4. Youth working with conflict
4.1 Introduction

Conflicts are always present. Whether we like it or not, conflicts are an integral part of everyday life. Just as a room needs to be cleaned regularly to prevent it from becoming dusty, conflicts need to be worked on all the time. If this does not happen, there is a substantial risk that conflicts will deepen and escalate, complicating efforts for rapprochement between conflicting parties. In this chapter, therefore, we ask ourselves how young people, youth organisations and youth work might make a constructive contribution to working with conflicts. We do this in consideration of up-to-date thinking on how to intervene effectively in conflicts in a way that brings out their positive potential for learning and change, rather than reinforcing their negative consequences.

Planning conflict interventions is a delicate task. On the one hand, if not properly thought through, interventions could have negative consequences on the course of the conflict. On the other hand, intervention is often urgently necessary to avoid further escalation and violence. As a result, the time needed for thorough planning of interventions is sometimes not available. Organisations working in the field grapple with this dilemma every day, and youth work has to be aware of it, and learn to deal with it in order to make constructive contributions to conflict management and transformation.

This chapter begins by considering how specific ways of thinking about conflict (or conflict paradigms) influence intervention approaches. We look at how today’s four mainstream approaches to conflict intervention – resolution, prevention, management and transformation – relate to youth work. The chapter continues with a discussion about how those active in youth work can begin to think about working with conflict, focusing on the practical implications. We go on to discuss the multifunctional approach to dealing with conflicts, which lends importance to the involvement of civil society (and, therefore, the grass-roots level, where youth organisations are) in conflict intervention efforts. The focus of this chapter, then, is not so much on traditional methods of working with conflicts commonly used by high-ranking leaders and senior politicians (for example, international legal mechanisms, diplomacy or military force) but rather on non-conventional, civil society strategies. This section considers the fact that the voluntary youth sector is strategically placed within civil society to develop strategies for social change from below, and ways in which youth work is doing this in relation to conflict.

The chapter closes with an exploration of some of the more practical aspects of how to intervene in conflicts, and provides advice on working with some specific methods associated with different categories of conflict intervention, including conflict mapping, co-operation solutions, methods of communication, negotiation, mediation, and other third-party interventions, in anticipation of the introduction of the practical activities proposed in Chapter 5.

4.2 Thinking about appropriate intervention

Which approach should we use for working with conflict, and in which circumstances? What is the most appropriate way of dealing with a conflict once the analysis of its causes and dynamics has been completed? Which conflicts can youth work address? Which conflicts can youth work not address? Should youth work stay on the micro level? Or can it make a difference on the macro level too? These are challenging questions, to which there are no right or wrong answers, no recipes, and no black and white solutions.
Admittedly, distinguishing between the different approaches that are commonly used for intervening in conflicts, and deciding on which one(s) make sense for your particular situation at any given time, can be challenging. Nevertheless, being clear about which one you are using and why is important, because each approach reveals a different understanding of conflict. Each demands the use of different methods for dealing with the conflict. This implies that the methods for intervention are more than just “tools”. Deciding on a particular approach and method means that you have considered which understanding of conflict and conflict paradigm you subscribe to, which generation of thought about conflict you feel closest to, and which understanding of conflict you wish to promote. It means you have considered what kind of intervention is appropriate for the conflict you are working with, and what kind of intervention is appropriate for your circumstances and your competence.

In the following sections, we look at approaches to conflict intervention that are associated with the latest understandings of how conflicts work. These can be useful for those who would like to capitalise on the positive potential of conflicts for young people. The idea of conflict paradigms can help us do this.

4.2.1 Power versus co-operation?

There is ongoing debate over whether conflict theory should be considered an independent field of research, or a sub-category of international relations. The disagreement is not only over terminology. The different views on this theme can be distinguished by their overall “take” on the nature and origins of conflict. These can be classified into two main ways of looking at conflict, or paradigms, representing two generations of thinking about conflict. The first of these, known as the power paradigm (1st generation), proposes that conflict is negative and, therefore, that it should be prevented, or, if that is not possible, resolved. Conflict takes place because of the competitive and aggressive nature of human society. Power relations determine who wins and who loses in this view. The co-operation paradigm (2nd generation) considers conflict neither positively nor negatively, but acknowledges that its consequences can be negative and/or positive. Conflicts are seen as stemming from unfulfilled needs and an uneven distribution of advantages. It proposes that conflicts can be managed to avoid negative consequences, and transformed into positive opportunities for development and growth for all the parties concerned through co-operation. The focus is on finding long-term solutions, which satisfy all parties by addressing their fears and needs. Responsibility for the solutions found is shared between the parties.

The power paradigm dominated international policy on relations between states, and the regulation of conflicts between them, throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries. During the Cold War, the balance of terror between the Soviet Bloc and the United States and its allies was seen as a guarantee of peace and stability. The devastation that would be guaranteed by a global nuclear war stopped (deterred) the parties from engaging in violent conflict. However, while global nuclear disaster was avoided, the 20th century can hardly be described as peaceful. According to many experts, the introduction of nuclear arms has increased rather than decreased security worldwide. In recent years, practitioners in the field have become increasingly convinced that the power paradigm has its limits and that it has to be complemented by the co-operation paradigm, if sustainable positive peace is to be achieved.

In the following graphic, we compare the main characteristics of the two paradigms (generations of thinking) on conflict, and we clarify the aspects that distinguish them:
4.2.2 Approaches to dealing with conflict: prevention, resolution, management and transformation

Conflict paradigms teach us one important thing in relation to intervention, namely, that how you think about conflict will influence your approach to working with it. For example, if you think conflict is negative, your approach will include trying to stop it from taking place. If you make no particular judgment on the nature of conflict as good or bad, you might consider it more important to work on trying to manage its effects. If, however, you consider conflict an opportunity for growth and development, you might prefer to work towards the optimisation of the conflict’s positive potential, in terms of personal learning.

In the following sections we describe four approaches commonly used in dealing with conflict. In each case, we relate how the approach has been or might be used in a youth-work context. This will help readers to make appropriate distinctions when choosing which approach to use for specific conflict interventions. Nevertheless, some overlaps are inevitable.

**Conflict prevention**

Conflict prevention is based on the assumption that conflicts are violent and negative. Because they are negative, conflicts should be avoided and prevented from taking place. In general, conflict prevention includes steps for the careful monitoring of potentially violent disputes, the establishment of early warning mechanisms, using planned co-ordination to prevent conflict, and the institutionalisation of prevention mechanisms at the local, regional and international levels.

Active measures to prevent conflicts can be divided into two types. The first is aimed at preventing situations with a clear capacity for conflict escalation. This is called “light prevention”. Practitioners of conflict prevention are not necessarily concerned with the root cause of the conflict. Their primary aim is to prevent latent or cold con-
Conflicts from escalating into violence. The second type is called “deep prevention” and aims at addressing the root causes of the conflict, including underlying conflicts of interest or perceived incompatibilities in needs. It can involve measures for dealing with an immediate crisis (operational prevention) or measures taken before the conflict escalates (structural prevention). Conflict prevention requires complex strategies: one-dimensional fixes rarely work. It requires political will, strong leadership, resources, and international co-operation, as well as effective institutional structures.

Conflict resolution

The aim of conflict resolution is to completely resolve the conflict so that all the needs of the parties are met and the conflict disappears. In order to do this, the behaviour, the conflicts of interest and the underlying issues must all be addressed in depth, at the same time as searching for a mutually satisfactory solution using a process that is acceptable to all concerned. To be effective, all needs must be met. This approach assumes that the parties are willing to resolve the conflict in a mutually acceptable way. It cannot, therefore, be applied to conflicts where any one party may choose to exercise legal authority and/or force, rather than negotiation, to overrule the other party.

Conflict management

Conflict management is based on the idea that the way in which we manage a conflict may be negative or positive, but that conflicts, as such, are neither. Conflicts are neutral per se but their course and consequences are determined by the actions of the parties.
which can be negative and destructive, or positive and productive. This perspective, therefore, makes no value assumptions on conflicts, as such. Conflict management involves taking action to keep a conflict from escalating further. It does not necessarily aim at addressing the deep-rooted and long-term issues that underlie the conflict. Conflict management implies the ability to control the intensity of a conflict and, as a result, its effects through various methods such as intervention, negotiation and traditional diplomatic efforts, as well as institutional mechanisms. From this perspective, management could take the form of military intervention to stop suspected genocide (in other words, it could involve violence) as much as it can take the form of long-term dialogue projects at the grass-roots level (in other words, it could be non-violent).

Conflict management methods can be rights-based or interest-based. The rights-based approach is based on a formal mechanism through which conflict parties compete to convince a decision maker that they are right, according to some legal or contractual provisions. The resolution is often imposed on the parties, and often one or both sides feel dissatisfied with it. On the other hand, the interest-based approach looks at problems in terms of the underlying interests of parties, not their positions, and addresses deeper concerns (needs, desires, values and fears) that may be at the root of a problem. In contrast to the rights-based approach, it is more informal and achieves conflict management through respect for the interests of all conflict parties, active listening and effective communication. It is designed to transform the process into a co-operative and collaborative search for a solution to the problem at hand.

In certain contexts, conflict management is used to describe the entire field of approaches for working with conflicts. This can be confusing because conflict management also constitutes a distinct and defined approach within conflict work. In the graphic below, we show how conflict management is understood as an umbrella concept.

And in relation to youth work?

Practitioners would say that youth work can make a specific contribution to conflict management. Conflict management can take place at any level of the conflict and it does not have to address the causes of the conflict to have an impact. This can also be said of youth work: it works with ordinary young people (the grass-roots level) and youth leaders (the middle level), using a variety of methods, and making small-scale contributions to improving relations between different people and groups. On the one hand, conflict management might take place in the youth-work setting, because youth workers might be faced with conflicts between young people. Youth work might also be part of a strategy for managing intra-societal conflicts, because it provides young people who are at risk of getting involved in violence with positive alternatives.
Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation aims at shifting how individuals and communities see their differences away from win-lose (adversarial) approaches towards win-win (collaborative) problem solving. Conflict is seen as a never-ending process, because the nature and manifestations of conflict are ever changing. Hence, conflict transformation engages with the conflict and its actors on multiple levels over the long term in order to develop understanding and skills that empower everyone involved to coexist peacefully. Conflict transformation considers that once a conflict occurs, it changes or transforms the events, people and relationships that created it. Conflict transformation involves changes to the personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of the conflict. Overcoming fear and distrust, addressing stereotypes, deeply held assumptions, false perceptions and learning how to communicate effectively are important ingredients in redefining the relationships amongst the parties in the conflict, contributing to the establishment of justice and equality.

And in relation to youth work?

Conflict transformation can also happen within the context of youth work. It is well known that given enough time and appropriate facilitation, youth work can develop critical reflection among its participants about social realities and problems, how these might affect them personally or their communities and about how they want to change things for the better. This kind of reflection takes place on a very personal and deep level and can have meaningful consequences for the young person in question, in terms of transforming how they deal with conflicts they experience in general, and how they take action in society.

Reference to conflict transformation has become increasingly popular since the late 1990s. For some, it represents resolution at the deepest level. For others, it is a significant step beyond even the resolution of the conflict, as it reflects a more profound understanding of the nature of conflict than any other approach, and works towards sustainable positive peace on a permanent basis over the long term.

So, which approach should I use?

There is little consensus among experts about which approach is “better”. Despite this, there have been some attempts to bring the different approaches together. There are those who argue that these approaches should not be considered as different approaches to working with conflict, but rather as methods or tools. These could then be applied at different stages of a conflict and to address different aspects and issues of the conflict, as appropriate. From this perspective, all approaches are equally important.

