

# The Handbook of Reconciliation in Kenya





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## Table of contents

Foreword	v
Acknowledgements	viii
Handbook summary	x
Abbreviations	xiii
<b>Module 1 • Introduction and overview</b>	<b>1</b>
• Purpose of the Handbook	2
• Overview of the reconciliation process in Kenya	2
• The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation	3
• Community interventions and dialogues on reconciliation	5
<b>Module 2 • Conceptual framework</b>	<b>8</b>
• Introduction	9
• Understanding reconciliation	9
• Unpacking dialogue	18
• Dialogue as a tool for community reconciliation	24
<b>Module 3 • Analysis of community issues</b>	<b>27</b>
• Introduction	28
• Developing a community profile	30
• Identifying community issues	32
• Conflict analysis	33
<b>Module 4 • Trauma and reconciliation</b>	<b>42</b>
• Introduction	43
• What is trauma?	43
• Types of traumatic events	44
• Traumatic events in Kenya's history	46
• Outcomes of trauma	47
• Impact of trauma on reconciliation	51
• Dealing with trauma and helping traumatised individuals and communities	53
• Psychological self-care, or self-help for dialogue facilitators	57

<b>Module 5 • Facilitation of reconciliation dialogues</b>	61
• Overview of the dialogue process	62
• Process design	62
• Practical preparation	76
• The dialogue process	78
• Sustainability of the dialogue	81
 <b>Module 6 • Roles and skills of a facilitator</b>	 84
• Introduction	85
• The framework of the dialogue	85
• Introducing the dialogue	88
• Facilitating the dialogue	92
 Glossary of terms	 101
References	103

## Foreword

In any society recovering from mass violations of human rights and violent conflict, confronting the legacy of violence and injustice is imperative yet no easy feat. In Kenya, ethnic tensions have been an ongoing issue between and among various communities. The post-election violence in from 2007 to 2008 was the climax of deep-rooted historical injustices that had caused ethnic intolerance and tension stemming from independence in 1963 and before.

It would, however, be simplistic to decry the situation in Kenya as evidence of the ethnic tensions of its diverse people. Such an analysis fails to take into consideration the several layers and complexities of Kenyan society as a whole. As elaborated on in the final report by the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) published on 3 May 2013, Kenya's history since independence has significantly contributed to polarisation, marginalisation and physical, emotional and economic scars in society. The pre-independence era of colonial administration contributed as well to the state of play in the nation, particularly in the administration of the country in its formative post-independence years.

Kenya is in a transitional phase and is aspiring to establish sustainable peace by confronting historical injustices and violations of human rights. By the time the 2007 elections unfolded, numerous ethnic groups in the country were polarised and in stiff competition for state power, which guarantees access to state and other resources. The politically motivated ethnic divisions were the spark that ignited the post-election violence. The devastating events that occurred made it necessary for the competing political formations involved in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) mediation process, namely the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU), to discuss the establishment of national mechanisms that would address the deep-seated divisions among the Kenyan people.

Agenda Four of the KNDR recommended the establishment of institutions, including the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), mandated to address issues related to ethnic divisions in the country. In achieving part of its goal, the NCIC partnered with the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), a Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), a South African non-governmental organisation committed to

promoting sustainable reconciliation, transitional justice and democratic nation-building in Africa.

In early 2012, the three institutions launched the tripartite project, Promoting National Cohesion and Reconciliation in Kenya. The project builds on the rationale that reconciliation is key for states that are transitioning from a legacy of human rights violations and mass violence to peace and respect for the rule of law. The benefits of this are that it can contribute to the prevention of a recurrence of violence and provide an opportunity for society to engage in constructing a shared future. The project draws on the shared capacities and experiences of our respective organisations and seeks to build capacity concerning reconciliation-related issues among key stakeholders at all levels.

Drawing on our shared institutional knowledge and experience, and as part of its lasting contribution to capacity-building and skills transfer, the project has developed this Handbook on Reconciliation in Kenya (hereafter the Handbook). The objective of the Handbook is to equip individuals and communities to engage in reconciliation dialogues. A total of 141 persons from all 47 counties of Kenya and from all walks of life have, over the past two years, undergone one of our courses on reconciliation and dialogue. Forty-eight of these participants have also undergone a second course aimed at providing them with skills to conduct similar courses in their respective communities. Many of these highly skilled individuals have also contributed to this Handbook.

It is our hope and ambition that, by sharing our experiences in this Handbook, institutions and practitioners will obtain useful advice on how to contribute to reconciliation processes. The task is not easy and results are not immediately achieved. Reconciliation is a process that will require tireless dedication and broad participation from all parts of society. As partner organisations promoting reconciliation and national cohesion, we have been deeply encouraged by the dedication and conviction of the people with whom we have engaged.

Reconciliation needs to be at the heart of all efforts to build a peaceful future following periods of conflict. It is key to preventing historical injustices spurring renewed conflict. Reconciliation provides the tools necessary to break the cycle of violence and bridge the divide between members of the Kenyan nation. In the run-up to the general election of March 2013, all spheres of society joined hands in campaigns that



promoted peace and national unity. The peaceful election proved to Kenyans and the international community that the country had indeed moved on from a history of election-related violence. The time is now ripe to take advantage of the momentum and the progress made. A key opportunity for sustainable reconciliation rests firmly on promoting dialogue centred on building trust between government structures and the people, and among the people as a nation. A society that strives towards reconciliation must address the challenge of divergent opinions by providing platforms for sincere dialogue at all levels.

The NCIC will advocate for co-ordination of the national and community-based initiatives in respect of reconciliation and dialogue in order to enhance their impact. It will take the commitment, courage and resilience of all to move from a divided past to a shared future. It is up to all members of society and its various institutions and sectors to continue this crucial work.



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## Acknowledgements

This Handbook has been developed to assist reconciliation dialogue facilitators and practitioners to understand the concept of reconciliation and the dialogue process, with the goal of ensuring the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in resolving past and ongoing conflicts. The Handbook is based on the expertise and experiences of the partnering organisations, the NCIC, IJR and FBA, under the Promoting National Cohesion and Reconciliation in Kenya project. The tripartite partnering organisations wish, first and foremost, to acknowledge the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) for its financial support of this project. This made it possible for the partners to realise the set project objectives and to contribute to promoting cohesion in Kenya.

Secondly, the partners acknowledge and thank all of the authors of, and contributors to, this document. These individuals spent countless hours over the past three years researching, writing, brainstorming, consulting, rewriting, organising and formatting this Handbook. The authors and contributors include: Munini Mutuku, Liban Guyo, Elvi Agunda, Allan Ngari, Friederike Bubenzer, Kelly Jo-Bluen, Prof. Tim Murithi, Therese Jönsson, Peter Nordström, Henrik Mungenast, Dr Lukoye Atwoli, Millie Lwanga, Fatuma Mohamed, James Wanyande, Faith Bwibo, Quin Mwendwa, Joyce Mutoka, Tusmo Ogle, Dr Julius Jwan, Parusha Naidoo, Peter Maruga, Abduba Molu, Sam Kona, Levi Obondo, Florence Mpaayei, Babu Ayindo, Dr Godfrey Musila and staff from the partnering organisations.

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Finally, this Handbook would have remained a dream had it not been for the continuous support and guidance provided by Hassan Mohamed OGW, commission secretary of the NCIC, Dr Fanie du Toit, former executive director of the IJR, and Sven-Eric Söder, director-general of the FBA.

To all those who took part in contributing to the Handbook in one way or another, and who have not been mentioned, we sincerely appreciate and acknowledge your support.

## Handbook summary

The Handbook targets practitioners in the field who will be involved in facilitating dialogues in order to promote reconciliation at the community, county and national levels. It is a resource that contains both conceptual and practical tools to equip users for this task. In the Handbook, reconciliation work is introduced through core concepts, skills and ideas. It is designed for both expert trainers and novices.

More specifically, the manual's goals are to:

1. Provide materials that cover the conceptual dimensions of dialogue for the purpose of reconciliation within the Kenyan context;
2. Provide training modules that identify and enhance the necessary skills needed for reconciliation work; and
3. Provide trainers with the necessary considerations to allow them to tailor training to fit participants' needs and their local context.

Within each module, 'Notes for the facilitator' have been included so as to provide activities that can complement the content of the Handbook as well as important information when conducting training.

### Module summaries

1. Module 1 starts off by giving a *contextual overview of the Kenyan situation* with reference to the country's history and the incidences of violence culminating in the 2007/2008 post-poll period that led to the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) process. This process led to the formation of bodies such as the NCIC, whose mandate is to deal with long-standing issues pertaining to ethnic, racial and religious marginalisation of groups within Kenya. The KNDR, in part, also paved the way for the promulgation of the new Constitution of Kenya in 2010. The Constitution presents a strong framework for democracy and human rights and also sets up a devolved system of government that allows citizens closer access to government and authorities. It is within this space that the Handbook hopes to tap into existing localised structures in order to enhance the efforts towards reconciliation through dialogue.

2. The first part of Module 2 on the *conceptual framework* provides a theoretical framework for the key concepts of dialogue and reconciliation. In the second part of the module, the Handbook gives practical background information on the concept of dialogue, on the differences between debate and dialogue, and on the practical process of conducting a dialogue within a community setting. As with Module 1, one of the most important points within this module is that there is a need to place the community context and sensitivity to cultural differences and narratives at the core of any training conducted.
3. Module 3 on *analysis of community issues* begins by defining community social constructions as the various segments within a community that enable its healthy functioning, and by discussing the ways in which progressive and sustainable reconciliation dialogues are hinged on understanding these constructions. As noted above, one of the central roles of the facilitator is to carry out a community analysis and to formulate a statement of the problem that is context-specific, while taking into account issues such as community trauma, as discussed in this module. The module indicates to facilitators the various instruments that should be developed to enable such an analysis and make assessments that will provide reliable information as well as the building blocks for a challenging and creative learning environment for participants. Undertaking community analysis and problem-assessment highlights factors that are critical for a dialogue facilitator to understand when planning a dialogue and guiding the process. Trainers should be familiar with the culture of the participants whom they are training and be sensitive to cultural differences.

When designing training, one of the most important points for facilitators is to ensure that the process and content of the training are context-specific.

4. Module 4 deals with *trauma and reconciliation* and starts off by providing the Handbook user with a general understanding of the meanings, types and outcomes of trauma at the individual and collective level. There is a need for sensitivity in approaching reconciliation in traumatic environments, and the module therefore provides research on case studies that has been carried out to

examine the impact of trauma on reconciliation and forgiveness, research on which facilitators can draw to mitigate retraumatisation. The module also provides suggestions for how to deal with traumatised individuals and groups on both levels, while also focusing on expressions of trauma in the context of a community dialogue. The module concludes by highlighting the risks to the psychological health of dialogue facilitators themselves and provides ways to mitigate the occurrences of burnout and secondary trauma when conducting dialogue (i.e. self-care).

5. Module 5 on the *facilitation of reconciliation dialogues* deals more specifically with practical and logistical considerations when designing a dialogue. Again, many of the issues are context-specific, but this module provides a general overview of the different phases of a dialogue and the role of the facilitator in each phase. The module is divided into: process design; practical preparation; and the dialogue process.
6. The last module, namely Module 6, on the *roles and skills of a facilitator* looks further into the key roles and skills of a dialogue facilitator. The approach taken is that the roles and skills of a facilitator can be learnt, practised and perfected, rather than being a question of personality. The emphasis is, therefore, on *skills* and *roles* rather than *characteristics*. The module is divided into three sections describing the main roles in which the skills of the facilitator are needed: the framework of the dialogue; introducing the dialogue; and, lastly, facilitating the dialogue. Each section looks at the role of the facilitator and the different skills, approaches and techniques that can be used to support a successful dialogue.

If you are still looking for more information, the last section, References, provides resources to help you obtain further information and additional resources.

Expert trainers and practitioners are encouraged to add other insights from their years of practice in reconciliation, peacebuilding, conflict transformation and development work, as well as the research that has accumulated on these topics.

## Abbreviations

<b>ADR</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution
<b>ASD</b>	Acute Stress Disorder
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CAJ</b>	Commission on Administrative Justice
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organisation
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CoK</b>	Constitution of Kenya
<b>CIPEV</b>	Commission of Inquiry into Post-election Violence
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>FBA</b>	Folke Bernadotte Academy
<b>FBO</b>	Faith-Based Organisation
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FRD</b>	Facilitation Of Reconciliation Dialogues
<b>H.E.</b>	His Excellency
<b>Hon.</b>	Honourable
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICD</b>	International Crimes Division
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IIEC</b>	Interim Independent Electoral Commission
<b>IJR</b>	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
<b>IREC</b>	Independent Review Commission
<b>KNCHR</b>	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
<b>KNDR</b>	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
<b>LFA</b>	Logical Framework Analysis
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation

<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCIC</b>	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>No.</b>	Number
<b>ODM</b>	Orange Democratic Movement
<b>PEV</b>	Post-election Violence
<b>PFA</b>	Psychological First Aid
<b>PNU</b>	Party of National Unity
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SATRC</b>	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Agency
<b>TJ</b>	Transitional Justice
<b>TJRC</b>	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>TRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<b>UN</b>	United Nations



## MODULE 1

### **Introduction and overview**

Allan Ngari



## Purpose of the Handbook

This Handbook, developed through the collaborative effort of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), is based on the practice of dialogue as a tool for reconciliation. It is the result of a series of training sessions on reconciliation dialogues in different parts of Kenya conducted in terms of the project, Promoting National Cohesion and Reconciliation in Kenya, that took place across the country during 2012 and 2013. The Handbook is informed by the experiences of the three institutions in engaging communities in dialogues for reconciliation in Kenya, as well as by experiences of previous work of the FBA and IJR in other post-conflict states.

Consequently, the Handbook targets practitioners in the field of reconciliation in Kenya who will be involved in facilitating reconciliation dialogues in order to promote reconciliation at the community, county and national levels.

## Overview of the reconciliation process in Kenya

The independence of Kenya on 12 December 1963 was greeted with enthusiasm by its people. For many years under the British colonial administration, Kenyans of all ethnicities aspired to an independent state and self-governance. In the years following independence, a narrative of exclusion began to emerge in which selected ethnic communities were said to have been solely responsible for the independence struggle. The contribution of Kenya's diverse ethnic landscape to the struggle was reserved for a few ethnic groups. In consequence, state power and resources were allocated to a select few. Deep-seated resentment among Kenya's ethnic groups took root. These differences among the Kenyan people led to marginalisation of communities and to a number of violations of human rights.

The height of ethnic animosity among the Kenyan people was the period immediately after the announcement of the disputed 2007 presidential election results. The most violent and destructive period in the country's history then erupted in various parts of Kenya in late December 2007 and in January 2008. It is estimated that 1 300 lives were lost as a direct result of the violence, and conservative estimates are that

**The post-election violence exposed the tragic consequences of deep-rooted ethnic intolerance, corruption and inefficient governance structures.**

**Confronting this legacy of violence and injustice is necessary if a peaceful future is ever to be achieved.**

350 000 people were internally displaced. Some Kenyans were forced to go to neighbouring countries as a direct result of the post-election violence (PEV). Others remained in exile for fear of persecution. After these events, Kenya's fate as a country in transition was sealed.

