9 Peace and conflict

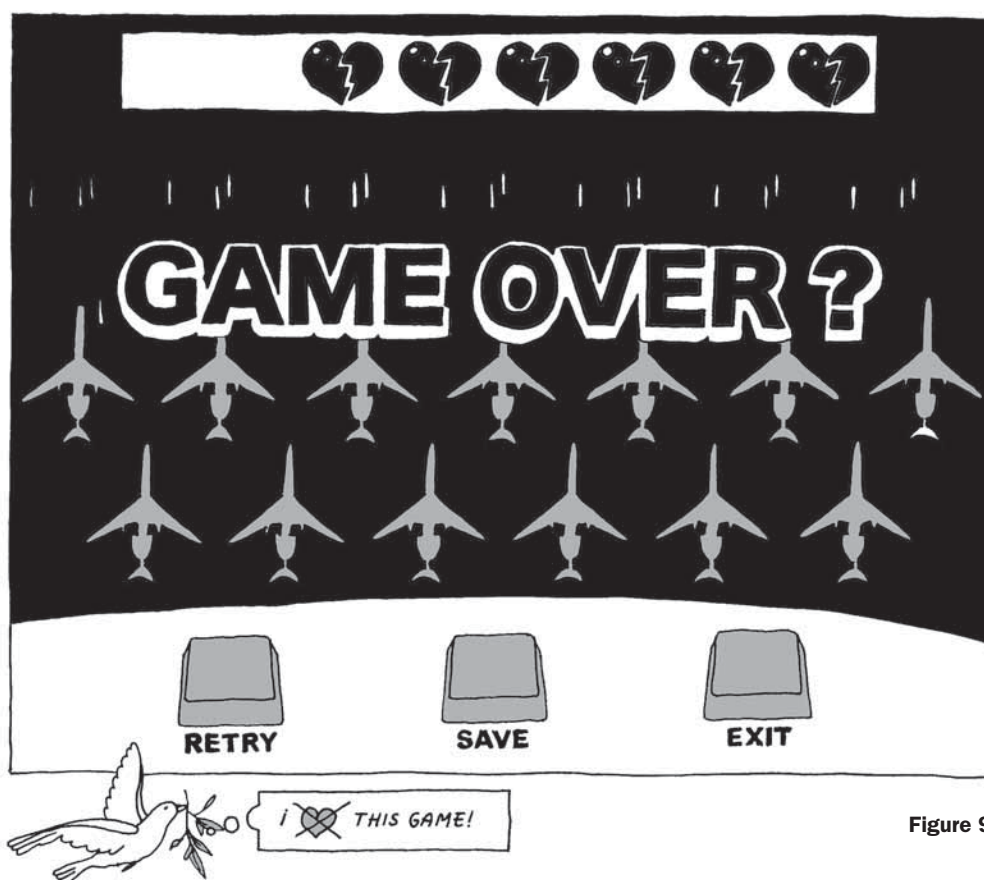GAME OVER ?

RETRY   SAVE   EXIT

i ♥ THIS GAME!

Figure 9.

Imagine all the people
Living life in peace
You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one …

John Lennon, "Imagine" lyrics, *Imagine*, 1971

9.1 Introduction

Why are the ways of dealing with conflict and building peace relevant to Euro-Mediterranean youth work? First of all, because cultural, political and religious conflicts may arise anywhere, and the Euro-Mediterranean area is no exception. Quite the opposite, conflicts seem to be what first comes to mind when the Mediterranean space is evoked: the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the conflict in Cyprus between the Turkish and Greek populations; the wars in the Balkans, or in Iraq and Lebanon; conflicts over the share of natural resources such as water and oil; conflicts in Russia with separatist groups – and these are only some of the better-known ones. These conflicts inform and influence the quality of Euro-Mediterranean youth projects – even whether they happen at all. Therefore, youth workers may need conflict management tools to deal with conflicts appropriately in their work.

Secondly, conflict management and transformation can be applied to a variety of political, social, cultural or religious conflicts and issues; they are particularly relevant to Euro-Mediterranean youth work because of the great diversity found around the Mediterranean Sea. By focusing on this topic with reference to youth work and youth activities, this chapter aims to discuss concepts of peace and conflict that may help youth workers in dealing with conflicts, and it offers basic tools for advancing towards peace at different stages of a young person's life.

9.2 About peace and conflict

➜ 9.2.1 Concepts of peace and conflict

The idea of peace has changed significantly through history. Traditionally, two main dimensions exist for the concept of peace: one dimension has to do more with inner peace (peace in people's minds or hearts); the second is understood to be outside individuals (absence of war or violent conflict).[1]

The Greeks used the word *eirene* to designate periods when there were no wars between the Greek cities. This 'peace' referred only to the peace they had among themselves, because they used that word for the peace that existed while they were at war with others. Similarly, in Roman times, *pax* meant the state of security and legal order within the Roman Empire. *Pax* was used to describe times when there were no rebellions against the Roman system (the absence of rebellion against an occupation), even if wars against barbarians outside the Empire were being fought.

Other examples around the Mediterranean Sea relate the concept of peace to positive values – for example, *shalom* and *salaam* link peace to justice, which is also visible in the Christian notion of peace, and to fair economic relations between people. Both concepts, with some nuances, are often also linked to religion.

In the modern world, the usage of the concept of peace has evolved significantly. In contrast to peace defined as "the absence of" (war, violence, etc.), the modern concept of peace is often defined as "the presence of" justice, and other conditions that create social harmony and thus prevent situations of violence that may result in social or armed conflict. In the 1960s, the peace researcher Johan Galtung had a major influence on the definition of the concept by proposing the distinction between positive and negative peace: negative peace is defined by the existence of "no wars or violent conflicts between states", while positive peace emphasises "no war or conflict situation combined with a situation where there is equity, justice and development", hence horizontal and co-operative relations between people, a state of law and social welfare (in addition to the "vertical" relations between state institutions and people).[2]

The definition of peace adopted in this chapter is the process of achieving justice at different levels of human relations. This is a dynamic concept that "makes people acknowledge, confront and resolve conflicts in a non-violent way aiming at a harmony of the person with themselves, with nature and with other people".[3] This definition underlines the idea of the dynamism of peace that, just like democracy or justice, can always be improved. Note also that the definition highlights the importance of acknowledging, confronting and resolving conflicts.

Q: Which non-peace situations are you confronted with in your youth work?

Conflict can be defined as "a situation involving a dispute or difference of opinion in which there is a clash of (tangible) interests, needs and/or values".[4] Conflict is usually seen as a cycle, which might deteriorate into a violent situation, but this may not be necessarily the case.
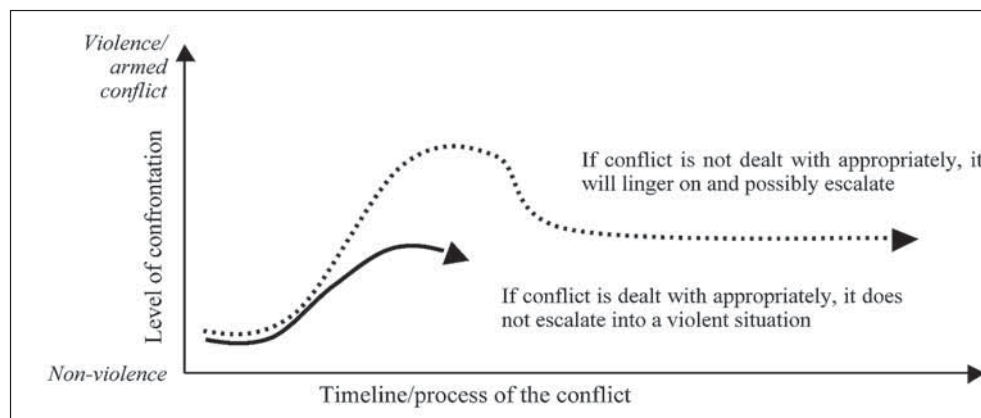
Figure 9.1: The progress of conflict

When conflict is dealt with in a way that avoids a violent development, it means that a new situation has been created, which takes heed of the interests, needs and/or values of the people involved in the conflict. That is one of the reasons why conflict education claims a neutral concept of conflict, seen as a natural consequence of diversity of opinions, cultures, values and so on. Conflicts are mostly seen as negative occasions, since confronting a conflict means investing time and energy and undergoing an unpleasant experience.[5] However, if one considers that diversity is positive, then the existence of conflict can be accepted as a natural thing. Moreover, it is argued that conflicts can be viewed positively as a way of transforming society, and thus as an opportunity to learn from the diversity and difference of human relations in an understanding of co-operation and solidarity.[6]

Conflicts can be found at different levels: at a personal level (personal conflicts), at a group level (within a youth group, or within one's own community) or at a macro-level (between states, between polarised groups in a country). The examples in this chapter mainly refer to conflicts between groups, but the suggested approach can equally well be applied to larger conflicts.