The following table presents a brief comparison of each of the different approaches according to key indicators. It can help you to understand which approach is most appropriate for the kind of youth work you are doing, and the kind of outcome you want to achieve with your conflict intervention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conflict prevention</th>
<th>Conflict resolution</th>
<th>Conflict management</th>
<th>Conflict transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key question</strong></td>
<td>How do we prevent something not desired?</td>
<td>How do we end something not desired?</td>
<td>How do we deal with conflicts?</td>
<td>How do we end something destructive and build something desired?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>The issue(s)</td>
<td>The issue(s)</td>
<td>The issue(s) and the relationship(s)</td>
<td>The issue(s) and the relationship(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To prevent armed conflicts from taking place</td>
<td>To achieve an agreement and solution to the conflict</td>
<td>To deal with conflicts based on active choices</td>
<td>To promote constructive change processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time frame</strong></td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Short to long term</td>
<td>Mid to long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of conflict</strong></td>
<td>Conflicts are negative</td>
<td>Conflicts are negative</td>
<td>Conflicts are neutral</td>
<td>Conflicts are neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Prevention, resolution, management and transformation: a brief comparison of perspectives

**Something to think about!**

Which approach have you used most in your youth work? Why was that approach most relevant for you and your youth-work context? Can you imagine using any of the other approaches? How would these be useful in relation to the kind of youth work you do and the kind of young people you work with?
Dilemma 7: Terrorism

“I was called a terrorist yesterday, but when I came out of jail, many people embraced me, including my enemies. … I tell people that I was also a terrorist yesterday, but, today, I am admired by the very people who said I was one.”

Nelson Mandela

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 shocked the world and changed the world view of many people. The attacks demonstrated that terrorism cannot be contained by national borders, exposing the vulnerability of states. States have commonly reacted to what they see as the increased terrorist threat by putting in place new measures for monitoring and controlling suspect populations, especially non-citizens.

Defining terrorism has proved to be a very difficult task. Few words are as politically or emotionally charged. Branding someone a terrorist has significant political connotations and makes a clear cut between good and evil. At the same time, one man’s terrorist may be another man’s freedom fighter, as exemplified by the case of Nelson Mandela. Contemporary terrorism has come to be reduced to the alleged existence of a violent Islamic conspiracy against the civilised world. Misguided as this attitude
may be, it has come to be widely held by ordinary people in many countries of the developed (white) West and in Europe.

Terrorism has a long and extensive history and is anything but foreign to Europe. It cannot be associated with any (one) cultural or religious group and its motives and methods vary greatly. State and state-sponsored terrorism, for example, have existed as long as states. The word “terrorism” first came into use in the Académie Française in 1798 in reference to the Reign of Terror waged by the government following the French Revolution. In the mid-19th century, terrorism came to be associated with small oppositional groups using violence as a means to accomplish political goals. Such groups had the common aim of overthrowing the ruling power elite, believing that a strategy of direct action against political leaders would fulfil their objectives. At this time, Russian terrorists were most active. In 1881, members of the Russian revolutionary group Narodnaya Volya (Will of the People) murdered Tsar Alexander II, but failed to instigate a democratic revolution. This group inspired others around Europe, amongst them Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip. His assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28 June 1914 started the First World War.

Following the Second World War, political movements turned to violence to further the struggle against colonial rule. The enemy was the official representatives of the colonial powers, but during the 1960s and 1970s civilians increasingly became victims, and even deliberate targets, of terrorist attacks. Many of the new terrorist groups were secular in ideology, with left- or right-wing extremist views. The most famous include Brigate Rosse in Italy, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain, the German Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Japanese Nihon Sekigun and Sendero Luminoso in Peru. The 1970s and 1980s saw hijackings become the method of choice. The highly mediatised attack on the Munich Olympics (1972), as well as the Entebbe (1976), and the Lufthansa Flight 181 (1977) hijackings, taught the world the hard lesson that terrorists were no longer making distinctions between civilians and active representatives of state.

Terrorist acts in the name of Islam have become more frequent since the end of the Cold War. In 1993, a car bomb was used in an attempt to destroy the World Trade Centre in New York. In 1994, the Algerian Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) killed a large number of passengers aboard hijacked Air France Flight 8969 from Algiers to Paris. The Embassy of Egypt in Islamabad was bombed in 1995, and in 1996 a US military camp in Saudi Arabia was attacked. Hundreds of people were killed in simultaneous bombings of American embassies in several cities across Africa in 1998. During the years that followed, groups suspected of being associated with the al-Qaeda network carried out several violent attacks worldwide leading up to the events of 11 September 2001. Al-Qaeda posed a new kind of terrorist threat, with new aims and methods of increased brutality against civilians.

The consequences of the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 were, however, the most far-reaching. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq were direct responses to the new sense of threat felt by the United States and others. Governments around the world and international organisations have adopted political and legal measures to prevent and counter terrorism. Restrictions on and monitoring of air travel, financial transactions and communications have all been extended. Additionally, an increasing amount of resources is being thrown at the problem. For young people, and especially young men from Muslim or immigrant backgrounds, this has meant less freedom of movement and more surveillance and policing.
However, there are many critical voices. Some say the threat of terrorism is overestimated. According to “Patterns of Global Terrorism”, issued by the US State Department annually, a total of 20,464 worldwide were victims of international terrorism between 1998 and 2003, out of which 6,276 were killed and 14,188 wounded. During the same period some 3.5 million deaths occurred as a result of the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone. The civilian casualties in the war in Iraq by mid-2007 amounted to approximately 80,000 according to the NGO Iraqi Body Count. Another important critique relates to the effectiveness of measures taken by governments to prevent and combat terrorism. The focus of those measures has been questioned extensively, as it would seem that tighter control and policing has not been effective in addressing the root causes of terrorism. Reports from intelligence services, amongst others, suggest that the socio-economic conditions of a large proportion of the world’s young people are one of the main grievances that leads some to engage in terrorism. This begs the question as to whether tighter policing in the absence of measures to redress the feelings of contempt, humiliation and hopelessness experienced by such young people can succeed in preventing terrorism.
4.3 Ways into working with conflict

The negative outcomes of conflicts have been discussed in some depth in the previous chapters of the T-Kit and do not need to be repeated. As we have said several times, conflicts do not only have negative potential. Conflicts can also present opportunities for positive change. If we never meet resistance and never allow our ideas to be challenged by new or different perspectives, we will never learn new things or evolve as individuals, or as societies. Contemporary researchers, conflict theorists and practitioners working in the field are increasingly convinced that, if approached in the right way, intra- and interpersonal, intergroup and even intrasocietal conflicts can produce positive outcomes. For them, the aim of working with conflicts is to maximise the positive potential of the conflict and minimise its negative potential. Some of the positive outcomes that can be achieved by effectively addressing a conflict are outlined in the box below.16

### Positive conflict outcomes

- Increased problem awareness
- Increased self-awareness and awareness of others
- Increased exchange of information and knowledge
- Improved decision-making processes
- Increased innovation and creativity
- Enhanced motivation and morale
- Decreased tension
- Enhanced psychological maturity

The large number of armed and violent conflicts in the world could discourage young people from trying to work for peace and to optimise the positive potential for learning represented by conflicts. Each conflict certainly has its distinctive qualities and differences, but, whether they take place at the micro or macro levels, they nevertheless share many common features. This means we can learn from previous conflicts and from the experiences of those who intervened in them.

Without wishing to detract from the fact that many young people in Europe and worldwide have to deal with macro-level conflicts and their consequences, including the effects of armed conflict, at least in Europe it remains more likely for young people to have to deal with some form of injustice, poor relations between different groups in their school, or arguments with their parents in their everyday lives, than an international conflict. As macro- and micro-level conflicts have similar and comparable features it can make sense to begin by addressing conflicts at the level closest to the young people we are working with, which will most often be at the micro level. Micro-level conflicts can be easier to relate to for young people. At the same time, they can facilitate understanding of the key features of working with other kinds of conflicts, including those at the macro level. This considers the different roles that youth work can fulfil in relation to conflict, while taking into account competence, resources and chances for success, what we are able to do and why we want to do it.

Nevertheless, some youth work does happen in places experiencing an outbreak of violence or armed conflict (that is, the during-conflict phase).17 Violence represents an important additional dimension for anyone wishing to intervene in a conflict. In war-affected areas much is demanded from the people and organisations engaged in conflict interventions. Greater resources and specific qualifications are required to deal
with the needs and situations of young people living in war-affected areas in a sensitive and constructive manner. For example, the people responsible for such work need to know how to deal with psychological trauma and its behavioural consequences. Alternatively, the main priority for such youth work may be to contribute to fulfilling basic human needs, before it can address issues of reconciliation. Once the time has come to attempt reconciliation, it may take significant time and energy to persuade the young people and their wider community that they should participate. Staff responsible need to be aware of the fact that being involved in reconciliation can involve risks for the young people who agree to participate, such as being labelled a traitor or being ostracised from the rest of community, and staff may need specialised training in order to stay the course with the young people they have convinced to get involved. Those engaged in such areas must be aware that their actions will have an impact on the conflict context. At the same time, it is important for them to maintain a certain distance and not to become embroiled in the conflict, or to become partial.18

“Do no harm” is an analytical framework developed by Mary B. Anderson in a book with the same name19 and is based on a collaborative project of a number of international agencies, NGOs and UN bodies with the aim of helping aid organisations and projects to improve their impact by reducing the risk that their action causes escalation into violence. Recognising that each conflict has issues that divide and connect groups in a society, the point of “do no harm” is to ensure that external assistance supports the development of connections while reducing divisions, at the same time as not worsening the conflict or causing harm to innocents. This is easier said than done, as evidenced by the mixed record of humanitarian and aid organisations to achieve conflict management goals, such as “do no harm”.

For more information: www.donoharm.info/.

If we are thinking about how to work with and on conflicts through or in youth work, then it is important to remember that, in most cases, conflicts are not noticeable until they have been brought to the surface. Until then they remain hidden. Only the conflict behaviour of the parties is visible. This behaviour is often mistaken for the root causes of the conflict, when in fact it is one of its negative side effects. This can be the cause of misunderstandings, tension and an unhealthy atmosphere, contributing to escalation.20

The characterisation of conflicts as hot or cold is useful when thinking about the surfacing of conflicts.21 A “hot” conflict is manifest or visible. It can be observed because it is characterised by hectic activity and confrontations between the parties. The parties are enthusiastic, motivated and demonstrate high ideals. Hot conflicts appear to simmer.

Figure 8. Hot and cold conflicts
They are active and full of energy, ready to boil over. “Cold” or latent conflicts, on the other hand, are characterised by detached attitudes and frozen relations. In cold conflicts, the parties appear to have lost track of their goals. They are blind to the effects of their own behaviour on others and they have diminished self-esteem. It is important to assess how hot or cold a conflict is when thinking about working with it. Hot conflicts need to be cooled down in order to be able to work with them successfully. If we wish to address cold conflicts it is necessary first to find ways to make the conflict parties become active and involved.

It is also important to acknowledge that intervening in a conflict, no matter how, will have an impact on how it develops, and not all impacts can be foreseen or will be positive. Thinking through how a particular intervention will impact on the conflict is a step towards reducing the risk of causing harm, however unintended. There are some simple methods for checking the possible conflict impact of a given intervention. What is most important is that those in charge are aware that they need to do this, when developing their conflict intervention plans. The following checklist\(^\text{22}\) presents one such tool for assessing the potential impact of the proposed action on the conflict being addressed.

