the point is that conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy initiatives continue to take place throughout the conflict cycle.

PEACEMAKING

When a violent conflict has broken out, the focus will be on bringing an end to the violent conflict, that is, achieving a ceasefire. The UN or AU would describe these peaceful diplomatic efforts towards achieving such a ceasefire or peace agreement as peacemaking. The immediate focus is on achieving an agreement that will end the hostilities. Once that has been achieved, more time and effort can be dedicated to achieving a comprehensive peace agreement over a longer period. The immediate goal is to stop the fighting so that the suffering of the people and the destruction of the environment, economy, property and infrastructure can be halted.

Peacemaking efforts take place at all levels, but those at the highest level naturally attract the most attention. Depending on the nature of the conflict, these efforts may include several neighbouring heads of state or government representatives, as well as representatives of regional organisations. Recent high-profile peacemaking efforts – such as the Lusaka process in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dayton peace process for former Yugoslavia and the Lomé process in Sierra Leone – are examples of this kind of high-profile multilateral ceasefire and peace agreements. However, many others may occur only between the parties themselves and the mediator or facilitator, such as the Arusha Burundi peace process, led by former president Nelson Mandela. In this case, most of the actual negotiations took place in a number of committees, each facilitated by experts in those fields. The progress made in the committees was summarised and agreed in plenary and, from time to time, milestones were solidified in high-profile meetings attended by the principals of the parties to the conflict, regional heads of state and other dignitaries.

The peacemaking aspect of the peace process thus refers to the negotiations between the warring parties, usually with the aim of achieving a ceasefire agreement. This is essentially a diplomatic effort, but it may be supported by various other efforts, such as the threat of military intervention, or sanctions against all or some of the warring factions. The process normally deals with establishing trust, agreeing to issues to be discussed and the

PEACEBUILDING

Any actions undertaken by the UN in a conflict situation, which are aimed at addressing the root causes of the problem so as to prevent a reoccurrence of the conflict once the UN presence is scaled down or phased out, are referred to as peacebuilding.



June 2003: A boy watches as UN peacekeepers from Uruguay drive through Bunia, the capital of Ituri province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. French troops arrived in Bunia in June under a UN mandate to secure the city, which had been plagued with a wave of ethnic killings. The war in the north-eastern Ituri province had claimed 55 000 lives so far, leaving thousands homeless and living in refugee camps.

format and process in which talks will unfold, getting the parties to the table, mediating the actual talks, achieving and formalising the agreement, and implementing the agreement. Although it is a diplomatic, and therefore a civilian-driven process (although that civilian may be a retired officer, as has been the case with some special envoys), many other disciplines should inform the process. ‘Lessons learned’ studies have found, for instance, that peace agreements fail because politicians have agreed to ceasefire provisions that were impossible to implement on the ground. Special envoys should thus ideally be supported by a range of specialists, including military specialists, who can advise them on the practical aspects of ceasefire implementation.

PEACEKEEPING

Once a ceasefire agreement, in whatever form, has been reached, the UN or AU may be called on to monitor and facilitate the observance of the warring parties to the ceasefire. It may assist with other aspects, such as some form of election or popular consultation, human rights investigations, humanitarian relief and/or the rebuilding of certain state and physical infrastructures.

As the demands for these political and humanitarian tasks has grown, the UN has increasingly turned to civilian experts in these fields and, as a result, modern peace missions have large numbers of civilian personnel. This was not always the case, certainly not to the extent, size and proportionality that is typical of peace missions today. One of the ways in which this change has manifested itself is in the management of modern peace missions. Since 1989, appointing a civilian head of mission, normally in the form of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in UN missions, has become the norm.

A typical management structure in a classical peacekeeping operation would see a force commander at the head of the operation. A typical modern peace mission, in contrast, will be headed by a civilian SRSG for UN operations, or a Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) for AU missions. The SRSG/SRCC is normally assisted by one or more deputies (DSRSG/DSRCC). The SRSG/SRCC will have a Mission Management Team, comprising the divisional heads of all the components that make up the peace mission. These will differ from mission to mission, depending on the specific mandate and circumstances, but a generic Mission Management Team can be said to include, apart from the SRSG/SRCC: one or more DSRSGs/DSRCCs; a force commander; a chief military observer, if there is a separate military observer mission; a UN/AU police commissioner; and several heads of substantive civilian components, such as Political Affairs, Civil Affairs, Human Rights, Public Information, Electoral Affairs, etc. The last member of the Mission Management Team is the head of Mission Support, also known in some missions as the director of Administration or chief administrative officer.