Sometimes, particularly in the media, "conflict" is used as a synonym for war or armed violence. Conflict, then, has terrible connotations. But it is important to differentiate types of conflict and to note that conflicts are not always violent. Galtung defines violence as "avoidable insult to basic human needs": survival, well being, identity, and freedom.[7] He identifies three kinds of violence:

- direct violence: physical or psychological aggression towards a person or group (such as tearing, piercing, crushing, burning or explosion)
- structural violence: social conditions and actions such as exclusion, exploitation, poverty, fragmentation and/or marginalisation[8] of part of a community, preventing people from satisfying their basic needs (by unemployment, hunger, lack of health or educational services)
- cultural violence:[9] those aspects of culture (such as symbols representing religion or ideology, but also language, art and empirical or formal science) that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence.

Wallensteen and Sollenberg[10] defined armed conflict as "violently contested incompatibility that concerns a government and/or a territory with the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state", categorised as:

- minor conflict – one that claims at least 25 battle-related deaths, but fewer than 1 000 deaths, over its entire course;
- intermediate conflict – one that accumulates at least 1 000 deaths, with fewer than 1 000 each year;
- war – resulting in at least 1 000 deaths in a single year.

Q: In the period 1989-2006, there were 122 armed conflicts in 80 places around the world.[11] Can you list any of those that occurred in the Euro-Mediterranean area?

The lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea have never been free from conflict. There are many sorts of conflict and most of them are multi-causal, which makes it difficult to classify them. Below is an attempt to classify at macro-level the main conflicts in the Euro-Mediterranean basin since 2000. Of course, the list is not exhaustive.

Cultural or religious conflicts stem from misunderstandings about cultural or religious values. At a societal level, laws that prohibit the display of religious symbols in secular public schools, as in France or Turkey, or demands to build mosques in Christian European countries being rejected can be related to cultural and religious conflicts, either as causes or consequences of conflict. Some conflicts at the macro-level may also have a religious dimension, which can be considered together with some other reasons for the conflict.

Immigration conflicts arise when the right to free movement clashes with states' frontiers and national policies. Preventing entry of immigrants into a country or a region, repatriation by the government of immigrants without residence permits, or the difficult living conditions these people have to cope with who have no right to live in that country, can be listed as immigration conflicts.

Political conflicts happen when a political system does not correspond to the specificities or demands of its population. Many political conflicts are related to political groups that feel under-represented and claim a specific political representation (for instance, the Kurds in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, the Basques in Spain, the Chechens in Russia, Russians in Latvia), or reflect a state's intention to rule a territory inhabited by "their" people. In some other cases, political conflicts are due to internal tensions between polarised parties (in Algeria and Egypt between the government and religious parties, in Lebanon between religious and political parties and communities).

Territorial conflicts occur when there is disagreement about control of a territory or a claim to historic rights over the land (for example, aspects of the Israel–Palestine conflict that relate to religiously symbolic sites; also the conflicts in Western Sahara with Morocco, and in Nagorno Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan). Other territorial conflicts relate to strategic reasons and/or the use or possession of territories which are rich in natural resources, such as water.

➜ 9.2.2 Conflict styles: attitudes to conflict[12]

We can identify five attitudes to conflict. If we consider conflict as a cycle that might become violent if the opposing parties cannot reach a reasonable agreement, ignoring conflict (or making no effort to resolve it) is not a positive attitude. The attitude is commonly known as avoidance.

Avoidance can be related to fear or apathy: considering conflicts at a group level, people might avoid conflicts if they feel that their objectives are not so important that they are worth the effort of a confrontation through conflict. When people choose to deal with conflict, rather than avoid it, they often adopt one of four other attitudes: competition, submission, co-operation or compromise.

Competition is when one party's desire is to win and there is no concern if the other side loses. A competitive attitude does not aim to reach a reasonable agreement with the other party, but rather to achieve exclusively one's own objectives. Many sports and competitions, and relations between companies and political parties for example, are based on the principle "I win – you lose".

Submission refers to a preference for maintaining a good relationship with the other party, rather than defending one's own interests. Familial or friendship relations are those where submission is common. Submission may be seen as the opposite of competition.

Co-operation is when the interests and relationships of all sides involved in a conflict are taken into account, and often respected. The will to preserve a positive relationship with the other party does not necessarily mean giving up one's objectives (as in submission); the co-operative attitude aims to achieve both at the same time.

Compromise is the fifth possible attitude. Since reaching full co-operation is very difficult, both parties may try to win on what they consider the most important points, though they cannot expect to achieve all their objectives.

None of these attitudes is bad *per se*. When there is a conflict, each party needs to think to what extent their objectives and relationships are important for them, before determining which attitude will be the most appropriate to adopt. Be aware, though, that being always competitive or always submissive may lead to unsustainable situations or relations; co-operation is the most sustainable in the long term. The five attitudes can be represented diagrammatically, as shown in Figure 92.[13]
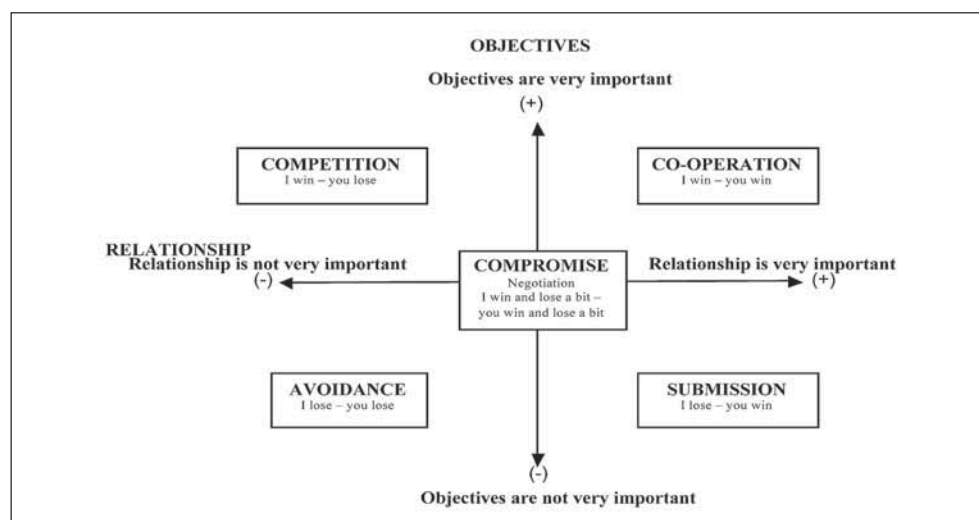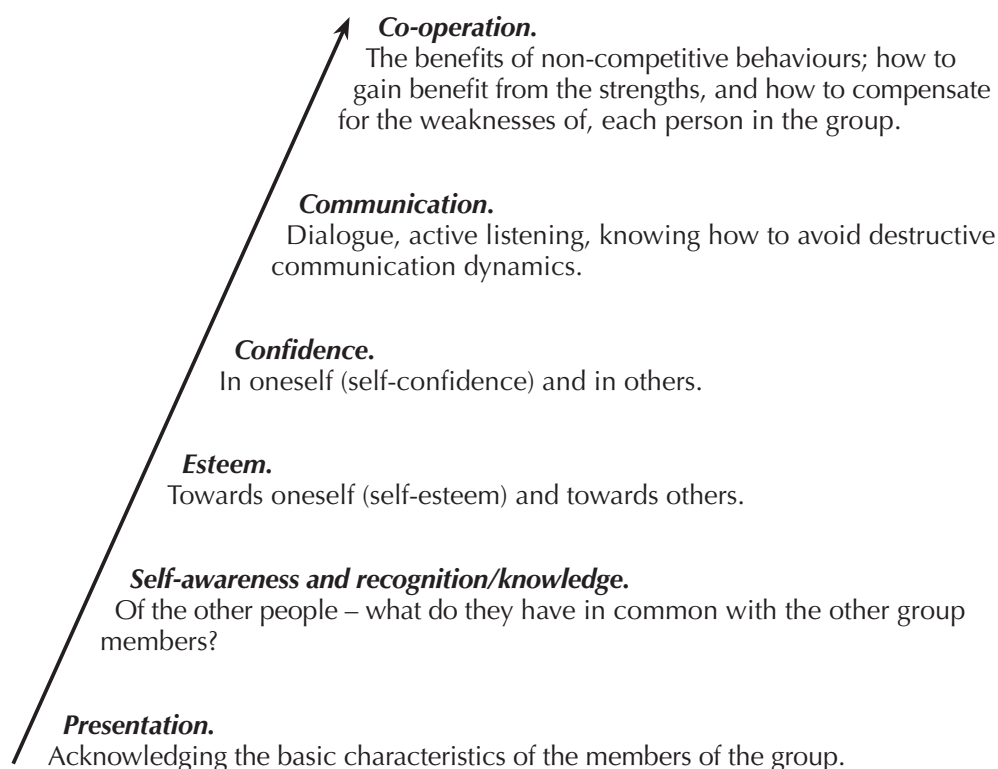