**Intervention impact checklist\(^\text{23}\)**

1. Is there ongoing consultation and involvement with all affected groups and fractions in the area, using indigenous structures wherever possible?
2. Does the programme meet the needs of a range of interests, not just those of powerful groups? Are you monitoring your programme at first hand to avoid the possibility of resources going to support a political faction?
3. Do you take every opportunity to demonstrate your impartiality in the conflict, and your commitment to peace and reconciliation?
4. Is your programme building in long-term sustainability and development?
5. Are you co-ordinating your work with other agencies in the area?
6. Do you have an effective policy for the security both of your staff and others involved in the programme?
7. Does your programme offer opportunities for dialogue between groups in the area, and the identification of common needs, including security?
8. Does the programme encourage an accountable style of leadership?
9. Do you encourage and make use of processes for handling disagreements peacefully, both within organisations and in the wider community?
10. Does your programming foster hope and the vision of a better future, for example through active involvement in the reconstruction process?
11. Are you assisting people, as necessary, in coping with the trauma of violence, injury and psychological damage caused by experiences such as loss of relatives, witnessing atrocities and intimidation?
12. Are you doing anything to assist victims of war? In particular widows, children and people with disabilities?
13. Are you keeping donors fully informed of the progress of work as well as the continuing needs?
14. Have you made a serious enough long-term commitment to work in such areas to justify the outlay and the hopes you raise?
The above only points to the importance of systematising planning for intervention in a conflict if one wishes to make the most of its positive potential and to avoid negative side effects. Systematising the planning of conflict interventions can help us to discover ways into working with conflict that we were not aware of before. In addition, it is an effective way of finding out what our proposed actions can achieve and how to divide tasks in a way that everyone’s competences are used to the best effect. Doing this together with other key actors and stakeholders in the conflict context can increase effectiveness further.

The model below combines three different models discussed in some detail in Chapter 3:

1. the pyramid that describes the top, middle and grass-roots levels of conflict (p. 71);
2. the stages of pre-, during- and post-conflict (p. 88);
3. the ABC Triangle that distinguishes between conflict attitudes, behaviour and contradiction (p. 77).

Together they form a new model that can be used for developing a systematic approach to conflict interventions once we have decided what we are trying to change. It gives us 27 different options for working with the conflict.

For example, we can focus our efforts on trying to change the behaviour of the top-level leaders during the conflict or we can try to change the attitudes of the grass-roots level in the post-conflict phase. Alternatively, depending on our resources, we can consider doing more than one of these at the same time. If we take the example
on which we developed the Tree of Conflict in Chapter 3, the local authorities represent the top level, and the youth subcultural groups whose activity was banned represent the grass roots. The leadership of a mainstream youth organisation (which could be considered the mid-range leadership) that has an interest in young people being able to organise public events, but has a better working relationship with the local authorities, might act as an intermediary in negotiating a solution to the conflict. They could begin by trying to improve the attitudes of the local authorities and the youth subcultural groups to each other, bringing them into direct discussions with each other. Only then might it be possible to work on the contradiction, that is, on overcoming the ban on public events held by young people, and to change the behaviour of the local authorities in regard to youth subcultural groups in general, from negative to accepting or tolerant.

We can use this model for analysing where, with whom and for what we are intervening in a given conflict. The model can provide us with information about whether our intervention plans are potentially realistic, considering the access we may have to a particular level, or considering whether we have the resources and competence for addressing the conflict contradiction itself or only the conflict behaviour. It breaks the conflict up into more manageable pieces, allowing us to see that several small-scale interventions in a short time frame can complement long-term efforts.
"The measure of a man is what he does with power." 
Plato

Dilemma 8: Power

Hubert M. Blalock has said that:

... the concept of power is both exceedingly slippery to pin down and yet indispensable in enabling one to analyse a number of important social issues, including that of conflict.

He considers power as both the capacity of an individual or group to accomplish an aim, and the act of attempting to achieve that aim. Max Weber points to the fact that:

... within a social relationship power means any chance (no matter whereon this chance is based) to carry through one’s own will (even against resistance).

Power is also commonly defined in the broadest sense as the ability to make things happen, or as the capacity or potential for making change. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr defined power as:
French and Raven introduced the most widely accepted typology of power, one which distinguishes the kinds of power that individuals can have over other individuals and reflects the different bases or resources that power holders rely upon to gain and maintain power.

- **Legitimate power**
  Power based on relative position and duties, resulting from one’s being elected, selected or appointed to a certain position

- **Reward power**
  Power based on the perceived ability to give positive consequences, remove negative ones or confer valued material rewards

- **Referent power**
  Power or ability of individuals to persuade and influence others, resulting in charisma and interpersonal skills

- **Coercive power**
  Application of negative influences, ability to withhold rewards, punishes those who do not conform to your demands

- **Expert power**
  Power related to the knowledge, skills or expertise of the person holding power

- **Informational power**
  Ability to control the availability and accuracy of information

- **Connectional power**
  Ability of the power wielder to influence, based on association with or respected sources of power

In real life, several types of power will combine, but one power base will dominate. The importance and role of specific power bases varies between societies. Describing real-life power relations, Toffler points to three forms of power: violence, wealth and knowledge. Women’s rights’ advocates and feminists have developed other categorisations that clarify the diverse sources and expressions of power – both positive and negative. These include the most common controlling forms of power – “power over” – and more life-affirming and transformational forms – “power with”, “power to” and “power within”.

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**Power over**
The most commonly recognised form of power, “power over”, has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption and abuse. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the “power over” pattern in their personal interaction, values, communities and institutions.

**Power with**
“Power with” has to do with finding common ground among different interests in order to build collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, collaboration, and recognition and respect for differences, “power with” multiplies individual talents, knowledge and resources to make a larger impact.

**Power to**
“Power to” refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. It implies that education, training and leadership development should be based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference; it can be multiplied by new skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence.

**Power within**
“Power within” has to do with a person’s sense of self-worth and self-knowledge. It is grounded in an ethical value base that fosters a vision of human rights and responsibilities as well as an ability to recognise individual differences while respecting others. It is the capacity to imagine and have hope.
Gene Sharp points to the fact that successful “rulers” derive political and other forms of power from the legitimacy given to them by their “subjects” and that their source of power depends intimately on the obedience and cooperation of those subjects. His analysis describes the social and psychological mechanisms that motivate subjects to be obedient, including habit, fear of sanctions, moral obligation, self-interest, psychological identification with the ruler, zones of indifference and absence of self-confidence. While habitual obedience is embedded in all cultures, “moral obligation” can be seen as the product of cultural programming and deliberate indoctrination by the state, church and media, and the extent to which any kind of obedience can be understood as truly voluntary can be questioned.

As such, power can seem especially difficult to attain and engage with for individuals who have lived under repressive regimes that deny individual and collective freedoms. However, in reality, power is dynamic and conditional, rather than absolute, so the access to power, even of marginalized groups or excluded minorities, can change. Recent European history has been characterized by democratic revolutions: the popular revolution that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the subsequent collapse of communist regimes all over eastern Europe, and electoral revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004). Noteworthy is that civic student and youth movements were at the front line of these successful democratic revolutions that relied on non-violent civic actions to achieve change. Gene Sharp has identified 198 different kinds of non-violent action, stressing that strategic non-violence can be a powerful tool for achieving changes in power relations, when these are unsatisfactory or unjust.
4.4 A multifunctional approach to working with conflicts

In many parts of Europe at least, working with conflicts was historically the business of the prince. Political elites controlled conflicts and their consequences. Conflicts were managed in a manner that did not include the general public or even the conflict parties. Conflicts were “owned” by the political leadership but not by those most affected by them. However, over the years, alternative and more inclusive popular approaches for dealing with conflicts have been developed and have become more widespread. The struggle for women to have the vote, beginning in the late 19th century (female suffrage), is one historic example. The civil rights movement in the United States of the 1950s and 1960s is another. Grass-roots initiatives using non-violent methods have repeatedly managed to bring about positive change, overthrow dictatorships and systems based on discrimination, and also to prevent violence and escalation in conflicts around the world. Looking back through the recent and not so recent history of conflict intervention, one of the most important developments is that ordinary people have been recognised as key actors of conflict processes. This has radically changed the way everyone concerned works with conflicts and has created the opportunity for young people, among others at the grass-roots level, to have a say about how conflicts are dealt with.

In a word, much has changed during the 20th century in relation to dealing with conflicts. Working with conflicts has in many cases come to involve a multifunctional approach. The top-down perspective has made way for bottom-up alternatives with the inclusion of previously excluded groups. Even if a large part of conflict work remains within the limited domain of politicians and the officials of international organisations, nevertheless NGOs, activists, youth workers and young people are more frequently invited to participate in processes of conflict resolution and management, and today have more capacity, possibilities and power to affect outcomes and attitudes, at both the micro and macro levels. Even traditional activities such as diplomacy have become more accessible. This has also made it possible for all conflict parties to assume ownership of both the conflict and the proposed solutions. Viable and sustainable resolution requires broad support from and acceptance by all actors. This change is also visible at the international level. Globalisation has not just led to increased internationalisation but has also facilitated interpersonal contacts across borders and altered the way people interact. International relations are no longer limited to communications between states. John in Vancouver can as easily talk to Laure in Versailles, as Alfredo in Venice or Natasha in Vladivostok, creating opportunities for new approaches to conflict intervention.

Track II diplomacy

The term “Track II diplomacy”, originally coined by Joe Montville, refers to processes of negotiation on the formal resolution of an ongoing conflict or arms reductions, for example, that involve private citizens rather than official negotiators (on behalf of governments, for example). Over time, Track II diplomacy has come to encompass processes such as problem-solving workshops, dialogues, cultural and scientific exchanges, cultural events, sports teams, or any other contacts between people who belong to groups that are engaged in a conflict, especially those which are intractable.

For more information:
www.beyondintractability.org/essay/track2_diplomacy/.
In the remainder of this chapter we look at the approaches to conflict intervention that have emerged out of this shift in the way key actors think about conflict, and reflect on how young people and youth organisations can develop appropriate interventions to address the conflicts they are confronted with.

4.5 Youth work as an effective civil society strategy for conflict intervention

The multifunctional approach described above has created more inclusive ways of working with conflicts. In the past, it was difficult for young people to have a say, having few if any formalised channels for participation in high-level diplomatic processes of conflict resolution or even management. During the Cold War, international conflict was defined as war between states. Even if many international conflicts today do take place between states, many more are defined as intra-state – in other words, they take place between different groups within one state. Furthermore, as the nature of conflicts changes, so does the involvement of different actors. Today, the population at large, and young people, have gone from being passive bystanders to being active agents in conflicts, whether by choice or not. Ordinary people play a much more significant role as conflict parties, but also as potential conflict interveners – as conflict managers and transformers, or as peace builders. Civil society – the voluntary and independent associations of people with similar concerns – has become an increasingly important partner in working constructively with conflicts, even in situations of armed conflict or in areas which are experiencing outbreaks of violence.

This new position of civil society has also changed the role of young people and their organisations in relation to conflict in interesting and positive ways. At first glance, youth work may not seem to be in a strong position to intervene, especially in international conflicts and especially when they are armed. Moreover, youth work does have limits in the face of violence and state failure. Some of these have been outlined in Chapter 2. It would also be a mistake to assume that young people per se are more innovative, open to change and free from prejudice about “enemies”. However, one can hope that their views, values and roles have not yet been cemented to the extent that they are no longer in a position to, or ready to change. As such, efforts for conflict intervention targeting young people, involving young people or channelled through youth organisations, can be a fundamental building block in wider efforts involving more traditional high-political efforts.

Youth work can play an important role by creating opportunities for young people to transmit their needs and concerns to those responsible for resolution efforts and by providing young people who have been affected by conflict with the opportunity to overcome their experiences and come into contact with the “other side”. Moreover, young people can deal directly with the grass roots, because they are part of the grass roots, and they can communicate with several parties without losing credibility. They are able to take risks and investigate new methods through trial and error. In addition, young people have more freedom to act as agents of change in contrast to senior politicians because they are not constrained by the need to maximise votes in regular elec-
tions or by specific limited mandates. What is more, they are free from the time constraints of specific political mandates (namely, election cycles), so they can work long term. Finally, the cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue that youth work can initiate helps mutual understanding and builds bridges between groups with conflicting needs.