It would be incorrect to peg Kenya's transition and the resulting attempts to deal with the past injustices solely on the events following the last general election. The PEV was the culmination of years of tensions in Kenya about issues relating to state power and the control of national resources (primarily land), as well as about unaddressed historical injustices. What the PEV has exposed – not only to Kenyans, but also to the international community at large – are the tragic consequences of deep-rooted ethnic intolerance, corruption and inefficient governance structures. Kenyan society must deal with the physical, emotional and economic scars of its history. In the context of the lack of governance structures and the poor implementation of policies, poverty is widespread and unemployment is rife. There is a general sense of despair, resulting in a disgruntled populace prone to crime and violence. The government and its people have been forced to deal with this difficult past and must forge a way through Kenya's transition to a democratic and socially cohesive nation. Confronting this legacy of violence and injustice is necessary if a peaceful future is ever to be achieved.

## **The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation**

Under the aegis of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities chaired by the former secretary-general of the United Nations, H.E. Dr Kofi Annan, an agenda was developed by representatives of the competing political formations. These new formations were namely: the Party of National Unity (PNU) led by then incumbent President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) led by former Prime Minister Raila Odinga. The political negotiations took the form of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) process, which started on 29 January 2008 and had four key agendas. The first agenda focused on immediate action to stop the violence and restore fundamental rights and liberties. The second focused on immediate measures to address the humanitarian crisis, and to promote reconciliation, healing and restoration. The third was aimed at overcoming the political crisis, and the fourth saw the creation of national commissions that would address and provide solutions to longer-term issues.

On 28 February 2008, the National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement was signed by representatives of the PNU and the ODM, and witnessed by members of the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities. Following the political agreement, a Grand Coalition Government was created with H.E. Mwai Kibaki as the president and the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga as the prime minister of the Republic of Kenya (two principals). A number of institutions for promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation in the country were also created. This included the NCIC, whose mandate provides for the elimination of discrimination in the country based on ethnicity, race and religion.

Eight years since the KNDR process, Kenya remains in a state of transition, aspiring to safeguard democracy and establish lasting peace after the PEV and after decades of systematic human rights abuses by state and non-state actors. Significant progress has been made since the formation of the coalition government. An extensive constitutional reform process led to the promulgation of a new Constitution of Kenya ('the Constitution') in August 2010 – a major milestone in Kenya's history. The constitutional framework is a significant step in the process of addressing the underlying causes of the PEV.<sup>1</sup> The national values and principles of governance in the Constitution provide the necessary legislative and social framework to embark on social cohesion and reconciliation of the Kenyan people.<sup>2</sup>

The constitutional referendum was conducted by the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC), a commission established under Agenda Four of the KNDR and charged with the pivotal task of reforming Kenya's electoral system. The IIEC built on the significant work done by the Independent Review Commission (IREC). The Commission of Inquiry into Post-election Violence (CIPEV), similarly a product of Agenda Four, made remarkable findings in its investigations into the PEV. One of the CIPEV recommendations was to set up a special tribunal for Kenya, which would be a local court with international characteristics, to investigate and prosecute individuals alleged to have committed crimes during the PEV.<sup>3</sup> Following the CIPEV's investigations, a list of ten individuals deemed to be the most responsible for the PEV was handed to H.E. Kofi Annan. The CIPEV's report provided that the failure to abide by its recommendations would result in the two principals referring the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, the Special Tribunal for Kenya Bill, 2009, was defeated in Parliament. The

**Significant progress has been made since the formation of the coalition government.**

**The country stands at the cusp of an unprecedented chance to address past and present injustices.**

prosecutor of the ICC thereafter initiated investigations that led to the confirmation of criminal charges against four Kenyans, and the trials of two of them commenced in September 2013, with that of current President Uhuru Kenyatta beginning in February 2014. However, the charges against the latter were withdrawn in December of the same year due to lack of evidence.

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya (TJRC) was created by an Act of Parliament (No. 6 of 2008) to inquire into human rights violations, including those committed by the state, groups or individuals. This included, but was not limited to, politically motivated violence, assassinations, community displacements, settlements and evictions. The TJRC also had a mandate to inquire into major economic crimes, historical land injustices, and irregular and illegal allocations of land – especially those crimes and injustices related to conflict or violence. The TJRC handed its report to the president of Kenya in May 2013. Looking forward, it is crucial that the narratives of inquiry developed in its report are used to build a ‘collective truth’.

## **Community interventions and dialogues on reconciliation**

Kenya has made significant progress since the post-election violence in 2007/2008. Following a free, fair and peaceful referendum, the promulgation of a new Constitution in August 2010 set the stage for a strong framework for democracy and human rights. On 4 March 2013, more than 80% of registered voters cast their ballots in a largely peaceful general election. These two landmark events have set Kenya on the path towards sustainable development and peace. The country stands at the cusp of an unprecedented chance to address past and present injustices so as to promote national reconciliation with a view to countering the underlying factors that ultimately led to the post-election violence in 2007 and 2008.

The new system of government in Kenya, which includes the creation of devolved governments at county level, has improved the opportunities for citizens and organisations to engage more closely with authorities. Even with these new governance structures, there are sharp differences between their functions and those of central government. A broad-based approach involving all relevant stakeholders at a national,

regional and local level is necessary to promote national reconciliation in Kenya and prevent a resurgence of conflict and division in the country. Devolved governance structures and the communities they serve and represent are the targets of this Handbook, which promotes dialogue as a tool to be used in promoting reconciliation. Community engagement in the reconciliation process ultimately reflects on the national process of reconciliation.

There have been several efforts in different communities in Kenya to reconcile conflicting parties through religion, traditional customs and other ways. These processes have had varied levels of success and have been documented in other handbooks, which may be useful for dialogue facilitators to refer to where necessary. The distinguishing factor of this Handbook, however, is its emphasis on dialogue within communities as the vehicle through which the community establishes the necessary foundations for reconciliation.



## Summary of module

- To better situate this Handbook, this module gives an overview of the Kenyan context, with a brief historical background of issues related to reconciliation and the interventions that have been put in place at the local and national levels.
- Ethnic tensions fuelled by marginalisation of communities in Kenya have been present since independence, and a culmination of this was the 2007/2008 post-poll violence.
- The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process led to the formation of bodies designed to deal with long-standing issues in Kenya's history that were the triggers of conflict and impediments to reconciliation. Two such bodies were the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission.
- The country is currently in a state of transition and has made great progress, including the holding of a peaceful national referendum process in 2010 that saw the promulgation of the current Constitution. This is a progressive document and creates a strong framework for democracy and human rights. The Constitution also creates a devolved system of government that allows citizens closer access to government and authorities more generally.
- This Handbook taps into these localised structures and bolsters other efforts to address reconciliation in Kenya by focusing on the ways in which dialogue in communities acts as a vehicle to foster dialogues for reconciliation.

## Endnotes

- 1 South Consulting, 2011: para 1.
- 2 Constitution of Kenya, 2010: article 10.
- 3 CIPEV, 2008: paras 453–476.

## MODULE 2

### Conceptual framework

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## Introduction

This module begins by providing a theoretical understanding of key concepts in the field of reconciliation and dialogue as a tool for reconciliation. It aims at providing the dialogue facilitator with a clear understanding of what reconciliation is and how dialogue can be used in the context of a community, or different communities, to promote reconciliation.

## Understanding reconciliation

Reconciliation is the process of repairing damaged relationships.<sup>4</sup> Reconciliation is often thought to originate in religious discourse and around the notions of forgiveness and mercy. From a peacebuilding point of view, the conceptualisation of reconciliation now encompasses other components of, and disciplines in, society. This module looks at the concept of reconciliation from the perspective of a post-conflict or post-authoritarian state at both the national and community levels.

### Notes for the facilitator

This section assists the Handbook user to obtain a general understanding of the concept of reconciliation. It should not be used verbatim to conduct the session, 'Reconciliation: Frameworks, concepts and approaches'.

A post-conflict state is one that is in 'transition' and that is shifting from periods of gross human rights violations, mass violence or protracted armed conflict towards a peaceful, democratic future characterised by respect for human rights and the rule of law. Such a state must actively engage in a process of reconciliation – at the very least, in the political and social domain – to promote national healing and avert the resurgence of violence and gross human rights violations in the future.

Political reconciliation focuses on the characteristically impersonal relations among members of a political society.<sup>5</sup> The actors involved in this form of reconciliation would include political parties and their leadership, as well as state institutions such as the security sector and the judiciary, among others. A state in transition that seeks to build reconciliation must work towards the resolution of current issues and, at the same time, towards a frame of reference that provides a focus on the restoration and rebuilding of future *relationships*.

Reconciliation is closely linked to the notion of transitional justice. Transitional justice seeks to address legacies of large-scale past abuses and includes initiatives such as acknowledgement and truth-telling, criminal trials, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, memorialisation and institutional reform. The anticipated outcome of such processes is the creation of platforms where dialogue aimed at national healing, cohesion and reconciliation can begin. A key note to states in transition is that reconciliation is not an isolated event, but rather a *process*. This usually encompasses dialogue that involves an integrated approach on the part of many actors, including political leaders, civil society, faith-based institutions, communities and individuals, and extends over a significant period of time.

Reconciliation and transitional justice are interdependent. Reconciliation is perceived as one of the *pillars* of transitional justice, along with truth-seeking, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. Reconciliation is also the *product* of transitional justice interventions in a given society. Ultimately, at the core of the reconciliation process is the institutionalisation of a process of transitional justice.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, no matter the school of thought, implicit in transitional justice is the concept of reconciliation and the recognition that the practice of reconciliation is a process and not a one-off event in a country in transition.

The following elements are critical for a successful reconciliation process:

### **Acknowledgement of the harm done, and forgiveness**

For the process of reconciliation to be successful, there are certain acts that should take place within a society. The acknowledgement of the harm caused to society through mass violence and gross violations of human rights stands as a key component of this process. Historical dialogue is of importance, as it seeks to challenge national or ethnic memories of heroism and/or victimhood as they are narrated or viewed by society; provides an opportunity to collect and provide facts about the history of particular conflicts; and gives space for the acknowledgement of victims of past violence and human rights abuses.<sup>7</sup> Acknowledgement comes in various forms: it may be voluntary or coerced through accountability mechanisms – here amnesties come into play as ways to get people to tell the truth. In an ideal situation, acknowledgement of harm is closely followed by remorse on the part of the perpetrator(s).

**Reconciliation is a process and not a one-off event.**

**Forgiveness, should not be used as a conduit for impunity.**

The perpetrator(s) should then ask for forgiveness from the victim–survivor(s), who, in turn, can choose to forgive or not. Forgiveness, however, should not be used as a conduit for impunity.

If carefully managed, the participation of witnesses and victims in trials benefits victims in their own individual healing and contributes to the process of personal reconciliation as well as forgiveness. However, caution must be exercised with regard to forgiveness. Given that victims have experienced unimaginable pain and suffering, it is unreasonable to put the burden of forgiveness upon them in an explicit way. This process is deeply personal and must be voluntary. Where a community decides to engage in forgiveness, it is important that there is access to psychosocial support services to reinforce the longevity of reconciliation. For the nation to be reconciled, the reconciliation process must include personal reconciliation. There is no greater healing than a personal process in which one comes to terms with the events of the past and willingly chooses to move forward in a peaceful manner – whatever that may mean to the individual. Dialogue towards attaining this process is key and must be sensitive to the promotion of the respect and dignity of the people involved.

Acknowledgement must also be followed by remorse. What use is there for the truth to be told when the perpetrator does not care about the effects of his or her violence? In cases where the state has occasioned harm to citizens, it is incumbent on representatives of the state in the highest office to take on the responsibility of offering public apologies for the harm caused by the state and its agents.

### **Truth-seeking**

The Kenyan people suffered from violations of human rights for decades leading up to the post-election violence (PEV). The political settlement of 2008, though, marked the beginning of the country's efforts to deal with historical injustices. At the national level, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) was set up with the specific mandate to establish an official and accurate record of the atrocities of the past and make recommendations to the government concerning reparations and prosecution. Among other things, it was tasked with investigating and documenting injustices that took place in the country from 12 December 1963 to 28 February 2008. With such a broad mandate, the time frame for completing this task was Herculean from

the outset. Coupled with public concern regarding the selection and integrity of the chair of the commission, the TJRC faced a measure of paralysis in effectively carrying out its mandate.

Despite these challenges, the TJRC collected 42 465 statements from Kenyans from all walks of life, in every region of the country. This is the largest collection undertaken by any truth commission to date. The statements were collected through oral narratives, research of existing archival and other materials, and public- and private-hearing sessions, amongst others. In addition, the TJRC extended its work to neighbouring countries where Kenyan refugees resided in camps after fleeing the violence. The TJRC has made – and continues to make – positive and progressive contributions to the reconciliation process in Kenya. Its report and recommendations are important as a foundation for the continuing healing and reconciliation process in the country.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC), globally hailed as a model for truth-seeking mechanisms, enabled historical dialogue on tough and sensitive issues at local, regional and national levels. As chair of the SA TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, pointed out it initiated a dialogue that would contribute to the reconciliation process in the country that was required beyond the life of the SA TRC. Truth commissions must be seen as initiators of dialogues within fragmented societies. Their objective is to provide safe spaces for genuine remorse, and for sharing narratives that enable various truths to contribute to a collective truth that does not suppress the contributions of certain communities to nation-building. They should be able to grant amnesty where appropriate within the ambit of internationally accepted standards, and they provide platforms for a continuing dialogue process aimed at healing.<sup>8</sup>

The TJRC report of 2013 has been presented to the president. The truth-telling process initiated by the TJRC is crucial in the reconciliation process in Kenya. It is equally important that civil society remain engaged in the process, as it is pivotal in establishing a collective truth. This will be vital as the country engages in further reconciliatory dialogues between different government structures, between these structures and the people they govern, and among the people themselves as one nation.

**Truth commissions must be seen as initiators of dialogues within fragmented societies.**

**Justice processes may either foster or impede national reconciliation.**

Truth-seeking and truth-telling exercises are not confined to the national level, and they are not a one-off event. In fact, the benefits of such exercises are best seen where they percolate to the grassroots of any society. These conversations exist in every community and should also extend between communities.

### **Justice**

The retributive theory of justice has as its objectives punishment for past crimes and the deterrence of future crimes. The trial of individuals accused of committing gross human rights violations can contribute to reconciliation. Depending on how they are managed, international and locally owned justice processes may either foster or impede national reconciliation. As a starting point, it is important to highlight that the notion of reconciliation untethered to justice is fundamentally problematic. In this regard, it is important that reconciliation and justice are not conceptualised as binary and separate features, but rather as integral aspects of a similar problem and a similar dilemma. In this respect, one cannot conceptualise a genuine notion of reconciliation divorced from a notion of justice. If the goal of the process is to advocate for the reconciling of divided communities, in a context of past wrongdoing and a history of oppression, this is surely not feasible without a notion of justice as central to the process.