Figure 9.2: Five attitudes to conflict

Q: Is there any attitude that you adopt more than others in different contexts: with your parents, brothers, sisters or friends? at school, university or work?

➜ 9.2.3 Tools for dealing with conflict

There are several ways and opportunities to intervene in a conflict: conflict prevention (before any conflict has arisen) and, if a conflict emerges, conflict negotiation and mediation.

Conflict provention

As opposed to "prevention", which would suggest a desire to avoid conflict, Burton[14] refers to "provention" – meaning the skills that can be learned in order to deal with conflicts. Provention skills – some of them at the individual level, some at the group level – are shown in Figure 9.3.

Co-operation.
  The benefits of non-competitive behaviours; how to gain benefit from the strengths, and how to compensate for the weaknesses of, each person in the group.

Communication.
  Dialogue, active listening, knowing how to avoid destructive communication dynamics.

Confidence.
  In oneself (self-confidence) and in others.

Esteem.
  Towards oneself (self-esteem) and towards others.

Self-awareness and recognition/knowledge.
  Of the other people – what do they have in common with the other group members?

Presentation.
  Acknowledging the basic characteristics of the members of the group.

Figure 9.3: Provention

In a youth activity, many of these skills can be introduced by youth leaders using methodologies and approaches that are common in non-formal education. Note that each skill must be exercised in turn, starting with presentation: showing confidence in the group might seem artificial if one did not yet know the people, and so on.

Communication is a key concept in conflict provention. A dialogue must be based on active listening, and on speaking that focuses on one's own needs. Active listening allows people to do more than just understand the content of the message of the other. It consists of making the other feel that they are being listened to, by means of body language, facial expression, nodding, asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing and so on.

"I-message" is an effective non-violent communication tool based on the following principles:[15]

- Talk about yourself, not about the other.
- Focus the discussion on your feelings, rather than on facts.
- Talk as dispassionately as possible; avoid using negative adjectives.

Using the "I-message" prevents you from accusing the other of negative things, and focuses instead on how those negative things make you feel. The basic structure of the "I-message" would be: I feel ... (*expression of the emotion you feel*) ... when .... (*explanation of the situation that makes you feel this way*) ... because ... (*telling what your needs are*) ... and I would like... (*proposing a different situation that you would have preferred instead*).

> **Q: Can you reformulate a discussion that you have recently had, using the I-message structure?**

Conflict negotiation[16]

The basis of conflict negotiation rests on the ability to distinguish between the person, the process and the problem (the 3 Ps): the "Person" refers to the main actors involved in the conflict; the "Process" is the way the actors deal with the conflict; and the "Problem" is the objectives of the actors involved in the dispute.

Why is it so important to differentiate between these three aspects of a conflict? As stated above when describing the co-operative attitude, being willing to defend strongly one's own objectives does not necessarily mean behaving aggressively towards the opposite party. On the other hand, being willing to maintain a positive relationship with the other party does not necessarily mean having to give up one's own objectives: the aim of learning to distinguish the 3 Ps is to act differently with each P, as in Table 9.1.

How do people behave towards …	… the Person?	… the Problem?	… the Process?
When they avoid conflicts	with indifference	with indifference	they keep outside
When they compete	aggressively	aggressively	aggressively
When they submit	gently	gently	gently
When they co-operate	sensitively	firmly	equitably

Table 9.1: How do people behave towards the 3 Ps?

One of the most common reactions when there is a conflict with someone is to treat that person badly. People usually personalise the problem, confusing Person and Problem as if they were the same thing; instead of thinking that they have a conflict with someone, they think the actual person is the problem. The first step in dealing with a conflict, therefore, is to try to be sensitive towards the other party involved, while staying firm with one's own objectives and being equitable throughout the process.

What is known about the 3 Ps?		
Person	**Process**	**Problem**
• *Perceptions* play an important role in conflicts, as they may influence the behaviour of each involved person. • When strong *emotions* are involved, they may interfere negatively in relations with the other party. Thus, it is important to learn how to deal with them. • *Power* between parties must be balanced. Otherwise the result of the conflict negotiation might be unfair to the weaker party. If power is not balanced, the weaker party has to find ways of empowering its side. • The public *reputation* of the other party as well as oneself must be respected at all times.	• The process of a conflict is usually seen as a *curve*, because it has positive and negative fluctuations. It is important to keep this in mind so as to stop the negative dynamics and make use of the most positive ones. • *Communication* can be a source of misunderstanding or mutual accusation. It is important to avoid accusations, insults and generalisations, and instead practise positive communication skills. • Basic *rules* of the process can be established to ensure that the process is fair for all involved (who will negotiate, which aspects will be negotiated, how long everyone will speak, etc.)	The trick to finding solutions to problems is to be able to find the way to dismantle positions to reach common objectives: • *Positions* are where opponents start in a negotiation. One party's position is usually completely opposite to the other party's; it seems difficult to make the two positions compatible. • The *needs (or interests)* are what are behind the position: they are the fundamental reason why opponents adopt one position or another. • Negotiating the problem requires attaining the objectives of the parties (which may be subconscious) by finding a way to make them *compatible*.

Table 9.2: What is known about the 3 Ps?

Mediation

If negotiation between the parties does not help them to reach any constructive agreement, there is still another tool with which to manage the conflict. Mediation consists of asking an external party to help find agreement. There are plenty of mediation methods, from the most informal to the most regulated, and many variations according to custom. Any mediation, though, should include:

• the mediator's introduction of the parties and agreement of the rules of the mediation;

• a description of the facts, given by each party in the conflict according to their perceptions;

• after this, the parties in conflict must search for resolutions to the conflict;

• the parties must reach an agreement, while the mediator helps to make its details concrete.

Sulha is a traditional Arab mediation technique.[17] The mediators in *sulha* are the *jaha* (people respected by the community) and they must be invited to mediate by the offender's family. Then the *jaha* must investigate the facts. Each party in the conflict lists their losses in the conflict and the one that lost the most is compensated by the other. Once this is done, there is a ceremony of *musalaha* (reconciliation) where the parties exchange greetings and apologies, shake hands under the supervision of the *jaha (musafaha)*, and the offending party visits the house of the offended family to drink coffee, and then invites them to a meal.