In general, youth work dealing with conflicts can be classified into three conditional groups:

- the promotion of values and ideas among young people with the aim of creating an atmosphere that prevents conflict escalation and the eruption of violence;
- the development of conflict management and transformation skills and competences among young people;
- the initiation of youth-led peace campaigns and projects.

The first category is related to conflict prevention and peace building more broadly, because it includes programmes and initiatives encouraging tolerance, respect for diversity, equality, social cohesion and pluralism, and promoting human rights, inter-cultural dialogue, democratic citizenship, a culture of peace and substantive measures to bring about positive peace. These activities aim at decreasing the potential for conflict to have destructive consequences using a variety of indirect mechanisms that are preventative in nature. These activities are also closely related with peace education.

According to The Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education:

... a culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other. Such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace.
The Human Rights Education Youth Programme (HREYP) of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe

The Human Rights Education Youth Programme (HREYP) was developed around the idea of bringing human rights education into the mainstream of youth work practice. One of the main concerns of the programme has been to promote the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. The provision of educational materials to all those who are concerned but are not human rights educators or trainers is essential for this purpose, while sustaining the work of multipliers at the local level. To this end, Compass – A Training Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People was developed, and a training model for its dissemination was put into practice. At the time of writing, Compass exists in 25 languages, including Arabic and Japanese. Since it was first developed, the programme has come to include activities relevant both to social cohesion and to the social exclusion faced by young people. In Europe today, millions of children and young people are affected by violations of human rights in areas increasingly related to economic, social and cultural rights, rather than political rights.

The objectives of the HRE programme are to:

1. deepen the understanding of, and develop educational and other responses to persistent violations of human dignity, such as social exclusion, violence, racism, intolerance and discrimination;
2. empower young people, in particular the most vulnerable groups and those working with them, to develop strategies and activities to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination and gender-based forms of violence that affect them;
3. develop and create access to educational tools and methodological resources for use by practitioners in HRE;
4. consolidate and further develop European networks of trainers, multipliers and youth organisations active in promoting human rights;
5. support the establishment and development of pilot projects and activities on HRE and to disseminate their results.

The Living Library

The Living Library is a project initiated in 2000 by the organisation Stop the Violence, in Copenhagen, with strong support from the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Living Library is an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding. The main characteristics of the project are to be found in its simplicity and positive approach. In its original form, the Living Library is a mobile library set up as a space for dialogue and interaction. Visitors to the Living Library are given the opportunity to speak informally with “people on loan”, this latter group being extremely varied in age, sex and cultural background. The Living Library enables groups to break stereotypes by challenging the most common prejudices in a positive and humorous manner. It is a concrete, easily transferable and affordable way of promoting tolerance and understanding.

The library has a large collection of books representing prejudices and stereotypes, and the number of books is in a permanent growth. Some of the titles are very popular all over the world: disabled, female firefighter, funeral director, healer, homeless, homosexual, immigrant, lesbian, Muslim, refugee, Roma, vegan and many more. A “living book” is a person who has chosen to be a public representative of a certain group, an example of how people can be, if only minds are open long enough to find out who and what they really are. However, more than anything else, they are courageous people who stand by their convictions and are willing to discuss their values with others. A “reader” is a person who is interested in facing his or her prejudice and to learn more about it. Becoming a Living Library reader is a chance to maybe feel a bit safer about some concerns.

At the time of writing in mid-2009, Living Libraries exist in 27 countries and six more countries were expected to join the initiative.
The second category is related to conflict management and transformation, but also makes a contribution to peace building. Under this category, one can find the action of a variety of youth organisations that provide assistance to young people by helping them to learn skills and competencies for dealing actively and constructively with conflicts in their everyday social interactions, so that they can learn from the experiences. At the same time, this kind of youth work makes a contribution to increasing the capacity of young people to deal with the consequences of conflicts taking place in their environment, including armed conflicts. Such organisations provide training and further education opportunities focusing on conflict theory, analysis and mapping, conflict behaviours and communication skills, conflict management methods, leadership skills, and approaches for strengthening civil society. Such training has proven itself as an effective method to support small-scale local capacity building, extremely important in situations of state collapse, where governmental authorities are not able to provide the most basic public services, requiring that other forms of organisation step in and take over. It can be conducted at a local level with local people, contributing to local ownership of solutions and agreements reached, by building the competence of the local communities concerned to see beyond conflict behaviour, deal frankly and openly with their fears and anxieties, and approach the conflict with more distance and tolerance of ambiguity. It can even make a contribution to conflict resolution. It brings conflict parties together in safe places to work on issues of common concern. This allows individuals to feel free from the usual pressure to conform to the version of the truth imposed on them by their side of the conflict, and to develop trust in themselves and the others.

**DYS training courses and forums on conflict-related youth work**

Between 2000 and 2006, the DYS of the Council of Europe organised a series of training activities and consultative meetings (forums) to address the capacity-building needs of the youth-work community co-operating with it in relation to conflict issues.

The first on Mediation and Conflict Resolution (European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 5-11 November 2001) and the second on Conflict Transformation in Multicultural Youth Activities (European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 18-29 March 2003) aimed to enable participants to deal competently with issues of conflict, their mediation, resolution and transformation, in educational activities involving multicultural groups of participants. They focused on how to work on conflict in youth work and how to use intercultural approaches to conflict mediation, resolution and transformation. The third training course on Conflict Transformation and Multicultural Youth Work (European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 31 March-11 April 2005) focused on the analysis of conflict as it expresses itself in the context of youth work situations, often microcosms of wider societal conflicts. The course did not focus on the analysis of specific macro or international conflicts per se, but made reference to such only when there was an influence on the specific youth-work contexts concerned. A further training course was organised in 2006 on the specific Role of Women in Conflict Transformation (Palermo, 4-12 August 2006). The main aim of this course was to develop gender-sensitive strategies and tools to deal with conflict, focusing on the identification of factors that prevent the active involvement of women in conflict transformation and developing new approaches that are gender sensitive.

The consultative meeting on conflict transformation took place at the end December 2006, and served the purpose of a strategic meeting to look at already existing materials, experiences and training courses on conflict transformation in the past, in order to plan future activities within the DYS. Participants formulated specific recommendations for working on/with conflict transformation in educational practice, publications, co-operation and networking, youth policy and youth work and research. Results of the forum were taken into account for the creation of this T-Kit.

More information is available on request from the Directorate of Youth and Sport: youth@coe.int.
Theatre of the Oppressed

Theatre of the Oppressed is a movement and an educational method founded by Augusto Boal in Brazil in 1971. It is a form of participative theatre which helps participants (both actors and audience or non-actors) to address issues of oppression, and transform the way they think about themselves and the others in situations of oppression. It helps them to understand how they can act to liberate themselves from specific situations of oppression. Theatre of the Oppressed is a method that undoes the traditional division between actor and audience, and brings audience members into the performance, to have an input into the dramatic action they are watching. Theatre of the Oppressed is active in over 70 countries around the world, helping to empower individuals and communities seeking ways out of oppression.

Theatre of the Oppressed has developed beyond its original approach to include several specific forms of theatre method often used in activities to learn about how to deal with conflict and oppression. The most well-known and most commonly practised of these is probably Forum Theatre. In Forum Theatre the audience members and other actors can stop a performance, which is often just a short scene in which one or more characters are being oppressed in some way. When someone in the audience or another actor on the scene has an idea for how to change the outcome of the scene being played out before them, or for changing the oppression that is being committed, they can stop the performance and take the place of the actor in question or join the performance, thereby changing the dramatic action and opening up new ideas about how oppression can be dealt with. Participants are known as “spect-actors” because they have a dual role – as audience members and as actors of the situation. The process is designed to come to a conclusion through the consideration of opposing arguments, rather than presenting ready-made solutions for complex human and social problems. It is intended as an act of empowerment.

Another important method developed out of Theatre of the Oppressed is Image Theatre. It begins with the presentation of a static image of some form of oppression. Participants are asked to “mould” and “sculpt” their own bodies or those of others into individual representations of a particular situation, emotion or idea (usually of oppression) and then move into a group and re-form the images they have created to form a picture or “image” of how “things are” in real life. The second step is a transition from the real to the ideal – to a changed situation in which oppression has been overcome – to encourage insight into ways of overthrowing the oppression in reality. In Image Theatre the division between actor and spectator is also broken.

The running of Theatre of the Oppressed is based on a declaration of principles that helps those facilitating Theatre of the Oppressed based activities to respect the basic philosophy behind it. The principles can be consulted at: www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/en/index.php?nodeID=23.


The third category refers to youth peace-making campaigns and projects focusing mainly on raising awareness about interstate, civil and other kinds of armed conflict. Activities in this category include demonstrations, peace marches, awareness-raising campaigns and peace concerts. As such, youth peace initiatives have considerable direct and indirect impact on conflict prevention, working towards a culture of peace.
This category also includes providing platforms for young people from different conflict parties to meet and negotiate, usually using a neutral location.

### All Different – All Equal campaign 2006-07

The European youth campaign, All Different – All Equal – For Diversity, Human Rights and Participation, was launched in June 2006 and concluded in October 2007. The campaign was established following the adoption of an Action Plan at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2005. The campaign’s main aim was to combat racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance by encouraging and enabling young people to participate in building peaceful societies based on diversity and inclusion, in a spirit of respect, tolerance, and mutual understanding. The campaign highlighted the links with the 1995 campaign against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance; to this end, the slogan selected for the campaign is that of the previous initiative, namely: “All Different – All Equal”. A remarkable achievement was that 40 member states participated in the campaign and during the relevant period, the European Youth Foundation supported 365 campaign projects with a grant of €3 155 400.19

### Something to think about!

Which category do you identify with most in your youth work? Which one, to you, seems the most efficient for the young people you’re working with?

#### 4.6 Four common methods for working with conflicts

In the following section, we describe in more detail four ways of working with conflict that are today commonly identified with civil society strategies and which are common in the context of the three categories of youth work outlined above.

These are:

- advocacy;
- networking, coalition building and joint projects;
- non-violence or non-violent action;
- alternative information.

All these have been successfully used by groups of young people and youth organisations as contributions to conflict management and transformation, and while they do not exclusively address young people, they are among the approaches for which young people have become recognised as actors of change.

#### 4.6.1 Advocacy

Advocacy is any action that aims to change the opinions and approaches of authorities (which have the power to change policies towards a particular issue or situation). In a situation of armed conflict, the main aim of advocacy might be to expose the destructiveness and cruelty of militarism and to promote non-violence by showing that there is a groundswell of support for an alternative approach. Those who prosecute military conflicts depend largely on the availability of public support – this support is essential for recruiting soldiers, accessing supplies, and remaining legitimate.
Youth-led initiatives have often been the catalyst for a shift of opinion among the general public in relation to ongoing military conflicts, helping the general public to see the advantages of peace and the disadvantages of continuing to support the military conflict. Advocacy activities include the following: petitions, formal statements and lobbying, public speeches, campaigning, peace rallies, wearing badges and symbols, Internet activities, and symbolic acts such as mock trials or mock elections.

### 4.6.2 Networking, coalition building and joint projects

Networking and coalition building activities and joint projects, which include the rival parties to a given conflict, are important because they keep the channels of communication between the parties open, even if communication only takes place through third parties. Lasting transformation of conflicts cannot be imposed from the outside, but must be based on the wishes of local people. Third parties can assist as civilian peacemakers and peacekeepers by opening up the political space. They can also provide moral support for local activists to carry out their work without fear of repression. Networking, coalition building and joint projects can help the conflict parties to develop another understanding and perception about the “threat” represented by the others involved, and can help conflict parties find some form of common ground. These activities often focus on issues that have nothing to do with the conflict per se, such as a common business interest, sport, or cultural activities, for example, football, arts, graffiti and break dancing. The fact that a project does not take a stand on the conflict (that is, its impartiality) is an important contribution to building bridges. Third party mediation at round tables or forums can be facilitated when such projects have taken place because they can serve to break down prejudices and stereotypes and to build platforms for collaboration on the basis of relationships that existed before the conflict escalated.