In contemporary peace missions, the various dimensions are intimately interlinked to form a holistic web, network or system of interrelated and mutually supportive functions that have a combined, collective and cumulative impact on the peace process.

PEACEBUILDING

Any actions undertaken by the UN in a conflict situation, which are aimed at addressing the root causes of the problem so as to prevent a reoccurrence of the conflict once the UN presence is scaled down or phased out, are referred to as peacebuilding. In its simplest

form, peacebuilding is those actions aimed at preventing a recurrence of the conflict. These are normally longer-term developmental aspects such as physical infrastructure projects, agricultural development projects, health systems, etc., but also often include the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants. In some conflicts, such as in East Timor, this can include preparing a new country for independence, which means new civil servants, new judges, new teachers, new police personnel and new soldiers needing to be selected and trained, laws and systems needing to be put in place, and an overall political framework needing to be developed.

The UN talks of two types of peacebuilding, namely preventive peacebuilding and post-conflict peacebuilding. Preventive peacebuilding is those efforts dedicated to preventing a conflict from developing into violent conflict, whereas post-conflict peacebuilding addresses the rebuilding of physical infrastructure, state systems and civil society organisations.

Peacebuilding is a complex system that consists of multiple short-, medium- and long-term programmes that simultaneously address both the causes and consequences of a conflict. In the short term, peacebuilding programmes assist in stabilising the peace process and preventing a relapse into violent conflict. In the long term, peacebuilding programmes, collectively and cumulatively, address the root causes of a conflict and lay the foundations for social justice and sustainable peace. Peacebuilding systems require a coherent and coordinated multidimensional response by a broad range of internal and external actors including government, civil society, the private sector, international institutions and agencies, and international non-governmental organisations. These actors undertake a range of interrelated programmes that span the security, political, socio-economic and reconciliation dimensions of society. Peacebuilding starts when hostilities end, usually marked by a ceasefire or peace agreement. Peacebuilding ends when a society can sustain its transition without external support, and it is replaced by a sustainable development period.¹

Successful peacebuilding operations evolve through three broad phases, namely the stabilisation phase, the transition phase and the consolidation phase.² These phases should not be understood as clear, fixed, time-bound or having absolute boundaries. One should anticipate considerable overlap in the transition between phases, and regression is possible, in which case a specific system may switch back and forth between phases (UN, 2004).

MISSION COORDINATION AND COHERENCE

The overriding lesson from all of the modern peace missions undertaken to date is clear: there is a need to improve coordination and cooperation among all the various multidisciplinary elements in a modern UN peace mission, and to do so during all the phases of the mission,

that is, during the planning phase, during the execution, and at all the levels of the mission – strategic, operational and tactical.

We need to understand the new conflict paradigm as one where peacemakers are confronted with continuously evolving complex conflict systems. To manage them, we need to develop an equally complex conflict management response – one that addresses the conflict system holistically and in a coordinated fashion. Hence the modern peace mission formula that combines military, police, humanitarian and various other disciplines in one integrated effort to achieve one combined and interrelated objective – a meaningful and lasting peace, normally described in mission terms as the ‘end state’.

The most significant failure of modern peace missions, with their complex mix of political, civilian and military personnel and objectives, has been their inability to integrate these various components into a single holistic effort.

The need for synergy between the political, civilian and military contingents in modern peace missions also extends to the multitude of non-UN international organisations and NGOs, which have become part of the reality of any modern complex emergency. The success of each is dependent on the success of the other. Any factor that impacts negatively on any of the elements of the overall mission, whether it is in the political, military or humanitarian areas, eventually impacts negatively on the mission itself. If one element fails, e.g. the election in Angola during UNAVEM II, then everything achieved in the other sectors will be meaningless. One of the major challenges – if not the major challenge – of modern peace missions is thus the overall management and coordination of such a complex, integrated and multidimensional operation.

Notes

¹ This definition of peacebuilding was first formulated by Cedric de Coning and Senzo Ngubane for an ACCORD study on *Peacebuilding in Southern Africa*, commissioned by JICA in 2004. It was subsequently further refined by De Coning for NEPAD’s *African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Framework*.