9.3 The 'image of the enemy'

→ 9.3.1 Prejudice and hatred

The previous section showed the importance of learning to differentiate between the 3 Ps. In this section, we focus on what happens when two Ps (Person and Problem) are blurred – a double process that personalises the Problem and dehumanises the Person in the 'image of the enemy'.

The 'image of the enemy' is such a negatively distorted representation of the other party that it reaches the point of dehumanising them as "it", even justifying a violent attitude towards "it".[18] Whereas an enemy is "a person or a group of persons perceived to represent a threat or to be hostile towards the perceiver",[19] the 'image of the enemy' is the distorted representation that people have of this person or group. For example, xenophobia, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "a morbid fear of foreigners or foreign countries", is an aspect of the 'image of the enemy' reflected upon "foreigners" or "strangers". However, from a more general standpoint, an enemy could be anybody or any group from whom a threat or hostility is perceived.

Usually, the 'image of the enemy' appears in deeply divided societies, where there is little contact between the opposite groups. The 'image of the enemy' can apply to all levels of conflict: between opponents in an armed conflict; between opposite parties in a polarised society; or towards an immigrant from a culturally different background. It can be spontaneously perceived or induced by some political interest or even by a single person. When that image is shared by a group of people, it gets stronger, deeper and increasingly polarised.

There are two main factors that generate such a distorted representation: one is the feeling of being under threat, and the other is the inability to overcome prejudices and stereotypes.

Feeling of being under threat

People have fundamental needs they need to satisfy; if they perceive one of their needs as under threat, an 'image of the enemy' can arise. This is a non-exhaustive list of some of those needs:

- biological needs, like access to food, the opportunity to sleep and rest;
- security needs, like physical security from threats to life or other types of direct violence;
- autonomy needs, like the opportunity to have a job with a decent salary, to have a place to live;
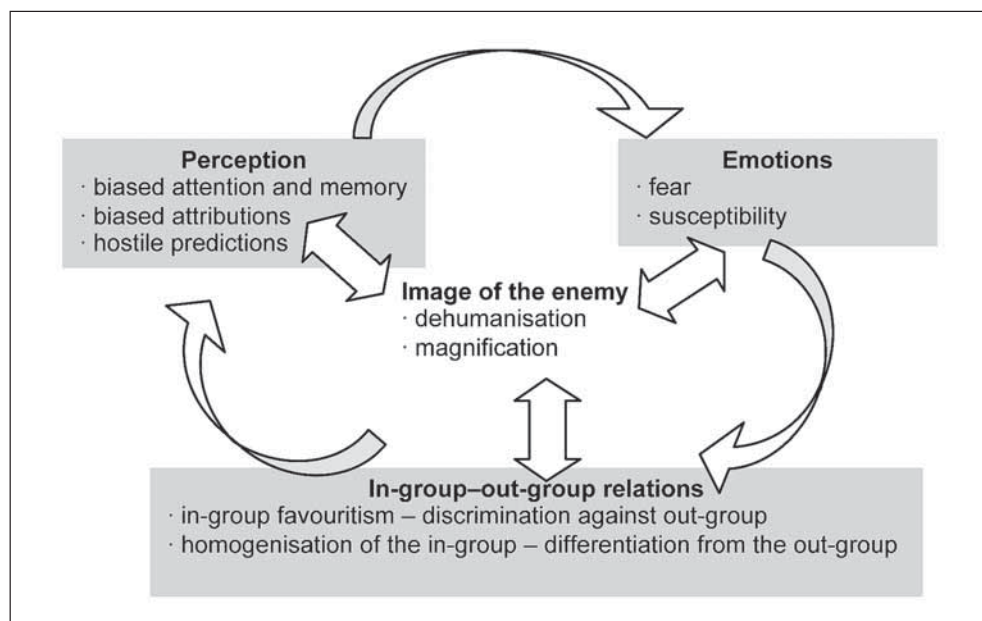
- identity needs, like the fact of being recognised in the way that one defines oneself; this can be linked to culture, language, territory, religion, sexual orientation, political ideas or values;
- relationship needs, like having close relationships with family and friends, receiving affection.

Inability to overcome prejudices and stereotypes about the other[20]

Everyone has prejudices and stereotypes; if we are not aware of them and how they can modify our behaviour, it is difficult to overcome them. But perceiving others through the 'image of the enemy' goes beyond having prejudices and stereotypes: it reaches the extreme point of removing all human characteristics. For example, look at how enemies are portrayed in times of war.

➜ 9.3.2 Psychology of the 'image of the enemy'[21]

Seeing the other party through the 'image of the enemy' is related to some psychological reactions that people have as individuals and as a group. These reactions condition the way they perceive the information they obtain about the enemy, vivify some of their emotions and generate strong group feelings with regard to the enemy group.

Perception
· biased attention and memory
· biased attributions
· hostile predictions

Emotions
· fear
· susceptibility

Image of the enemy
· dehumanisation
· magnification

In-group–out-group relations
· in-group favouritism – discrimination against out-group
· homogenisation of the in-group – differentiation from the out-group

Figure 9.4: The 'image of the enemy' – perceptions and feelngs

As the word "image" reveals, the 'image of the enemy' depends strongly on perceptions. Studying the 'image of the enemy', psychologists have identified the following bias in perceptions:

- Biased attention and memory: people do not remember all the information they get in the same way. When they have an enemy, they tend to focus especially on the negative information about it, rather than taking a balanced approach. This reaction is then stored in the memory in the same manner: one will remember much more easily negative information about the enemy than positive information.

- Biased attributions: when people receive information about the enemy, about its good and bad actions (good and bad from their point of view), they believe that the bad actions have been taken because the enemy is naturally bad; while the good actions have been taken because the enemy had no other option, because it was compelled to do good by external circumstances.

- Hostile predictions: the feeling of being threatened makes people expect the worst from the other party. Usually they over-estimate its destructive capacity.

Because the 'image of the enemy' usually appears in contexts of competition or in cases of cruel violence, the emotions involved are usually very strong, especially fear. The perception of threat will most probably generate feelings of anxiety, insecurity and alertness. Usually, the level of fear is disproportionate to the real threat. This can lead people to take measures to protect themselves or even to plan or carry out pre-emptive actions. Fear makes people susceptible: they take everything connected with their relation with the enemy really seriously. They consider all that the enemy says or does as defiance or an attack on them, their needs or values, and attach enormous significance to this.

An in-group and out-group form when the 'image of the enemy' is not between two people but between groups. The effect of subjectivity is greatly amplified, favouring the in-group ("the group I belong to") and distancing the out-group ("the group I don't belong to", the others or, in the worst case, the enemy).

- In-group favouritism: in most cases, belonging to a group influences people, so they judge with benevolence and understanding the members of the in-group while judging severely the members of the enemy group. This tendency is also known as "double standards".

- Homogenisation of the in-group/differentiation from the out-group: belonging to a group confronted by another group provokes a double reaction of homogenisation and differentiation. The need to find cohesion in the in-group makes people underestimate the differences between the members of their own group, while it enhances perceptions of the differences between "us" and "them", between the in-group and the out-group. Two firm groups are created, with little space to dissent inside each group.

All these reactions lead to an 'image of the enemy' characterised by dehumanisation and magnification. What does this image look like?

- Dehumanised: people confer on the enemy non-human characteristics that exclude it from the category of human being. It can be considered as an animal or as the devil, and even be treated as an object without life, forgetting that it has fears, feelings, family and friends just like other people.

- Magnified: people tend to consider the enemy as bigger, more powerful and more cruel than it really is.

Developing an 'image of the enemy' is quite common in a context of conflict. Unfortunately, developing this perception does not help at all to find constructive resolutions to that conflict. On the contrary, it makes dialogue between opponents much more difficult, increases suspicion of and lack of confidence in the other, and generates increasing polarisation.

Q: Can you apply this to the way an enemy is portrayed, in the media, for example?