**Something to think about!**

Do you know of any projects involving people from different sides of a conflict in work on a subject unconnected to the conflict? How did the project bring the conflict parties together? What did they work on? Did it help them to overcome their prejudices about each other? If so, how did it achieve this result?
When one hears the term “non-violence”, great men such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr easily come to mind. Although they are revered by young people all over the world, their actions might seem difficult to emulate. However, the history of non-violence has not only involved great heroes who dedicated their lives completely to a higher cause. Non-violence has also come to be a powerful tool for change from below. There are many examples of youth movements which have pursued profound social and political change in their countries using non-violence, even when the authorities resort to violence. Among the best known in Europe include Otpor! in Serbia, Zubr in Belarus, Kmara in Georgia, Pora in Ukraine and YOX! in Azerbaijan. These movements have all used humour, creativity and non-violent direct action to break deadlocked situations and change opinions. The young people involved in Otpor! (Resistance!) in Serbia, for example, have been credited with leading the revolution that overthrew Slobodan Milosevic, the authoritarian leader of Serbia, in 2000.  

Real power is legitimate power, and, therefore, always based on popular support. Once large numbers of ordinary people no longer approve of the actions of those in power, they will eventually lose their positions. The same can be said for dictators,
oppressors and warlords. However, these illegitimate leaders seek to monopolise or cling to power using a variety of legal and illegal means, not infrequently violent. They may rig elections, censor the media, limit freedom of movement, or change the laws of their country to create a veneer legitimacy for their actions. Their “support” often comes from fear: people might fear losing their job, being accused of being a traitor or an enemy of the state, being imprisoned or exiled, or that the future of their children will be jeopardised if they have non-conformist opinions or openly oppose the regime in power. In such closed societies, strategic non-violence has often worked as a means of raising the awareness of ordinary people to the corruption and illegitimate actions of such regimes, thereby acting as a catalyst to break down fear, and helping people to dare to disobey.

As a method, non-violence can be especially effective in situations of oppression. As long as the methods used by the oppressed are similar to those used by the oppressive state, the outside world can have difficulties in recognising that oppression is taking place, and the legitimacy of the claims for change made by those taking a stand. In such circumstances, the oppressive regime can simply accuse its opponents of disturbing the peace or causing trouble, and explain away its actions as a legitimate reaction to the violence of the opposition. However, if the opposition decides to stick to non-violence, the oppression will become obvious and it will be difficult for the oppressor to maintain their power in the long run.

Non-violence is also often confused with passivism, which refers to a refusal to use violence. Non-violence is not only a rejection of violence. It is based on the Indian term Ahimsa, which means “without violence” and first came to prominence as a method for political change with Mahatma Gandhi. To him, it was not enough only to refuse to participate in violent actions, as do pacifists. It is an obligation to actively interfere against oppression. Many atrocities would never have been possible if it was not for the obedience of soldiers to take orders and for the silent acceptance of bystanders. The rise and reign of the Third Reich is one of history’s most horrifying examples of how a lack of disobedience enabled human catastrophe.

Nowadays non-violence is seen as both a philosophy and as an effective method for change, and considerable research has been done on the topic. Gene Sharp, for example, has listed and categorised nearly 200 different methods of non-violence ranging from public meetings and demonstrations, to administrative non-co-operation, non-violent invasion and the establishment of parallel government. Strikes, protests and civil disobedience are common methods of non-violence. Throughout modern history, these have been frequently used for raising awareness about social and political debates of importance and for registering protest when those decisions are not to the satisfaction of important constituencies of citizens.

At the international level, violence is often met with violence, even though it has clearly not been an effective approach for preventing or controlling armed conflicts. There are countless examples. Although the mission of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, African Union troops and United Nations peacekeepers is to keep peace and prevent violence, these forces seldom engage in strategic non-violence. Many groups and individuals vainly use violence in their struggle for recognition and freedom. However, the suicide bombings, hijackings and terror attacks have done little for the aims or the image of the “cause”. Even when they have succeeded in bringing down dictators, wars have proven very inefficient in eradicating injustice. Yet they continue to be the method of choice most of the time. Non-violence, however, has been successfully used to eliminate any reasonable doubt about the intent.
and the methods of oppressors and to raise awareness concerning core issues in conflicts. Remember the man in front of the tank in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989? Why, then, is non-violence not a more widespread approach in the prevention of armed conflict? Is it because of stupidity, a lack of awareness or tradition? Or are other interests perpetuating the situation as it is?
4.6.3 Non-violence and non-violent action

Non-violent resistance or non-violent action is the practice of achieving socio-political goals through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political non-co-operation, and other methods, without using violence. It is made up of methods that help societies and groups to deal with conflicts in ways which do not resort to any form of aggression or violence (physical, emotional or psychological, etc.). It should not be confused with passive resistance, which is a form of non-co-operation that involves resistance by inertia or refusal to comply, as opposed to resistance by active means, such as protest or risking arrest. Well-known advocates of non-violence include Mohandas Gandhi, Andrei Sakharov, Martin Luther King, Jr, Lech Wałeśa and Václav Havel. Non-violent resistance played a key role in recent transitions to democracy and ordinary citizens in countries such as Cuba and Belarus are actively using non-violence as a means to change their political realities. Non-violent methods are often effective because they are seen as holding the moral high ground by the general public. The strength of non-violence comes from the willingness of those involved to take personal risks without threatening other people.

Something to think about!

Think about a case of non-violent resistance you know about. What were the circumstances? What makes it a case of non-violent resistance? Was it effective? If so, how?

4.6.4 Alternative information

When it comes to conflict, the focus of mainstream media is usually on the negative aspects, the “sensational” aspects. One rarely gets a balanced picture of the situation on the ground or the grievances of the parties. The provision of alternative information has become especially important in contexts where government or any other authority has a monopoly on channels of mass communication, and is using these to present its version of reality to people (propaganda), and where freedom of the media is not respected, which is often the case during conflict. During the conflict in Rwanda, two radio stations were particularly effective in propagandising the local population into supporting and even actively participating in the genocide. In Belarus, which at the time of writing remains one of the few remaining unreformed post-communist regimes in Europe, where the government exercises extensive control over the media, and which has a poor record on freedom of expression, ordinary citizens have little access to objective information about the political and economic situation either at home in Belarus or abroad, leading to their general isolation and their difficulty in differentiating between propaganda and information.

Alternative media, such as blogs, other Internet-based media, amateur radio and independent print media are often organised by non-governmental organisations (that is, civil society) and provide a different perspective by reporting more than one side, opinions of a variety of actors, and comments from external observers. Civil society organisations also organise public meetings, the distribution of print information, the training of journalists to avoid bias, and activities to hold media to account when what they report is not balanced. There has been an explosion in the availabil-
ity of alternative media since the advent of information and communication technologies. Young people are often actively involved in collecting and distributing this kind of alternative information because they find it easy to use information and communication technologies (ICT). They do not even necessarily realise that in so doing they have taken up the role of actors of social change or of conflict transformers. They get involved because they are concerned, have something to say and enjoy debating with their peers online. They get involved voluntarily and on an informal basis, through their virtual cyber networks and, while they are making a contribution, they do not consider themselves “organised”. With the help of ICT, young people are learning to question different points of view, interpret information and put their perspective on it, using blogs and web-portals. These are essential skills for working with conflicts.

Something to think about!
Think about the media you consume on a regular basis (newspapers, magazines, television, radio, or the Internet). What kind of media are they (state, private, independent)? What information do you trust the most? Why?

4.7 Tools for intervention

We have already explored the nature and dynamics of conflicts, the ways in which these interact with the lives of young people and their relationship to youth work. We have also explored how to think about (conceptualise) intervention. The time has now come to consider the more practical aspects of how to intervene in conflicts.

Throughout this T-Kit we have proposed that the primary role of youth work in engaging with conflicts is to bring out the positive potential for development that conflicts can represent for young people at the same time as minimising their negative consequences. In the following sections of this chapter we will therefore present some tools for intervention that are commonly associated with civil society strategies for conflict management and transformation and that we think are well suited to such a purpose. As we have already explored, micro- and macro-level conflicts can be considered as having similar dynamics and features. The tools for intervention included in the following sections can therefore be seen as relevant for all types of conflict discussed in this T-Kit, although clearly not without some adaptations to the specific context and conditions of the conflict concerned.

This part of the chapter explores several categories of tools for intervening in conflicts, providing advice on working with some specific methods associated with each category. The categories are as follows: conflict mapping; co-operation solutions; methods of communication; negotiation; mediation and other third-party interventions. Each of these tools for intervention is commonly applied in the conflict prevention, resolution, management and transformation activities of conflict professionals. However, they are also commonly practised in youth work and youth organisations by volunteers and professional staff alike. Later in Chapter 5, when we present activities for working on conflict and conflict issues in a youth-work setting, these categories will return as a means of organising the different kinds of activities presented.
4.7.1 Conflict mapping

In the same way as conflict analysis is the first step to understanding the reasons why a conflict takes place, its nature and dynamics and its stage of escalation (discussed in detail in Chapter 3), conflict mapping can be considered the first logical step to identifying the kind of intervention which is appropriate for dealing with the conflict constructively. In order to be able to develop a relevant mapping, you have already conducted an in-depth conflict analysis. We therefore strongly recommend that you read carefully the sections on conflict analysis presented in Chapter 3. That information is essential for being able to work with what we present on conflict mapping.45

In-depth conflict mapping provides people or organisations wishing to make an intervention in a conflict with the opportunity to make an informed judgment about what to do, for how long and with what means. The map helps to demystify the process of conflict that for so many people is experienced as confusing and thoroughly frustrating, by providing insights into the needs and the reasons involved in the conflict. Sharing the conflict map can help conflict parties to take a step back from and make sense of the conflict, which they are too close to and have difficulty in dealing with objectively. At the same time, it is important to remember that, because conflicts change over time, the results of a given mapping are only relevant for a limited time period. It is also important to consider, and reflect on, the position of the person or people who will conduct the mapping. Are they independent third parties? Or are they conflict parties? If so, how does this affect their ability to conduct a reliable and accurate mapping of the conflict?

The following adaptation of Wehr’s conflict-mapping guide, a well-known conflict-mapping tool, proposes questions for an in-depth mapping of a conflict. It is an adaptable tool that can be modified to provide specific information relevant to planning a conflict intervention through youth work or in youth work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict element …</th>
<th>Questions for mapping …</th>
<th>DOs for the intervener …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>What are the origins and major events in the evolution both of the conflict and its context?</td>
<td>DO make the distinction between the conflict relationship among the parties and the context within which it occurs …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>What is the scope and character of the context or setting within which the conflict takes place?</td>
<td>DO consider dimensions such as: boundaries; structures; relations; jurisdictions; communication networks and patterns; decision-making methods … DO consider the similarities between macro- and micro-level conflicts when assessing contextual dimensions …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are the actors of the conflict?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are the primary and secondary parties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the interested third parties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a party to the conflict?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO list all the possible conflict parties, from direct to indirect …**

### Issues

| What are the issues involved in the conflict? |
| Which of these issues can be considered a real “cause” of the conflict, and which of them are conflict behaviours? |

**DO use the ABC Triangle to help you to distinguish between the different types of issue involved in the conflict …**

**DO take into account the disparities in perception, values and interests motivating each party in the conflict …**

### Dynamics

| What were the precipitating events? How did the issues emerge and transform? |
| How have the issues transformed or proliferated? |
| To what extent have the conflict parties’ positions on the issues become polarised? |

**DO remember that conflicts have common, although not always predictable, dynamics that, if recognised, can help an intervener find a way around a conflict …**

### Solutions

| What are the suggestions of the parties and uninvolved observers for resolving the conflict? |
| What resources and tools in the possession of the conflict parties could be used to manage or even resolve the conflict? |

**DO identify as many “policies” as possible …**

**DO consider and try to understand approaches that have not succeeded until now …**

---

**Something to think about!**

Use the table above to map a conflict that took place in your organisation. Ask others involved in the conflict to do the same. Compare the results and discuss them.