The intersections between reconciliation and justice thus need not be binary and dialectical, as is often presented. Arguably, there are certain aspirations of each that potentially negate the other. If one is aware that one may be tried in a criminal proceeding tomorrow for a truth one told today in a dialogue under the impression of healing as opposed to ‘justice’, the entire legitimacy of the process is undermined. However, there are methodologies and sequencing approaches, as well as different operational levels on which both can be pursued. Moreover, not only can both be pursued, but favouring one over the other at the expense of justice is also counterproductive to the goals of reconciliation. There is a need for there to be a balance of both within the reconciliation process.

For the purposes of this manual, which is largely derived from both academic reflections and our extensive work over the course of years in Kenya in the aftermath of the PEV, the focus is on the contextual dialogue process as a means of reconciliation. This cannot escape the

issues especially of international and local justice mechanisms that have dominated the Kenyan discourse since the PEV. Our insights are drawn from our work and our reflections on our insights in a broader perspective.

It is worth noting that the main discourse concerning the conceptualisation of justice in Kenya has often been around the International Criminal Court (ICC) process. Whereas the process has enjoyed wide public support as a vehicle for fighting impunity in Kenya, there is scepticism about the ability of the ICC interventions to promote reconciliation in the country. There has been a fair amount of politicisation around the timing and subjects of ICC trials, and this does not contribute to an effective dialogue on reconciliation. It is, however, possible for international criminal trials to contribute to political reconciliation by fostering the social conditions required for the rule of law.

Cultivating respect for the rule of law is a constitutive part of the process of political reconciliation. International criminal trials can contribute to reconciliation by cultivating legal decency and good judgement among officials, and by encouraging faith in the law among citizens.<sup>9</sup> In addition to being a state party to the Rome Statute that created the ICC, Kenya has implemented the Rome Statute in the form of the International Crimes Act, No. 16 of 2008. Kenya is only one of a handful of African states parties to implement the Rome Statute effectively. These are gains that Kenyans should celebrate and that the government must support by establishing the necessary structures to enforce the legislation.

International criminal trials can influence prospects for reconciliation in Kenya through an 'educative' exposure of the practices of the past in the country – 'educative' in the sense that due process of international criminal law and the structures established by international criminal procedure are respected. Such an educative role can powerfully shape a transitioning state's adherence to the rule of law in accordance with internationally accepted standards. Kenya has, for example, enacted the Witness Protection Act, No. 16 of 2006, and reviewed the law through the Witness Protection (Amendment) Act, which established a Witness Protection Agency, in order to conform to international standards of procedural provision for the protection of witness identities during and after court proceedings so as to ensure that witnesses can testify freely

**Cultivating respect for the rule of law is a constitutive part of the process of political reconciliation.**

**The presumption of innocence, the conducting of fair trials and the humane treatment of those accused can be adopted.**

and safely. It is critical that the witnesses who do co-operate with law enforcement agencies be provided with adequate protection, including protection for their families. To the extent that such procedures are followed, international criminal trials provide a model for how national criminal proceedings should be conducted.

The treatment of alleged perpetrators of crimes at international criminal tribunals also provides a model for national criminal jurisdictions. Thus, such practices as the presumption of innocence, the conducting of fair trials, and the humane treatment of those accused (no torture or degrading treatment in order to obtain confessions or information in the investigative stages of a trial) can be adopted in national criminal processes.

Locally owned criminal-justice processes have the benefit of restoring confidence and faith in the law and the capacity to ensure that the legal institutions concerned provide justice. With the substantive reforms to the Kenyan judiciary, the legal and investigative officers have an opportunity to engage in and invoke reconciliatory language and concepts in the administration of justice. Knowing that arrest does not entail torture; that conviction does not entail death; and that co-operation does not risk death, increases the likelihood that individuals will co-operate with the national criminal-justice system.

Further, justice should extend beyond retribution and must involve restorative aspects. The Constitution of Kenya, in article 159, provides for the use of alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms could constitute restorative aspects of justice that might be employed in the Kenyan context.

The use of alternative dispute-resolution (ADR) mechanisms also allows for communities to tap into processes that they would traditionally use to mediate conflicts. This comes about because these principles are often embedded in community mores about notions of justice and reconciliation. A noteworthy example of these ADR mechanisms is the Garissa Dialogue Forum. An outline of this follows in the box overleaf.

### **Garissa Dialogue Forum discussions on traditional justice**

- The consensus is that the Somali traditional justice system is structured around the central authority, namely the sultan. The sultan is the head of the justice system, and this is a unifying position that initiates dialogue within the community.
- There is both recognition of, and participation by, the committee of elders (also referred to as ‘Sagalah’), meaning the nine sub-elders who represent each community at the committee of the sultan. The involvement of the Sagalah ensures that the sultan has moral support and legitimate authority in order to lead the process.
- In terms of procedure, the system provides for a complaint-lodging mechanism in which a victim deposes to a complaint or an aggressor submits an apology in advance of a formally lodged complaint. The technical terms commonly used are: ‘Saweenheer’ – that is, where the aggressors submit an apology to the victim through a dialogue process – and ‘Saweengarthara’ – that is, where the victim submits to the aggressor as a gesture indicative of his or her desire to live in peace. The entire process is overseen by a Sagalah elder and is witnessed by other community elders.
- During the dialogue process, which often takes place under a tree, the disputants are given the opportunity to narrate their perspective of the dispute and to make their submissions. The community has an unwritten code that stipulates the penalties for each crime. After each party to the dispute has submitted his or her case, the community elders invite the disputants to commit themselves to the judgement of the elders. The community of elders then arrives at a joint decision that is later conveyed to the parties to the dispute and is binding on them.

### **Reparations**

Reparations are the embodiment of a society’s recognition of, remorse and atonement for harms inflicted.<sup>10</sup> It is generally agreed that reparations must, as far as possible, wipe out all of the consequences of the illegal acts and re-establish the situation that would in all probability have existed if the act concerned had not been committed.<sup>11</sup> To an extent, reparations represent the acknowledgement that the recipient has experienced some form of harm and that there is a need to redress this harm and restore the individual to the situation that she or he was in before the harm took place. It is clear, however, that, in many instances, it is not possible to fully restore the individual who has gone through the trauma of an event to the state prior to such event. This is true in the case of killings, torture and rape, and even destruction of personal property that had sentimental value attached to it.



In these cases, reparations are not to be seen as a replacement of what was lost, but rather as an acknowledgement of the harm inflicted, as an attempt at facilitating and opening up dialogue, and as an expression aimed at assisting harmed individuals to deal with the effects and ‘move on’ with their lives in a positive sense.

There has been a progressively growing legal basis for the provision of redress to victims of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of humanitarian law. Reparations have long been a recognised principle of international law, as evidenced in human rights instruments as well as in the decisions of regional human rights and national courts. Reparations have a basis in both tort (a wrongful act or an infringement of a right, other than under a contract leading to legal liability) and the law governing state responsibility.<sup>12</sup> Van Boven describes reparations in the human rights sphere as a generic term representing ‘all types of redress, material and non-material, for victims of human rights violations’.<sup>13</sup>

National governments bear the primary responsibility for providing remedies and reparations within environments that guarantee safety and human security.<sup>14</sup>

Reparations can encompass a variety of concepts, including compensation, restitution, rehabilitation and satisfaction.<sup>15</sup> Each component represents a unique remedy for victims. ‘Compensation’ refers to the amount of money awarded by a judicial or quasi-judicial body after an assessment of the harm suffered. ‘Restitution’ is a return to the situation before the harm occurred. ‘Rehabilitation’ refers to the provision of ongoing social, medical, legal and/or psychological care for victims. ‘Satisfaction’ refers to broader measures, which may be individual or societal, such as the verification of facts, the search for bodily remains, public apologies, memorialisation, institutional reforms and/or the imposing of sanctions on perpetrators.

Reparations can be material (i.e. in the form of compensation, restitution and rehabilitation) or moral. Moral reparations can include a range of non-material measures that address the victim’s felt needs to be heard, for justice, and for measures to avoid repetition of the violations. Measures that may be taken include the removal of those most responsible from positions of power and influence, the disclosure of the facts of a victim’s mistreatment, and/or official, public apologies from government(s) for past violations.<sup>16</sup>

## Unpacking dialogue

This section assists the Handbook user to obtain a general understanding of the concept of dialogue. It should not be used verbatim to conduct the session, 'Reconciliation: Frameworks, concepts and approaches'. *It should also be read together with Module 5 on conducting a dialogue.*

Dialogue is an efficient tool of engagement between parties in conflict. As noted in the background analysis, dialogue is recognised as an indispensable part of conflict prevention. In multi-ethnic contexts, the chances of ensuring stability are considerably enhanced when the ethnic groups are engaged in regular dialogue to end the conflict. This also holds true with regard to conflict of a national or international nature. But what of reconciliation? Which role does dialogue play in the process of reconciliation between ethnic groups? How do we distinguish between dialogue for the purpose of conflict prevention and dialogue aimed at reconciliation?

Reconciliation dialogue is best defined/characterised as a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be influenced in an open and objective manner.

Thus, each makes a serious effort to draw others' concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his own identity, but each recognises enough of the other's valid human claims so that he or she will act differently towards the other.

It is clear, however, that, for reconciliation dialogue to have any effect within and between communities with divergent opinions, the parties to the dialogue must be willing to take into account what each side considers as its vital interests. A genuine dialogue, where both sides are willing to listen to each other, greatly enhances the stability of a community and, largely, the state.<sup>17</sup> This does not presuppose that the parties empathise with each other's opinions, but meaningful dialogue demands that the opponent communities be willing to sit through the dialogue session and engage with the other side with the intent to listen and open up to the other community. The indices of a successful dialogue can then be determined by the steps taken by the parties in the dialogue to avoid the pitfalls present in any meaningful dialogue. Knowing these pitfalls is therefore essential from the perspective of a facilitator.

### Characteristics of dialogue

The dialogue process begins by inviting the parties in question to the table. The acceptance of this invitation is the start of sessions where active listening between the parties is key, and may also involve the following:

- *Understanding.* Listening leads to understanding. Dialogue does not necessarily need to result in a changed viewpoint, but it should result in a better understanding of the respective viewpoints, as well as the nature of, and reasons for, disagreement/past violence.
- *Learning.* Understanding leads to learning, coupled with openness and objectivity towards parties to the disagreement.
- *Agreement.* Agreement is not a primary aim of dialogue. It is not necessary that one produce a binding agreement. What is required, however, is that the parties can find a way out, that is, aim to understand one another and try to find a way forward together.
- *A safe space.* Inclusiveness, equality, mutual respect, trust and comfort are needed. Try to be all-inclusive through involving as many stakeholders as possible. This may mean that more than the person directly in the conflict is included so as to get a broader understanding of the problem. The solution must be sustainable.
- *Inclusiveness.* In this regard, what is necessary is multistakeholder dialogue as a form that assembles the different groups whose interests are bound up in achieving a successful outcome and that allows the different opinions and narratives to be heard.

### Distinguishing debate from dialogue

Dialogue is distinct from debate. Table 2.1 on the next page illustrates some major differences of which a facilitator must be aware.

Table 2.1: Differences between debate and dialogue

DEBATE	DIALOGUE
Pre-meeting communication between sponsors and participants is minimal and largely irrelevant to what follows.	Pre-meeting contacts and preparation of participants are essential elements of the complete process.
The atmosphere is threatening, and attacks and interruptions are expected and permitted by moderators.	The atmosphere is one of safety: facilitators propose, get agreement on, and enforce clear ground rules so as to enhance safety and promote respectful exchanges.
Participants speak to their own constituents and, perhaps, to the undecided middle.	Participants speak to and with each other/ one another.
Differences within 'sides' are denied or minimised.	Differences among participants on the same 'side' are revealed as individual, and personal foundations of beliefs and values are explored.
Participants express unswerving commitment to a point of view, approach or idea.	Participants express uncertainties as well as deeply held beliefs.
Statements are predictable and offer little new information.	New/unacknowledged information surfaces.
Success requires simple, impassioned statements.	Success requires exploration of the complexities of the issue being discussed.
Participants listen in order to refute the other side's data and to expose faulty logic in their arguments. Questions are asked from a position of certainty. These questions are rhetorical challenges or disguised statements.	Participants listen in order to understand and gain insight into the beliefs and concerns of others. Questions are asked from a position of curiosity.
Debates operate within the constraints of the dominant public discourse. (The discourse defines the problem and the options for resolution. It assumes that fundamental needs and values are already clearly understood.)	Participants are encouraged to question the dominant public discourse, that is, to express fundamental needs that may or may not be reflected in the discourse and to explore various options for defining and resolving the problem. Participants may discover inadequacies in the usual language and concepts used in public debate.

## Benefits of dialogue

The positive outcomes of engaging in a dialogue process are as follows:

- It increases understanding, and this leads to more appropriate responses;
- One does not need to be ready to make concessions;
- It increases openness and helps find solutions, and it creates a safe environment in which people can share even their innermost feelings;
- It improves relationships, thus leading to open social relations and, eventually, to direct contact; and
- It results in more sustainable solutions because there is a better understanding of the issues at hand.

## Dialogue as a process

Dialogue is a process, not an event. It comprises a series of discussions and, sometimes, gatherings that progressively build towards achieving the set goals. The individual gatherings are not isolated. There is a need to maintain contact with participants between the different meetings, briefing them on information about agreed points of previous discussions and meetings, checking how they experienced these discussions and meetings, providing reminders, posing possible questions in preparation for follow-up meetings, and so forth. Participants must thus be kept informed about the process.

In addition to the dialogue process, there might be a need to work with the different groups separately with regard to preparing, informing, capacity building and internal dialogue. The different groups might not be at the same level. In order to engage in conducive/level/progressive dialogue, one must work with groups separately. This is operationalised through involving groups in aspects of intra-preparation, events and communication.