➜ 9.3.3 'Images of the enemy' around the Mediterranean

Generalisations are often misleading and untrue because they are general statements or opinions based on observation of single or limited instances, on a few cases or on incomplete knowledge. The 'image of the enemy' tends to generalise and mix concepts, and to attribute to the enemy characteristics, values or ideas that may not always correspond to it. An example of crossed misperceptions in the Euro-Mediterranean area is the way Arabs and Europeans see each other.

Europeans think that Arabs ...	Arabs think that Europeans...
• are fundamentalist, extremist, radical Islamists • are stuck in the past • do everything they do because it is written so in the Koran • are male chauvinists	• are materialists and consumerists • are atheists, and have no morals at all • believe they are always right and are arrogant

Table 9.3: Negative perceptions between Arabs and Europeans[22]

Q: Does this correspond to your perceptions?

To overcome the 'image of the enemy', it is very important to clarify the concepts that are relevant to the Euro-Mediterranean countries, concepts which have often been misused throughout history.[23] In this T-Kit, it is important to focus on those referring to Muslims and Jews, as unfortunately anti-Judaism (and anti-Semitism) and Islamophobia can be found everywhere (see Table 9.4). But a similar clarification of concepts can be applied to other minorities in Mediterranean countries, to Americans or others, as prejudice and stereotypes are often prevalent for these groups too.

Jewish ≠ Zionist ≠ Israeli	Arab ≠ Muslim ≠ Islamist
Jewish: A person who follows the religion of Judaism. **Zionism**: Political ideology that considers that the Jews must live in a Jewish state. Originally, Zionism did not specify which piece of land this state should be located on. The idea of Zionism was conceptualised at the end of the 19th century by Theodor Herzl. **Zionist**: A person who believes in the ideas of Zionism. **Israeli**: A citizen of the state of Israel. **Anti-Judaism**: Hostile attitude to Judaism. **Anti-Zionism**: Being against the idea of Zionism and its followers. **Anti-Israelism**: Hostile attitude to the State of Israel. **Anti-Semitism**: Hostility to Jews as a religious or minority group, often accompanied by social, economic and political discrimination. It is a combination of power, prejudice, xenophobia and intolerance of Jewish people.[24]	**Arab**: A person whose native language is Arabic[25] and a member of the group that has historically lived in the Arabian peninsula. **Muslim**: A person who follows the religion of Islam. **Islamism**: Political ideologies that consider that Islam is not only a religion but also a political system and that its teachings should be pre-eminent in all facets of society.[26] There are many trends in Islamism, from more conservative to more liberal. **Islamist**: A person who believes in the ideas of Islamism. **Islamophobia**: A fear of Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them.[27] It is a form of prejudice, suspicion and ignorance, and in some cases can result in physical and verbal harassment and discrimination.[28]

Table 9.4: Common conceptions of Jews and Muslims

A second set of concepts whose manipulation reveals an internalised 'image of the enemy' is the set of concepts referring to the use of violence (see Table 9.5), as terrorist or as freedom fighter.

Terrorist ≠ Resister ≠ Jihadist
Terrorism: "Any action … that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of that act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act."[29]
Resistance: International humanitarian law recognises the right to fight for self-determination, and the right to fight against an occupation. At the same time, the same law forbids any attack against civilians.
Jihad: This refers to the obligation incumbent on all Muslims, individuals and the community, to follow and realise God's will: to lead a virtuous life and to extend the Islamic community through preaching, education, example, writing, etc. Jihad also includes the right, indeed the obligation, to defend Islam and the community from aggression. Despite the fact that Jihad is not supposed to be used for aggressive warfare, it has been so used by some rulers, governments and individuals.[30]

Table 9.5: Terrorist or freedom fighter?

Another concept relevant to the 'image of the enemy' is that of double standards: applying a set of principles differently – usually more rigorously – to one group of people or circumstance than to another.[31] It especially refers to the moral code that applies more severe standards of sexual behaviour to women than to men. For example, a husband assumes the right to go out with friends in the evening, but does not let his wife do the same. This is a form of behaviour widely found in daily life, and it is "a bias or favouritism based on social class, rank, gender, ethnicity or other distinctions".[32] Discrimination and double standards are closely related: they are cause and effect.

Double standards

To understand how much the terms people use depend on perceptions, an experiment was conducted in 2001 about perceptions of terrorism:[33] 500 Israeli Jews, 500 Arab Israelis and 1 300 Palestinians were asked to consider if some examples of attacks were terrorism or not. The examples were carefully balanced: four were perpetrated by Israeli Jews, three by Palestinians and one by an Arab Israeli, and they were very similar in characteristics, with the same number of deaths and the same kind of victim (politician/civilian).

The results showed that about 16% of the Palestinians defined a Palestinian act of violence as terrorism, while at least 90% defined a similar Israeli act as terrorism. Similarly, less than 19% of the Israeli Jews labelled Israeli acts as terrorism, while more than 90% defined the Palestinian acts of violence as terrorism. The Arab Israelis' perception was closer in each case to that of the victims: when Israelis were the perpetrators, their perception was closer to that of Palestinians; when the perpetrators were Palestinians, their perception was closer to that of Israeli Jews.

Q: What conclusions can you draw from the example of double standards above? Can you also see any examples of how perceptions shape your own value judgements in your daily life?

➜ 9.3.4 Dealing with the 'image of the enemy'

Below there are six tips to help deal with the 'image of the enemy' and to limit its importance. These tips can be applied to individuals, and/or to groups with regard to societal 'images of the enemy'. As the following diagram shows, the tips derive from the idea of learning how to distinguish between the Person and the Problem.
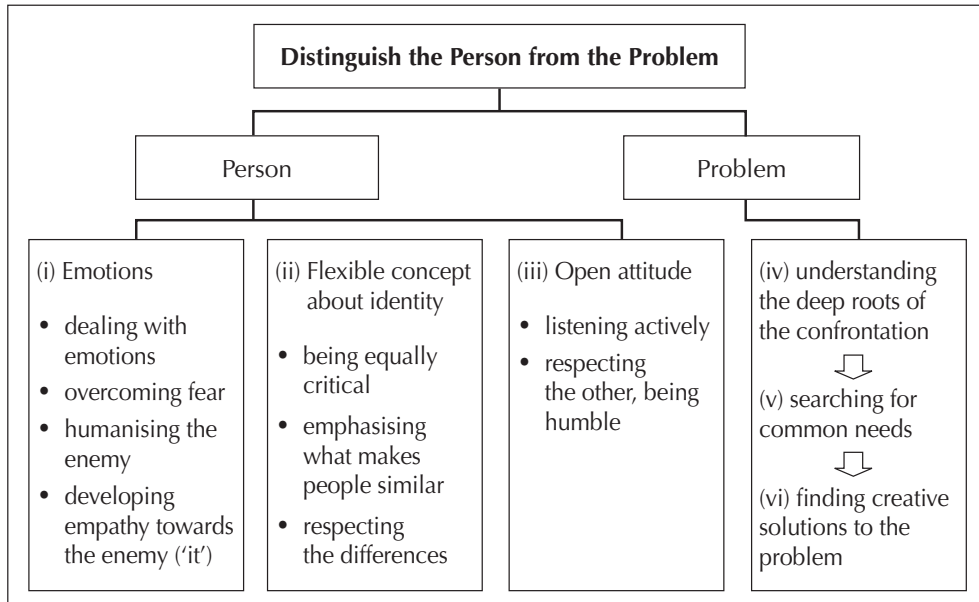
Distinguish the Person from the Problem			
Person		**Problem**	
(i) Emotions • dealing with emotions • overcoming fear • humanising the enemy • developing empathy towards the enemy ('it')	(ii) Flexible concept about identity • being equally critical • emphasising what makes people similar • respecting the differences	(iii) Open attitude • listening actively • respecting the other, being humble	(iv) understanding the deep roots of the confrontation ⇩ (v) searching for common needs ⇩ (vi) finding creative solutions to the problem

Figure 9.5: Tools for dealing with the 'image of the enemy

Emotions

Dealing with emotions: Emotions are spontaneous reactions; one cannot be blamed for feeling them. Frustration or fear must not be covered up, but instead dealt with in a way that prevents reflecting them onto someone else. Although it can be natural to feel rage towards somebody at a specific moment, this does not allow one to be violent towards this person. When emotions come to distort relations between people, it is better to express one's feelings by oneself (by shouting, having a shower, crying, doing sport: whatever works) or share those feelings with a trustworthy person. In violent contexts, it is a real challenge to learn how to transform rage into constructive forms and not perpetuate the circle of violence. The search for justice or respect for human rights can be a way to manage anger constructively.

