Psychosocial Conflict Analysis

Guide

A tool for evaluation and self-evaluation that combines and integrates the «Do No Harm»-approach with the psychosocial approach.

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How Should the Guide be Used?

The Guide supplements the Tool for the Psychosocial Conflict Analysis and aims at assisting in its implementation. It has been written mainly for those persons who guide and facilitate the psychosocial conflict analysis.

On the one hand, the Guide imparts further conceptual knowledge about the *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis and the psychosocial approach. On the other hand, it provides general practical recommendations regarding the conduct of the analysis and gives specific tips for every single Building Block of the Tool. The practical tips are helpful for the organization and shaping of the evaluation process. The detailed explanations regarding the crucial points in each step of the Building Blocks and the difficulties that are to be expected support the self-assured and competent guidance of the group process.

Theories about conflicts can be found in very different scientific disciplines: conflict theories in the political sciences classify and explain global political conflicts between states and political systems; sociological conflict theories tend to be concerned with conflicts between groups in different social settings, whereas (social)psychological conflict theories explain conflicts between and within individuals. What we can learn about a conflict also depends on what theory we use to analyse it. To define a conflict implies a theoretical position, which can always be disputed and criticised. Attempts to grasp conflicts in their complexity, i.e. to define them jointly in their societal, social and individual dimensions, are necessary on the one hand if one wants to generate a really comprehensive understanding of a conflict but are, on the other hand, always difficult, because it means putting extremely different theories from very different disciplines in relation to each other. Although the same words are used to some extent, they frequently have very different meanings. The present Tool for psychosocial conflict analysis intends to improve project work and does not directly aim at creating a scientific theory. However, it inevitably uses different definitions of conflict, which should at least be referred to here, with their overlapping and different priorities, without however having the time or space here to engage in an exhaustive discussion.

Conflict definitions

Across all disciplines, it can be noted that conflicts are today no longer considered as purely negative and as something to be avoided, but are rather seen to also contain positive potentials and possibilities of social and individual development. For example, the political scientist and peace researcher Norbert Ropers writes:

«Conflicts are an unavoidable side effect of living together in all societies, and are necessary for social change. They are an expression of tensions and incompatibilities between different, mutually dependent parties with regard to their respective needs, interests and values. Such conflicts lead to general social crises and destructive escalation mainly in phases of profound socio-economic change and political transformation; that is when the redistribution of opportunities and possibilities of participation between different groups is at stake.»[1]

As early as in the 19th century, Marx and Engels wrote: «The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.»[2] This thesis introduces an idea of conflict which, on the one hand, emphasises the existence of social classes and the processes of oppression relating to this, but which at the same time sees in the conflict between the classes the engine of social development. More contemporary sociological theoreticians, such as Bourdieu, do not completely dismiss the Marxist hypotheses but rather expand on them by introducing other, not purely economic, conflicts of interest which determine social developments, that is the modern «class struggles»: Today, people in factories and enterprises have to cooperate, and they need technical and social abilities in order to keep a complex technology, or a widely dispersed production process, both geographically and in terms of time zones, operating. Socially, this leads to a highly differentiated and global division of labour with complex, and sometimes contradictory, cultural and political implications. Pierre Bourdieu describes the constitution of classes in the social space: «The social space is designed in such a way that the distribution of the actors or groups in it corresponds to the position that results from their statistical distribution according to two distinct principles, (…), namely economic capital and cultural capital.»[3] He thus expands the economic concept of capital with social, cultural and symbolic forms of capital in which new fields of conflicts of interest emerge that are, however, not negative per se, but are always part of every social development process.

Although psychological theories focus initially on quite different issues, they also start from the position that conflicts are not just there to be overcome and solved, but that they are a normal and necessary part of daily life, and of every psychological development:

«Psycho-analysis speaks of conflict when contradictory internal requirements are opposed to each other in the subject. The conflict may be manifest – between a wish and a moral imperative, for example, or between two contradictory emotions – or it may be latent, in which event it is liable to be expressed in a distorted fashion in the manifest conflict, emerging especially in the formation of symptoms, behavioural troubles,

character disturbances, etc. Psycho-analysis considers that conflict is a constitutive part of the human being, and this remains true when it is viewed in various perspectives: conflict between desire and defence, between the different systems or agencies, between instincts, and, lastly, the Oedipal conflict, in which there is not only a confrontation between contrary wishes but also one between these wishes and the prohibition imposed upon them.»[4]

Despite placing the emphasis very differently, we can see that in all these spheres and relationships, conflicts are a necessary part of human reality. So the key issue is less their existence than the way in which they are dealt with. Therefore, the purpose of the project work is not to prevent or resolve conflicts, but rather to either prevent or to end a destructive way of handling a conflict. Thus, the aim is always to achieve as successful a conflict transformation as possible, to build or restore the capacity to handle and develop conflicts in a productive way. «Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.»[5]

The «Do No harm»-conflict analysis

For a long time, projects in International Cooperation were analysed in relation to many things, just not in relation to the conflict context in which they were being implemented. Although there was an increasing awareness that an important prerequisite for successful intervention in conflict situations was a deeper understanding of the local situation, there were initially no good tools with which these connections could have been assessed. This situation only changed with Mary Anderson and the *Do No Harm*-approach.

The *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis tries to support the understanding of the impact of a project on the conflict in which it is working. It implies the identification and definition of key issues of tension and their classification. This involves defining facilitating and hindering conditions in the working context, as well as clarifying the programme logic and the internal theories of change. The *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis is an approximation of an impact analysis, whereby success is not a pre-

determined category, but rather a variable that is derived from the circumstances. Potential needs for change can be quickly recognised and acted upon. With the *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis, the congruence between context, target group, project activity, transversal themes and programme can be examined and improved. Any damage caused by the project, the programme design or the donor can be recognised and limited or avoided more quickly.

The *Do No Harm*-approach goes back to a project involving various US and international NGOs (also known as the Local Capacities For Peace-Project), which started in the 1990s. A vital contribution to the development of the tool was made by Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), a consulting company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in particular by its President, Mary B. Anderson. The purpose of the *Do No Harm*-approach is to minimise the negative effects of development interventions on violent conflicts. With its memorable title, the term has quickly become internationally known. The tool was initially developed for the purpose of analysing projects in emergency aid, active in conflict areas, and then transferred to conflict contexts in development cooperation and peace promotion. The *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis claims to be able to investigate all development measures in conflicts (working in conflict) as well as measures for peace promotion (working on conflict). The aim is to be able to use the approach at all social levels. In the practical analysis, however, the focus is put on the particular level at which the measure is applied. In terms of the timing during a project, the *Do No Harm*-approach can be used in the planning phase, the monitoring phase or at the end as an evaluation tool.

The basic assumption of the *Do No Harm*-analysis is that each measure taken in a conflict has an impact on it, and thus becomes part of the conflict context. It does not matter here whether the effects were intended or unintended. The procedure in the *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis is divided into seven steps:

First, the appropriate «arena» is identified in a context analysis. This is the geographical and social area, which is appropriate for the measure to be examined. In this «arena», conflicts between groups that are escalating violently, or can escalate, are identified. The first step concludes with

the definition of the parties in the conflict and the determination of the key conflict. When carrying out the conflict analysis, one should be aware that different levels should always be analysed. Thus, a large societal conflict will have its very specific characteristics in one or another social group, and it may surface in a more specific and circumscribed way in the practical project work. A good conflict analysis takes these different levels into account, but ultimately concentrates clearly on the specific project reality and on determining a key conflict and the identification of the key conflict that is visible there.

In the second step, the *dividing factors* and the *sources of tension* are analysed at different levels: systems and institutions, places, attitudes and behaviour, different values and interests, different experiences as well as symbols and occasions. Much of what appears to be a dividing factor turns out, on closer examination, to be also a connector, just as some apparently connecting element can be a dividing factor. It is important to understand at this stage that it is not a question of good or bad. Dividing factors are those that tend to separate the conflict parties from each other. Connecting factors are those that connect and link the conflicting parties with each other.

In the third step, the *connecting factors* and the *local capacities for peace* are analysed in similar fashion: systems and institutions, places, attitudes and behaviour, shared values and interests, shared experiences as well as symbols and occasions.

The fourth step addresses the question of how the project itself relates to the conflict and whether it tends to support more dividing or more connecting factors. This question is always very difficult to answer for the project staff, since nobody wants to deliberately cause harm, and because sometimes the negative impact of the project is more indirect. For example, it may happen that, although a project is doing something meaningful per se, it does not at all relate to the conflict. The project measure itself, or the different elements of the project measure is/are analysed using the following questions: Why (formulated goal), where (place of the measure), what (benefit of the measure), when (time period), with whom (target groups), by whom (staff) and exactly how? The fifth step analyses the impacts of resource transfers (RT) and implicit ethical messages (IEM):

For example, the impact of RT refers to distributional effects, market effects, substitution effects as well as legitimisation effects. IEM can take the form, for example, of different standards of living, resource utilisation, competition between external actors, and they can lead to tension and suspicion, different values placed on different people, demonization and victimisation. Implicit ethical messages are sent out by the problematic behaviour of project staff, which is often not even project-related (e.g. lack of respect for local cultures, use of scarce resources for private purposes). Both the (potential) effects of RT and IEMs on *dividing factors* and *sources of tension* as well as on *connecting factors* and *local capacities for peace* are identified. This is done by examining the characteristics of the measure (see step 4) and the identified *dividers* and *connectors* (step 2 and 3).