---

### 4.7.2 Co-operation solutions

In the book *Everyone Can Win*, Helena Cornelius and Shoshanna Faire list five different approaches to choose from when dealing with conflicts. The first four are most commonly present in our everyday conflict behaviour.

These are competition, avoidance, submission and compromise. They are described in more detail in the table:
| **Competition** | This is easily recognised in almost all forms of sports; one party has to lose in order for the other to win. In a conflict this means that the parties place great importance on their own needs while ignoring the concerns of the others. |
| **Avoidance** | A noticeable low level of activity and little concern for one's personal needs or the needs and concerns of the other party. In the most extreme cases, avoidance borders on apathy. Both parties refuse to acknowledge the existence of the conflict or are indifferent to its outcome. Both sides behave in a hostile and unco-operative manner, which makes mediation difficult. Both parties lose because they lack initiative and enthusiasm for finding a solution. |
| **Submission** | This is a highly flexible approach where the parties give in to the needs of their conflict partner in order to save the relationship. You lose and the other party wins, but the relationship is maintained. |
| **The competition approach** | The competition approach can be used for dealing with conflict when there is a lack of time and a genuine lack of interest in maintaining the relationship with the other party. In situations of great danger, competition might be the only available approach as there is no time for discussion or reflection on the deeper issues. However, there is always a risk that new conflicts will arise as a result of the dominating or competitive behaviour and attitude of one party towards the relationship with the opponent. |
| **Avoidance merely postpones it temporarily and the conflict surfaces again when the conditions change. Avoidance is generally used when the parties are more afraid of losing than they are of continuously avoiding the conflict. It prevents the core concerns from being properly addressed and aired, and automatically runs the risk of conflict escalation, because there is potential for frustration to build up.** |
| **This approach can be used to improve a bad relationship or to maintain a good one, but only in cases where the issue really is less important than the relationship itself. If submission becomes a habit in a relationship it can indicate that the relationship is destructive, and that one person in the relationship is using power over the other.** |
Youth working with conflict

| Compromise | This is commonly regarded as a constructive way of dealing with conflicts and resolving them. To settle the problem, it requires that both parties give up part of what they wanted or needed. As a result, both win some, but they also lose some. In this sense, this approach demonstrates intermediate assertiveness and co-operation, since both parties give up a bit and split the difference in order to reach an agreement. This style is also known as sharing or horse-trading. A compromise solution is often considered to be a 50/50 split, but in fact it can be anything from 1/99 to 99/1. |
| Finding an intermediate solution or a trade-off sometimes requires a lot of energy and time. Both parties have to be satisfied with the final result for the solution to be called a compromise. |

The fifth approach, co-operation, attempts to take our thinking out of the box and suggests that both parties can fulfil all their needs without compromising. It confronts and challenges the inherited idea that in order for me to win, you have to lose. In order to completely resolve a conflict, co-operation is the only sustainable solution. If not all the issues of all parties are taken into consideration, the conflict remains under the surface even if it is forgotten for a while. By considering all issues and by fulfilling the needs of all actors involved, the root causes of the conflict are addressed and a sustainable solution can be reached.

| Co-operation | This takes place when the parties work together to find a solution to the problem which is agreeable to both of them. As a result, both win. This approach is also known as collaborating, win-win, problem solving or an integrative approach. |
| It is with this approach that a conflict is resolved entirely as the needs and concerns of both parties are completely fulfilled. Both parties are thus high in both assertiveness and in co-operativeness, allowing them to find a solution that is fully satisfactory for both. |

There are co-operation solutions to each and every conflict at all levels, but finding them is not always easy. First of all, it demands a great deal of time, energy and creativity. It puts high demands on the ability of the parties to distance themselves from the conflict and to think creatively about solutions. Secondly, this approach is often applicable in situations where there is already some awareness about the alternatives available and the consequences of not dealing with the conflict. An understanding that all other solutions are less effective has also been established. Thirdly, this approach requires that good relations and a certain level of open communication be maintained between the conflict parties. It is never as simple as one person being to
blame for the conflict. It is important to separate the person from the problem and to address the problem, and its core issues. Rather than seeing someone with a different view as a person that needs to be defeated, the focus should be the issue itself, and finding a solution that can satisfy all parties involved. In other words, the solution is to be hard on the issue but soft on the relationship. This requires sensitivity and an awareness of how actions can be interpreted and misinterpreted.

Finally, both parties must be involved in finding a solution, must have a very strong interest in the outcome and a concern with solving the problem. This involves a great deal of courage and trust since honesty about the issue is of high significance and open communication is necessary. A considerable amount of awareness of the needs and concerns of all parties is required, including those of oneself. What do you not yet know? Try to understand the position of the other party. Why does he or she act in the way he or she does? What underlying needs can you imagine there are? Remember, you can never for sure “know what the other person is thinking”. The only way is to ask the person if what you think they are thinking is right.
Dilemma 10: Neutrality

“The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in times of great moral crises maintain their neutrality.”

Dante Alighieri

The concept of neutrality plays a fundamental role in relation to conflict. The commonly accepted definition of neutrality characterises it as non-participation, non-engagement or non-involvement in a dispute, conflict or war. The idea of neutrality in the context of international or armed conflict may also refer to the position of a state. In international relations and law, neutrality refers to the position of a state that is non-belligerent in a war between other countries. It has a long history and the underlying rules are laid out in The Hague Convention.

In its wider sense, neutrality is also associated with tolerance, respect of others’ positions, beliefs, values and lifestyles, as well as the capacity for unbiased and impartial criticism. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between tolerance and neutrality. One definition is as follows:
Tolerance is the attitude: I think you are wrong, but I will not hinder you from going on in your wrong ways. Neutrality requires more than this restraint concerning action. It also requires refraining from expressing a verdict … Tolerance commands staying clear of some actions; neutrality commands also staying away from some aims and justifications.\textsuperscript{51}

Are there limits to neutrality? Considering the involvement of a third party and their impact on a conflict can help us to address this question. The opinions, positions, actions or inaction of a third party can have a significant effect on the course of a conflict. Neutrality requires that a third party’s actions equally impact on the conflict parties: to be neutral in any conflict means to do one’s best to avoid unequal treatment of the conflict parties.\textsuperscript{52}

At least in theory, this is true. Conflict parties have various needs and expectations and the actions of the different parties, including third parties, will always have a variety of impacts. Furthermore, depending on the type of conflict, there can be various types of third parties: people, groups, organisations, communities, states or international organisations. They can have a professional background in dealing with conflict, direct or indirect roles, or a formal or informal status. In reality, the requirements, understanding and interpretation of neutrality depend on the whole context of the conflict. Sometimes it is more important for the resolution of the conflict for the third party to maintain absolute impartiality. In some cases, third-party neutrality requires that the conflict parties be heard out equally. In principle, the neutral party should have no interest in the conflict outcome and should have no close links or relations with the conflicting party/parties. That said, conflict transformation experience shows that in many cultures, participation or involvement of trusted interveners (insiders or partials) having prior relationships with conflicting parties is considered more effective than completely external mediation.\textsuperscript{53} Furthermore, the state of being neutral should be the ability to interact with the absence of emotions, values or agendas.\textsuperscript{54}

However, this begs the question of how long neutrality should or can be maintained. According to Desmond Tutu:

\begin{quote}
… if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

It is recognised that neutrality has become a pillar of mediation and is even synonymous with the definition of mediation. The process of mediation indeed requires impartiality and neutrality, but new trends in approaches to conflicts have begun to question the primacy of neutrality for the conflict transformation process. It is clear that a third party in a conflict has its own attitudes to the conflict issue, and from the standpoint of human psychology, it is very difficult to remain neutral. Staying neutral is probably harder for young people: at the same time as they are forming their opinions and attitudes, they have strong ideals and wish to defend particular values. In this vein, some organisations combine fundamental principles of impartiality and neutrality with their humanitarian mission to protect the lives and dignity of the victims of war and violence. This contrasts with the approach of other organisations which openly denounce human rights violations, putting the focus of their work on testimony and advocacy and often making themselves “unwelcome” in the countries where they work.

At first glance then, neutrality might seem like a contradictory concept for youth workers dealing with conflict issues. On the one hand, they are expected to take an active part in resolving conflicts with the young people they work with. On the other
hand, they are encouraged to be neutral and not take sides. The solution possibly lies in the values that urge youth workers to act, such as peace, human rights, multiculturalism, pluralism, citizenship and inclusion. Youth workers and organisations should not renounce their basic principles and values for the sake of an outcome or “pure neutrality”.
**Something to think about!**

Imagine that you and another person are standing in front of each other on opposite sides of a red line on the floor. Each of you has the task to get the other person to go over to the other side of the line. Competition would dictate that you start pulling the other person over to your side of the line, while submission would dictate that you let yourself be pulled over. A compromise would involve both of you standing together on the middle of the line or for each of the parties to put one foot over onto the other side of the line, thereby giving half of what the other part wanted in order to get half yourself. Avoidance would dictate that you walk away and not deal with the task at all. A co-operation solution is based on the idea that you do not have to lose in order for the other person to win and that the solution is reached in co-operation between the two parties. What do you do?

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**4.7.3 Methods of communication**

As soon as communication is hindered or stopped the conflict will start to escalate.\(^5^7\) It is, therefore, an extremely important aspect of conflict intervention, and many intervention methods rely on alternative and non-traditional ideas about communication as a means of addressing conflicts constructively. Two such methods are: non-violent communication (NVC) and active listening.

**Non-violent communication (NVC)** developed from the idea that in everyday life people use a language that is very aggressive. They judge people, without reflection, telling others how they are or should be, threatening them and making them feel guilty. We tend to interpret everything said in the worst possible way. NVC proposes that, instead, we should try to communicate without attacking, criticising, judging, punishing or labelling other people, maintaining a non-accusatory tone and avoiding putting guilt on other people. Learning to communicate in a non-violent manner will help you to be more effective in dealing with conflict. A common misinterpretation is that non-violent communication is about being nice, accommodating or even giving in. On the contrary, it helps you to stay focused on your needs at the same time as avoiding making the situation worse. It means separating the problem from the person, and being hard on the issue but soft on the person.