Overcoming fear: Even though fear is not in itself a destabilising emotion (it can help to protect a person from real threats), in some cases it can become a problem. This can happen when, feeling fear of a person, one behaves violently towards 'it' (the enemy) or becomes paralysed. More than once, fear has been deliberately exploited as an instrument to justify greater military spending or to distract attention from internal problems. To overcome fear, it might be useful to think about the possible hidden objectives that others might have in fomenting a culture of fear.

> **Q: What might specific groups (the government, political groups) gain from generating fear about, for example, the people of a neighbouring state or a minority group of people?**

Humanising the enemy: Feeling fear has much to do with ignorance about the other party, because when people see 'it' as an enemy, they forget that 'it' has feelings (including the same fear that they themselves feel), that 'it' has friends, family, hobbies and in fact probably more than one thing in common with themselves. To learn about how 'its' life must be, to remember that 'it' is also a person and that 'it' has weaknesses just as ordinary people do, can help us to perceive 'it' less as an enemy and more as a human being.

Developing empathy with the enemy: A step beyond remembering that the enemy is human is to develop empathy with it. This means trying to identify with and understand the emotions of the enemy. Note that putting oneself in someone else's shoes is different from sharing or justifying their motives or values; it is related mainly to their feelings. In cases where it is particularly difficult to achieve empathy, where the parties have suffered strong and painful emotions, for example, each party must at least reach the stage of recognising that "the other" party has also been a victim or has relatives who have suffered as much as "we" have.

> Many youth projects have brought together people who had been on opposite sides in a war, in order to promote empathy between them. These programmes rely on expressing and hearing the war experiences of others, and recognising the other party's pain and their status as victims. This is the real potential of youth programmes and projects!

Reaching a flexible concept of self-identity and group identity

As already stated, one of the causes of seeing the other party through the 'image of the enemy' is the fear that other cultures, other values, other ways of doing things may put one's own identity in danger. This perception of threat results from the perception that identity, as a person or as a group, is or must be fixed. However, since one's identity changes with one's age, the people around one at different stages in life, one's circumstances and other factors, it is logical to suppose that one's cultural identity, the identity of one's own society, also evolves.

To be equally critical of their own identity as they are of others', people must try to preserve the aspects of their identity that they consider more positive and to modify those that they consider negative. At the same time, they should enrich themselves with the aspects of the other people's identities that they consider positive, and reject those that seem negative.

Emphasising similarities: Although it might seem difficult, it is quite easy to think that, for example, a Jordanian person has many things in common with an Israeli: age, gender, fears, likings and expectations from life. To make the effort to find aspects that are similar instead of emphasising differences is an easy way to break down barriers between people. It is especially effective with young people because they have many concerns and areas of interest in common.

Respecting differences: People must also respect what makes them different and see this as natural. This exercise must be done in an equal way, without considering differences as a reason for superiority or inferiority, and with an effort to understand this diversity.

To promote flexible and open concepts of identity, youth associations can develop inter-cultural learning training events that focus on the multiple origins of everyone's identity as an effective way of promoting flexible concepts of identity.[34] Any other activities (arts, music, dance) that bring people from different cultural backgrounds together can also be very effective.

Having an open attitude

Dialogue is very often mentioned as a means of understanding people's views. Unfortunately, dialogue does not usually take place with a truly open attitude, so it is important to emphasise actively listening to the other party, listening from a position of equality. This requires a predisposition to meet the other, an attitude of sincerity and good will.

To recognise that every person deserves respect, that everybody has good points, is an exercise that requires:

- respect for people who have divergent ideas; disagreeing with the opinions or customs of others must not mean deriding or undervaluing the people who defend them;

- trying not to think ill of others, with an attitude that does not interpret their errors as a result of their perverse nature or their successes as stemming from external causes or hidden agendas;

- self-criticism, being well-disposed towards recognising one's own errors and being as critical of oneself as of others;

- being content-centred and accepting ideas and proposals from others when they are good, instead of rejecting them because they are put forward by the enemy;

- the establishment of a relationship based on equality with the other party, without arrogance or positions of superiority.

What are the causes?

Confrontations may have deep roots. Thinking that "the other is the problem" is to run the risk of forgetting that the problem has a cause, leading to the sterility of competition and disqualification of the other party, moving away from the reasons that gave rise to the conflict. It is important, then, to focus on the ideas that are, or might be, causes of the conflict.

If relations between members of a youth group are distorted by the 'image of the enemy', it may be useful for both parties, together or separately, to reflect on what might be the original causes of the confrontation. Trying to agree what are the causes of conflict is an important step towards measures of rapprochement.

Search for common needs

All sides in a dispute can have common needs, despite the most obvious differences. Even the bitterest rivals can have similar needs. The need to live in peace in a secure environment is a good example. Increased social spending instead of military spending

is another 'need' that might benefit the great majority of the population. Certainly, the populations of two states might prefer their taxes to be dedicated to services for their community (improving education and health, say) rather than to eliminating people in the enemy community. Searching for common needs and making people aware of them will help to create links between opponents.

> In 1998, two young people did a bicycle tour from Switzerland to Turkey to collect money to bring together three young people each from Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus. Once together, these six leaders debated and designed a common agenda – what the needs of both communities in the island were – and returned to their communities to implement it.

Finding creative solutions

One way to find solutions for complex conflicts is to look beyond the usual options. To make an effort to be creative and imaginative can facilitate the process of finding solutions to a problem. Finding inspiration from all possible fields (other cultures or other professions, for instance) and not rejecting any new idea right away can help to find those solutions.

9.4 Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation is the process by which conflicts – such as ethnic, religious or political ones – are transformed into peaceful outcomes.[35] Miall states that "contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win–win outcomes" because "the very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships that extend beyond the particular site of conflict."[36] So, conflict transformation is "a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict."[37]

➜ 9.4.1 Non-violence and empowerment

Non-violence, the term used by Gandhi, is based on *ahimsa* ('non-injury to all living beins') and refers to the absence of any harm to others. It means an active attitude that rejects any kind of violence (violent conflict, occupation, undemocratic political structures, unfair economic systems, etc.) and transforms it in a constructive way. The underlying idea of non-violence is that the means must match the aims, so it is important to promote peace without violence to the enemy.

> The Arabic concept of *sabr* ('patience') can be related to non-violence. Where impatience may mean violent reaction, *sabr* is the virtue of patience, waiting without hustle, and thus a non-violent reaction.

Empowerment means being aware of the sources of power that one can have as a person and in a group. This definition includes support and development, and their role in strengthening the person and/or group. It claims an alternative concept of power – not a means of imposing one's opinions on the enemy, but being able to find

a solution with the enemy, without necessarily yielding to the enemy's preferred option. This alternative concept rejects the idea of power as physical force and strength. It has a double aim: to balance power between the parties in conflict (so the weaker party gets more power) and to feel/be aware that people have the capacity to transform society.

How to get more power

As a person:

- develop such skills as self-confidence, self-esteem or assertiveness;
- self-empowerment: know the strongest sources of power one has, and use them.

As a group:

- strengthen the group: create a climate of affection and confidence in the group, improving communication skills, encouraging co-operation and so on.
- learn methods: how to reach consensus, how to plan strategic actions, how to achieve non-violent action, how to formulate projects, how to negotiate with others in the group.
- learn content: receive training on peace education, intercultural learning, peace building, development, human rights, democratic participation.

Sources of Power

Power from motivation comes from the capacity to believe in the project and be able to encourage people to participate in it, to have time and energy to dedicate to it and the like.