If an element of the measure has a negative impact on *dividers* or *connectors*, then the sixth step develops alternatives in line with the characteristics of the measure (see fourth step).

The final seventh step involves testing the alternatives and *redesigning* the measure. The potential effects of the alternatives on *dividers* and *connectors* are assessed, and the best alternatives are chosen.

The psychosocial approach

According to Becker & Weyermann[6] there are three dimensions of «psychosocial»:

There are projects that are defined as psychosocial. These projects are usually located in the sectors of education, health and social work and focus on interventions with individuals and groups defined as having special needs and problems, e.g. victims of human rights violations, ex-combatants, HIV-patients, people living in extreme poverty.

However, the psychosocial approach as a methodological approach goes beyond this. In all projects, including those that appear to be of a purely infrastructural nature, it focuses on the well-being of individuals in relation to their environment. So this approach always involves linking individual and social dimensions of reality. This allows analysing the dynamics between the individual and the environment, and focuses on the working through of psychosocial processes of destruction.

Thirdly, psychosocial aspects are also used for looking at issues of organizational development. The aim is to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and communication processes in the organizational structure, between the staff members and in the areas of work. A good quality of work is achieved and burn-out symptoms are prevented by introducing self-reflection and self-protection processes and empowering the staff.

If one takes it for granted that psychosocial approaches always look at the links between individual well-being and social context, then the following key relations can be defined[7]:

Social Processes		Corresponding Psychological Terms
Threat	< >	Fear
Destruction	< >	Trauma
Loss	< >	Grief

Threat – Fear

The equivalent to the social reality of threat is the individual reality of fear. Fear, normally a healthy psychological mechanism through which we protect ourselves from danger, becomes the powerful source of inhibitions and continuous, self-perpetuating powerlessness and hopelessness if it becomes a chronic part of existence due to particular social circumstances. The consequences are:

– A culture of silence, chronic focussing on defence against dangers, social withdrawal, watchfulness, suspicion;
– Suppressed feelings surface at moments when it is not possible to acknowledge them and deal with them; as a consequence, fear grows;
– Self-protection mechanisms are restricted, difficulty in handling conflict.

Often, it is a question of focussing attention on, and working through, structures of fear in the project context, so that at least minimal empowerment processes and conflict transformation strategies can be introduced.

Destruction – Trauma

These days, the term trauma is used by everyone, but all too often the assumption is that it is exclusively a psychological disorder. However, when linked to socio-political conflict, traumatization is part of a social process, and can only be understood and dealt with in the interconnection between individual and social processes:

– The traumatization of individuals is part of the strategies of political oppression aimed at entire populations;
– Traumatic experiences are extreme experiences of disempowerment that make it difficult
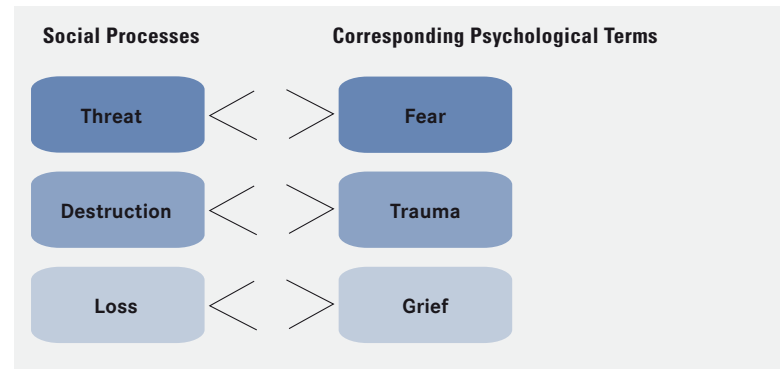
to become active later in the sense of empowerment and transformation;
– Dealing with trauma is always also related to the place that the victims of conflicts occupy in their society;
– «Dealing with the past», and specifically «transitional justice», always refer to traumatic processes that have not only happened in the past but are still on-going in a certain way;
– In a country in which all have been traumatized in one way or another, it is not a question of building a lot of psychiatric clinics, but rather of including the issue of trauma in the social and political process;
– Trauma in the context of political repression and persecution is not one single terrible event with severe psychological consequences but a long process of extreme and chronic suffering.

Loss – Grief

In all conflicts that have escalated violently – especially in their transformation and their struggle for peace perspectives – the key issue is how to come to terms with loss: Loss of life, loss of home and work, loss of friends, loss of a feeling of self-worth, loss of faith, trust, etc. Some losses can be compensated, but the majority we have to grieve over. We differentiate two phases in grieving processes:

– Recognition/acceptance of the loss with the key feelings of denial, anger;
– Learning to live without what was lost, with the key feeling of sadness, of grief.

These phases are often very difficult to work through and to overcome, especially in the case of traumatic losses. It is not just an individual process, but rather also always a social one. Without

mourning, there can be no reconciliation after conflicts.

The psychosocial approach therefore looks at the emotional dimension of conflicts and tries to make their complex dynamics manageable – also for persons without recourse to the specific knowledge of psychologists.

The integration of the psychosocial approach and the *Do No Harm*-analysis

If an analysis of the political conflict includes an analysis of its meaning for the individuals, then the consequences of the conflict become clear for the life of the individual, for the family and the social environment. An understanding of the individual level, i.e. the emotional well-being, the psychological stress and the traumatization processes, differentiates conflict dimensions and makes them specific; it prevents unacceptable generalisations and clichés, and is necessary to enable a fundamental understanding of the political conflict. Unless the psychosocial dimension is integrated into the conflict analysis, the understanding of the conflict remains schematic. At the same time, failure to take account of the economic and political dimensions in psychosocial interventions will also limit success and sustainability. On the contrary, it could make people feel even more «crazy», because it would marginalize the social reality as the cause of the suffering. Psychological stress can be managed by using methods of self-reflection, relationship work, empowerment and strengthening of resources.

The *Do No Harm*-conflict analyses published so far deal mainly with social and political issues such as distributional effects, standard of living or cultural aspects. Psychosocial issues in which one's own emotions and interests are placed in relation to the social living conditions have not so far been integrated into the tool. The *Do No Harm*-conflict analysis is fundamentally different from the psychosocial approaches. The former is an analytical method, while psychosocial approaches build mainly on experience gained in practical and therapeutic work. In recent years, psychosocial approaches have become more widespread in International Cooperation. It seems evident that humanitarian crises cause psychosocial destruction processes. Despite this, very little attention is as yet devoted to identifying and managing the psychosocial consequences. The reason for this is that during needs analyses and in programmes of International Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, psychosocial interventions are conducted separately from other spheres, as for example food security, health provision, reconstruction, rather than integrating them. Another reason is that psychological conflict theories and methods for rehabilitation and trauma management often remain too centred on individuals.
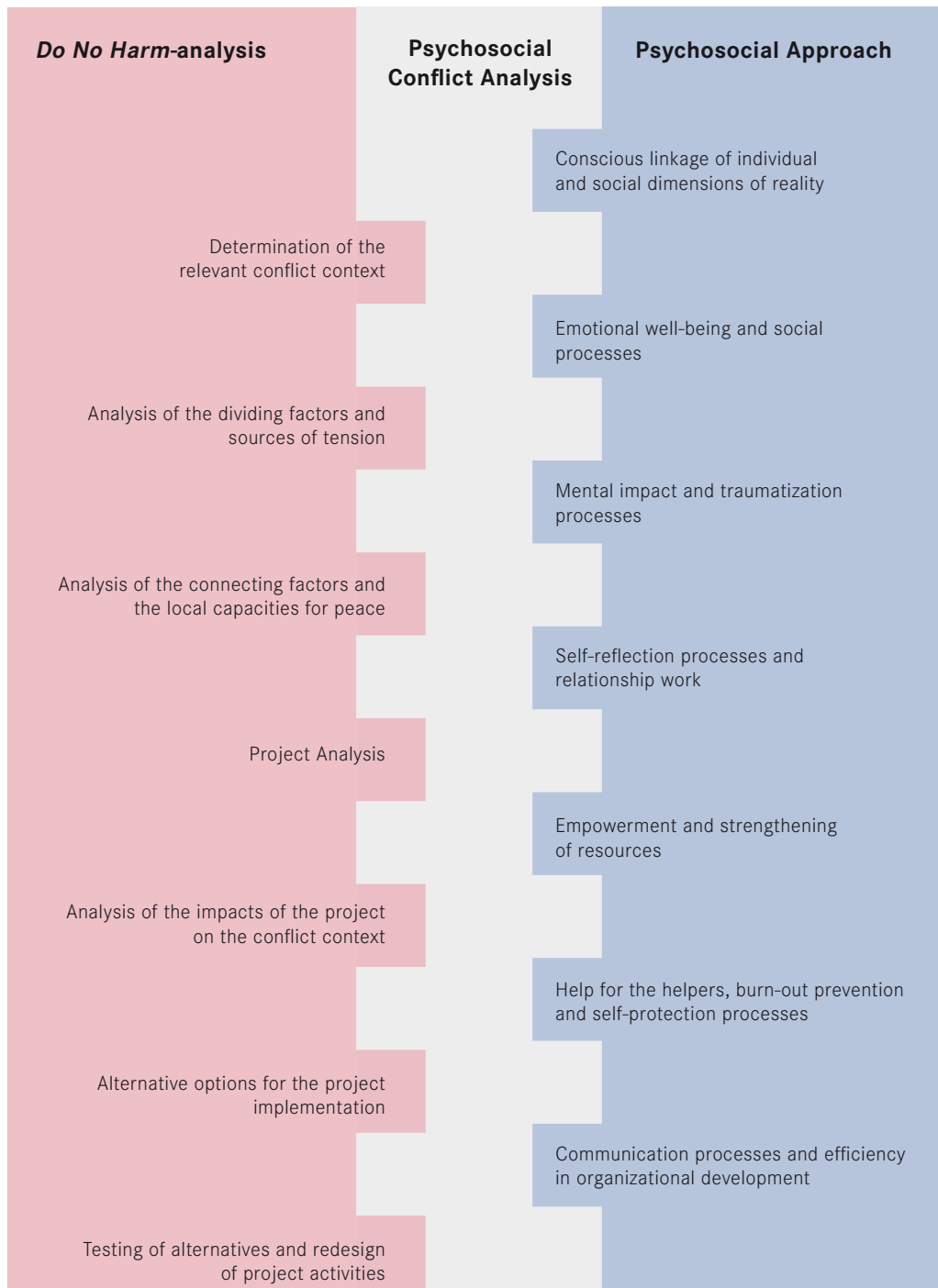
To sum up, it can be said that the *Do No Harm*-approach implies a big step forward in the sense of a differentiated awareness of the possible impacts of projects on conflicts, but that project staff often find it difficult to relate the broad-based conflict analysis to their daily work experiences. One gets the feeling that the conflict should be redefined in a more «down to earth»-way, i.e. be operationalized. Some elements may seem too schematic, even seducing us to refrain from dealing directly with the conflicts. By contrast, as regards the psychosocial approach, it is not really a tool but rather a concept, which tries to analyse the connection between individual and social processes and to understand the meaning of emotional processes. So this approach is always closer to the human beings and their experiences, but it is also unwieldy, unsettles many, and cannot be easily used as part of an analytical tool. If in this present Tool, we attempt a mixing and interpenetration of the two approaches and analytical grids, then we do this with the clear objective of developing a multi-dimensional conflict analysis to assist in evaluation and self-evaluation processes, and the supposition that this will allow the mutual deficits of the approaches to be offset. The integration of psychosocial dimensions into the *Do No Harm*-analysis not only leads to a more coherent and denser analysis, but can also appropriately address and pick up on difficulties within the organization and identify those conflicts in which the staff are involved, or which are inherent in the organizational structures. In our Tool not only the integration of psychosocial aspects is especially important, but also the stringent endeavour for a conflict transforming value of the analytical grid itself. This means for example that we do not identify dividing factors per se with factors that aggravate a conflict and