### *Intra-preparation*

A facilitator of a dialogue needs to spend some time with the different groups involved in or affected by a conflict so as to build rapport and understanding. During this preparatory stage, the facilitator can gain a thorough understanding of the conflict and the issues and of the views of the different parties to the dialogue. During the preparations

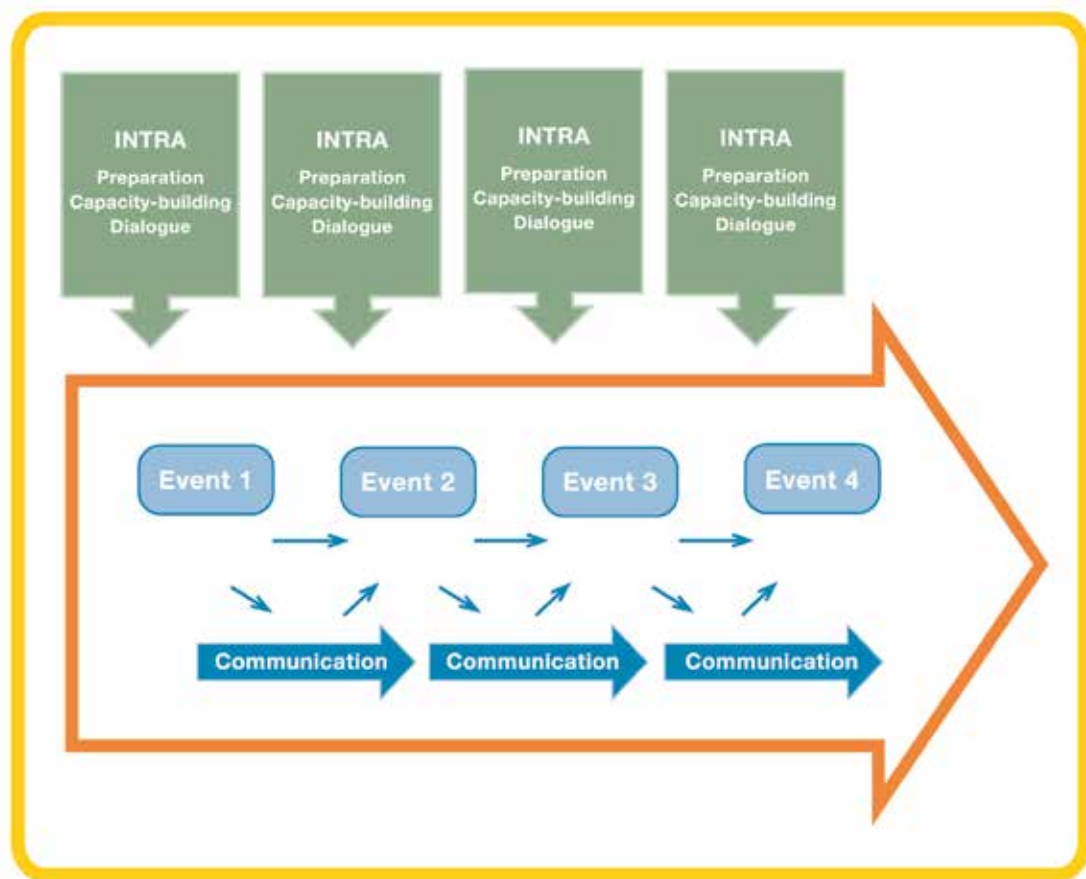


Figure 2.1: The dialogue process

for dialogue sessions, the facilitator may, for instance, ascertain that one or more parties to the dialogue process will require assistance in a particular area and, as a result, conclude that the provision of such assistance will greatly advance the dialogue sessions. For example, one of the parties to the dialogue may not follow the proceedings of the dialogue at the same pace as other parties. In such a case, the facilitator of the dialogue may use the time between the dialogue sessions to work with this party, in the process identifying why they are having difficulty keeping pace with the others and assisting in building the capacity of the party to perform at an optimal level in order to benefit from the dialogue sessions. These ‘intra-sessions’ should not be used by the facilitator to ‘coach’ parties towards the desired outcome of the dialogue. Since the capacity-building sessions are conducted by the facilitator

with one party to the dialogue to the exclusion of the others, the facilitator should ensure that there is full disclosure to the other party or parties on the nature of the engagement. Moreover, the facilitator should seek consensus among the parties to the dialogue on the need to build the capacities of all parties in order to advance the dialogue sessions.

### *Events*

The events are the actual dialogue sessions in which the procedures and substance are discussed by all parties to the dialogue process. It is at these sessions that the facilitator will be most engaged in order to ensure that the parties exchange views and advance discussions on issues that will lead them to the desired goal of achieving consensus to coexist despite their differences and, in other cases, to set aside these differences completely after unmasking the myths about 'the other'. The facilitator should be careful to encourage good order and relations among the parties, including foreseeing obstacles that may disrupt the dialogue prematurely. Steps are then taken between the events to ensure that discussions are on track towards the dialogue objectives. In most reconciliation dialogues, it is beneficial for there to be a team of facilitators who will take on different roles and assignments in order to ensure the success of the dialogue process. Division of roles and responsibilities should be effected and there should be a clear understanding of these duties prior to the commencement of any event.

### *Communication*

Communication occurs in three forms. Firstly, there is communication among the team of facilitators prior to, during and after a dialogue event. Prior to the event, as stated above, facilitators and their teams should be clear as to their roles and responsibilities before communicating with any of the parties. It would be beneficial for the facilitator(s) to develop a communication strategy to guide the process of the dialogue intervention. Such a strategy would include agreement on the demeanour of facilitators and teams during a dialogue session (for one's body language sends strong messages to participants), on the means and modes of engagement with parties to the dialogue jointly and individually, on the content and timing of communication, and on the involvement of the media, if necessary (see more about this in Module 5, among others). The second form of communication is that between the facilitator(s)

and the parties to the dialogue. This can be guided by the communication strategy and in consultation with the parties to the dialogue. The third form of communication is that among the facilitator(s), the parties to the dialogue and the world at large. This aspect may also be guided by a communication strategy that is agreed on by all. What is particularly important is for a facilitator to demonstrate the progress within the community towards reconciliation.

## Dialogue as a tool for community reconciliation

Consider the example of a tree for the purpose of the present discussion. The trunk, leaves and branches are visible, whereas the roots are invisible. The visible aspects of the tree in this analysis would therefore be the issues in a post-conflict state that have historically been the source of conflict. The invisible aspects in a post-conflict state would be the root causes of the conflict, and it is these causes that reconciliation aims at addressing (see the tree analysis in Module 3, which further illustrates these root causes of conflict). Among the root causes would be stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes among certain members of the community to others.

### **Note:**

*This section of the module complements Module 5 on conducting a dialogue.*

The facilitator of a community dialogue should understand what the various issues are and be prepared to move beyond the visible aspects of conflict within the community or nation and address the underlying issues. Underlying issues often come in the form of stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes that have been supported by generations of narratives within communities. For example, members of community A and B have lived together as neighbours for decades and the belief of community A is that members of community B are thieves, while community B believes that members of community A are not astute entrepreneurs. It is clear from this example that, in the daily conduct of business between members of both communities, there are endless possibilities for conflict due to mistrust and contempt for each other based on the stereotypes and perceptions that exist between the communities. In a post-conflict community, this rather simplistic example is amplified by numerous other underlying causes of conflict. What is even worse is that many of the community's members are unaware of the reasons for generational enmity. This is particularly a burden to younger members of the community and is exacerbated by the current issues that this generation faces.



As noted in the background and contextual analysis, dialogue for the purpose of community reconciliation is aimed at uncovering these often invisible and underlying causes of conflict with the goals of sensitising community members as regards their existence and tackling the issues jointly so as to promote coexistence within society. Such dialogue is both progressive and dynamic and has to be linked with the reality of the community in question.

### Summary of module

- The module begins with a theoretical explanation of key concepts in the field of reconciliation and by providing an understanding of dialogue as a tool for reconciliation. The aim is to provide the dialogue facilitator with a clear understanding of what reconciliation is and how dialogue can be used in the context of a community, or different communities, to promote reconciliation.
- It further introduces the concept of transitional justice and indicates that reconciliation is perceived as one of the *pillars* of transitional justice, along with truth-seeking, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence. Reconciliation is, however, also the *product* of transitional justice interventions in a given society. The two are interdependent, with reconciliation being a process and not a one-off event in a country in transition.
- Lastly, the module addresses, from a practical standpoint, the concepts of dialogue, the differences between debate and dialogue, and the actual process of conducting a dialogue within a community setting.

### Endnotes

4 This understanding of the concept of reconciliation can be found in: Roth, J. 2004. Useless experience: Its significance for reconciliation after Auschwitz. In: D. Patterson & J.K. Roth (eds). *After-words: Post holocaust struggles with forgiveness, reconciliation, justice*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 86; Philpott, D. 2006. Introduction. In: D. Philpott (ed.). *The politics of past evil: Religion, reconciliation and the dilemmas of transitional justice*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, p. 14; and Govier, T. & Verwoerd, VV. 2002. Trust and the problem of national reconciliation. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 32(2): 178–205. This is the second sense of reconciliation that Paul M. Hughes identifies in his 2001 article, Moral atrocity and political reconciliation: A preliminary analysis. *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 15(1): 123–135.

5 Murphy, 2010: 224.

6 Murithi, 2009: 136.

7 Fellowship for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA), 2014

8 Adopted and modified from a reconciliation framework proposed by Hizkias Assefa.

9 Murphy, 2010: 224.

**10** Roht-Arriaza, 2004: 159.

**11** See Redress Trust, 2003.

**12** Ibid.

**13** Van Boven, 1993: para 13.

**14** Article 2(5) and (6) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides that the general rules of international law and of any treaty or convention ratified by Kenya will form part of the law of Kenya. In essence, all international treaties that provide for reparations to victims and to which Kenya is a signatory thereby establish the right to reparations in Kenya for victims.

**15** Van Boven, 1993; Saul, 2004: 541.

**16** Roht-Arriaza, 2004: 159.

**17** Max van der Stol, 2003: 3.



## MODULE 3

### **Analysis of community issues**

Munini Mutuku, Elvi Agunda & Liban Guyo



## Introduction

This module begins by explaining what community social constructions are, how to analyse community issues, and how to identify opportunities for engagement with reference to such constructions. It outlines how to develop a community profile in order to enable dialogue and the identification of issues affecting community cohesion as well as of existing opportunities for engagement.

The analysis in this module will assist the facilitator of community reconciliation dialogues to obtain an understanding of the various elements of the community, and how to analyse these elements and identify issues. Furthermore, it provides tools that can be used to identify the key economic, social, political and environmental factors (information, actors and institutions) that are critical to the community's ability to engage in meaningful and progressive dialogue, which can enable it to set and pursue common and diverse goals.

As a social group whose members reside in a specific locality, share a government, and have a common or diverse cultural and historical heritage, a community and its identity are dynamic and multiple in nature. This calls for sensitive ways of engaging in and enabling dialogue. A community's multiple identities are not confined to ethnicity and race. They could either be created by its members and the circumstances that surround them, or be nurtured through social and other environments. This diversity in identity means that any intercommunity and intracommunity reconciliation dialogue and conflict-resolution efforts should adopt multifaceted approaches and strategies.

### **Community social construction**

A community's social construction embraces the various segments that exist within that community and which enable its healthy functioning. The different segments provide the building blocks that perform different roles and bring about stability. Communities in which a segment of the social construction is severely lacking, or which fails to function as expected and its roles are neglected, could be considered dysfunctional.

The social construction is, by and large, influenced by the historical, social, economic and cultural factors that have existed, and continue to exist, within the community in question. As noted in an earlier module, in societies that have been affected by violent conflict, historical

**A community's multiple identities are not confined to ethnicity and race.**

dialogue is an imperative for understanding the community's current situation and helping it come to terms with its past.

Historical dialogue seeks to collect and provide facts about the history of particular conflicts, to foster a working relationship among the various parties in conflict, and to identify how the history within the community is used to divide the society and perpetrate conflict, all in an effort to promote reconciliation. This is also important in influencing a community to challenge its narratives of heroism and victimhood, as well as its view of victim, perpetrator and bystander.

For progressive and sustainable healing and reconciliation processes to take place, community analysis and participation through various avenues that intend to promote harmonious coexistence are key. Thus, it is critical to understand the community in question through the various actors or members of the community and their diverse roles by identifying the underlying issues that cause conflict and understanding the available avenues for dialogue and how dialogue is conducted, as well as those issues that impede and challenge efforts with a view to community healing and reconciliation.

### Notes for the facilitator

Guide the participants to discuss and document their community's social construction. Identify the issues and dialogue avenues.

### Community analysis and problem-assessment

For dialogue facilitators to understand a community and identify the contentious issues, community analysis and problem-assessment should be undertaken and tailored in a manner to bring to the fore the realities of the specific communities. This should be done using a participatory approach and by considering the social construction. The dynamic nature of communities gives them different forms as they go through the different experiences, a fact that affects the content and style of dialogue. It is of importance to note that community analysis and problem-assessment are complex, continuous, situation-specific and dynamic. Therefore, various instruments should be developed to enable such an analysis and assessment in order to provide reliable information.

A community problem-assessment is a basic audit of local problems identified by community members against the background of factors such as the community's history, local conditions and the level of resources available to the community. The assessment aims to find out why certain community components operate in dysfunctional ways, thus causing violent conflict, tension and lack of community cohesion. This information is crucial for a facilitator of reconciliation dialogues, since it enables the choice of a dialogue style as well as the design of the dialogue process and guides the sessions so as to address the real issues.

There are various steps/ways in which practitioners can undertake a community analysis and problem-assessment in an effort to develop strategies to promote dialogue for the purpose of addressing community dysfunction that causes violent conflict, tension and lack of cohesion. This will entail developing a community profile, identifying the community issues, and conflict analysis. Undertaking community analysis and problem-assessment highlights factors that are critical for a dialogue facilitator to understand while planning a dialogue and while guiding the process.

## **Developing a community profile**

To enable dialogue facilitators to understand a community's social construction, it is important to develop a community profile as a first step. A community profile enables an understanding of which style of dialogue would fit the specific community or the specific stages of an intervention. It also supports the development of strategies and action points in the process of undertaking a community analysis.

### **Defining a community profile**

A community profile is a collection of social, political, economic and environmental factors, both historical and current, relating to a community.<sup>18</sup> This information informs the key characteristics of the community and provides a comprehensive outlook on the current reality within the community. In a dialogue process, this information is analysed to establish the available avenues of engagement, the style of dialogue that can be used, the available actors, and other factors that could support or affect a dialogue process.

A community profile provides vital information about the community's social construction, challenges, successes and current status with reference to its history and historical events. The information will assist in mapping out the challenges, opportunities, relationships and support networks within which the community-healing efforts and the community reconciliation efforts can be developed. It enables an understanding of the dialogue styles appropriate for the community, of the spaces available, and of other interventions that can target community healing and reconciliation.

### Steps towards developing a community profile

A community profile can be prepared with information collected through research, oral and written interviews, community participatory platforms, the various media channels, books, the environment, reports from various actors within the community, culture and cultural practices.<sup>19</sup>

Developing a community profile could consist of the following key steps:

- *Clarity of purpose:* What is required is clarity as to why the profile is being developed and which purpose it serves to have the information. This also helps to identify the sources from which data will be collected.
- *Data sources:* Identify where credible information can be obtained. This could be institutions, persons, physical locations, books or articles. From these sources, data should be precisely selected in relation to the intended use.
- *Data selection and collection:* Choose which data serves the purpose, identify who will collect the data, and determine how the data will be collected. This will also entail identifying any tools that may be needed for data collection.
- *Data analysis:* How will the data be analysed? What are the indicators against which the data is to be analysed?

The data collected includes (but is not limited to) data on geography, population and demographic characteristics, the local economy, the governance system or structure, the labour force, political and community institutions, available social amenities, cultural and other resources, and historical events. These elements affect the social construction of

the community and its different segments and influence functionality. All of these exercises culminate in a report that is termed a 'community profile'.