Power from affection means knowing how to create a positive atmosphere in groups, how to listen, how to be sensitive to people's problems, how to deal with conflicts within the group.

Power from experience resides in knowing how to analyse situations, being familiar with useful theories.

Management power is related to the capacity to facilitate meetings, know where to find funding, have connections with influential people and so on.

Q: What sources of power have you got?

➜ 9.4.2 What can we do? Peace-building

Peace-building is the full range of approaches, processes and stages needed to transform relationships and governance modes and structures to make them more sustainable and peaceful.

For a long time, peace-building activities have been delegated to international organisations such as the United Nations, or have been perceived as initiatives of individual states, but experience shows that many useful things can also be achieved at grass-roots levels and that many organisations may have a substantial say in them. To commit oneself to promoting peace might seem very difficult but, if many youth associations have achieved it, it means it is possible.

Peace can be built by actions in three main areas:

- stopping violence and its effects,
- addressing the root causes of conflict,
- creating the means to confront violence.

An armed conflict has terrible consequences, from the immediate victims of violence to longer-term damage, such as hatred or psychological trauma. Many actions can be undertaken in the shorter term, for instance by denouncing the use of violence through symbolic acts, delivering training about the effects of landmines, addressing refugees or displaced people's basic needs, giving threatened people protective escorts or offering psychosocial support to victims of violence.

Identifying the original causes of violence and intervening in them is the best way to make sure that violence will not resume. These actions must be considered from a much longer-term perspective. Actions that may be undertaken include creating job opportunities, enforcing democratic participation and favouring democratic structures.

To stop violence, it is important to help the opposing parties reach agreement, by such means as promoting dialogue between them. At the same time, it is possible to work to empower people against an armed conflict while trying to maintain neutrality with regard to the opposing parties; as a result, people can learn how to reject violence and to act to promote peace. Possible methods include advocacy and lobbying of politicians to negotiate, facilitating dialogue in and between communities, and training people on how to keep neutral from armed actors.

Figure 9.6 shows various actions that could be developed and undertaken in different phases of an armed conflict. Figure 9.7 mentions only a few examples of what can be (and has been!) achieved by young people in different phases of an armed conflict.
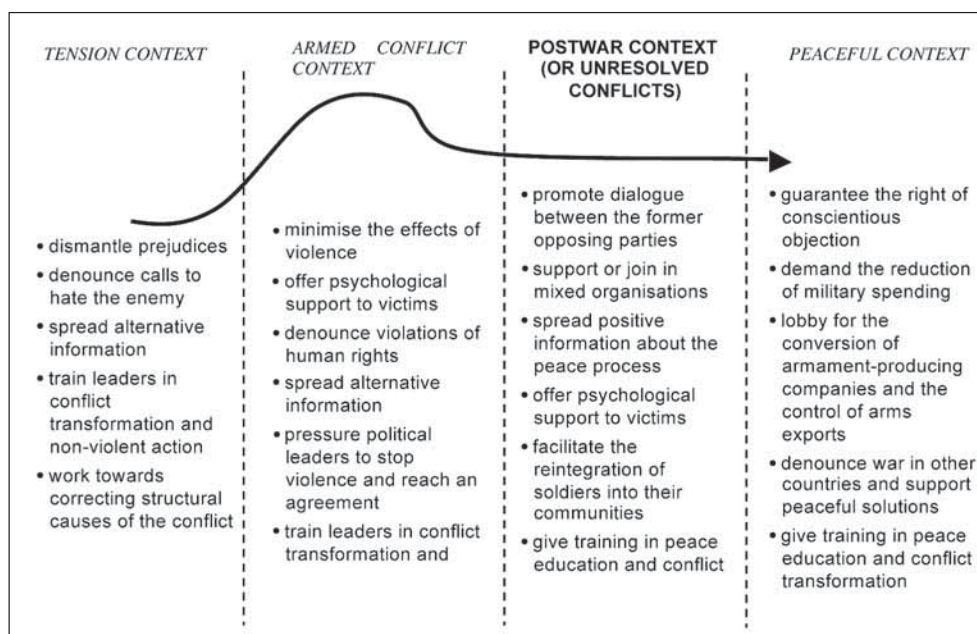
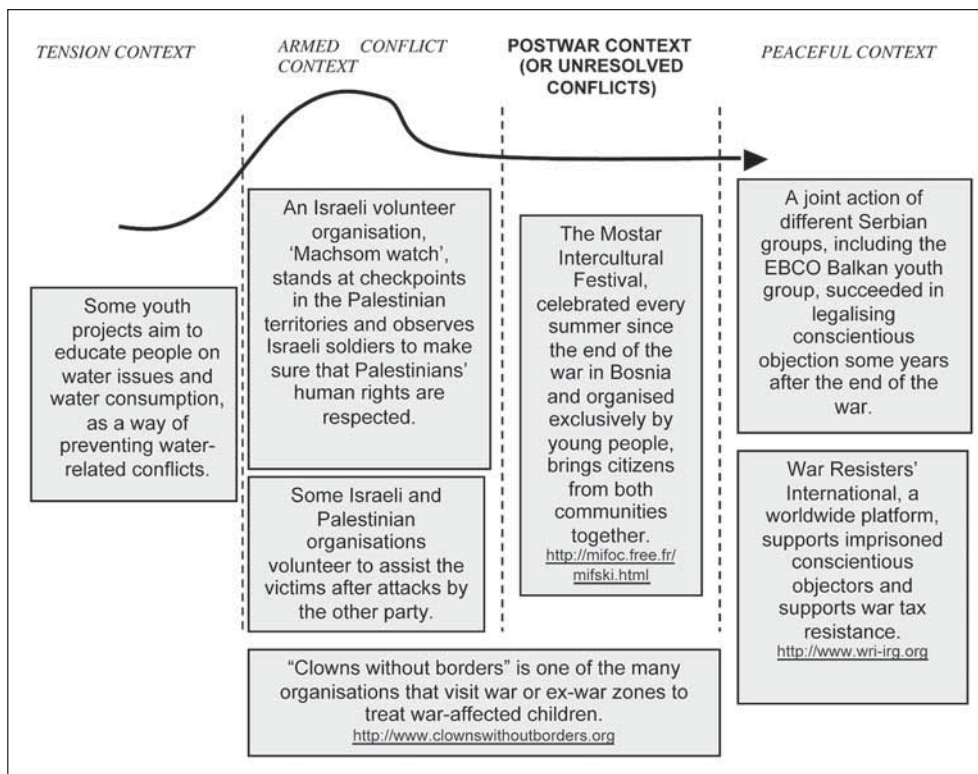**Figure 9.6: Possible actions for peace during an armed conflict**

Figure 9.7: Real actions for peace during an armed conflict

In 1999 the World Conference on Peace took place in The Hague with the participation of thousands of youth activists from a hundred countries. The conference decided on a 50-point plan for global action by governments and civil society. In the publication *Time to Abolish War! A Youth Agenda for Peace and Justice*[39] plenty of examples can be found of what has been done together with plenty of ideas for what can still be done by young people.

➜ 9.4.3 Tools for transforming conflict

Peace-building is a very sensitive area that requires certain competences and abilities. In the 1990s, many NGOs and research centres monitored the positive and negative impacts of peace-building projects in the context of violent conflict. Here are six ideas for youth workers, trainers and youth NGOs, derived from NGO recommendations for effective peace-building projects:

- Dreaming the future. The starting point for designing peace-building projects is to visualise the future one would like to build. Peace practice is sometimes called a "future-orientated approach" – it tries to focus on how to make the future better. For this, plan a creativity exercise about which future the person would like to live in and, from the results, think of the different strategies and concrete steps required to reach that future.

- Analysing the context. Once a strategy to focus on is chosen, it is necessary to analyse the context of the conflict in depth. Many aspects must be considered.