connecting factors per se with factors that re-
solve a conflict. We rather examine both catego-
ries in reference to their conflict transformative
potential.

We are deeply grateful to Mary Anderson and her
staff for her work and her tool. This has given us
a rich basis on which we could build. However,
we take sole responsibility for our understand-
ing of their tool, our interpretation, development
and changes we have made. With this integrated
tool, we are presenting a new analytical tool
which we hope will fulfil the expectations and
demands made on it.

1 Norbert Ropers, 2002, Friedensentwicklung, Krisenpräven-
  tion und Konfliktbearbeitung. Technische Zusammenarbeit im
  Kontext von Krisen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Eschborn:
  Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), p. 11.
  http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/02-5163.pdf, translation
  by OPSI.
2 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, 1848, Manifesto of the Communist
  Party. http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/
  communist-manifesto/ch01.htm
3 Pierre Bourdieu, 1998, Praktische Vernunft. Zur Theorie des
  Handelns. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, p. 18, translation by
  OPSI.
4 J. Laplanche, J.-B. Pontalis, 1973, The Language of Psycho-
  Analysis. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: The
  Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, p. 359 f.
 5 Paul Lederach, 2003, The Little Handbook of Conflict Transfor-
  mation. Intercourse: Good Books, p. 12.
6 Becker, D. & Weyermann, B., 2006, Gender, Conflict Transfor-
  mation and the Psychosocial Approach. Toolkit. Bern: Swiss
  Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
7 We will continue to base our subsequent observations relating
  to psychosocial aspects on the publication by Becker and
  Weyermann mentioned earlier, and the basic concepts devised
  by them.

Issues that are Linked in the Psychosocial Conflict Analysis

Do No Harm-analysis	Psychosocial Conflict Analysis	Psychosocial Approach
		Conscious linkage of individual and social dimensions of reality
Determination of the relevant conflict context		
		Emotional well-being and social processes
Analysis of the dividing factors and sources of tension		
		Mental impact and traumatization processes
Analysis of the connecting factors and the local capacities for peace		
		Self-reflection processes and relationship work
Project Analysis		
		Empowerment and strengthening of resources
Analysis of the impacts of the project on the conflict context		
		Help for the helpers, burn-out prevention and self-protection processes
Alternative options for the project implementation		
		Communication processes and efficiency in organizational development
Testing of alternatives and redesign of project activities		

General Tips for the Implementation of the Tool

Facilitation

The psychosocial conflict analysis can be used in very different types of groups. What is important is that somebody must facilitate the discussion of the group, in order to keep to the given time frame, secure the results and assure a good and respectful discussion. If no external person is available to do this, someone from the team can take on this role. Teams can also subdivide the responsibility and can prepare and direct specific Building Blocks in small groups. This saves time and usually produces a better understanding of the whole tool, because like this everybody feels co-responsible and takes their time to get to know and understand at least one of the Building Blocks really well. Whenever possible, teams should use a combination of these alternatives: It always makes sense to invite someone external who has some experience with the Tool to facilitate the discussion, and at the same time to distribute specific responsibilities within the team.

This Guide tries to prepare the facilitator for this task and explains as clearly as possible how to move through the individual steps of the Building Blocks. It summarises what is really important in each step, and provides information that helps to understand the underlying idea and to explain it. It further advises on what the role of the facilitator is during the group process, and which methods he/she can use. It also deals with the issue of group dynamics, which help to ensure a good atmosphere in the discussions. Often, unexpected difficulties arise during group work, and some ideas are suggested on how the facilitator can deal with them appropriately. However, despite the advice and explanations, many situations will turn out differently from what we have anticipated here. Also, aspects from one set of steps may surface in another set. So the comments do not cover every eventuality, but they will help to understand the processes and to prepare for them. They also help to adapt tasks and requirements included in the Tool to the particular needs of the group and to the context. The Guide should not be applied rigidly, but rather used to assist the facilitator in providing considered and skilled help to the group in working through the conflicts.

The facilitator takes on a responsible role. It is important that he/she expresses interest, listens carefully, involves every participant, makes the process lively, asks probing questions, is never in too much of a hurry but is nevertheless guided by the stipulated timing.

This Tool also addresses the participants' personal experiences. Emotions and controversies enrich the analysis, but they also heighten the intensity of the group dynamics. The facilitator should pick up on these, integrate them and also contain and facilitate them well. The group process during the psychosocial conflict analysis is not coincidental. It depends on the conflict context and is therefore in itself seen as an important part of the analytic tool. The more intensive and trusting the group's cooperation is, the greater will be the informative value of the results and the more meaningful the changes for the project work that can be achieved.

Starting off

The way in which the facilitator introduces him/herself has an effect on the atmosphere in the group. He/she should therefore think about what is important to disclose about him/herself specifically to this group, in this place. Starting off with a personal lead-in is an offer of trust to the participants, and of mutual acknowledgement. The clearer an idea the participants have of the facilitator's profile, the greater will be their confidence and trust in that person, and thus also in the group process.

Before starting the work with the Building Blocks, the facilitator should also briefly outline the general framework of the workshop: Firstly, what the group is actually planning to do, namely to carry out a psychosocial conflict analysis. It means that the work in the project will be examined in relation to the conflict context as well as the individual work of the project staff. This includes both an analysis of individual conflicts, as well as an analysis of social conflicts which the project is working through, or which it is dealing with. The aim is to become aware of the effects of the project activities on the conflict, to minimise negative impacts and to make changes in the handling of conflicts if necessary. Conceptually, the psychosocial conflict analysis combines the psychosocial approach with the *Do No Harm*-analysis. Secondly, the facilitator should make the participants aware of the time-frame of the analytical process. A rough timetable for

a labour-intensive two-and-a-half-day time frame is shown on the next pages. It is, however, recommended to rather spread the analysis over three whole days. It also has to be taken into consideration, that, depending on the team and the question, some steps can be shortened or even skipped. This influences the time planning.