² There are various different interpretations of these phases, but most convey the same essential progression from violent conflict to normalisation, e.g. the Association of the U.S. Army and Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington D.C. published *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Task Framework* in 2002, in which they identify three stages, namely the initial response, transformation and fostering sustainability.





3

Your Personal Context

In a peace mission you will face conflict – of that there is no doubt. And this conflict will take place at many different levels: with co-workers, in the mission structures and between military and civilian sectors – not to mention in the host communities. You are also likely to experience inner conflict as a result of the challenging circumstances and feeling isolated and far from home.

But this will not be a new experience for you – we all have a lifetime’s experience in dealing with conflict. And we have developed certain built-in mechanisms for dealing with conflict that work for us at some levels, but may be dysfunctional at others. Most of us are afraid of conflict, and withdraw from it to some extent, even in situations where it may be better to confront the situation and deal with the conflict directly.

This chapter will help us look at our personal background and context and identify our built-in styles of conflict handling, and which areas of our personal style need to be further developed.

KEY THINGS TO LEARN

- Gain a deeper understanding of ourselves
- Self-assess our experience, skills and knowledge as a basis for further learning
- Understand the different personal attributes that contribute to effective conflict management
- Understand that there are different archetypal responses to handling conflict, and that they may be appropriate at different times



OVERVIEW

Personal Styles of Dealing with Conflict

Every person has an individual way of handling conflict that has grown out of a lifetime of experience with conflict, and is also a product of **our own cultural and historical background**. Developing our capacity to handle conflict – both personally and professionally – involves examining what works well, and what needs to develop further in our approach. This is a journey of growth that will last a lifetime.

FEAR AND AVOIDANCE

Fear of conflict is a very natural response – most of us avoid dealing with conflict unless necessary. Gaining a better understanding of conflict, seeing its positive value and practising tools to deal with it will help build our confidence to manage conflict in the future.

EXPERIENCE

We all have a lifetime of highly valuable experience in dealing with conflict. It is important to be ourselves, but we may have learned some destructive patterns in the past that are not helping us, and can be changed through training and understanding.

MY CULTURE MAKES ME WHO I AM

We are a product of our cultural, geographical and historical make-up. Within that diverse and unique background is a wealth of resources. For instance, only recently have traditional approaches to conflict handling really been recognised and accorded importance. It is important to invest in becoming familiar with our traditions, and learning to value them.



WHAT IS MY PERSONAL STYLE?

Are you aware of the way you respond to conflict, and why? Our ability to assert our needs and our openness to the interests of others will affect our programmed responses. Maturity in this area is having the flexibility to choose an appropriate approach to the situation, rather than simply acting out a programmed response.



ARCHETYPAL RESPONSES

There are some basic archetypal responses to conflict – from withdrawing, through compromising, to joint problem solving. Each approach may be appropriate in certain circumstances, and learning to identify which approach to use under what conditions will help us to become conscious of why we may typically default to one type of response.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

The role that you play in the peace mission will impact on the way you handle conflict – you may have to fulfil a specialist role or act under a very strict set of guidelines. How much flexibility can you create for yourself to deal with conflict within these boundaries?