- Defining the project. When defining the project, two objectives must be emphasised: connectors and follow-up. Peace-building projects attach great importance

not only to results but also to the process itself, the way things are done. As one aim of any such project is to (re)build positive relationships between opponents, the project should create the conditions for this by identifying and promoting connectors to build networks. Connectors are factors that link the opposing parties. They may be people or groups of people who reject the division (mixed associations, intellectuals with active roles in understanding the problem, and so on); they may be places where people from both sides go (markets, squares, public transport, hospitals); they may be common values or habits. Those elements that divide societies (dividers) must also be taken into consideration and, if not tackled, at least not reinforced.

- *Implementation of the project:* This requires the capacity to react quickly to external inputs, as many unpredictable events related to the conflict, both opportunities and threats, can happen.

- *Evaluation:* Since evaluation must analyse both the outputs (if the specific objectives of the project have been fulfilled) and the impact (its contribution to peace-building), it needs to be done at different times during the project, when it is finished, and some months or even years later in order to assess its impacts. Evaluation is very important to learn lessons from the project and best practices on peace-building, which can be shared with other associations.

- *Follow-up:* As already mentioned, follow-up is very important to guarantee the effectiveness of the project in the long term, and it must be carefully planned in the definition of the project.

It takes at least the same length of time to rehabilitate a society after a conflict as the length of time that the conflict lasted.[40] Rebuilding destroyed infrastructure, re-forming political institutions and particularly building bridges between people in divided societies all require time, and it is crucial to respect those timings. Thus peace-building actions require a long-term view (more than 20 years). This long-term approach means that the project planning must place special emphasis on how to guarantee the sustainability of the project, by training locals, creating a good working atmosphere in the working group, making people believe in the project, ensuring its long-term financial sustainability, and so on.

Three tips for devising more effective projects

1. Projects can be directed at individuals, at the personal level (to change the attitudes, values and perceptions of individuals) or at the socio-political level (to support the reform of institutions that address the grievances that fuel conflict).
   - To have positive effects on peace, projects focused on the individual/personal must translate the personal transformations into action at the socio-political level. Some, but not all, contexts require the socio-political actions to be translated to the individual level.

2. Projects can affect key people in the conflict or a larger number of people.
   - To be effective, activities that engage more people must be linked to activities that engage key people, and, at the same time, key-people activities must be linked to activities that engage more people.

3. Usually, peace projects work with people who are comparatively easy to reach (children, women, churches, health workers), but few of them move beyond these to actors who are benefiting from the conflict (economic elites, governments), because these are "hard to reach".
   - Involving the "hard-to–reach" is critical to securing peace.

One has to acknowledge that conflicts are very easy to create, but very difficult to resolve or even to ameliorate. However, the complexity and difficulty of the concepts presented in this chapter is proportionate to the effort and commitment required to deal with such issues. Youth work provides a promising opportunity for people who would like to have a positive role in peace-building efforts and deal with the conflicts that people live through every day. A single Euro-Mediterranean youth exchange may not be enough to establish long-lasting peace in the world. However, if the efforts are accompanied by commitment, work and constructive approaches from the young people and youth organisations, then they may bring about a positive change in a lot of young people's lives.

Notes

1. "Peace and violence" in *COMPASS: a manual on human rights education with young people*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003, pp. 376-381. Available at http://eycb.coe.int/compass.

2. Ibid. p. 377.

3. Seminario de Educación para la Paz-APDH (2000) *Educar para la paz: una propuesta posible*, Madrid: La Catarata.

4. Cascón Soriano, P. (2001) *Educar en y para el conflicto* ('Education in and for conflict') Cátedra UNESCO de Paz y Derechos humanos. Available in English or French at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001329/132945m.pdf (accessed 25 March 2007).

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence (accessed 22 October 2008).

8. Galtung, J. (1985) "Twenty-five years of peace research: ten challenges and some responses", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 141-158.

9. Galtung, J. (1990) "Cultural violence", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 291-305.

10. Wallensteen, P. and Sollenberg, M. (2001) "Armed conflict, 1989-2000", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 629-644.

11. Harbom, L. and Wallensteen, P. (2007) "Armed conflict, 1989-2006", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 5, pp. 623-607. For further information, see Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) at www.pcr.uu.se/database or at the School for a Culture of Peace database on armed conflicts at www.escolapau.org/alerta/index.php.

12. The explanation in this section is taken from Cascón Soriano, P. (2001).

13. This schema is taken from Cascón Soriano, P. (2001), p. 7, but the model is very similar to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE Instrument (Mountain View, CA: Xicom and CPP, 1974 by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann) which describes a person's behaviour along two dimensions (assertiveness and co-operativeness) and defines five "conflict-handling modes": competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating. See www.kilmann.com/conflict.html.

14. Burton, J. (1990) *Conflict: resolution and provention*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

15. If you want to know more about nonviolent communication, see Marshall Rosenberg's publications, such as *Nonviolent communication: a language of life*, Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2nd edn (1 September 2003).

16. This section is based on and adopted from Cascón Soriano, P. (2001).

17. Irani, G. (1999). "Islamic mediation techniques for Middle East Conflicts", Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 2; and Jabbour, E. (1998) "Sulha: an ancient Arab peacemaking process", in Non-violent possibilities for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: papers from the Jerusalem conference, September 7-8, 1993, Jerusalem: Palestinians & Israelis for Nonviolence [publisher].

18. From now on, the enemy will be refered to as 'it'. The usage of this term is justified not only by its gender neutrality, but also because it reflects the process of dehumanisation that it generates.

19. Silverstein, B. and Flamenbaum, C. (1989) "Biases in the perception and cognition of the actions of enemies", *Journal of Social Issues*, No. 45, pp. 51-72.

20. For more information on stereotypes and prejudices, see Chapter 3 on Intercultural Learning of this T-Kit.

21. This part is based on VVAA (2005) *Déconstruir l'image de l'enemie.* Bellaterra, Spain: Escola de Cultura de Pau.

22. Adopted from Khader, B. (2004) *Pour un dialogue culturel Euro-Mediterranéen rénové*. Available at: *www.cecod.net/ponencia_bichara_khader.pdf and* www.ewhum.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=38.

23. Some of the concepts in this section are discussed in detail in Chapter 8, 'Religion and tolerance', of this T-Kit.

24. *Education pack: ideas, resources, methods and activities for intercultural education with young people and adults*, 2nd edition, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2004, pp. 34-35.

25. "Arab" (2007) *Encyclopædia Britannica* at www.britannica.com/eb/article-9008139 (retrieved 13 November 2007).

26. "Islamism", Wikipedia, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamism (accessed 13 November 2007).

27. "Discrimination and xenophobia" in *COMPASS: a manual on human rights education with young people*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2nd edn, 2003, pp. 341-342.

28. Introductory speech of Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, in *Islamophobia and its consequences on young people*, seminar report, Council of Europe, 2004, p. 23.

29. United Nations (2004) *A more secure world, our shared responsibility* (Paragraph 164), at: www.un.org/secureworld/report2.pdf (accessed on 5 April 2007).

30. Esposito, J. L. (2002) "What is Jihad?" in *What everyone needs to know about Islam*, Oxford University Press: New York, pp. 117-118.

31. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

32. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_standard.

33. From Shamir, J. and Shikaki, K. (2002) "Self-serving perceptions of terrorism among Israelis and Palestinians", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 23, No. 3, September 2002, pp. 537-557.

34. For further discussions on intercultural learning and identity in the Euro-Mediterranean context, see Chapter 3 on 'Intercultural learning' in this T-Kit.

35. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_transformation (accessed 22 October 2008).

36. Hugh Miall (2004) *Conflict transformation: a multi-dimensional task*, Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, p. 4. Available at: www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/miall_handbook.pdf.

37. Ibid.

38. "Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand" (2007) *Encyclopædia Britannica* at www.britannica.com/eb/article-9109421 (retrieved 5 April 2007).

39. As an official UN document, it can be reached online at www.haguepeace.org/resources/youthAgenda.pdf.

40. Paragraph based on Lederach, J. P. (1998) *Construyendo la paz. Reconciliación sostenible en sociedades divididas* ('Building peace: sustainable reconciliation in divided societies'), Bilbao: Gernika Gogoratuz.