Time Frame

First day
Without breaks 6 hours and 30 minutes

Building Block I	**A Personal Perspective**		
Step 1	My Perspective	35 min	
Step 2	Conflicts at the Project Level	40 min	
Step 3	Conflicts in the Country	30 min	**105 min**
	Break		
Step 4	Selection	30 min	
Step 5	Rashōmon	90 min	
	Summing up	10 min	**130 min**
	Break		
Building Block II	**Conflict Landscape**		
Step 1	Key Actors	15 min	
Step 2	Conflict Issue	60 min	**75 min**
	Break		
Step 3	Key Psychosocial Issues	60 min	
Step 4	Summing up	20 min	**80 min**

Second day
Without breaks 5 hours and 30 minutes

Building Block III	**The Function and Mechanisms of the Conflict**		
Step 1	Introduction	10 min	
Step 2	Dividers and Connectors	30 min	
Step 3	Introduction	10 min	
Step 4	Course of the Conflict	30 min	
Step 5	Future Developments	30 min	
	Summing up	10 min	**120 min**
	Break		

Building Block IV	**The Impact of the Project on the Conflict and Vice Versa**		
Step 1	Project Activities in Relation to the Conflict Dimensions	40 min	
Step 2	Effects of the Project on the Conflict	30 min	
Step 3	Implicit Messages	40min	**110 min**
	Break		
Step 4	Project Partners	20 min	
Step 5	Team Conflicts	60 min	
Step 6	Summing up	20 min	**100 min**

Third day
Without breaks 3 hours

Building Block V	**Conclusions: What Should Continue? What Must Change?**	
Group Work and Group Discussion		120 min
Break		
Final Plenary: Decisions		60 min

Explanations of the Symbols Used

The symbols help to quickly find one's way through the instructions to the Building Blocks and each individual step.

Objective that is to be achieved in this section.

Indication regarding timing.

Information that helps to understand, and to explain the underlying idea.

Comments on the role the facilitator takes on in the group and what methods he/she can use.

Explanations about communication and group dynamics help to ensure a good climate for discussion.

Mood changes in groups are normal. The comments help to deal appropriately with difficulties.

Ideas for summarising the results.

A Personal Perspective

Building Block I is central to setting the course for the subsequent process of analysis. Important decisions are made about which aspect of the project work, i.e. which conflict is to be worked through. Furthermore, the participants get attuned to each other and to the theme. Making contact and communicating are important in this Building Block.

235 min

Step 1:
My Perspective

The aim is to think about oneself and to talk with the others about subjective experiences that have an influence on one's own perspective.

approx. 35 min

A **perspective** is in some way always a subjective perspective, since there is no such thing as an objective point of view in a strict sense. To get as objective a perspective as possible, the observer's own position and his/her own history have to be questioned, and other perspectives have to be included. To become conscious of one's own perspective, very different aspects have to be considered: the influence of the job, one's religious belief, political position, cultural circle, whether one is a woman or a man, which organizations one belongs to, what store of methods and knowledge one has built up, etc.

The task of the facilitator is to encourage a relaxed, communicative atmosphere. Care should be taken that mutual trust and personal commitment are fostered right from the start. The facilitator should make sure that there is a good mix of participants for the partner interviews and the mutual introduction in the group. The choice of method implies to immediately introduce here a playful element. This helps to relax the atmosphere and to make people feel less burdened and increases their focus on the task. If the participants do not know each other, the names of the participants should be displayed.

The purpose of the exercise is to get to know each other, and to create a positive culture of discussion. The aim of the exchange between two participants is to help them become less inhibited in talking about the subject, and to attune to the subject and the group in a personal way. It then makes it less difficult to speak in the larger group.
Even if a group has known each other for a long time, such an introductory round is worthwhile, because it creates a special climate of communication. Moreover, the introductory round is taking place

on a specific topic, which has perhaps not been much discussed previously.

Demand for completeness: The aim is not completeness, but rather to foster reflection about one's subjective perspective.

«I have no experience of war»: Even someone who hasn't experienced a war knows about conflicts. Everyone has had experiences of war, persecution and flight, if not themselves, then perhaps through other family members or earlier generations, acquaintances or friends, or through literature and press coverage.

Introductory round too personal or too impersonal: Personal topics should be talked about, but should not overload the round of introductions. By asking the respective partner to introduce the other person, one avoids the introduction becoming too personal or too impersonal. The right balance can be found by asking further questions. The facilitator exerts influence on the way in which the participants introduce themselves. He/she is giving the participants some guidance by introducing him/herself and emphasizing some personal details.

**Step 2:
Conflicts at the
Project Level**

The aim is to identify the conflicts, which the project deals with or which the project encounters, in their diversity and to find appropriate headings for them.

approx. 40 min

Conflicts are most often conflicts of interest. Conflicts in themselves are not a problem; on the contrary, they are partly a basis for development. They promote and structure disputes inside of oneself, between oneself and others, but also between systems. Conflicts have an impact everywhere, even when they are not directly visible. What is problematic is often the way in which conflicts are dealt with. They can get derailed, become violent, and cause huge destruction, such as in a war. But when we speak of conflicts in our project work we are often talking about problems, issues of tension, with which we deal or are forced to deal with.

The facilitator needs to organize the work in pairs. During their presentation, he/she must facilitate, structure and keep control of the discussion. He/she should write the titles on a list on the flip-chart. The list shows the participants the broad spectrum of conflicts and is a way of focussing on the complexity of the issues to be dealt with. This exchange encourages reflection about similarities and differences in the experiences with conflicts in the project.

For many groups, identifying conflicts in their own project is not something they are used to. For one, because they tend to see conflicts as a problem which should be solved by those affected, and on the other hand, because they are not keen to talk about their own problems. But people often also feel a need to start talking. So the group will therefore probably either be cautious, or quickly embark on a rather heated discussion. Drawing up a list of conflicts helps to restrain those who discuss virulently and encourages the timid ones to name the difficulties.

No conflicts are seen: Some people avoid conflicts, don't see them and idealise reality, which then makes it difficult to identify them. Conflicts should be portrayed as something normal and commonplace, whose analysis is important for the project work to be productive. As a synonym for conflict one can also speak of «problems» or «issues of tension».

There is a lack of mutual trust and courage to openly identify the conflicts: To address conflicts between colleagues, with superiors, within the programmes is not easy, and can differ greatly between cultures. It is also connected to the fear of one's own emotions,

and the reactions of the others. That is why it is important to start this discussion in pairs. The description given afterwards to the plenary should be a brief scene, a form of summary reporting, which prevents making value judgements. In the discussion in pairs, it should in no instance be a question of coming out in favour of the one or the other opinion about the conflict, developing strategies for solutions, or conducting a type of crisis intervention. The objective is to register what the other person has to say and to understand it as well as possible.

The subject headings remain incomprehensible: Sometimes, the participants find it difficult to find a synthesis, to reduce the discussed problem to a short and clear heading. Here, the assistance from the facilitator and the rest of the group is possible and necessary. If one is an outsider, it is usually easier to find a good heading. What is important is that the people whose conflict it is genuinely agree with the heading that is chosen. If thus sometimes instead of a title a short story is reported, this is not terrible. The facilitator just has to watch the time and then if necessary to propose a title.

The group starts a discussion: It is important that the presentation of the titles is only accompanied by a brief explanation to help understand the conflict, and not to start a lengthy discussion. There is room for discussion later on, when the conflict to work on is selected.

**Step 3:
Conflicts in
the Country**

The aim is to identify the key conflicts in the country and to discuss how they are understood.

approx. 30 min

Key **conflicts in the country** depend on the political and economic situation, but also on the system of government. Accordingly, the protection of basic human rights and issues of autonomy and dependency relationships between the citizens and the state vary. The government system affects the application of the law, the employment situation, access to resources, health, education and social assistance, or majority and minority positions and the relations between the sexes. These frame conditions can be more or less conducive or impeding to the project work. This step in fact is a playful way of obtaining a short context description.

The group discussion should be guided in a structured way. The key conflicts in the country are written on a flipchart.

It is not always easy to discuss key conflicts in the country. On the one hand, the situation is very complex, on the other hand, the ways of looking at them, and discussing them, vary greatly, and also arouse very different emotions. Participation, and the way in which the discussion is conducted, depends on the cultural and political setting and its possibilities and limits of identifying conflicts and taboos.

Lack of participation in the discussion: The reasons for this can vary. In some countries, conflicts are not openly discussed, and a political climate of fear prevails. But it can also be the case that conflicts are constantly talked about and so there is a low motivation to name what everyone is clear about anyway. The facilitator should make sure that there is wide participation. He/she can turn directly to individuals and ask what they think, or he/she may throw in critical or provocative questions to get reactions. If that doesn't work, the question may be asked why the participants do not want to give their view.

Too much participation, participants argue: It is good if positions are asserted and defended in the discussion, as long as the friendly climate among colleagues is maintained. It is important to bring out the different assumptions and views. But as soon as the participants start to analyse too much the underlying reasons and the discussion gets out of hand, it should be narrowed down.

Minorities are not given space to speak: Care should be taken that everyone has the opportunity to express their view and finish what

they say. It is also important that the facilitator makes sure that men and women get an equal voice, and also that, being an authority figure, he/she does not always have the last word. A team does not always agree on one single definition of their context.

Facilitator's difficulties of understanding: The facilitator is responsible for the analytic process and for summarizing the results. So he/she must understand what the issues are. Questions about comprehension are therefore important and permitted, especially if the facilitator is not familiar with the place. Moreover, it is a way of expressing interest and showing that the analytic process is being taken seriously. It also helps to expand one's own prior knowledge.