Practising NVC in real life, of course, is very difficult, especially when a conflict has made you emotional and angry. We can use a model for understanding how to practise NVC.\(^5^8\) The model involves using “I-messages” (that is, using statements about yourself, for example, “I feel ...”), active listening and dealing with feelings constructively. The aim is to help the user to become curious and open, rather than judging the other party, to ask questions, and to learn why the other party thinks the way they do, and why they acted the way they did. Just as learning any new language, learning to communicate non-violently takes time.
According to Rosenberg’s “grammar”, there are four steps to communicating non-violently, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation without evaluation</strong></td>
<td>You start by describing the action or the situation that is causing the problem. This should be done without casting blame. It is very important that you clearly mark what you have observed in as specific a manner as possible to avoid misinterpretations. If you start from yourself and put emphasis on your own interpretation of what happened, then you avoid unpleasantness over what actually happened. You are speaking about your own perception of the events. It is important to avoid accusations, and even phrases such as “… yesterday morning when you said …” can be interpreted as accusatory. Try to be as exact as you can by mentioning specific times and places, to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure that you are both talking about the same thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking about feelings</strong></td>
<td>This step involves reporting factually on things that are emotional, although this can be quite difficult. One way of doing this is to report how you behave and to tell others what you tend to do in a specific kind of situation, for example, “I withdraw, although that’s not what I want to do”, or, “I do everything myself”. Letting the other person know about the impulse that you are resisting at a given moment can be a good way of revealing one’s feelings without feeling nervous or embarrassed or without being accusatory. For example, “I feel like ignoring you”, or, “I want to leave”. Try to describe neutrally what feelings the incident stirred up in you. For example, if you say that you felt unprotected, you imply that your conflict partner failed to protect you, even unintentionally. However, if you instead speak about feeling afraid, you start from yourself, which cannot be misconstrued as an accusation. When you express your feelings, you take responsibility for them and do not blame others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connecting feelings to needs</strong></td>
<td>The next step involves trying to describe why you had the feeling you just expressed. You have to express the hidden need behind the feelings, but at the same time, it is crucial to separate positions and interests from needs, as they really are different. The positions are the standpoints, what the parties say they want. The interests are what they really want. The needs are what they need to achieve in order to feel secure and fulfilled. If you ask a tired person what he or she needs, the answer might be “coffee”. One could indeed feel the need for a coffee. Yet one might also argue that coffee is just the chosen path from being tired to becoming less tired. The real need could also be something else, such as getting more sleep. The difference might seem minor, but it is important because it will have an influence on the content of the next step.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last step is to express your preferred outcome with no demands. This means that you have to decide what you would like to happen, and what you would like your conflict partner to do. It is important to be as specific as possible and to try to come up with creative solutions. It is helpful to provide as many options as possible, leaving the choice of solution open to the other person.

### Something to think about!

Change the following sentences to make them non-violent:

- You never recognise that I am working hard …
- You always run me down …
- Nothing I do is ever good enough …
- You are wrong …

Active listening is also an important communication-based tool for intervention. Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding to others, which focuses attention on the speaker, postponing the judgment of the listener so that they can pay full attention to what the speaker is saying. Active listening requires that the conflict parties not only listen to each other, but really hear the message of the other. The important thing in active listening is to move beyond words to comprehension. This means that the parties have to work on understanding the meaning behind the words used, to try to understand the motivation for choosing these words and expressions, and the feelings that might be associated with what the person is saying, and to a certain extent to read between the lines to find the deeper message. Active listening is a process of learning to ask questions to get to the deeper message without turning the discussion into an interrogation or interview. It involves listening without commenting, even when what is being said may be frustrating for you, asking for further clarification once the person has finished what they are saying in a way that does not intimidate your conversation partner, and generally getting deeper into the topic in a relaxed and open manner.

### 4.7.4 Negotiation

Participation in negotiations is voluntary. The parties themselves negotiate a solution to the conflict. There is no third party facilitating the process or imposing a solution. There are different approaches to negotiation. In a power-based negotiation, the conflicting parties strategically use different sources of power and aggression to achieve their goals. In an interest-based or problem-solving negotiation the parties try to come to an agreement that meets the needs of everyone involved. In interest-based negotiations, finding the real needs is essential since the aim of the interest-based approach is to satisfy those interests rather than to bargain over positions.

When faced with participation in a negotiation, the above-mentioned approach of non-violent communication and the tools for conflict mapping can be used by the parties to find out the real needs. Negotiation is an approach that requires discussion.
and debate, and so it can be achieved when the conflict is on steps one to three in the “staircase” conflict escalation model. When the conflict has escalated further than step three, it will be difficult for the parties to solve a conflict by themselves and a third party will have to be invited to mediate.

### 4.7.5 Mediation and third-party interventions

A mediator is by definition a third party. The mediator facilitates the resolution of the conflict but does not have the power to impose a solution on the conflict parties. The third party is an independent observer or mediator outside the immediate conflict. Third parties are supposed to remain balanced, independent, and facilitating, and engage in analytical rather than bargaining dialogue.

There are a large variety of mediation styles. Some mediators use “interest-based” approaches while others use “rights-based” approaches. In interest-based approaches, the focus is on the interests of both parties rather than predominantly on the interests of just one. A rights-based approach is a competitive form of negotiation and is common in most legal systems. The parties are forced to take positions on who is right and who is wrong. Some mediators are “facilitative”, providing only assistance to the process of the negotiation. Other mediators may be “activist”, intervening to ensure all parties are represented and that power imbalances between the conflict parties are addressed. Activist mediators do not necessarily make specific recommendations on how to resolve the conflict to the parties. Other mediators consider themselves to be “transformative” mediators, working less towards settlements and more towards the transformation of relationships.

There are also many different ways to conduct a mediation process and each mediator has his or her own way of doing it. The mediation process usually consists of several typical stages, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step in the mediation process</th>
<th>What you do …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Introduction              | Introduce yourself, your educational background and previous mediation experiences.  
Set the agenda for the rest of the mediation by stressing key values of mediation such as communication, impartiality and honesty.  
The parties might be nervous, so make an effort to ease tensions and empower participants to work towards a solution.  
Ask if the participants wish to maintain complete confidentiality or if the mediation process should be open to outsiders: respect the wishes of the participants.  
Inform the parties that the mediator is a judge or an arbitrator, but that it is the parties themselves that will have to come up with the solution.  
Before the mediation starts, describe the process in detail so that the participants know what is going to happen; the parties are likely to find this comforting. |
2. Sorting out needs, fears, raising feelings, mapping conflict parties and the contradiction

Ask each party to tell their version of what has happened while the others listen actively without commenting. Once the telling is done, offer each party the space to comment on what they have heard, and some time for questions and clarifications. List all the parties to the conflict – make it clear that everyone’s needs will have to be taken into account in the solution.

Help the parties to explore their needs. If two people both need the same thing, ask why they need it, whether it could be replaced with something else, if they need it at the same time or if it is possible for them to take turns using it. Do not dismiss fears that seem irrational; these can influence the behaviour of the conflict parties.

Prioritise the needs and any fears expressed according to their relevance and importance for the parties.

Help the parties to define the contradiction – the issue that has caused the conflict. Keep the discussion of the issue as neutral and objective as possible.

3. Possibilities, solutions, alternatives and priorities

Help the parties to find options for resolution and to map solutions. Do not decide on any solution yet, but to try to map as many as possible.

4. Evaluating the available options

Stop the brainstorming and begin the process of evaluating the possible solutions with the parties. If it is difficult for the parties to decide if an agreement is suitable for them, you can use an approach called Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement, or BATNA, to help them decide. It is based on the idea that you cannot make a wise decision about whether to accept a proposed solution unless you know what your alternatives are. If the proposed solution is better than your BATNA, then you should accept it. If the solution is not better than your BATNA, then you should keep working to find another solution since it is not yet settled.

5. Reaching an agreement

Write down the agreement that everyone feels comfortable with, and prepare for it to be signed by the parties. Use a checklist format and decide on exactly what actions are supposed to take place, and when. Make arrangements for any future dispute concerning the agreement to be resolved by arbitration.

The presentation of the above steps in mediation is intended for your information and as a means for you to consider whether you are interested in learning more about it, rather than as encouragement to engage in the mediation of conflicts if you have no prior experience. Although mediation is widely practised, and is considered a tool for intervention in both micro- and macro-level conflicts, it is a practice that requires specific skills and experience. Every mediation process is different, and can include any number of unexpected developments. While the steps in the process are always similar, the ways in which they play out are different in each case. It takes specialised knowledge, a certain level of confidence, and emotional resilience to interpret developments in the process as they take place, and to move through the steps without being overwhelmed or, worse, being manipulated by any of the conflict parties. Specialised training courses and study programmes exist to train people in conducting the mediation of conflicts, and particular training offers are available for those active in the youth field.
In mediation, the involvement of a third party is essential. It usually takes one of two forms: formal or informal. Formal third parties are conflict management and/or resolution professionals who are hired specifically to act as third parties to resolution processes. At the international level, these people are referred to as first-track diplomats. Informal third parties are not professionals in conflict resolution, but they are trusted to act as neutral arbiters and to help the conflict parties to find a solution. Informal third parties are known at the international level as Track II diplomats.64

A third party can …

… act as an impartial intervener who has interest only in the process of resolving the conflict, not in the outcome. For example, in a car accident mediation, the mediator should facilitate reaching the agreement regardless of whether the mediator thinks the outcome is fair, because what matters is the satisfaction of the two parties, and not the satisfaction of the mediator.

… have the expertise to design a process in which the two parties will be willing to convene in search of a solution, and will know how to facilitate, mediate and arbitrate the interaction between them. In most conflicts, emotions run high and affect communication between the conflicting parties. An outsider with no interest in the perpetuation of the conflict can, however, act as a manager of the communication, enhancing the chances of resolving the conflict.

… be a content expert who can help the parties to avoid misunderstandings resulting from a lack of information about, or clarity on, the issues at stake. This helps the conflicting parties reach viable agreements that are based on accurate information, which enhances the chance that such agreements will be long-lasting. For example, a real estate agent could function as a good mediator in helping a family divide the estate of a deceased relative, since he or she could offer advice on the current market value for the real estate in question.

… act as a messenger between the parties, particularly when face-to-face communication is not possible because it is not wanted by both or either of the parties. Conflict often leads to the refusal of parties to talk and co-operate face to face. Here the third party plays an essential role in conveying each party’s messages to the other and encouraging them to consider enhanced communication (even meeting) in order to achieve resolution.

… provoke thinking out of the box. Often the parties reach an impasse or deadlock without assistance. In many cases in a negotiation process, the parties’ conflicting interests lead them to a dead end. The intervention and fresh thinking of an outsider can help conflicting parties to think about ways out of the impasse they would not have come to by themselves.

However, sometimes, controversy arises over the neutrality of third parties. It is difficult for the conflict parties not to assume that the third party is biased towards their opponent as soon as they demonstrate an attitude which is not favourable to their position. Furthermore, it is indeed often difficult for third parties to remain objective considering the conflict parties’ testimonies.

4.8 Youth as actors of social change – a new framework for working on youth and conflict

According to one international report:

A holistic, comprehensive and systematic framework that captures the complexity of the youth situation in relation to … conflict has not yet emerged.65
International policy frameworks rarely give positive value to “being young” as more than just a transit stop between being a child and being an adult, between being dependent and being autonomous. Such acceptance requires an understanding of the processes that are involved in the youth phase. It requires taking into account the personal development of the individual and the specific risks that the youth phase presents for them, including that phase in relation to conflict and violence. This means that effective policies for supporting young people facing conflicts in their environments or in their lives should be adapted to young people’s need for safety in experimentation. This means providing young people with the opportunity to “be young” for as long as they need to be, providing support for those who may be at risk of falling by the wayside or being caught up in processes beyond their individual control.

In regions affected by wars or armed conflicts, governance has often been weakened or is absent altogether. In addition, youth policies may not be in place or function. Peace-building and development activities may “replace” usual or traditional youth policy provision. Policy effectiveness has been weakened by the “prevention driven” approach, which has a tendency to see all youth issues in terms of problems that have to be solved and which can have a stigmatising effect on young people. By promoting the idea that young people should be prevented from doing certain things, such policies inadvertently or deliberately limit their autonomy and, therefore, their ability to deal with the conflict situations they encounter (in other words, their resilience). However, integrating differentiated ideas about young people’s resilience and agency in relation to conflict situations can help policy makers assess the nature of young people’s choices in relation to participation in violence better, and assist them in how they deal with adverse situations more generally. Furthermore, young people’s resilience and agency can be harnessed for the purposes of conflict transformation during the pre- and post-conflict phases, and with sufficient support, even during outright hostilities.