### Notes for the facilitator

Provide a write-up of a community in society. Divide the class into groups and provide them with this write-up. Then ask the groups to develop a community profile.

### Community consultation

Once a community profile has been drawn up, it is advisable that key stakeholders in the community are consulted. The community profile can be shared with the key stakeholders, with community members being afforded an opportunity to contribute to the profile. Engagement with the community's key stakeholders can also be an opportunity to relay information concerning the reconciliation dialogue process that the community could be planning or in respect of which it might be requesting facilitation in order to enable it to address ongoing issues affecting peace and cohesion.

## Identifying community issues

A dialogue facilitator enables participants to understand how to make use of the community profile so that they are in a position to single out key issues that make the difference between a functioning community and one whose functions are deficient, thus causing tension and conflict. Functionality, in this case, also entails the possibility of healthy dialogue and the availability of spaces for this dialogue. This exercise should bring issues to the fore and make linkages between factors affecting effective and progressive dialogue as well as peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

### Benefits of identifying issues

Identifying the issues is beneficial in that it:

- Aids in better understanding the visible and invisible issues, as well as historical and current issues;



- Clarifies and prioritises the range of issues that need to be addressed;
- Helps to identify relationships, as well as motivations, incentives, interests and views related to such relationships;
- Helps to verify perceptions, facts and information so as to build rapport and understanding among stakeholders;
- Helps to identify the impacts of, and linkages between, the issues affecting the community;
- Aids in evaluating the capacity of existing institutions or practices to act;
- Helps in the determination of appropriate interventions, and how and when to intervene; and
- Facilitates learning and self-awareness.

## Conflict analysis

After gaining an understanding of the social construction of the community in question, developing the community profile and identifying the issues, a dialogue facilitator should endeavour to undertake a conflict analysis.

Conflict analysis, as a tool that will be used to aid the facilitation of dialogue processes, is the systematic study of a conflict situation with reference to its profile, causes, actors, processes, and dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

When planning and commencing dialogue and intervention processes, dialogue facilitators should ensure that situation-specific strategies and approaches are employed.

Conflict analysis entails an interrogation of: what the conflict is about and what the key causes are (*the problem*); who is involved in the conflict (*the actors*); which motivations or incentives exist for the parties to settle the conflict (*the interests*); and which conflict-management strategies have been tried in the past and which opportunities for transformation exist (*the process*).<sup>21</sup> These elements are essential, as they help the dialogue facilitator in determining the appropriate intervention in a conflict situation.

## Notes for the facilitator

To undertake a conflict analysis of a community, the following guiding questions are important:

- How do you know when there is a conflict?
- What is the conflict about?
- When is a conflict likely to become violent and destructive?
- Which opportunities for dialogue and reconciliation currently exist in your community?
- Which actors should be involved in the dialogue process? For each actor, say why he, she or it must be involved.

### **Identifying key stakeholders in a community (stakeholder analysis)**

As will be identified through the community profile, a community's social construction comprises of various actors whose roles may be different in some respects and similar in others. In a conflict setting, the analysis of these actors and their various roles is critical in developing interventions and reconciliation strategies. Hence, at the beginning of any participatory work, a stakeholder analysis enables a dialogue facilitator to map out the different actors or parties affected, their roles, and the benefits or challenges they bring to a dialogue process. The analysis should address the following fundamental questions:

- Who are the key stakeholders in this community?
- What are the interests of these stakeholders?
- What are the roles of these stakeholders and the relations between them?
- How will they be affected by the work and engagements we intend to undertake?
- What is the influence of the different stakeholders, and how can they be encouraged to move towards constructive engagement in the process?
- Which stakeholders are most influential for the success of the process we intend to undertake?
- Which stakeholders are most likely to affect the objective of the dialogue process adversely and how can this challenge be met?

**Stakeholder analysis enables a dialogue facilitator to map out the different actors or parties affected.**

A dialogue facilitator should consider the following factors in undertaking a stakeholder analysis:

- *Power dynamics/authority and command:* Who has a mandate to execute the various duties and responsibilities or to give instructions in the community? What is the nature and source of that mandate?
- *Resources:* What are the available cultural, human, social, economic and political resources, and how are these used in the community?
- *Influence:* Who wields influence over whom, what is the nature of this influence, why do they exert influence, and how do they exert influence?
- *Social structures:* How does the community organise itself according to a way of life people have adopted over time, which equally determines people's actions? Do these social arrangements reflect norms and value systems or beliefs?
- *Relationships:* How do the people relate to one another within the community, and what is their approach with regard to gender roles, other communities, external actors, institutions, leaders and the environment at large?

### *Understanding actors*

Dialogue is best defined as a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be objective with respect to the point of view of the other party. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concerns into their own views, even when disagreements persist. No participant gives up her or his own identity, but each recognises enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently towards the other. Facilitation of a successful dialogue thus calls for a deep understanding of the actors, processes for intervention, as well as the different dynamics of the conflict. In identifying the actors, the facilitator needs to identify both the primary and secondary actors. The primary actors or stakeholders are those directly involved in the conflict. The primary actors may at times represent the secondary actors. For instance, with regard to traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms where elders are involved, these elders represent clans or villages and the members therein.

## Notes for the facilitator

The facilitator should help participants to make linkages in the process from drawing up the community profile, to identifying issues, to undertaking the conflict analysis.

Actors in a conflict are the people, groups, institutions or structures that are visibly or invisibly involved. They can also be directly or indirectly involved in the conflict and have a significant stake in the outcomes, be affected by the outcomes, and may influence the outcomes. They are categorised as follows:

- *Primary stakeholders/actors:* These consist of those whose goals are, or are perceived by them, to be incompatible and who interact directly in pursuit of their respective goals. They are the direct investors in the conflict. As a conflict progresses, they may become secondary stakeholders or actors.
- *Secondary stakeholders/actors:* This category of stakeholders or actors is affected directly by the outcome of the conflict, but they do not consider themselves to be directly involved. As a conflict progresses, they may become primary stakeholders or actors.
- *Interested third parties/tertiary stakeholders or actors:* This category of stakeholders or actors has an interest in the outcome of the conflict. They stand to benefit from the outcomes, especially if these are peaceful.

In every conflict, different actors usually have different stakes and motives. The various sets of actor orientations are summarised below:

- *Peacemakers:* These are actors within or outside a conflict situation who are engaged in supporting or undertaking interventions to end a stalemate/conflict. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose once a conflict comes to an end.
- *Conflict entrepreneurs:* These actors' profits depend on conditions that promote conflict, illegal and subversive economic activity is prevalent.
- *Peace blockers/spoilers:* Political actors or groups that destroy the peace efforts of a majority-preferred process by violent or non-violent means.
- *Peace opportunists:* These are those who support peace when it serves their interests or obstruct it when it is detrimental to their interests.

## Some tools for conflict analysis

This section of the manual shares some tools that can be used by community dialogue facilitators to analyse a conflict at a personal and community level. This is critical before embarking on the process of planning dialogue initiatives. The dialogue facilitators should understand the objective of the tool intended for use and the expected outcome.

### *The river of life*

The river-of-life exercise is used at the beginning of the seminar or workshop in order to help dialogue facilitators break the ice, and to know and understand one another better. Participants are asked to create a picture using a river as a timeline, along which they show their own life journey. Participants then share and explain their drawings. Take a look at the photographs on pages 27 and 61.

When disputes occur between two individuals, different groups or different communities, dialogue and reconciliation initiatives should be approached with sincerity of action and purpose. Thus, to make any progress with the reconciliation process, there is a need to build trust and constructive communication between and among the parties involved. This happens when parties can trust that information given is not going to be abused but will be held in confidence and used constructively in the process. This is only achieved when parties to the conflict are sincere and get to know and understand each other.

#### High points of this exercise

- The exercise allows a person to reflect on his/her life.
- It encourages awareness of who one is, of where one is and of where one wants to go.
- Before reconciling groups, there is a need for one to reconcile with the self or with a group.
- The experience gained through challenges and triumphs in life helps us to become better people.
- Sharing of different participants' life experiences creates a feeling of openness and a space where participants can look to each other for support, which strengthens the bond among participants.
- Taking time to listen to others is very important, as it allows us to understand them beyond what we merely see them to be (face value). This eliminates stereotypical thinking and the creation of the mythical 'other'.

## Notes for the facilitator

Give the participants an opportunity to draw the river of life that best describes their life history. Let them then share this with the class.

### *The conflict tree*

The conflict tree is used to identify issues that cause dysfunction in society and lead to dysfunctional dialogue and violent conflict. It enables dialogue facilitators to focus on issues at grassroots level, both those that are visible and those that are invisible. This is critical, as it establishes the foundation for achieving a possible and sustainable solution based on the realities that are seen or unseen. It helps in knowing the actors, as well as understanding the severity of the issues and their subsequent impact, and the challenges. It supports the process of identifying entry points for the purpose of reconciliation dialogue initiatives.

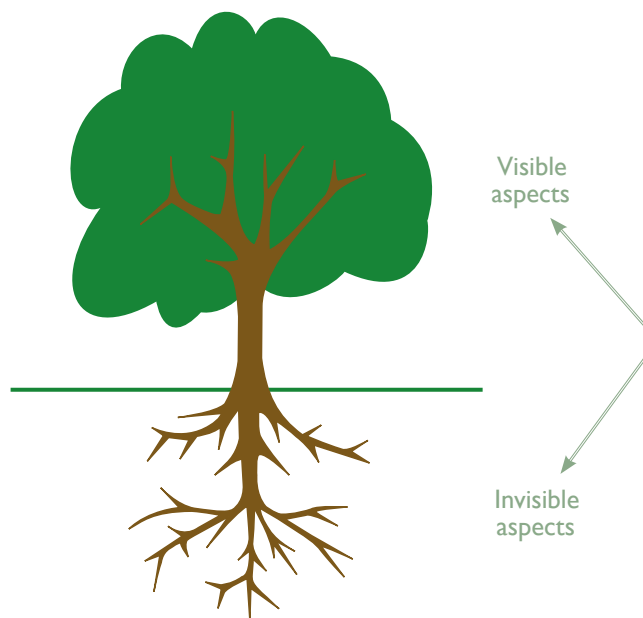


Figure 3: Conflict tree showing visible and invisible aspects of conflict

The tool has two key components:

1. Visible aspects of a conflict (*quantifiable*): hence it is feasible that the issue at hand can be addressed using the available institutions; and
2. Invisible aspects (*roots*): there is a need to look at the root causes of any conflict.

## Notes for the facilitator

Develop a case study of a conflict that encompasses both visible and invisible aspects. The case study should be related to a familiar situation with which the dialogue facilitators have worked. Share the case study with the class and give them time to read through it. Then divide the participants into two groups and let one group draw out the visible aspects while the other draws out the invisible aspects.

## High points of this exercise

- It enables dialogue facilitators to be analytical; and
- It guides a dialogue facilitator to consider conflict in a holistic manner.

### *The onion analysis*

This tool is based on the analogy of an onion and its layers. Its main focus is on positions, interests and needs of the parties involved in a conflict. Like the layers of an onion, the outer layers represent the positions we take publicly, the underlying layers represent the interests in terms of what is intended to be achieved from the situation of concern, and the inner core represents the most important needs that have to be satisfied. In undertaking an onion analysis, it is important to do an analysis of each layer.

It is of importance for parties who are involved in dialogue and negotiations to clarify for themselves their own needs, interests and positions. A critical look at how the interaction of the three elements (needs, effects and positions) affect one another when changes happen is essential when moving towards achieving an intended end.

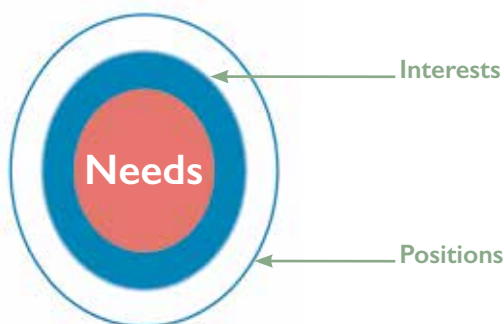


Figure 4: Pictorial representation of the onion analysis

## Notes for the facilitator

Share a case study with the participants. Divide the participants into three groups, with each group representing an element. From the case study, the groups should identify at least three major factors of the elements that they are representing.

### High points of this exercise

- It enables dialogue facilitators to analyse the positions, interests and needs of various parties in a conflict situation; and
- A dialogue facilitator is guided to a broader understanding of a conflict.

### *Conflict timeline*

A conflict timeline shows a sequence of events in a society. It shows how conflict events have been happening and evolving over the years within a certain community, country or region. It highlights the times when certain conflicts began and when they ended (if they ended), and it marks the milestones of key events that have affected the conflict in question.

## Notes for the facilitator

Distribute flip-chart sheets to participants according to the regions from which they have come or to each participant as it accords with the session. Instruct them to think through a conflict in their own community or region, with which they are familiar. Draw a straight line and indicate at the top of the line the year/date when the conflict began or when participants can remember being in the community in question. At the bottom of the line indicate the current year/date. In between these dates, let them share the various milestones that this conflict has reached, including intervention efforts that have been attempted.

This exercise should be guided by the section on communal trauma in Module 4, and should be dynamic to allow for differing narratives, even from within the same regions or groups in a community.

### High points of this exercise

- It enables dialogue facilitators to analyse a conflict in depth and its dynamic nature;
- It allows time for reflection, especially on the milestones;
- It helps develop strategies and other intervention measures that may not have been used; and
- It allows intervention opportunities to be identified at the present time.



## Summary of module

- The module shares an understanding of what a community is and of how to analyse community issues and identify opportunities for dialogue. It outlines community characteristics and how to develop a community profile so as to enable identification of issues affecting a community's cohesion and existing opportunities for dialogue.
- The module begins by defining community social constructions as the various segments within a community that enable its healthy functioning. It then proceeds to indicate the ways in which progressive and sustainable reconciliation dialogues are hinged on understanding this social construction.
- The process of understanding such construction entails a community analysis and problem-assessment, which must be context specific.
- The module further provides facilitators with the various tools that should be developed to enable such an analysis and assessment so as to obtain reliable information. These tools include the development of a community profile, identification of community issues, and conflict analysis. Undertaking a community analysis and problem-assessment highlights factors that are critical for a dialogue facilitator to understand when planning a dialogue and guiding the process.
- Lastly, the module deals with the considerations within each of these steps of the process, as well as with the necessary tools for reconciliation dialogue facilitators.

## Endnotes

**18** COE, 2013.

**19** Ibid.

**20** Training Manual.

**21** Training Manual.

## MODULE 4

### Trauma and reconciliation

Dr Lukoye Atwoli



## Introduction

This module begins by providing a background on the meaning, types and outcomes of trauma. It then addresses the impact of trauma on the process of reconciliation, giving examples from other countries that have gone through communal trauma. The module also provides information and skills on how to deal with trauma in the field, at both individual and communal level, and focuses on expressions of trauma in the context of a community dialogue. It concludes by looking at the effects of trauma on the ‘helpers’ or those involved in interventions, and how these helpers can prevent or manage these effects.