Compilation of the list: If difficulties were to arise in giving titles to the conflicts, then the facilitator should come up with suggestions to support the participants. These suggestions can then be jointly discussed.

**Step 4:
Selection**

The aim is to choose a conflict which is in the centre of the project work but also implies dimensions of the conflicts of the country. This decision-making process is an orientation and definition of the entire subsequent analytic process.

approx. 30 min

The participants should be given sufficient time for the decision-making process. The process of choosing should be well structured and organized, so that after narrowing the choice in the second round of selection, the group agrees on one conflict. The chosen conflict must now once again be defined. The facilitator should ensure a lively group discussion for this clarification process.

The voting process fosters the playful element in the group process. It makes sense to use the suggested time of 30 minutes so that everyone participates in the selection process and all are satisfied with the decision. Some individuals will try to push through their preferred choice, and will be disappointed if the one or other points are not selected. After all, this step involves determining what is to be talked about from now on. Nevertheless, it often becomes evident that seemingly different conflicts are actually dealing with the same issues. Thus in reality this choice is more a synthesis of different titles than a real mutually exclusive choice.

The key risk in the selection process is that the chosen conflict is both too specific and narrow, or too unspecific and broad. Here the facilitator must make sure that a good synthesis of the different ideas and conflict levels (project/country) is achieved. Sometimes one is lucky, and a project already knows what it wants to focus on. Then the selection process does not need to be excessively structured. Only at the end of Step 4 it is important to write down a clear statement, which defines the issue that will be worked on.

**Step 5:
Rashōmon**

The aim is to approach the conflict from different perspectives, to show how relevant all these different perspectives are and also to facilitate a concrete and emotional connection of the participants to the conflict.

approx. 90 min

The scenic interpretation allows the participants to take a playful approach to the conflict and stimulates the imagination of how differently the conflict can be perceived and understood, including at the emotional level. Emotions affect the explanation of, and the behaviour in, the conflict. Here a first psychosocial linkage is possible, that is a perception and comprehension of the conflict on many different levels, all of which are important and the linkage of which we often ignore.

Depending on the size of the group and the time available, a decision needs to be taken of how many conflict participants can be impersonated. There should be at least three and a maximum of as many people as there are in the group. In a big group the different roles can be prepared in small groups. In a smaller group each one will prepare their role individually. It should not take much time to decide on the different roles to be played. The presentation can be done in different ways. One can just put the figures on the scene statically, like statues, and each actor shortly explains their view of the conflict. But one can also open it up and allow a real role play. But all of this needs to be facilitated, because otherwise it is no fun and one runs the risk of everything falling apart. It will be interesting to consider in the group how the individual players felt in their roles.

Role plays allow emotions to be expressed in very creative ways. Afterwards, it also makes it easier to discuss these emotions, because after all they were felt in a «game», which always implies some distance.

Occurrence of feelings such as grief, fear or anger: It is good if feelings are integrated and expressed in the role play, even if this can seem dramatic. They should be admitted and recognized, even if not always immediately discussed in depth. It is more difficult if the group does not permit any emotions, or if they suddenly erupt in an uncontrolled way. This is an indicator that excessive demands are made on the group and means that the group must take its time to discuss what is happening.

The playful character is being lost: The facilitator should support the group in presenting the seriousness of the subject also

through play and fun. Sometimes, the group needs to be reminded that it is a role play and not reality. The facilitator needs to allow for improvisation and intensity. But at the same time he/she needs to offer security and must watch out for a good structuring of the process. Anyway, at the end it is important to discuss the implications of the game and to identify the key moments.

Summing up

What have we done and what results have we achieved?

approx. 10 min

In Step 1: The facilitator must name the different experiences which the group has had with conflicts and conclude how that is related to its perspective of conflicts.

In Step 2: He/she must present the variety of different conflicts in the project in a clear way and reflect the dynamic in the group process.

In Step 3: He/she must systematise the views about key conflicts in the country and reflect the dynamic in the group process.

In Step 4: The facilitator should repeat once again the definition of the selected conflict.

In Step 5: He/she should name the irritations or emotions that arose due to the different conflict versions or in the group process. In addition, he/she should conclude that a serious conflict analysis must be conscious of one's own position in the conflict. Becoming conscious of, and reflecting on one's own feelings is also part of a comprehensive conflict analysis.

Here the *Summary of Results 1*: *The Conflict* is produced. Sometimes after the Rashōmon-exercise this Summary of Results must be amended or changed a little bit, because participants have discovered an important aspect they had not mentioned before.

Conflict Landscape

If one wants to analyse conflicts, one needs a system through which one can examine the many different aspects. We call this system conflict landscape here. It differentiates between several grids through which we describe the conflicts, and which help to understand the many different connections and relationships.

155 min

**Step 1:
Key Actors**

The aim is to define the different actors who play a role in the conflict and to associate them to the conflict levels in which they are active. This is often easier said than done.

approx. 15 min

The key actors basically have been defined in the Rashōmon-exercise. Now the goal is to quickly name them again and to show on which level of conflict they are active. These levels are the international, the national, the communal and the level of the home, that is the family and the individuals. It is important to know that every conflict has a central level on which it occurs, for example the community or the family. But in fact every conflict occurs on at least two levels: on the one of the home, i.e. the individual level, and on any one or several of the other levels.

With the help of a well-structured and facilitated discussion, the results are quickly elaborated in the group process. The documentation must be clearly structured, legible for everyone, and comprehensible. It can be produced in the form of a chart, which should be prepared on a presentation board. A template for the chart is given on the next page. It can also be used in the subsequent steps.

It is likely that actors are judged very differently, and that their roles and aims are understood in different ways in the group. This can lead to quite a lively discussion

How does one differentiate between important and unimportant actors? The subject is not the conflict in the country in general, but rather the conflict defined by the group. Care must therefore be taken that the actors identified are those that really matter in the selected conflict. The distinction between actors and stakeholders can be helpful.

Demand of completeness: It will be difficult to avoid exaggerations or simplifications resulting from the identification of the actors. This may annoy some participants. But any analysis remains a schematic approximation of reality. It is not a question of demanding the absolute truth. It is simply the task of naming the most important key actors for the project and to decide jointly on which level they are active.

Conflict Parties / Key Actors

Levels	
International	
National	
Community	
Family | Individual	

**Step 2:
Conflict Issue and Ways
in Which the Conflict is
Carried out**

The aim is to understand what the conflict is about, i.e. what the subject matter of the conflict is and how it is dealt with, i.e. what means are being used. To this end, we describe the conflict within different conflict dimensions

approx. 60 min

It becomes clear that one and the same conflict has many different aspects. We sum up these aspects with the term **conflict dimension** of which we differentiate four. It is important to read through the description of the dimensions in the Tool and to understand that every conflict takes place in all four dimensions. Sometimes a conflict occurs mostly in one or two of these dimensions, but usually there is something to say about a conflict in all four dimensions. Victims of an earthquake, for example, surely have a problem within the dimension of **political economy**, because they have lost the economic basis for their livelihood. But at the same time they are afflicted as **individuals**, they feel fear, grief and they are probably traumatized. The conflict situation is also influenced by how much they are allowed to participate and decide about the «how» of the task of reconstruction. Thus **political participation** is also an issue. And surely special issues of **cultural affiliation** will appear, maybe because the earthquake threatens these cultural characteristics or because they have to change as a consequence of what happened. One can thus see that all four dimensions are relevant in this example.

Sometimes it seems quite clear what the conflict is about. But if one looks more closely at how the fight is conducted, many different connections will appear that could relate to the conflict. It may happen that it is then no longer quite so clear what the conflict is about. Conflicts are always conflicts of interest, and are not intrinsically bad. If there is a problematic aspect, then it is the way, in which the conflict is dealt with, and how interests are asserted. This often takes the form of violence, where one can differentiate between three types of violence: Direct, structural and symbolic violence. **Direct violence** takes place between individuals in the form of physical and/or psychological violence. **Structural violence**, by contrast, is based on unequal power relations in social structures that are reflected in institutions or values and norms. They result in unequal life chances. Structural violence is often not perceived by the victims, because the restricted norms of living have already been internalised. This is also the case with symbolic violence. **Symbolic violence** is a form of violence which keeps being restated in public discourse, ideologies, the mass media and which creates the impression that certain relations of violence are apparently natural, i.e. when it is asserted that it is a law of nature that women are more stupid than men. Symbolic violence is necessary so that relations of power and dominance can be reproduced.

With the help of a well-structured presentation and guidance, the results are elaborated in a group process. The discussion should not get out of hand. Nevertheless, it is important to think through the different aspects. Some conflict dimensions are obvious to everybody immediately, others maybe have never been thought about in detail. It is important to identify and document the many aspects. To this end, one can again use a chart, which we present on the next page. The documentation links to Step 1.

Discussions based on different positions are very likely and important.

The understanding of the conflict dimensions gets muddled because the dimensions overlap: It doesn't matter if the same themes come up in several dimensions. Although it is important to state about what and how people fight in which dimension, there will always be connections from the one to the other dimension. It is not important to sharply delineate the dimensions from each other, but rather to present connections as differentiated as possible.