The findings of a study on youth and conflict conducted by one international donor exemplify the issue of approaching youth and conflict in a more holistic manner:

> Excellent programmes address a wide range of youth issues in both developing and developed countries. The following lessons for building effective youth programmes are based on practitioner experience and academic findings: … Identify, but do not isolate at-risk youth; … Build community-based programmes; … Youth leadership and ownership; … Female youth; … Holistic programming; … Plan for youth transitions. … If services only target demobilised or at-risk youth and neglect others, then youth are de facto rewarded for violence – the emphasis should be on social integration and meeting the needs of all youth, since the effects of conflict spare none.66

This boils down to one simple imperative: the focus of policy and programming needs to move from considering young people in a dualistic manner, as perpetrators on the one hand, and as victims on the other, towards a more holistic way which considers young people’s potential to influence conflict in a positive manner, to a view of young people as actors of social change.67

This means considering conflict as an important part of many young people’s realities, which requires special attention, research and in-depth understanding. It also means developing a better understanding of young people in conflict: of their needs, concerns, beliefs and wishes. Young people should be better recognised as “relevant stakeholders” in all conflict management efforts that will have some impact on their lives. They have to be directly involved in the definition of their present and future,
Youth working with conflict during post-conflict reconstruction processes at the level of political, social, economic and community development. Paternalistic attitudes on the part of decision makers contribute to the spread of frustration among young people. If until now young people have tended to be considered as subjects of change in the conflict context, experienced conflict workers in the development and non-governmental sectors are beginning to see youth in a different light and to create channels for them to contribute constructively to the definition of policies and programmes that affect them directly.

While it would be more than unfair to expect that young people and their organisations are able to solve the world’s conflicts, young people and their organisations have an active role in advocating for more in-depth debate and consideration of the need for a revised concept for framing policies and programmes addressing youth and conflict. They can also continue to make beneficial contributions through their educational and social work. However, for both these potentials to be fulfilled, it is simply not enough to be given the opportunity. Active support is also required: political will on the part of key stakeholders, money, human resources and positive publicity; in other words, developing young people’s consciousness of their potential role as actors of social change, and giving credence to it with public support. For young people’s full potential as conflict transformers to be reached, it is essential for adult institutions to demonstrate trust in young people, otherwise the spiral of stigmatisation and recrimination will never be broken.

Albert Einstein said, “In the last analysis, every kind of peaceful co-operation among men is primarily based on mutual trust and only secondly on institutions such as courts of justice and police. This holds for nations as well as for individuals. And the basis of trust is loyal give and take.”

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has tried to understand conflict intervention better, in other words, how to work with and on conflicts, taking into account the specifics of working with young people. In the next chapter, we will look at how some of these approaches translate into practical activities for learning about conflict intervention and for addressing contemporary conflict issues with young people in different kinds of youth work context. We hope this will challenge you to engage in the process of reshaping the practice of youth work as a provocation to the status quo, as socially and politically constructive and as empowering young people to become actors for change.
Resource box: youth working with conflict

- International Alert – www.international-alert.org
- International Peace Bureau – www.ipb.org
- Amnesty International – www.amnesty.org
- Peace Brigades International – www.peacebrigades.org
- International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) – www.crisisgroup.org

- The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) – www.gppac.org
- Crisis Management Initiative – www.cmi.fi
- International Association for Conflict Management – www.iacm-conflict.org
- Conflict Prevention Partnership – www.conflictprevention.net


- Learning to abolish war. Teaching toward a culture of peace. A series of books available in English, Russian, Arabic, Albanian and French.

According to Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, “identity” is defined as “the condition of being oneself or itself, and not another.”

As such, it refers to the totally individual way a person defines him or herself – the features which distinguish him or her from all other human beings. What is the relationship between identity and conflict? How does this relationship play out in relation to young people, and why is it important?

In the study of psychology, identity refers to the self-image of the individual. It is understood to be important for a person’s self-esteem. The term “identity” refers to a person’s capacity for self-reflection and their awareness of self. This is important for how people interact with each other in society. Sociologists use identity to describe the variety of senses of belonging, or group memberships that define the individual. People learn that society expects them to behave in a particular way depending on the identity role(s) they take over. During adolescence, young people experiment as a means of forming their identity. They have to negotiate their ideas about who they are with the social expectations of the wider society, including parents, teachers, peers and authorities (for example, local government or the police).
However, identity is, above all, an individual, personal process. Everyone, at some stage, has to make decisions about who they want to be or are. Everyone identifies more with some groups than with others, with some political ideas, with some cultures, traditions or beliefs. Societies often strongly contribute to these “identifications” by pressurising people to make conscious choices. In most countries, the authorities impose integration conditions on those wishing to access citizenship. These also relate to those new citizens’ feelings of “belonging” to that country’s culture. Erik Erikson describes various stages of “identity crisis” that everyone goes through as part of their natural development process. For him, it is one of the most important conflicts people ever face. Today, the concept of identity crisis is often used in relation to young people from minority or migrant backgrounds who have trouble finding or constructing their own identity, considering the expectations of the majority society in which they live and of the culture of their parents or grandparents. As a result, identity can be the cause of conflict between people, but also within individuals.

In contemporary politics, identity is most often referred to in national, cultural or even ethnic terms. In multicultural societies, where people from different cultural backgrounds and origins live together, but do not necessarily communicate or co-operate, and where immigration has come to be seen as a problem, identity distinctions (such as nationality, religion or citizenship) can come to be interpreted as barriers to social integration. In such circumstances, identity differences have increasingly come to be blamed for causing conflicts and social unrest. Identity politics is not, however, only about culture. We often forget about its multiple facets, including the sexual, gender, religious and professional dimensions. The various dimensions of identity can come into conflict with one another in the lives of individuals, for example, being homosexual at the same time as being a practising member of a religious community, or being both a mother and a career woman. These are identity issues, which can put additional pressure on individuals but which have important implications for the way in which society deals with certain groups or communities of people. Often these identity issues need to be addressed and regulated through legislation.

How are identity differences and conflict interrelated? A typical example is minority-majority relations. On the one hand, minority religious and immigrant communities can be seen as a danger by majority society. This can be because they live in compact areas, which are seen as closed to people who are not from that community, because they do not speak the majority language among themselves or because they are perceived as not accepting the values of the majority society. On the other hand, minority communities are often fearful that their cultural identity will be lost if they “integrate more” into the majority society or behave as the people considered locals do. The conflict potential is clear. Each side fears the other will respond with violence if challenged.

Despite some theorists’ attempts to present identity as the main cause of contemporary social conflicts, cultural arguments alone are weak in explaining which differences are intractable, and which differences can be addressed through negotiation and compromise. Many other experts have argued that economics, competition for resources and structural disadvantage are more important for explaining where conflict, including the violence that often accompanies them, comes from. These argue that while cultural or identity differences can divide, these divisions are only a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for conflicts.

Young people are often seen by their community elders as losing their traditional morals and as being corrupted by promiscuity and consumption. Minority young people
face dilemmas about how to behave with peers and with parents, about how to be accepted by their specific cultural group and by the wider society. At all levels there is potential for conflict – between members of different communities (intercultural), among members of individual communities (intergenerational and interpersonal) and even in an individual (intrapersonal).

The conflict potential of identity also poses challenges for the practice of youth work in multicultural settings and for international youth work. Multicultural groups, whether composed of young people from within one country or from several countries, can be challenging to handle: suspicion, fear of the unknown, language barriers and prejudices may all play a role in the way the group dynamic develops. Contrary to popular assumptions, young people are not always curious about people who are different from them, often making communication and interaction in youth-work situations complex. Youth-work situations are also significantly influenced by the wider conflict context in a given country or between countries, where propaganda, violence and the atrocities of war make suspicion, segregation and hatred the norm between people from different backgrounds. The challenge for the youth worker then is to motivate young people to actively engage with each other, by confronting their fears, overcoming prejudices and moving in the direction of mutual recognition and respect.
Notes

1. For a definition of paradigm, see the glossary.
2. For a definition of deterrence, see the glossary.
3. Deterrence theory is criticized for the assumptions it makes about the motivations and possible actions of opponents. Firstly, opponents, if suicidal or psychopathic, may not be deterred. Secondly, diplomatic misunderstandings and/or opposing political ideologies may lead opponents to believe that the threat is more important than it really is, and therefore to dangerous escalations. Thirdly, military build-ups increase budget deficits, restrictions on civil liberties and the creation of a military-industrial complex.
4. For more on cold or latent, and hot or manifest conflicts see this chapter, p. 108.
12. For a definition of terrorism, see the glossary.
13. Nelson Mandela was the first President of South Africa to be elected in a fully representative democratic election, and served in office from 1994 to 1999. Previously, Mandela was an anti-apartheid activist, and the leader of the African National Congress’ armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. The South African courts convicted him on charges of sabotage, as well as other crimes committed while he led the movement against apartheid. Mandela spent 27 years in prison. More information at: www.nelsonmandela.org.
17. For more on pre-, during- and post-conflict phases, see Chapter 3, p. 88, and the glossary.
18. For more on this, see the conflict dilemma on neutrality, P. 133.
20. For more on this, see discussion of conflict as an iceberg, and the Tree of Conflict, both in Chapter 3, p. 68 and 77.
21. Hot and cold conflicts are sometimes also referred to as open and closed, or visible or invisible. For more on this, see Glasl F., Konfliktsmanagement (Conflict Management) (Paul Haupt Verlag, Bern/Stuttgart, 2002).
24. Plato (427-347 BC) was a philosopher in Ancient Greece. For this quote, see: www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/p/plato.html.


30. Gene Sharp is a political scientist and founder of the Albert Einstein Institution, a non-profit organisation which studies and promotes the use of non-violent action in conflicts around the world; see www.aeinstein.org/.


32. For more detail, see the essay “Power and Struggle” that is available for download at www.fragmentsweb.org/TXT2/p_srevtx.html. The psychology of power and obedience was studied extensively in the famous Milgram Experiment in the 1960s. For more information see the following website: www.cba.uri.edu/Faculty/dellabitta/mr415s98/EthicEtcLinks/Milgram.htm. Jose Saramago's 1995 novel entitled Blindness and the 2008 film adaptation of the same name (starring Julianne Moore and Danny Glover) describes a mass epidemic of unexplained blindness that causes organised society to break down, and explores issues of power, corruption and obedience. See: www.blindness-themovie.com/.


35. According to the “Conflict Barometer 2008” published by the Institute for International Conflict Research at the Department of Political Science at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, 345 conflicts were counted in 2008. Apart from the 39 conflicts fought with the use of a massive amount of violence, 95 conflicts were conducted with sporadic use of violence and therefore classified as crises. In contrast, 211 non-violent conflicts were counted, which could be subdivided into 129 manifest and 82 latent conflicts. The Conflict Barometer studies can be accessed at: http://hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html.

36. See p. 36.

37. For more on this, see the conflict dilemma on peace, p. 65. See also the glossary for a definition of positive peace.

38. See www.eycb.coe.int for more information on the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and Compass.

39. A summary of the projects supported by the European Youth Foundation during the campaign in 2006 and 2007 is available in the appendices of the “All Different – All Equal, Cookbook”, Council of Europe, 2008. Available on request from the Directorate of Youth and Sport (youth@coe.int).


42. For a more in-depth exposé, see: http://afroamhistory.about.com.


45. See p. 48.

46. Wehr P., Conflict Regulation (Westview, Boulder, 1979). The original mapping guide is available online at: www.campus-adr.org/Webquest/Wehr.htm

47. For more on this, see the ABC Triangle in Chapter 3, p. 77.
48. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was an Italian poet whose central work, the Divine Comedy, is considered one of the greatest literary works composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature.


55. One promising new approach has been developed by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe in the context of its work to promote the Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. Called the RMSOS framework, it proposes that any youth policy must consider the rights, means, space, opportunities and support available to underpin the participation of young people in order to succeed, and was developed to train youth leaders and civil servants responsible for youth policy in local authorities in how to promote youth participation at the local level. For more information, see: www.netuni.nl/tnu/moz and www.berghof-center.org/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=13.