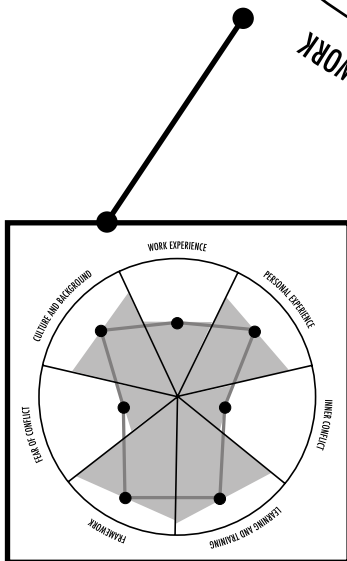
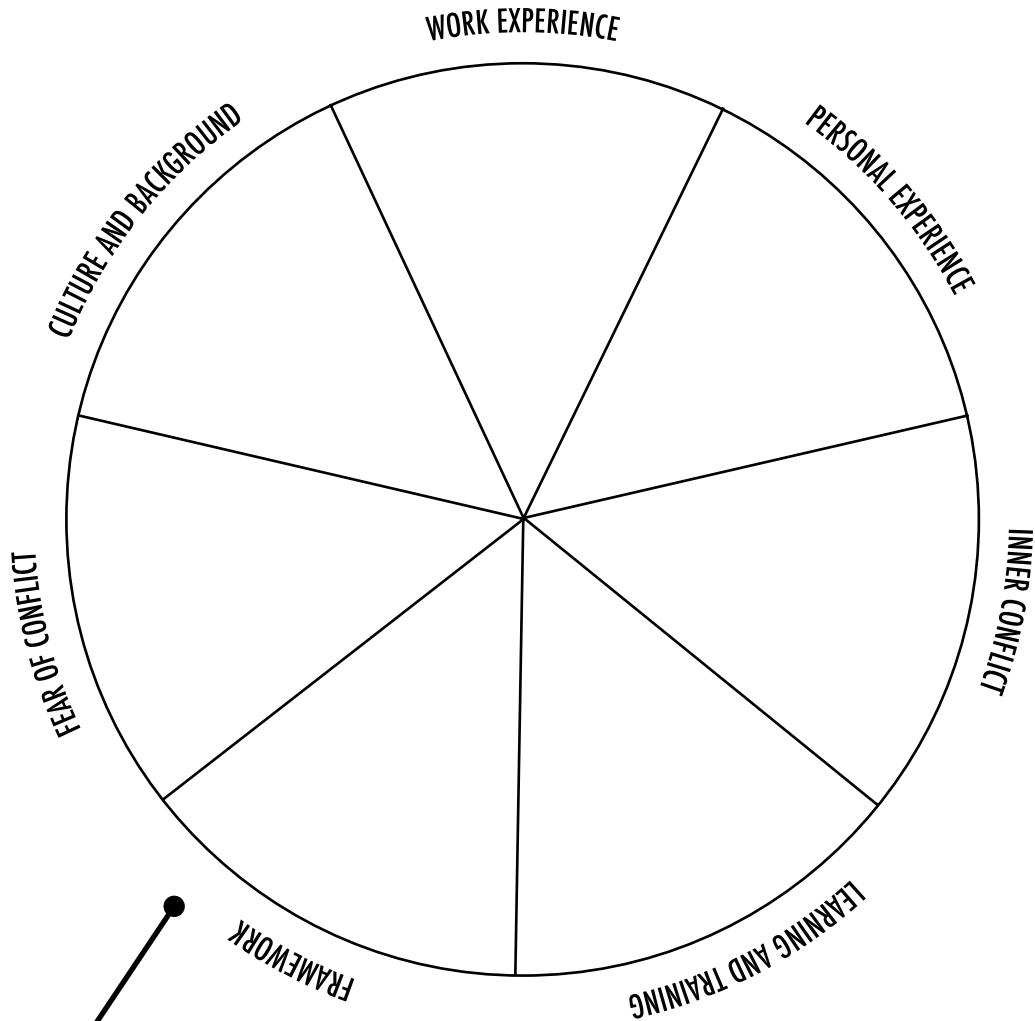


Personal Conflict Map

You are already part of – or are likely soon to be part of – a peace mission, where dealing with conflict is one of the challenges that will determine whether this is going to be a constructive experience for you. Are you prepared? This handbook offers many tools, insights and approaches to help you, but it may be good to start by getting a sense of how well equipped you are so far.

Fill in the conflict map on the opposite page by shading in each segment, on a scale of 1 to 10. If the description describes you well, then shade in most or all of the segment, from the centre outwards. If it doesn't – you are, in fact, the opposite – then leave it blank, or shade it a little. Decide for yourself where on the scale you are.

- ✳ **Experience at work** – I have a lot of experience of dealing with conflict successfully at work; I am utilised as a resource to help others resolve conflict; when I have difficulties with others, I am able to resolve them and have a constructive work relationship.
- ✳ **Personal life experience** – in my family and with close friends I can deal with difficulties well, and have harmonious relationships; I don't have long-standing problems with people; I am seen by those close to me as someone who can resolve problems.
- ✳ **Inner self** – I am good at facing and dealing with inner conflict around difficult choices and things that have not gone the way I wanted them to in my life; I don't repress or avoid things within myself; I understand all parts of myself pretty well.
- ✳ **Learning and training** – I have undergone training in conflict management; I have read books and papers on different ways to handle conflict; I know the theory of how to handle conflict.
- ✳ **Framework** – I have a personal framework for dealing with conflict; when facing a conflict situation in my mind, I can consciously imagine what steps to follow and what to do; over the years I have refined and developed my personal approach, and it works quite well for me.
- ✳ **Emotional response** – I am not so afraid of conflict; when facing conflict, I am relatively comfortable with dealing with it, even though I know it can be difficult; I don't avoid conflict – I would rather deal with it.
- ✳ **Culture and background** – I am a person who knows my culture and history; I know about traditional methods for dealing with conflict in my family and culture, and I have integrated them into my personal approach; I see myself carrying on with my cultural rituals and practices.