## What is trauma?

Trauma is first and foremost a stressful event, an occurrence that may be considered as falling outside the usual experiences of the individual. Usually, in day-to-day life, individuals experience events that demand more effort to deal with than usual. These are ordinary stressors and we often have coping mechanisms that help us to deal with them. When the effort required to deal with them is greater than expected, we may experience some psychological disturbance, which may be referred to as ‘distress’. Long-term exposure to distressing events causes changes in an individual’s thoughts, emotions and behaviour, and this may have psychological, social and even physical effects. When they reach this threshold and overwhelm an individual’s usual coping mechanisms, the events are considered to be traumatic.

A traumatic event, therefore, has the potential to overwhelm an individual’s usual coping mechanisms and inflicts both an external and internal reality that attacks ideals and beliefs about safety, control and freedom from pain.

The resulting external reality is one of danger, because traumatic events have the capacity to kill, maim, brutalise and destroy. The inflicted internal reality is one of fear, horror and lack of control. Traumatic events often cause lasting psychological effects, shattering assumptions about safety and personal invulnerability that form part of the normal human experience.

In the case of events in which a person loses a loved one, the trauma related to the event is complicated by grief, making it even more difficult to deal with the feelings and thoughts resulting from the event. Further, traumatic events have reminders in the environment that heighten distress and prolong suffering among those who experienced them.

## Types of traumatic events

There are many different ways of classifying traumatic events, depending on the cause or agency. A recent paper on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in South Africa<sup>22</sup> used a classification scheme that probably reflects causes of traumatic events in Africa, and the same scheme is used in this module.

Excerpts in the information boxes are from the Waki Report.<sup>23</sup> This report came out of The Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence (CIPEV), which investigated the clashes in Kenya following the disputed presidential election (2007).

### War events

These are events related to armed combat that involve governments or large groups and affect whole communities. Examples of traumatic war events are: involvement in combat as a fighter; involvement in a combat zone as a relief worker; being a civilian in a war zone or terror attack; a refugee escaping from war events; perpetration of traumatic acts (injuring, torturing or killing others), etc.

#### **Civilian in a war zone (Kenya's post-election violence [PEV] in 2007/2008):**

*At about midnight on December 30 ... I was awoken by screams. When I went out of the house I saw that neighbours' homes ... were on fire. I remained out up to morning. I went to check what was happening. I saw houses burning ...*

### Events involving physical violence

These are events involving an attack on personal integrity. The person experiencing these events is often the only one targeted, as opposed to war events where larger groups are targeted. Examples include being beaten (as a child, sick person or elderly person) by a caregiver; being beaten by an intimate partner; physical assault by a stranger; being mugged or threatened with a weapon; being kidnapped or carjacked, etc.

### Events entailing sexual violence

These are events involving assaults of a sexual nature. Examples include being raped, being subjected to other forms of sexual assault, or being stalked by a stranger.

#### Sexual violence during PEV:

*I fell near a seasonal river ... while running away. My last-born child fell a distance away from my arm, was hurt, and was crying. Some people were running after me and when I fell, two men caught me. They tore my panties and they both raped me in turn.*

### Accidents and disasters

These are occurrences over which the individual often has no control, or has very limited control, in determining whether they will happen or not. Examples include: automobile accidents; natural disasters, including flooding and droughts; disasters occasioned by people; life-threatening illnesses; and other life-threatening accidents.

### Network events

Falling into this category are events involving people with whom the individual shares a relationship in one way or another. Examples include: the unexpected death of a loved one; having a child with a serious illness; witnessing or hearing about a traumatic event involving a loved one; accidentally causing serious injury to, or the death of, another.

### Witnessing events

These are events that do not directly involve the survivors, but occur in their immediate surroundings and are witnessed by them. Examples include: seeing atrocities committed on others (usually mass torture, ethnic cleansing, organised mass violence, deportation, etc.); witnessing death or seeing a dead body; and seeing someone else get seriously injured.

#### Witnessing during PEV:

*Some [youths] were running after people [in] the road. I ran away with my children. I saw a man being killed by [being cut] with a panga and hit by clubs when I was running.*

There are other complex events that involve a combination of the types listed above and which result in systematic violence targeting segments of society. These include events or situations relating to negative ethnicity or racism, poverty, socio-economic exclusion or neglect, and negative stereotyping.

## Traumatic events in Kenya's history

Kenya has experienced many disasters and other potentially traumatic events since before independence. Many of these events have involved communal conflict, leading to long-term hostilities that periodically erupt in armed conflict. Others have involved man-made disasters such as terrorist attacks that are perceived by many to emanate from one segment of Kenyan society, leading to generalised hostility against members of that segment and potentially causing them to miss out on opportunities available to other members of Kenyan society. The final category of potentially traumatic events in Kenya is natural disasters, including flooding, famines and mudslides.

Among all these problems, the ones most likely to cause conflict that lasts for a long time are communal conflicts, often over natural resources such as pasture, water and livestock. Terrorist attacks also pose a huge risk to national cohesion and social coexistence due to the suspicions they create in the population, leading to profiling of individuals and marginalisation.

### Communal conflicts

The 2007/2008 PEV led to the death of over 1 000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. Part of the conflict was ethnic in nature, with political affiliation being assumed on the basis of ethnicity.

Long-term cattle rustling in the northern region of Kenya involves many communities and results in death, livestock theft and the displacement of populations. Since it is often packaged as a communal issue, attacks and counter-attacks target random members of the affected communities, resulting in a perpetual cycle of violence that becomes difficult to break with the passage of time.

Inter-ethnic conflict is also common in the counties on Kenya's borders and along the coast. In parts of the country, some groupings have periodically been formed, ostensibly to agitate for communal rights, and they often engage in armed conflict in defence of those rights.

### Terrorism

Kenya has had terrorist attacks for a long time. In 1975, a terrorist attack at the OTC bus terminus in downtown Nairobi left 27 people dead and several injured. In 1981, the Norfolk Hotel, also in downtown

**Kenya has experienced many disasters and other potentially traumatic events since before independence.**

**Outcomes may be classified into four main categories: physical, psychological, social, and communal or societal.**

Nairobi, was bombed, killing five people and injuring dozens. In 1998, the United States Embassy in Nairobi was bombed by terrorists, killing over 200 people and injuring hundreds more.

In 2010, during the campaigns relating to the referendum on the new Constitution, grenades were lobbed into a campaign meeting, killing six people and injuring several more. Finally, in 2013, a band of terrorists attacked a shopping mall in the Westlands suburb of Nairobi with grenades, automatic machine guns and other military-grade weapons, killing dozens of people and injuring hundreds.

The more recent terrorist attacks have been said to have links to foreign Muslim extremist groups and international terrorist networks. This raises the risk of negative profiling of all persons of Somali or Arab ancestry, and Muslims in general, leading to a form of marginalisation that breeds long-term grievances within these communities

## **Outcomes of trauma**

Exposure to traumatic events may result in many different outcomes for the individual and for the community or society in which they live. Individual-level outcomes are determined by a number of factors, including the severity of the event, the individual's past experiences, the larger meaning the event represents for the individual, coping skills, values and beliefs held by the individual, the reactions of, and support from, family, friends and/or professionals, and the individual's level of preparedness for the event. Similar factors may also influence the occurrence of societal outcomes.

The outcomes may be classified into four main categories: physical, psychological, social, and communal or societal outcomes.

### **Physical outcomes**

These are outcomes that affect the individual's body either directly or indirectly (physical injuries and scarring; stress-related medical conditions such as duodenal ulcers, flare-ups of asthma, hypertension, heart disease, and strokes; frequent infections due to lowered immunity; delayed healing of physical wounds; slowed growth in children; and poor nutrition, among others).



## Psychological outcomes

These are outcomes that affect a person's thinking, feelings or behaviour, and may include mental disorders arising as a result of exposure to traumatic events. They include: personality changes; extreme emotional reactions (inappropriate gaiety, unexpected tempers, mood swings); general mental illnesses (depression, psychotic episodes, manic episodes, anxiety disorders, somatic-symptom disorders and substance abuse); and trauma-related mental illnesses (post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]; acute stress disorder [ASD]), among others. Some mental disorders related to exposure to traumatic events include the following:

- **Depression:** This is a mental illness characterised by a persistent and pervasive low mood or loss of interest in usual activities, an illness that lasts for several days to weeks. This is accompanied by several of the following: appetite and weight changes; sleep changes; lethargy; agitation or slowing down; a sense of worthlessness; a feeling of hopelessness; excessive guilt; problems with concentration or making decisions; and suicidal ideation, plans or attempts, among others.
- **Anxiety disorders:** This is a group of disorders that share certain features, including excessive fearfulness and worry about things that do not normally bother people. Common presentations include: excessive fear, which is often irrational; being constantly anxious; panic attacks; physiological signs (palpitations, shortness of breath, sweating, sleep problems); cognitive signs (sense of impending doom, problems with attention and concentration, irritability); etc.
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and acute stress disorder (ASD):** Common features of PTSD include recurrent intrusion (memories, nightmares, flashbacks, and anxiety attacks when exposed to the event or memories of the event); avoidance of reminders (people, places, activities, objects, etc.); memories, thoughts and feelings about the event; mood and thought changes (forgetfulness, negativity about oneself, distorted thoughts about the cause or consequences of the event, negative feelings, loss of interest, and detachment); and changes in arousal or reactivity (irritability, recklessness, hypervigilance, being easily startled, problems with concentration, and sleep problems).

Acute stress disorder (ASD) is similar to PTSD, but the symptoms begin soon after the traumatic event and end within a month of onset. People who develop ASD are at higher risk of developing PTSD



than those who do not, and they may require some follow-up with a mental-health professional in order to reduce this risk and manage the condition should it arise.

It must, of course, be noted that almost any of the major mental disorders can arise after exposure to a traumatic event, and therefore any individual exposed to a potentially traumatic event who develops a change in behaviour, thinking or feelings will need to be evaluated for a possible mental disorder.

### Case study: John B

John B is a young man who was recruited by a terrorist organisation to fight in Somalia against African Union (AU) forces. After a period of training, he was deployed to fight with others in and around the Somali city of Afmadow.

During an encounter with a military detachment affiliated to the AU, all but one of his friends were killed. The two of them trekked through the bush until they reached the city, from where they hitchhiked lifts to Kismayo.

John B managed to convince a fisherman to drop him off the coast of Kenya, and he swam ashore and managed to join the numerous beach boys along the shoreline.

He eventually made his way back home. At home, his relatives noticed that John B had changed. He refused to talk about his experiences or even to tell them where he had been. He was irritable most of the time and would lash out violently at the smallest provocation. He was not sleeping well at night, and would wake up screaming and shouting about imaginary attackers. When walking down the street, he would suddenly crouch in a defensive position and run off the road. When asked what was going on, he would say that he had spotted the enemy and was organising how to attack them.

Eventually, John B was taken to hospital where the psychiatrist diagnosed him as having PTSD and started him on treatment.

### **Social outcomes**

These are outcomes that affect an individual's ability to relate well with others and to work in co-operation with other people. Common problems include an impaired relationship with a spouse/partner; problems with other family members; problems at work or school; difficulties maintaining supportive friendships, etc.

### **Communal or societal outcomes**

Trauma may also have effects that have an impact on how a whole community or society functions. Extreme or prolonged trauma often changes a society's norms and functioning, resulting in new social behaviours and rules. Examples include: increased crime due to behavioural problems; a distrust of strangers, leading to problems with tolerance and cohesion; a readiness for violence in anticipation of an attack; a breakdown of social norms and the adoption of either more rigid attitudes or very laissez-faire ones; a distrust of social order and leadership; and a risk of increased retraumatisation.

Some of the positive effects of trauma that could fall into the above four categories include:<sup>24</sup>

- Improved relationships with other people because the victims know that they can count on such people in times of trouble; a sense of closeness with others; and a willingness on the part of the victims to express their emotions, etc.;
- New possibilities such as developing interests; establishing a new path of life; the availability of new opportunities that would not have been possible otherwise; changing things that need changing;
- Personal strength where one feels self-reliant; an ability to handle difficulties; the discovery that one is stronger than one thought one was; and being able to accept the way things work out;
- Spiritual change; and
- Appreciation of life where one is able to identify what is important in life, among others.

## Impact of trauma on reconciliation

This section assists the Handbook user to appreciate the role that a traumatic experience plays in determining people's behaviour in different settings, including during reconciliation dialogues with 'strangers'. Handbook users and facilitators intending to conduct dialogues need to use this section to identify, among participants, some individuals who may be having these reactions, and help them recognise them and initiate a process of healing.

### General considerations

As we saw in the previous section of this module, trauma has far-reaching effects on all areas of an individual's life. When thinking of the social constructions as developed in Module 3, it is important to note that the effects of trauma can impact social organisation and make it more difficult for people to accept new ideas that threaten their own. Despite the need for reconciliation after mass traumatic events, traumatised people are often more likely to resist reconciliation and help and to see any gestures made in an attempt to reach out to them as threatening.

Indeed, the outcomes of trauma at the societal or communal level have a significant impact on a society's readiness for reconciliation and social interaction.

A number of studies have been carried out to examine the impact of trauma on reconciliation and forgiveness. A few are summarised below.

#### *Research findings*

A South African study examined the impact of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) on psychiatric illness and forgiveness among survivors of human rights abuses during apartheid.<sup>25</sup> The study concluded that the SATRC process had no impact on the occurrence of mental illness among the survivors. It also had no impact on the survivors' attitude concerning forgiveness or as regards the likelihood of them forgiving their former tormentors. In this study, low forgiveness was associated with an increased risk of mental illness.

Another comprehensive review of the literature<sup>26</sup> concluded as follows:

*An unforgiving nature correlates strongly with the development of psychiatric disease. Encouraging forgiving attitudes and emotions leads to decreased anxiety and depression.*

A study in a hospital setting<sup>27</sup> concerning disclosure of adverse events to patients concluded in the following vein:

*There is preliminary support from the ... literature for further investigation of the hypothesis that disclosure can moderate ... recovery and health ... after an adverse incident, provided that the disclosure incorporates an admission of responsibility. (Emphasis mine)*

Persaud, a consultant psychiatrist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, argues:

*When two communities are deadlocked they need to 'own' the conflict, and therefore understand how essential is the choice of resolution and moving on, rather than mutually assured destruction. What we increasingly see on the worldwide stage is third parties attempting to intervene to resolve disputes, but somehow exacerbating rather than resolving them.<sup>28</sup>*

One can therefore conclude as follows: after trauma, reconciliation is key for peace to prevail and for nations to be built; lack of forgiveness, or an environment that does not promote forgiveness, hinders reconciliation, integration and cohesion; forgiveness promotes good mental-health outcomes, thereby reducing the effects of trauma on individual thoughts, feelings and behaviours; and, after trauma, mental health is key in the promotion of reconciliation, integration and forgiveness.