It is difficult to define the means: If weapons are used in the conflict, then these can be clearly identified. But few conflicts are carried out with actual weapons. It is much more difficult to identify forms of structural or symbolic violence. The facilitator must support the group in this endeavour, and insist by posing relevant questions. It can be helpful to give the participants an example of structural violence that they can transfer to the conflict context.

Insufficient time: In some cases, there is very little time available in the steps, if there is a great need to talk and to share experiences. Although one should keep to the rough time frame, sometimes one just has to allow more time.

Very different previous knowledge: The issues are too complicated for some and too simple for others. The facilitator must therefore try to use the differences of knowledge in the group in order to facilitate questions and to generate answers amongst group members.

Discussions about theory: Participants begin a meta-discussion about the categories of the conflict landscape and propose other theories and definitions. This discussion can be interesting but it destroys the on-going evaluation process. The facilitator thus has to watch out that the discussion of theories and methods does not get out of hand. S/he should register criticism but gently invite participants to adhere to the framework of the instrument.

Conflict Dimensions

Dimensions	
Individual | Subjective	
Cultural Affiliation	
Political Economy	
Political Participation	

**Step 3:
Key Psychosocial
Issues**

The individual dimension will be analysed more closely in this step. The task is the more specific description and discussion of the three big psychosocial issues, which are fear, trauma and grief.

approx. 60 min

Emotional key issues will be discussed now. They affect not only the target group of the project but also most of the team members themselves. It is important in this discussion to start out with individual cases and situations and only gradually look at the implications for the whole group. For a good discussion of these issues it is not necessary to possess differentiated psychological knowledge. What counts here is to allow one's own impressions and feelings to appear and to talk about them. All three abovementioned terms and their social reference terms should briefly be explained again, or at least it should be checked how they are understood in the team. There is not only one correct understanding of these terms. What matters is the definition of these words within the local context. The most difficult term is trauma, because people identify it as a clinical, a professional term, while fear and grief are terms people use more often.

The discussion can and should be intensive. While the work proceeds in small groups, the facilitator can walk around and check if every group has really entered in discussing the topic they are supposed to discuss. In the second half, it is important to support the summaries of the group discussions.

If in the small groups initially there are some doubts as to the meaning of the key terms to be discussed, the facilitator helps to clarify conceptual understanding. Later on it often happens, especially if the discussion was good and intensive, that the process of summing up is carried out rather dryly or too short. Here the facilitator can ask some questions in order to open up the atmosphere in the group again. It is important at the end to produce some kind of a group agreement on all three issues, potentially also accepting some add-ons from one small group to the next one.

Emotional affliction in the group: The discussion of key psychosocial issues is always exciting and important, but it can also trigger dismay and fear. If difficult feelings appear, it is most important to acknowledge and accept them and not to deny or avoid them. When participants start to cry or get angry that is ok. It belongs to the issue being discussed. It is important to show the group that it makes sense to accept these kinds of feelings. Experiences of suffering and pain must be accepted in the group, so that those

who feel in this way do not receive rejection, but security and acceptance. This is more difficult when feelings are forbidden. Quick consolation and empty promises like «all will be well again soon» are wrong. Then the person who expressed feelings of sadness and hurt will not feel accepted and might even feel shame. One should thus express a basic willingness to listen to others. Nevertheless, the facilitator must also assure limits to the discussion, so that the process can continue.

The labelling of victims and perpetrators: Asking about the victims often produces questions about the perpetrators and who is guilty. This implies the risk that too simple labelling processes of victims and perpetrators take place. This cannot be avoided completely. But the facilitator can help the participants to differentiate as much as possible. Again it is important to let everybody give his/her opinion. If enough people can express their opinion, the issue is usually described in a very complex way.

**Step 4:
Consequences and
Summary**

This step is important, because the main aspects of Building Block II are highlighted and recorded as a result. Here, it is also shown what the conflict actually means for people's lives.

approx. 20 min

The Summary of Results 2, 3 and 4 are jointly looked at again and finalized. The key actors of the conflict, the conflict dimensions and the key psychosocial issues are looked at in connection with each other and it is made sure that the conflict landscape has been adequately described.

Many contents that are also emotionally important are jointly discussed here. This implies that, especially in this Building Block, the facilitator must lead the discussion in a good way: on one hand offering structure and not losing sight of the goal of the discussion, on the other hand offering a warm and open space, and offering acceptance and acknowledgement.

The conflict landscape is diverse, multidimensional and probably also contradictory in some parts. Also, the participants will not completely agree on everything. It is important to allow, to acknowledge and to accept this.

People want to start the discussion again: In the summing up of this Building Block, people are sometimes seduced into starting the discussion again. This is ok, but now the discussion needs to be clearly goal oriented and should not get out of hand.

All are tired: Since the preceding discussion was probably emotionally intense and exhausting, there is sometimes a certain lack of strength for a good summary of results. Here the facilitator must motivate participants and ensure the securing of the results.

The Function and Mechanisms of the Conflict

120 min

The aim is to examine the development and escalation of the conflict, that is, how it functions. One way of doing this is to find out what actually connects people to each other, and what divides them from each other, and to think about what this means for the conflict. Another way is to consider what exactly happened prior to the conflict, i.e. to look at the history and the course of the conflict. If the dynamics of the conflict are better understood, then it is easier to assess what kind of role the conflict plays in the impending individual, but also social, changes.

**Step 1:
Introduction to the
Concept of Connectors
and Dividers**

The aim is to convey what is understood by dividers and connectors in the *Do No Harm*-approach. These elements are the basis from which to recognize what aggravates conflicts or what transforms them.

approx. 10 min

The categories of **connectors** and **dividers** are not that easy to understand, because connecting elements cannot be simply equated with «good» and dividing elements with «bad». However, to simplify slightly, one could start from the premise that everything that divides us aggravates a conflict, and everything that connects us can contribute to its transformation. After all, it is plausible to think that one can only solve a problem by meeting together. On the other hand, this simple image is not in fact correct, because sometimes a little distance is needed in order to resolve conflicts, and it can happen that, if enemies are brought together in one place too quickly, this merely leads to renewed murder and mayhem.

Another problem is that the same issue can combine connecting and dividing elements, which makes it more complicated than it seems at first. What is important is that connecting elements bring people of the different parties to the conflict together and into a relationship with each other. For example, a bus can be a connector by promoting encounters between different groups and parties to a conflict. But a bus can also separate certain groupings, i.e. be a divider, for example, if there is a rule of segregated seating areas on public transport, as was the case with the «race laws» in the USA. The famous bus boycott by the black population in Montgomery demonstrates how dividers can become connectors. The black population acted in solidarity with each other and, for more than a year, suffered the enormous burden of walking to work. It grew into the great movement of passive resistance. In the end, this resulted in the repeal of these regulations, and «integrated busses» were introduced. The example shows how one and the same issue can combine both elements. If, using the example, one looks very closely at what connects and what divides, it becomes clear that one cannot equate dividing elements with negative and con-

necting elements with positive impacts on the transformation of the conflict. But the example also shows how dividers and connectors influence the development of the conflict. Obviously, a sound knowledge of the background of the conflict helps to assess this impact of dividing and connecting elements on the development of a conflict. So it is not just a question of determining dividers and connectors, but also of considering whether they contribute to the conflict transformation.

When one talks about **conflict transformation**, it is not a question of finding simple or quick solutions. Frequently, such a solution does not exist. The problem in a conflict is often not the conflict itself, but rather the way in which it is dealt with. If we kill each other, it is negative. But if we sit down together in a friendly manner and try to work out a solution, the conflict does no harm. So conflict transformation means seeking and finding a more positive and productive way of dealing with conflict. In this sense, it also involves scrutinising structures and changing them.

To determine the dividers and connectors, different categories are useful:

«Systems and institutions» concern political and legal structures, the country's infrastructure, trade, military forms of organization, etc. **«Values and interests»** concern religious ideas, or principles such as the protection of human rights. With **«places»** the market square or the community centre in the village is meant, for example, while **«experiences»** relate to situations that have been experienced, for example in the family, during work, when practising sport, during training, etc. If people come from the same region or practise the same hobby, they have common experiences, which connect them. Extreme suffering can connect, but it can also divide, as one can see in Sierra Leone, for example, where in extreme poverty the hungry older siblings will take away the school lunch from the younger ones, who because of their age have been «privileged» by school or parents. How experiences or historic events are interpreted, i.e. whether they reinforce the lines of division or strengthen the feeling of connectedness, often depends on the political interests. **«Symbols and events»** relate to flags, for example, or important events such as an assassination, a coup d'etat or a strike. For example, symbols play a key role in the conflict in Northern Ireland, because they are the expression and embodiment of the identity of the different parties in the conflict. Many people define themselves through these symbols as members of one of the parties. Thus, there are a large number of symbols in Northern Ireland, which are constantly present and are used. As if the Irish and the British flags were not enough, also the Palestinian and the Israeli flags are constantly on display.

The categories should be explained with the help of a short presentation. The graphic in the Tool may be helpful for this. If other examples make more sense for the specific context, they should of course be used for the explanation.

The categories of dividers and connectors remain too abstract: If difficulties of comprehension occur, then examples are always helpful. If the ones cited here don't help, then it is worth looking at the Implementation Example from Senegal.

Although dividers and connectors are identified, they are not sufficiently described: It is important to pay attention that the documentation explains why a certain element is dividing and/or connecting.