Once you have shaded each segment, mark a dot in the middle, as on the example shown, and connect the dots to make your own personal 'conflict spider'. The spider should ideally make a balanced circular shape – if yours is a lopsided or spidery-shaped, like the one shown, then the areas with little shading will demonstrate to you the areas on which you need to work.

As discussed on page 8, learning to handle conflict is a multifaceted process of never-ending learning. This handbook will assist you on that journey. Part of the learning is about **theories and thinking**, part of it is about **tools and skills**, and part of it is about **personal transformation** and internal change.



CONFLICT HANDLING EXPERIENCES: SELF, HOME AND WORK

We all have a wealth of ‘conflict management’ experience, built up over years of dealing with conflict at many levels in life. Honestly evaluating where our approach is working for us, and which areas we find difficult or problematic, is the first step towards improving our capacity to deal with conflict. It is helpful to think of a conflict system where all the levels are interconnected – our capacity to deal with our own inner conflict, for example, helps us to be sensitive and empathetic to the needs and perspectives of others in our work environment.

Learning and Training

A tremendous amount of research and writing has been done on conflict and its effective management. A lot is to be gained from reading and participating in training in conflict handling – particularly when exposed to perspectives and approaches that one might not otherwise have been experienced. Start with this handbook, and then look at other sources listed in the **Resources** section from page 183.

Framework

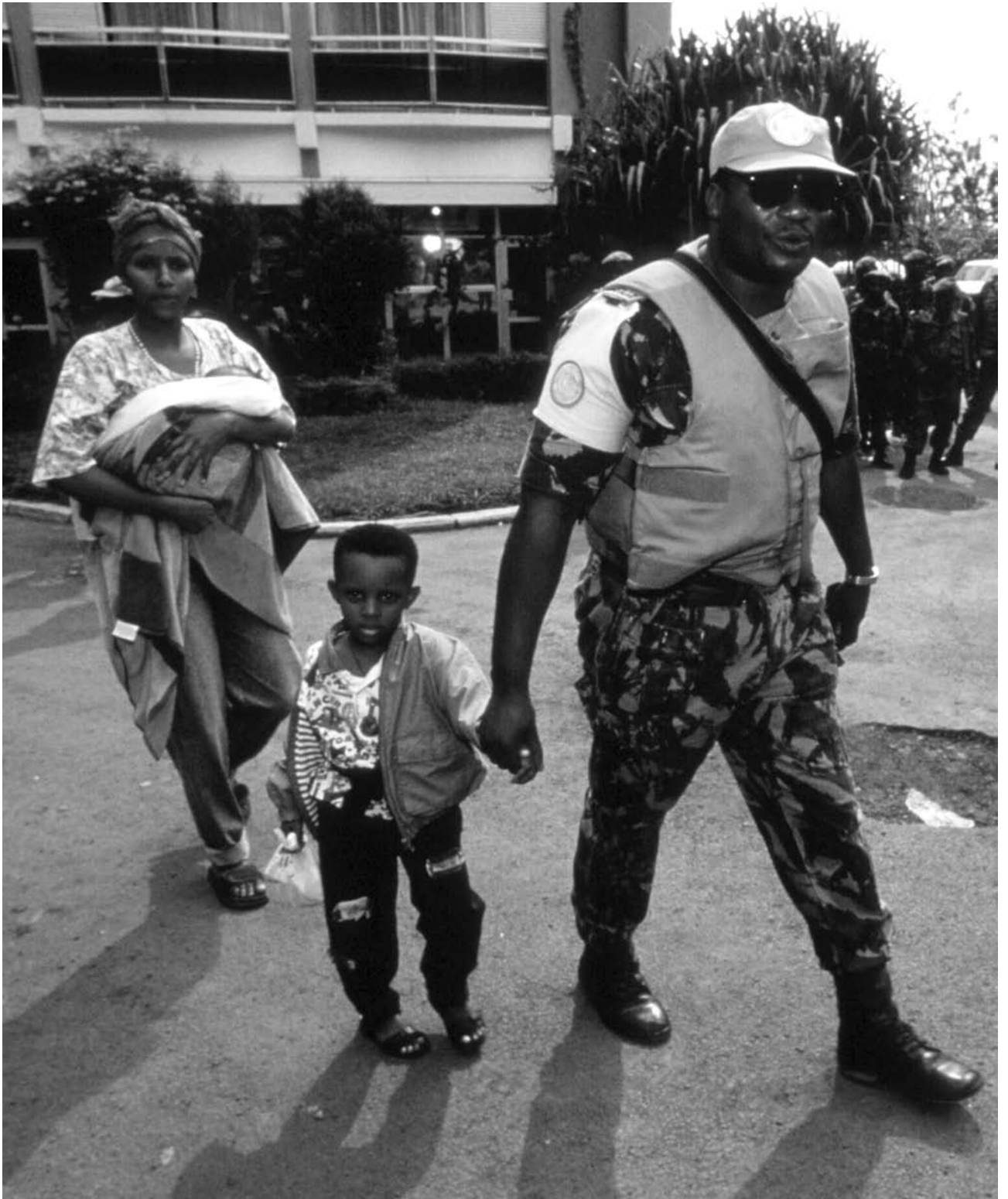
Conflicts are complex, unpredictable phenomena. Dealing with conflict effectively requires a **systematic approach**, particularly under stress and pressure. Internalising a system, which one tests and refines over time, and adapts to your personal qualities and circumstances, can greatly enhance one’s capacity to respond effectively to conflict.