It follows, therefore, that, after trauma, methods of promoting both forgiveness and better mental health improve the probability of reconciliation, cohesion and integration. This process can be achieved through dialogue between those who have wronged each other, with three components being involved: disclosure of wrongdoing (truth-telling), admission of responsibility (acknowledgement), and request for forgiveness (apology).

One must remember that conflicts often result in the exposure of large populations to at least one, but usually many, potentially traumatic events. It follows, therefore, that the process of reconciliation cannot be successful before an evaluation for psychological trauma is carried out and individuals and groups who experienced trauma are helped to overcome it.

**Unmanaged traumatic reactions can disrupt dialogue and frustrate efforts at reconciliation.**

Unmanaged traumatic reactions can disrupt dialogue and frustrate efforts at reconciliation. A person involved in promoting dialogue among traumatised individuals must therefore be able to identify at least some features of trauma and initiate efforts at addressing them before embarking on community dialogues.

**Traumatised individuals will have multiple disruptions in different areas of their lives.**

The next sections will address some simple ways of dealing with traumatised individuals. However, they must be read together with the section above, which identifies the common outcomes of trauma and even points out some of the psychological features that one can use to identify a potentially traumatised individual.

## **Dealing with trauma and helping traumatised individuals and communities**

This section identifies strategies that a dialogue facilitator can use to help individuals deal with traumatic events. It also gives the dialogue facilitator an understanding of the community's perceptions that may be fuelling traumatic reactions, as well as providing the facilitator with indicators on how to begin dealing with these perceptions.

### **Individual trauma**

Individuals who have experienced a traumatic event will have multiple disruptions in different areas of their lives. These disruptions have been identified in a previous section of this module. The following strategies are very useful in preventing or reducing the impact of trauma in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event. They can be modified according to the situation and numbers of people involved, but are useful even when applied in contexts where the actual magnitude of trauma is unknown. They are derived from a disaster-intervention principle known as 'Protect, Direct and Connect'<sup>29</sup>, but are expanded to address additional issues in a traumatic situation. Components include:

- *supportive communication* that conveys empathy, concern, respect and confidence;
- *protection from further trauma* by ensuring for instance that the dialogue takes place in a 'safe' environment, and that ground rules are set that ensure respect for divergent opinions, order, and the use of non-violent language and idiom; directing away from danger and towards safety and help;
- *connecting to necessary services and support mechanisms*, including professional mental-health services when necessary and where available;
- *triage* to assess levels of distress and organising assistance as necessary; and
- *referral to specialised services as needed*.

Triage produces three categories of clients: (i) *those who just need a 'safe space' for emotional expression* (in this instance, dialogue facilitators should provide a listening ear or refer the person to a colleague or other field responder if they feel incapable of assisting); (ii) *those with mild to moderate distress who are in need of on-site counselling* (this means there should be counselling services available during dialogues); and (iii) *those with moderate to severe distress or features of mental illness who should be referred to a hospital for more specialised interventions.*

Psychological first aid (PFA) is a useful intervention in dialogue situations with mass-trauma victims, especially in the immediate aftermath. It has been used before during the intervention for survivors of PEV in Kenya.<sup>30</sup> The emphasis of PFA is supportive, unforced listening (refer to Module 6 and the discussion on listening); gathering information about immediate needs (refer to Module 2 and the sections on community issues and a community profile), and addressing needs as they arise.

### **Individual trauma in the context of a dialogue**

It must be emphasised that a facilitator must prepare adequately prior to conducting a community dialogue session.

#### **Notes for the facilitator**

If possible, the facilitator should try to mingle with the participants in advance of the session and get a 'feel' for their individual experiences. In this way, the facilitator may be able to identify some features of psychological stress and offer remedies before the dialogue sessions actually begin.

In the event that a traumatised participant experiences strong emotional reactions during the dialogue, use of the strategies listed above will be invaluable in defusing the situation. The aim should be to get the individual to a 'safe' space, allow him or her to 'ventilate' and direct him or her for help as appropriate.

This means that part of the process of preparing for community dialogues must involve the identification of social and psychological support systems in the community to which traumatised individuals may be referred when they need such interventions. These interventions will include assistance by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in facilities within the community, but other mental-health workers may also be useful in the absence of the highly specialised cadres.

Social workers, mental-health nurses, occupational therapists and clinical psychiatrists may prove useful during acute interventions and in identifying participants who need further referral to larger mental-health

facilities. A clinical management and psychiatric referral pathway must therefore be identified in advance in order to ensure that those in need are helped without undue delay.

### **Communal trauma**

Communities often create a common narrative that may include generalisations about neighbours and their role in past traumatic communal events. The role of 'others' is magnified in order to increase communal cohesion, in the process leading to relative isolation from neighbouring communities.

As noted in an earlier module, narratives of past communal trauma may involve actual events, exaggerations of actual events, or even mythical events that never occurred. Over time, and through repeated narration, these narratives become entrenched and are accepted as the only version of the truth. The stories are used largely to boost intra-communal cohesion, rather than to cause animosity with neighbours. Unfortunately, some interpretations of the narratives lead to feelings of marginalisation and actual hostilities.

Attacking such communal narratives, even when they are not based on fact, often produces violent reactions and hinders further communication. Most members of a community perceive themselves as custodians of these narratives and pass them on to the next generation in one form or another, often with alterations to suit the times. They therefore feel that an attack on their communal narrative constitutes an attack on individual members of the community. During community reconciliation dialogues, it is therefore important to create an environment in which all participants feel that their communal narrative is not under direct attack, and that participants are just being encouraged to share their own personal experiences of the conflict.

#### **Notes for the facilitator**

During a dialogue process, the facilitator must be on the lookout for generalisations, accusations against groups, and statements that diminish the status of members of a community. Such direct attacks must be gently discouraged, with the facilitator indicating that no two individual experiences are the same, even within a particular community.

Erroneous perceptions of communal trauma may therefore be addressed by encouraging mixed community dialogues in which each member of the community gives an

## Notes for the facilitator (cont.)

account of his or her own life in the context of his or her community narrative or in the context of the conflict.

Hearing stories that humanise 'others' makes it easier to change our view of them and to deal with them as fellow human beings. The original community narrative therefore recedes into the past and a new one is gradually created to encompass the new relationships.

For example, Kenyans can use the PEV communal narratives as a frame of reference. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-election Violence (the Waki Report) states:

*One of the main findings of the Commission's investigations is that the postelection violence was spontaneous in some geographic areas and a result of planning and organization in other areas ...*

However, as demonstrated in the box below, that is not how most members of the affected communities see it.

### Post-election violence in Kenya

According to the Waki Report, the epicentres of violence were in Uasin Gishu and Trans-Nzoia.

Members of the different communities would later describe the PEV from their own perspective, demonstrating in their narrative how their own community had been wronged by others either before or during the conflict.

In the *Sunday Nation* Barometer column of 1 September 2013, Lukoye Atwoli wrote:

*Some members of one community argue that they are a chosen people who will prosper no matter what. They liken themselves to the biblical Israelites who underwent much suffering on their way to the Promised Land. The 2008 violence is conceptualized as part of this narrative, and envy among other 'lazy' communities is thought to be the main motivation for the supposed ethnic targeting.*

*Others have argued that since before independence, their land and property has been systematically alienated and given to 'foreigners' while the rightful owners suffer with the little land they have been left. According to them, successive governments have conspired with these 'outsider' communities to continue with this unfair system, and any legitimate attempt at reclaiming the land has failed. They argue that eviction of these 'outsiders' is therefore justified in order for the community to reclaim their land.*

*An alternative narrative argues that post-election violence was a spontaneous reaction to a 'stolen' election. According to them, there is nothing more to be read from the event, and any claims that the violence was pre-planned are derisively dismissed.*

All these narratives cannot be completely true, though each may be based on a truthful observation. In order to begin dispelling myths woven around these narratives, it is important that a dialogue session demonstrates that individuals within these communities experience the same problems as others, and that solutions to long-term problems may not lie in short-term measures such as attacking neighbours.



## Psychological self-care, or self-help for dialogue facilitators

This section identifies some of the risks to the psychological health of dialogue facilitators and includes signs that indicate that a facilitator is experiencing burnout. It then identifies how organisations can create supportive environments that will help reduce these risks and deal with the problems early on when they arise. Finally, the section identifies some of the strategies individuals can use to deal with the stress of their work and so avoid burnout.

### Importance of psychological self-care

During disasters and other potentially traumatic events, dialogue facilitators may experience a crisis because of the work they do. They often have a feeling of not having done enough, because, despite all their efforts, they still see people dying and suffering around them. They wish they could do more, but it is difficult for them. Facilitators are sometimes overwhelmed by the needs of the community or survivors.

Although the public may perceive them as heroes, they also have their own fears with which they need to cope. Help is often not forthcoming, because, during a dialogue process, most of the help is directed towards the communities in conflict. Unless the facilitators themselves develop strategies for helping themselves and one another, they inevitably suffer the same consequences of potentially traumatic events as the communities in conflict.

### The dialogue facilitator's challenge

Challenges encountered by facilitators during dialogues can include: being part of the collective crisis, which affects them as well as others in need of help; repeated exposure to grim experiences because of being on the 'front line'; carrying out physically difficult, exhausting or dangerous tasks; a lack of sleep and feelings of fatigue owing to the scarcity of skilled personnel or other facilitators and the magnitude of the work; coping with the perceived inability ever to do enough in the face of mounting complexities; facing moral and ethical dilemmas during dialogue meetings; being exposed to anger and a lack of gratitude by the communities in question, and their friends and relatives; becoming detached from personal support systems because of often working far from home; and feeling frustrated by policies and by decisions of supervisors that hinder smooth operations during the response.

### **Signs of dialogue-facilitator burnout**

A serious and adverse outcome encountered by dialogue facilitators is burnout. Burnout occurs when an individual has engaged in physically and emotionally exhausting work without taking any measures to ensure that he or she gets enough rest and recuperation. Manifestations of burnout include: wounded ideals – a person's outlook on life changes drastically; cynicism – one becomes very cynical, always anticipating the worst; feeling unappreciated or betrayed by the organisation; loss of enthusiasm for work or other activities in which one previously enjoyed engaging; and grandiose beliefs about one's own importance, often leading to heroic but reckless behaviour and neglecting personal safety and physical needs in the belief that survivors need more help. Other manifestations are: sexual indiscretions, including multiple sexual partners; unprotected sex with strangers; abusive sexual practices; mistrusting colleagues and supervisors, leading to inefficiency in carrying out operations; antisocial behaviour, including doing things that hurt others without expressing any remorse; excessive tiredness, which is especially worse in the morning, and includes a reluctance to initiate activities; an inability to concentrate, leading to misinterpretation of instructions or to the improper execution of tasks; symptoms of physical or mental illness; difficulty in sleeping in the form of either reduced or excessive sleep; and excessive use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

### **Organisational measures: Creating a supportive environment**

Organisations can help reduce the risk of burnout by taking measures to create a supportive environment for staff involved in high-risk activities. These measures, when consistently applied, will lead to a reduction in burnout, will help workers to identify colleagues who are suffering from burnout, and will enable people to help such colleagues. Below are some of the measures organisations can take to deal with burnout. These include: availability of guidance and support from managers and peers; an open and sharing organisational culture; regular and frequent staff meetings to discuss challenges and successes, and how staff are reacting to these; respect for confidentiality; and the creation of a peer-support system that ensures that staff have fun together and watch out for problems among their colleagues.

No matter what an organisation does to help workers to reduce the risk of adverse effects of working in a high-risk environment, it is important for individuals also to take measures to ensure that they remain healthy and safe as they carry out their tasks. The measures listed below can be regarded as psychological self-help for dialogue facilitators and, when consistently implemented, will help to ensure that facilitators reduce their own risk of developing problems as a result of their work.

In order to be successful in employing psychological self-help, facilitators should know the normal reactions to stressful events, should be aware of their own tension, and should consciously try to relax and use the buddy system (avoid working alone in order to ensure that, in case they develop a problem, their colleague will detect it early enough and link them to help).

When facilitators start feeling overwhelmed and notice that they are experiencing signs of burnout, they should talk to someone they trust and with whom they feel at ease. This does not have to be a helping-professional such as a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist, but could be anybody who is able to set aside time and knows how to listen patiently. This person should also listen to what people close to them are saying and thinking about the event in order to measure the magnitude accurately from an objective perspective. Other measures that can be taken include working on routine tasks if it is too difficult to concentrate on demanding duties; when one cannot sleep or is too anxious, discussing this with someone whom one can trust; expressing feelings in ways other than talking (e.g. by drawing, painting, playing music or keeping a journal); not self-medicating or abusing substances, since these only tend to worsen symptoms and make recovery more difficult; 'going easy' on one's mistakes and not blaming oneself every time something goes wrong; avoiding inflated or perfectionistic expectations, because these are less likely to be achieved, thus leading to the perception that one is a failure and exacerbating burnout; and seeking professional advice if these reactions continue – one could, for instance, seek out a counsellor, a clinical psychologist or a psychiatrist for help.

## Summary of module

- The module starts off by providing the Handbook user with a general understanding of the meanings, types and outcomes of trauma at the individual and collective level.
- There is a need for sensitivity when dealing with reconciliation in traumatised communities and the module therefore refers to research that has been carried out in order to examine the impact of trauma on reconciliation and forgiveness. This research will assist facilitators in their work. The module further addresses the considerations when designing post-conflict reconciliation processes to mitigate retraumatisation, which can hamper reconciliation-dialogue processes generally.
- The module also provides suggestions on how to deal with traumatised individuals and groups at both the individual and communal level, and focuses on expressions of trauma in the context of a community dialogue.
- The module concludes by highlighting the risks to the psychological health of dialogue facilitators themselves and indicates ways to mitigate the occurrence of burnout and secondary trauma when conducting dialogues.

## Endnotes

22 Atwoli, Stein, Williams et al., 2013: 182.

23 CIPEV, 2008.

24 Tedeschi et al., 1996: 455–471.

25 Kaminer et al., 2001: 373–377.

26 Spiers, 2004: 261–263.

27 Allan & McKillop, 2010: 126–131.

28 Persaud, 2005: 115–116.

29 Young et al., 1998.

30 Atwoli, 2010: 465–468.

## MODULE 5

## Facilitation of reconciliation dialogues

# Therese Jönsson



## Overview of the dialogue process

The facilitator requires an understanding of the overall dialogue process in order to manage and steer it towards its objectives. This module therefore provides an overview of the different phases of a dialogue and of the role of the facilitator in each phase. The module is divided into 'process design', 'practical preparation', 'the dialogue process' and 'sustainability of the dialogue'. Module 6, which follows, addresses the specific skills and tools of the facilitator.

### Process design

'Process design' refers to the setting up of the dialogue. It involves, among other things, planning and designing who to include in the dialogue, what type of dialogue should be used, how many meetings should take place, and who should facilitate. Simply put, process design is the foundation of the dialogue. The process-design work is initiated before the dialogue, but continues to some extent throughout the preparations. In ideal circumstances, preparations should be made by an inclusive team representing the core stakeholders in the dialogue. This process is led by the initiator or facilitator of the dialogue process or by a person engaged for the task. A well-thought-through process design increases the likelihood of a successful dialogue.