**Step 2:
Identification of
Connectors and Dividers**

The aim now is to identify the connectors and the dividers and to consider which elements intensify the conflict negatively and which transform it. The categories are helpful in adopting a systematic approach.

approx. 30 min

It is important to gain a good overview, in order to enable a well-structured discussion. To illustrate the points better, the chart on the following page can be prepared on a wall. It also makes sense to give a copy to the participants, to ensure better individual and group work. Depending on the time frame and the dynamics in the group, different aspects can be worked through simultaneously in small groups.

The categories of dividers and connectors simplify complex relationships. In some persons, this can generate resistance or fear. Others may find it interesting and may respond too quickly to the terms.

Irritations: The participants are irritated that one and the same matter can combine both elements. Here, it is important to look at the context and to consider in which connection this particular «matter» has a connecting effect and when it is divisive, and what effect this has on the development of the conflict.

Getting lost in a too generalized discussion: In defining dividers and connectors it is vital to select the most relevant elements.

The terms are interpreted too generally or too superficially: Sometimes, the participants don't find it easy to get involved in the topic. Then they remain too vague. It is important to insist, to question and to put the issue in practical terms.

Overview of the Connecting and Dividing Elements

	Connecting elements	**Dividing elements**
Systems and institutions		
Values and interests		
Places		
Experiences		
Symbols and events		

Step 3:
Introduction to the
Concept of Historical
Sequences

The aim is to look at the development of the conflict, i.e. to examine the past history and to understand the suffering experienced by the people.

approx. 10 min

How conflicts are dealt with always depends on the use of force in the past and how experiences of violence were dealt with, e.g. by criminal prosecution. Many people and societies are marked by numerous experiences of violence. These experiences of marginalisation due to ethnic, religious, regional, cultural or other attributions remain present in the population and are passed on to the next generations. These experiences of violence always bring a sense of threat in their wake. That, too, remains present, and depends on the past history. With the help of the concept of historical sequences, the degree of threat in the history of a conflict is characterised in different ways. It helps to show how emotional processes (fear, anger, hate, grief) are strongly influenced by the experiences of threat in the past. In the historical process, sequences can repeat themselves, or they may only progress as far as a specific sequence.

The graphic in the Tool helps to introduce the concept of historical sequences. Care should be taken that the characteristics for each sequence are presented. The conflict under discussion should not be used as an example because this is what will be worked on in the next step.

The depiction of the sequences remains too abstract: If problems of comprehension were to occur when using the grid of the sequential analysis of the conflict history, then the Implementation Example from Senegal should be used.

The conflict doesn't seem to fit exactly into the grid: It is not important to adapt everything exactly to the specified grid, but rather to work on an understanding of the historic nature of the conflict, and to work out the sequences of the specific conflict development. If necessary the grid can be changed.

The grid is seen as too «war-like»: Again, it is not important to adapt everything exactly to the specific grid. The grid tries to make escalation and development of conflict describable. For conflicts that are less «war-like» the sequences can be understood as metaphorical titles.

**Step 4:
Course of the
Conflictf**

The aim is to identify the historic facts and circumstances for each sequence and to determine in which sequence the conflict is currently located.

approx. 30 min

The discussion should be very well led and structured, at the same time, there should be sufficient space to exchange experiences. The information given is to be assigned to the sequences, so that the development of the conflict becomes ever clearer. It is a good idea to encourage the identification of very different facts: socio-political events, which affect the lives of all people in the country, but also individual experiences of the different groups of actors.

Every person always has stories to tell. Sometimes, it is difficult to start, but once the participants begin to talk, there will be a lot of topics to discuss. Opinions can differ.

The participants can't get to grips with the analytic grid, because their conflict has nothing to do with war: Although the analytic grid relates to situations of war and terror, the sequences can also be used for other conflicts, because each conflict has a conflict history and triggers feelings of threat. The grid can and may be changed.

The analysis gets too broad: The participants are working on different conflict lines in the country and not along the defined conflict. This means that the sequences cannot be clearly defined, nor precise historic events identified. Instead, the details remain unconnected and cannot be placed in relation to each other. The analysis must then be limited and connected to the conflict.

The analysis gets too narrow: The participants are working on the defined conflict, but they don't take the conflict field with its different dimensions sufficiently into account. The analysis must then be opened up and broadened out.

The participants disagree about the «correct» interpretation of the history: Historic events are always defined in different ways, depending on the power of interpretation. That is why the writing of history is always controversial. So it is «normal» if the participants disagree. The debate about the writing of history should certainly be given space, but an escalation should be prevented, because it is not a question of the definition of history, but rather of the sequential division and determination of how different groups have experienced conflict events.

The participants relate the historic processes one-sidedly either to the social or the individual level, without relating them to each other: This connection must be continually pointed out and insisted on.

The participants cannot agree on a sequential order: The division into sequences remains schematic and can be done differently, depending on the conflict example. If agreement in the group is difficult, then it is better to accept the different understanding of the course of the conflict than to have to cope with too much dissatisfaction and delay.

Step 5:
Future Developments

The aim is to link the results from the analysis of the connectors and dividers with the results of the sequential analysis.

approx. 30 min

The aim is to be able to assess more accurately how the current conflict influences the future development of the conflict in the economic, political, social, cultural and subjective sphere and in which areas dividers and connectors can act in a conflict-transforming way.

It is important to give good instructions for the work in small groups, to monitor them and to facilitate the presentation in the plenary. The type of presentation should be made dependent on the group dynamics. But it can also be left to the creativity of the small groups. For example, a small scene or a dialogue could be acted out.

A playful attempt is made to place the different dimensions in relation to each other. One shouldn't forget that even serious games can be fun.

Too much is expected: The purpose of developing these scenarios is not to arrive at the most realistic prediction of the future, but to make it possible to look back on the results that have been produced, and to gain a deeper understanding of these.

The conflict-escalating scenario creates fear: The negative scenario triggers reactions of fear among the participants. Space should be made to share feelings and to examine real dangers on the basis of collective assessments.

The need to discuss the conflict scenarios is great: For the good time management, it is important to be guided by a clearly set out and transparent framework. However, it is also important to allow some scope, but only if it is circumscribed. The summing-up of the results of the Building Block III serves to structure this discussion, to record results and at the same time to discuss possible developments of the conflict and assessments of development processes.

Summary

What have we done, and what have we worked out?

approx. 10 min

In Steps 1 and 2 the Summary of Results 5 was produced. It sums up the dividers and connectors and judges their transforming or non-transforming impact.

In Steps 3 and 4 the Summary of Results 6 was produced, which sums up the sequential development of the conflict.

In Step 5 the Summary of Results 7 was produced. It defines the transformative perspectives on the basis of valuating the historical developments. This is a first vision in reference to future interests, emphasis, impacts and limits of the project.

The Impact of the Project on the Conflict and Vice Versa

210 min

The relationship between the project work and the conflict is examined with the help of the previously produced analytic results. The findings must then be jointly documented. The aim is to pinpoint clearly what in the project work is conflict-transforming, what is not conflict-transforming and what is conflict-ignorant. What hinders the achievement of the objectives, and which conflict aspects must be taken into account in the project work?

Step 1:
Project Activities in Relation to the Conflict Dimensions

The aim is to describe the concrete activities the project is involved in and to check if and how it picks up the different conflict dimensions or doesn't.

approx. 40 min

The group discussion must be guided and recorded on the flipchart. At this point, it is important to watch the time. The results should be put together quickly and briefly, since everyone knows the project. Nevertheless, the facilitator should value the work and show appreciation for the work which the staff have done so far. They should be treated as experts of their project. The *S*ummary of Results 3 is further developed here.

It may be that participants don't feel like talking about their work, because they believe they have done so already too often. But it can also be the case that they like to report about it and are glad to at last be able to talk and to have an interested audience.

Descriptions remain too generalised: There is a danger that activities are listed in a very general way, as for example in project proposals, instead of describing the processes in detail. The aim is to explain the work processes from the perspective of one's own function.

Stories are told: Talking to interested listeners is enjoyable, therefore it can quickly lead to telling stories of experiences from the project work that one always wanted to talk about or through which one wants to make a good impression. These stories must be limited by means of a facilitation that structures well the presentations.

The participants don't understand the reason for this first step: The point here is to link what one is doing to what has been analyzed up till now. To be able to do this one has to talk about the concrete activities – but now always in reference to the question what for, i.e. in reference to the conflict dimensions.

**Step 2:
Effects of the Project
on the Conflict**

The aim is to determine which dividing and connecting factors the project influences. Are these effects conflict-transforming and/or not conflict-transforming?

approx. 30 min

To answer the questions, the group members should work individually for a few minutes. The presentation of the results and the group discussion must be facilitated by a group member and notes should be taken. The result of the discussion about which dividers and connectors the project is linked to should be documented. For this the Summary of Results 4 and 5 serve as starting point and are further developed. One way to do this is to underline one or the other issue with a distinctly coloured marker. This shows whether the project ties in to key dividers and connectors and how certain groups are being enhanced or not, and what that means for their psychosocial well-being.