Emotional Response

Many people fear dealing with conflict. Withdrawing from conflict can be a legitimate response – for instance, when potential for violence is high. However, if our fear of facing conflict leads us to avoid dealing with it at all costs, and in all situations, then **avoidance can carry a high cost in perpetuating conflict**. Gaining tools and confidence to deal with conflict can be an important part of overcoming our fear of it.

Culture and Background

Many cultural backgrounds have rich traditions, developed over centuries, for dealing with conflict – but globalisation and the destruction of the fabric of traditional societies means we are losing these resources. Through reading, research and talking to the elders in your family and community, you may be able to regain access to some of these resources.



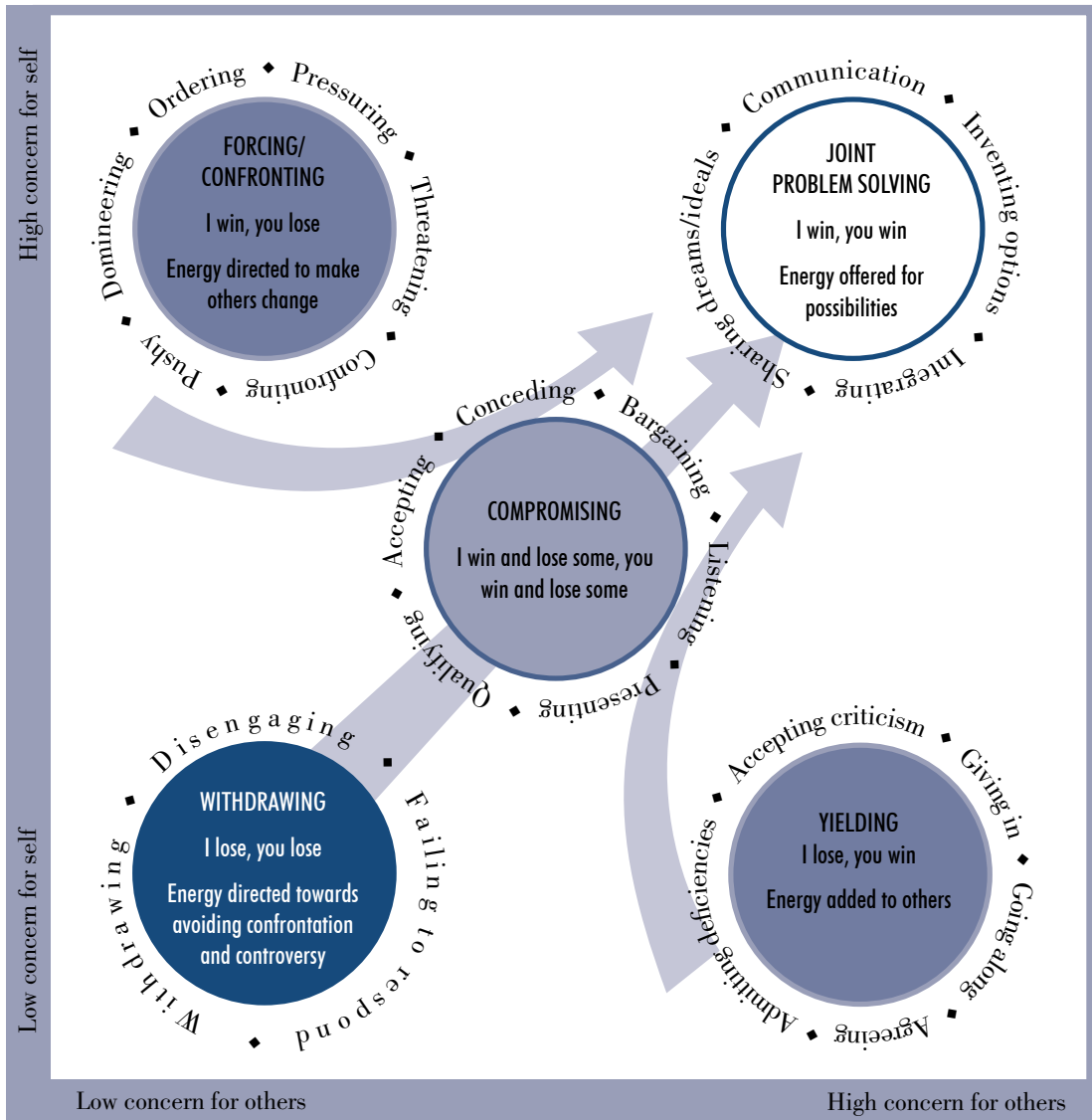
A United Nations Peacekeeper escorts a mother and child from the Mille Collines Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, May 1994.



THEORY

Archetypal Responses

There are five basic ‘archetypal’ styles that we use when responding to conflict. Each style may be appropriate under certain circumstances, and we should make a **conscious choice which approach to use**.



Source: Thomas-Kilman (1974) adapted by Radford, Glaser and Associates (1991) for Miedzinski and Steadman (1993: 8).

STYLE	IS APPROPRIATE WHEN...	IS INAPPROPRIATE WHEN...
Withdrawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the issue is trivial • the relationship is insignificant • time is short and a decision is not necessary • your only power is to block the other person by not dealing with the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you care about both the relationship and the issues involved • you use this style habitually for most issues • negative feeling may linger • others would benefit from caring confrontation
Yielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you really don't care about the issue • you have no wish to block the other person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are likely to harbour resentment • you use this style habitually in order to gain acceptance • others wish to collaborate and will feel like enforcers if you simply accommodate them
Forcing/ confronting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a life-threatening emergency looms • you're sure you're right, and being right matters more than preserving relationships • the issue is trivial and others don't really care what happens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaboration has not yet been attempted • cooperation from others is important • this style is used routinely for most issues • self-respect of others (losing face) is affected and is likely to have long-term consequences on your relationship
Compromising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation is important, but time or resources are limited • finding some solution, even less than best, is better than a complete stalemate • efforts to collaborate will be misunderstood as forcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finding the most creative solutions possible is essential • you can't live with the consequences
Joint problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the issues and relationship are both important • cooperation is important • a creative end is important • reasonable hope exists to meet all interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time is short • the issues are unimportant • the goals of the other person are incompatible with your mandate and/or principles

WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE?

As part of a peacekeeping mission, you probably do not have complete freedom to respond to a conflict situation in any way that you want – you may need to follow protocol, lines of authority, and policy and guidelines. You may also have to consider the safety and security of civilians or team members in a dangerous situation.

Select your response to a conflict according to the particular demands of the environment in which you find yourself. A joint problem-solving solution may not always be the most appropriate response.



Rebel soldiers from Liberia's main rebel faction, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD), sit in the back of a pickup truck cheering a ceasefire on 5 August 2003 in Monrovia, Liberia.