At this point, once again it is important to show appreciation and recognition for the work the staff have done so far, even if one is about to discover that in certain areas staff have involuntarily worked in the wrong direction. All of this will uncover things for which the participants were not prepared, both positive and negative ones. Therefore, this is a very dense step, which is also emotionally charged. It is important that everyone can contribute, and that the facilitator accepts the reactions and answers in a good and supportive way and shows what they reveal. As a rule, the connections quickly become clear.

Participants feel offended: It is quite normal if members of the team who are committed to their work and convinced that their actions are sensible will sometimes feel offended by criticism implying that their project could cause harm. But it is also quite normal that the employees of projects are not all-knowing and make mistakes through their project activities.

Collective interpretations remain vague: The facilitator must verify what is being said by referring to the results from the other Building Blocks and encourage the participants, through persistent questions, to move to a more differentiated interpretation. It is not always easy to be confronted with the results of the analysis, which are now becoming more evident. But sometimes also unexpected positive issues are discovered; things one has already been doing for a long time, but never really thought about them, thus ignoring their importance.

**Step 3:
Effects of the
Implicit Ethical
Messages on the
Conflict**

This question involves looking at the all-too-important small matters. It scrutinises prejudices in the relationships and in the structures of the project, and examines them with regard to their conflict-transforming or not conflict-transforming effects.

approx. 40 min

The implementation of project activities always also involves conveying implicit messages, which intensify or alleviate ways in which violence is used. How communication takes place during cooperation, who feels responsible for whom and for what, how rules are formulated, adhered to or not, etc., has an impact on the attitude of the other staff members and the target group in the conflict. It was noted, for example, that emergency plans often only include provisions for the evacuation of the foreign specialist staff, and thus convey the message that the life of the locals is less worthy of protection than that of the foreigners. How the resources are used in the project also gives out implicit messages: If the project vehicle is used for an excursion to the beach, then the message is being sent that whoever has control over resources can also use the project assets for their personal purposes, without having to account for it.

To answer the questions, the group should work individually or in small groups for a few minutes. Then, the group discussion must be facilitated in a structured way. The results should be documented by a member of the group. Here the Summary of Results 8 is produced. By using a different colour one should mark on the Summary of Results 5 on which dividers or connectors the implicit messages have influence.

The emotional dynamics in this step are very complex, because the discussion is about things in the daily work routine, about which people are normally silent, but which structure the relationships.

Low level of participation in the discussion: There can be different reasons for this. It may be that participants don't like to identify implicit messages, because they are advantageous for them and they worry that they would lose these advantages. It may also be the case that participants feel that they would betray other staff members if they talk about cultural characteristics, prejudice or the poor use of resources. It could also be that staff members don't want to make critical comments about their superiors so as not to jeopardise their image. In such situations the only thing to do is to try to overcome the collective mistrust and at least name a few

things. Sometimes this point is easier to discuss with a facilitator who does not belong to the team.

Value judgements and assignations of guilt occur too quickly: It is important here to safeguard an atmosphere in the discussion that encourages questioning. We don't get together in order to find each other guilty of prejudicial behaviour. That should in any case always be the rule. The point is rather for everyone to take note and understand how we function. Sometimes it helps to show that every human being is prejudiced. The objective is not to eliminate the prejudices but to be conscious of them, to be able to deal with them and to slowly change them. But none of this can happen, if one isn't even conscious of them.

Step 4:
Effects of the
Relations Between
the Project Partners
on the Conflict

The aim is to determine on which dividers and connectors the co-operation with other organizations has an influence. Is the conflict enhanced or transformed by this?

approx. 20 min

To answer the questions, the group again should work individually or in small groups for a few minutes. The presentation of the re-sults and the group discussion must be facilitated. A member of the group who was not yet involved actively in the steps before, should document the process. Again the result of the discussion, which dividers or connectors the cooperation with partners ties in with, should be marked in colour in the Summary of Results 5. It becomes visible if the cooperation with partners ties in with the same connectors and dividers like the project. The Summary of Results 9 is produced.

This step, too, will uncover things, in terms of a critical analysis of the relationship to the project partners.

Lack of participation in the discussion: This can have different caus-es. It may be that the participants are worried about voicing too much criticism and don't want to jeopardise the cooperative rela-tionship, from which they may well benefit. However, the precise and critical analysis of the cooperative relationship does not mean that the cooperation has to be terminated. What exactly can and should be changed will be examined in a subsequent step.

The participants respond in an emotional way: Every staff member has an emotional as well as a personal relationship to the other staff members of the partner organizations, even if they don't ac-tually have much contact with each other. It is normal that in the discussion about the partner organization, previous good and bad experiences play a part, and that the different interests in the co-operation have an influence on the discussion. These should be communicated as openly as possible.

The relationship to the project partners is called into question: Or-ganizations frequently postulate more partners than they actually have. It can happen that it is detected that in fact no cooperation exists. This is a problem that should be discussed.

Step 5:
Dealing with
Conflicts in the Team

The aim is to reach a joint comprehension of the existing conflict culture in the team.

approx. 60 min

Particularly in the context of work in conflict areas, the organization and the team bear a special responsibility. Primary and secondary traumatizations are part of daily reality. That is why communication in the organization, in the team or with superiors plays an important role in safeguarding psychosocial stability. A disturbed culture of conflict is more often the rule than the exception. When external aggression is very high, like in a war or a dictatorship, teams internally tend to deny conflict, which makes the outbreak of destructive processes of conflict even more probable. In the framework of this Tool not all relevant conflicts in the team can be worked on, but a kind of inventory is possible. With this inventory the team can then decide what problems need to be worked on, for example, in order to avoid burn-out.

To answer the questions, the group should work individually for a few minutes. Then, the group discussion must be facilitated in a structured way. A different person than the one in Steps 2, 3 and 4 should document the discussion.

This step, too, is emotionally complex for the group. Depending on the group and its existing conflict culture, they will talk to each other in this step openly, silently or in a harmonizing way. The analytic process in the group can, however, change this existing «balance» and irritate the team members. What is important here is to jointly evaluate if there are issues that need to be worked on outside of this evaluation process.

Dissatisfaction among the staff: Communication about feelings in the team is important, including communication about existing dissatisfactions. It is therefore even more important that this process is well led. On the one hand, the aim is to provide space to the group for personal communications, on the other hand, this is not the place for arguing about changes, but rather for reaching an agreement about the current status.

Instead of talking about the defined conflict, other conflict topics are raised: The issue here is both about the selected and defined conflict, as well as about the team's conflict culture in general. So it may happen that new conflicts are identified. These should be acknowledged and included in the list produced in Building Block I.

People are silent, harmonizing, or they disagree actively: The discussion can certainly reflect the conflict culture in the team. By making reference to the analytic process, the team can be made aware of its own culture and be invited to think about its implications.

The desire to immediately discuss and solve specific conflicts gets too great: Overall, care should be taken that the situation is only diagnosed here, not solved. Trends to immediately tackle the conflicts and deal with them have thus to be restricted. However, if it were to transpire that there is a great, immediate need to talk, then at least an agreement should be made about when this problem will be discussed. If such a need is diagnosed, an external facilitation is recommended.

**Step 6:
Securing**

The results must be clearly and concisely recorded, so that they can form the basis for further work.

approx. 20 min

The ten Summaries of Results elaborated up to now are looked at again. It is checked if they are complete and reflect the discussion process adequately.

There is general tiredness and boredom: Looking back, checking and securing is not an unnecessary repetition but the basis for decision-making processes. The facilitator must treat this step as very important, and must overcome the weariness. If necessary, he/she should organize a small relaxation game.

Conclusions: What Should Continue? What Must Change?

What Should Continue? What Must Change?

The participants must reach an agreement about what in the existing practice should be preserved and what should be changed. In order to implement changes, planning must start on a more concrete basis: Who does what, with whom, when and how?

approx. 180 min

It must be clarified who will facilitate the discussion in this last Building Block. To improve participation and long-term effectiveness, it may be advantageous if the facilitator prepares and facilitates the discussion together with a member of the team. The methodical approach of working through the key issues / questions can take the form of small groups working on different questions or of individual work followed by group discussion.

It is usually easier to continue as before rather than to change things. So it may be that despite the recognition that work processes should be changed, project workers are not very motivated to do this. Here, it is important that the participants themselves express their needs, their views about limits and possibilities, and that they are included in the planning process.

Overemphasis on the mistakes: It is not always easy to admit mistakes. Therefore, participants may be upset and frustrated and impede further work by judging everything to be «bad», or by no longer being open to change. It is not a question of changing the entire project, but rather of safeguarding what is good and meaningful, and only changing aspects of the project work within the realms of what is possible.

Trying to change too much: If the team aims too high, the risk is that very little or nothing is implemented. Therefore, it is important to adapt the planned changes to the possibilities of the project.

Suggestions are not implemented: Who does what, with whom, when and how? A clear answer to this key question supports the planning. However, someone should also be responsible for monitoring the results that have been produced and check their implementation.

The problem analysis shows serious problems in the project design: Sometimes errors are discovered which have their roots already in

the way the project was designed by the donor organization. But «nobody likes to cut off the branch he or she is sitting on». This means, sometimes it is difficult for the group to be confronted with such a challenge that implies the need to renegotiate the project with the donor. But if such errors are detected, it has to be decided to pick them up, because there is more constructive potential in renegotiating a project than to carry it through but fail.