#### Steps in process design

1. Understand the situation
2. Select the facilitator or co-facilitators
3. Select the organiser, if needed
4. Identify stakeholders
5. Formulate the objective with stakeholders
6. Determine intended number and frequency of meetings
7. Identify interpreters, if needed
8. Engage reporter, if required
9. Secure funding or work within a limited budget
10. Invite stakeholders (the order can vary depending on the context).



**A facilitator  
always has to be  
impartial.**

## **Understanding the situation**

Before designing the dialogue, a deep understanding of the situation concerned is required. An understanding of the situation and of the stakeholders will influence the design of the dialogue, because insights from the analysis will help to define the purpose of the dialogue clearly. Module 3 contains a number of different analysis tools that can be used before engaging in the dialogue. In addition, inviting different stakeholders to the dialogue, as described in this module when discussing pre-dialogue preparation, will diversify the facilitator's understanding of the situation. Besides understanding the actual situation, the analysis should also include other ongoing or past dialogue initiatives in the area. It is crucial to learn more about other initiatives so as to ensure complementarity and avoid competition.

## **Selecting the facilitator(s)**

It is crucial for purposes of the dialogue that the facilitator, or facilitation team, be accepted and trusted by all parties. The participants must trust the facilitator to conduct a fair and equal process or they will not find it meaningful to participate. A dialogue facilitator can be an *outsider* who is not directly linked to the situation concerned, or an *insider* who belongs to one of the groups involved in the dialogue. Both roles are legitimate, but have different implications. When the facilitator is already known to the community, credibility is, in the first instance, built on how the individual is already perceived. During the dialogue, the facilitator must keep in mind that his or her actions in private may impact how she or he is seen as a facilitator.

A facilitator always has to be impartial. This does not mean that the facilitator must come from a group not participating in the dialogue. As long as the facilitator is able to ensure an equal and fair process, and is trusted by the participants, the dialogue process can very well be led by an insider.<sup>31</sup> *Insider* facilitators must take care to remain in the role of facilitator. While they should avoid taking sides, they can express their perspective as stakeholders associated with the issue being discussed, as long as this perspective opens up further possibilities for understanding. As an *insider* facilitator, it is even more important to emphasise the role of the facilitator in managing the process and ensuring fair participation (see Module 6). A team of facilitators originating from two or more of the participating groups can be put together to avoid possible accusations of bias.

When an *outsider* facilitator is not directly affected by the situation that is the subject of the dialogue, she or he has to work harder to earn the participants' trust right from the beginning of the process. The pre-dialogue interactions with the community discussed in the next section then become of utmost importance as a trust-building exercise. The advantage of an external facilitator is his or her lack of involvement in the situation being discussed as part of the dialogue.

When the facilitator, whether an insider or an outsider, is not trusted by the community, she or he should consider stepping down. If all efforts to gain the trust of the community have failed, or the process is stalled, it is more appropriate to hand over the role to another suitable person. This should not be considered a personal failure but a sign of integrity. A facilitator must always put what is best for the dialogue process at the forefront.

### **Co-facilitation**

#### **The multi-ethnic facilitation team in Nakuru**

The tripartite project supported one of its alumni in conducting a dialogue in Banita, Nakuru County, that sought to reconcile internally displaced persons and host communities living in the area. The dialogue had two co-facilitators from the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu communities. The team found that their composition facilitated the mobilisation of stakeholders from both conflicting sides, as they appreciated having one of their own among the facilitators. It was also a benefit that the facilitators could understand both groups' mother tongues. The facilitators noted, though, that this required great self-discipline not to favour their own side when, for example, distributing the work. Facilitators needed to be aware of their potential bias and help each other to keep the dialogue fair and balanced. Our facilitators also noted that a clear division of roles was important in avoiding the risk of the facilitators competing as leaders.

As the tasks of the facilitator can be overwhelming, especially in the course of a longer process, it is often advantageous to have two co-facilitators. In addition to sharing the work, the continuation of the process becomes less vulnerable to unforeseen events. As mentioned above, a team of facilitators can also have the added advantage of representing more than one group in the community. It is important that a good working relationship, mutual understanding and a clear division of roles are established between the two facilitators. For purposes of clarity, one facilitator at a time should lead the discussion. The other person can write key points on a flip chart (if used), be available to assist the main facilitator, and simply listen carefully to the dialogue in



order to contribute to the joint analysis that will guide the next steps. The main facilitator could either be the same throughout the dialogue, or the co-facilitators could take turns to lead the process.

### **The role of the organiser**

Organising a dialogue with a larger number of participants requires a lot of work over and above the actual facilitation. While the facilitator might be able to take on an organising role, it is crucial that it does not overshadow the preparation needed for the facilitation. It is therefore recommended that the facilitator work with someone who can take the main responsibility for all the practical arrangements. It is also important to recognise that organising an event requires a different skill set than facilitating a dialogue, but is equally important for the success of the dialogue.<sup>32</sup>

In the case of a very long and inclusive dialogue process, an *organising committee* might be an alternative. This committee is composed of members of the participating stakeholders and assists the facilitator in terms of disseminating information to, and mobilising, participants, as well as taking care of the agenda and the practical preparations.

### **Identifying stakeholders**

Identifying and consulting the right stakeholders for the dialogue process lies at the heart of a successful dialogue design. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the situation, it is important that a variety of all the relevant stakeholders and perspectives is included (see Module 3 for the different types of stakeholder analysis). This will ensure that a more sustainable solution is likely to be achieved. An inclusive dialogue process values people's right to share their stories and perspectives on issues that affect them. As such, the general principle for the dialogues is that all stakeholders affected by the issue should be included. These types of dialogues are often referred to as multistakeholder dialogues.<sup>33</sup>

If the numbers are too large, rather than including all *individuals* affected by the issue, it is at least important to include *representatives*. It is also possible to ask the directly affected stakeholders which other actors they believe should be included. There is no general list of stakeholders to include in every dialogue, as each dialogue is context-specific. However, the type of stakeholders that may be relevant – depending on the situation – are, for example:

#### Direct parties (or those directly affected)

- Elders
- Women's groups
- The youth
- Economic actors
- Political leaders at different levels
- Community or informal leaders
- Capacities for peace<sup>34</sup>
- Civil society groups
- Religious actors.

Several of the above groups exist at different levels in society. Dialogue processes have the benefit of connecting actors on different levels. This leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation. Identify which relevant stakeholders exist on different levels of society, for instance at grassroots, community, national and regional levels. It is incorrect to assume that the most senior representatives of a group understand the full depth and breadth of the issue at hand as experienced by the members of the group. It is better to include a 'diagonal slice' – participants from different levels, age groups and professions – of the community's population, as recommended by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.<sup>35</sup>

Sometimes, it is appropriate to include people who are not stakeholders per se, but who are important for the context, such as local or national government officials, donors, experts or religious figures. The facilitator should weigh the benefits of including external persons against the possible negative effects on the dynamics and trust in the group. Given the existing insecurities, participants should not get the impression that they are being observed. The facilitator should, therefore, carefully consider the number of external people received (if any), and whether they are best included as participants, observers or supporters.

## Stakeholders in the Trans Nzoia and Bungoma dialogue

Rising tensions among communities living in the Trans Nzoia and Bungoma counties before, during and after the 2013 general elections prompted the tripartite project to support one of its alumni from Peace Right Programmes to conduct a dialogue that would seek to reconcile communities living in this area. The main communities experiencing tensions included the Bukusu, Teso, Sabaot and Kikuyu. The dialogue process involved inviting the following stakeholders to the dialogue forum:

- Ten stakeholders from each of the four communities (two of which had some level of expertise in the issue under discussion);
- Representatives from the youth, women and professionals selected by each community;
- Six elders selected by the Sabaot, Teso and Bukusu to represent them, with the Kikuyu being allowed to be represented by eight elders, since they were the main aggrieved community;
- Two key religious leaders from the two counties were present; and
- Political leaders, county administration officers and security agents also attended.

### *Inclusion of women*

The right of women to participate on equal terms in societal processes such as dialogues is well established in, for example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, the inclusion of women is not only a question of women's rights, but also means that the results will be more sustainable.<sup>36</sup> The representatives in the dialogue should be gender-balanced. If participation is not balanced, the facilitator must discuss the importance of having both male and female representatives from the different stakeholders. Including specific women's groups in the dialogue is no substitute for balanced participation among the different groups. As a facilitator, however, it is important to be accommodating as regards the will of the stakeholders, while at the same time challenging existing norms and stereotypes through respectful advice and curious inquiry. Nevertheless, to include women in the dialogue only as representatives of women's organisations is better than no participation at all. The main point is to *constantly improve women's participation* as much as possible in the specific community. What constitutes the biggest possible step forwards for women's inclusion and participation may differ from one community to another.

## Listening to women

The tripartite project supported a dialogue in Sondu, Nyamira – a border town with Kisiis, Kalenjins and Luos – where inter-ethnic fighting had been prevalent, especially at the time of elections. One of the beliefs held concerning women's rights, which had a direct impact on the dialogue, was that women should not speak in front of men. In order to maximise the inclusion and participation of women in this context, the facilitator met with women, men and youths separately, including all three ethnic groups in each meeting. At a final main dialogue meeting, all stakeholders and groups came together. The facilitator found that meeting the women separately increased their level of participation in the main dialogue, as they had first been able to raise their concerns in a supportive environment. Nevertheless, many women felt constrained to talk in front of men and the facilitator therefore needed to encourage them. When the women were not confident enough to put their perspective forward, the facilitator raised the issue as a general concern, without referring to the women's dialogue. Having compiled notes from the initial dialogues was helpful in this regard.

The women's voice contributed to the successful outcome of the dialogue. The women, to a larger extent, called for peace and forgiveness rather than violence and revenge. The dialogue series led to a reduction of violence in the community, even though some work still remains. The women still meet on a monthly basis to talk about their challenges and to support one another both morally and financially.

### *Willingness of stakeholders to participate*

If a dialogue cannot achieve its stated objective because key people are missing, it is likely to cause frustration and prevent people from participating in future dialogues. The facilitator can reflect on this and, if possible, better prepare participants for dialogue. This may include receiving additional information on the purpose and process of the dialogue, as explored in Module 3 on organising an intracommunity dialogue around the current situation. The formal objective of the dialogue can also be chosen strategically to ensure the necessary participation (see 'Formulate an objective' below). If key stakeholders are not willing to engage in dialogue concerning their conflict, they may perhaps be interested in discussing other topics, such as school opportunities for their children or general development of the area. If key people still refuse to participate in a dialogue with the other side, regardless of the topic, the facilitator can consider organising the dialogue with those who are in fact interested. It is then likely that the topic of the dialogue will need to be modified to take into account who is participating. If nothing else remains, the dialogue might simply have to be postponed until the needed stakeholders are ready. The facilitator can check in regularly to see if they have changed their minds regarding willingness to participate.

**A meaningful dialogue requires listening and sharing.**

**It is important to be clear as to what should be achieved by the dialogue.**

### *Including or excluding participants who are not constructive*

A meaningful dialogue requires listening and sharing, together with a certain openness to others' perspectives, to learn and, eventually, to be open to changing current behaviour. However, some individuals will have no intention or willingness to contribute constructively to the dialogue. These individuals are often referred to as 'spoilers'. However, calling people 'spoilers' is not helpful, because labelling people does not promote understanding. Another term that is used – and one that is preferable – is 'hard to reach'. It is important to note that lack of constructiveness is not a permanent state. Individuals can change from negative participation to positive participation, and vice versa, depending on the conflict (and even personal) situation and the dialogue process. The job of the facilitator is to create the best conditions possible, through the tools described in this Handbook, in order to 'disarm' participation that is not constructive and thereby enable positive transformation. However, in some instances, despite the best possible efforts of the facilitator, participants may remain unconstructive. Depending on the importance of the unconstructive stakeholder(s), and the potential negative risk their participation brings, the facilitator can choose to include or exclude them. Pruitt and Thomas recommend including unconstructive participants in the following situations, when:

- 'There is reasonable hope that they can engage positively or that engagement can neutralize their capacity to undermine the process.'
- 'There can be no solution without them.'<sup>37</sup>

Even though dialogue processes should be as inclusive as possible, if the above does not apply, it might be better to exclude the unconstructive stakeholders from the dialogue in order to avoid the complete destruction of the dialogue for other constructive participants. However, make sure to keep them (those who are unconstructive) as positive as possible by, for example, informing them of the process, consulting them separately, or, if appropriate, inviting them to a side event as part of the larger community. It is preferable to minimise the negativity towards the dialogue as much as possible.

### **Objective of the dialogue**

The *objective of the dialogue* should be formulated based on the understanding of the situation. It is important to be clear as to what

should be achieved by the dialogue, as this further determines what the process looks like and who needs to be ‘on board’. The objective can be formulated together with participants or it can be based on their description of the situation. In the latter case, the facilitator should check that participants agree with the objective and modify it where necessary. As the objective of the dialogue steers its direction, participants must feel that it is relevant and that they own it. Be careful not to formulate an overly ambitious objective for the dialogue and thus create unrealistic expectations of what the dialogue can achieve.

In some situations of high tension or deep-seated conflict, the concerned stakeholders may refuse to sit down and talk to the other side about the conflict. As discussed in Module 1, they might require an apology or monetary compensation before engaging in dialogue – something that is usually not achieved without the parties engaging in dialogue. An alternative strategy to explaining the benefits of the dialogue to the participants, as mentioned in the section on inviting stakeholders above, is to formulate the objective of the dialogue as something more acceptable to the stakeholders. Perhaps it would be acceptable to all sides to meet to address a practical issue such as access to water or the construction of a road, or to discuss developmental opportunities that would benefit the community, such as education for the children, improved agricultural techniques or setting up small businesses. These types of dialogues (or sometimes even capacity building) can serve to open communication between the groups, build trust, and make it possible to have a dialogue about the core conflict in the near future.

#### **Objectives of some of the dialogues supported by the tripartite project**

##### *County objective*

Garissa: Providing a platform for rebuilding relationships between the Abdwak and Aulian clans who had been in constant conflict due to resource allocation and clan rivalry.

Nakuru: Reconciling internally displaced communities with host communities living in Banita.

Laikipia: Deliberating on causes and sustainable interventions with regard to the ethnic tensions among communities living in Laikipia County.

## Length of the process

After consulting with different stakeholders, the facilitator might have a sense of the length and number of meetings required for the first dialogue. The first meeting might give an even better indication of the scope of the issues to be addressed in the dialogue. It is important to note, however, that a dialogue process is dynamic and can lead to an unexpected turn of events. The length of the process is very much dependent on the level of engagement of the stakeholders, which, in turn, at least partly depends on how constructive they find the dialogue. Stakeholders will continue investing their time in the dialogue as long as they see the benefits of it.

Nevertheless, the facilitator should present a process plan for the first (and possibly only) phase of the dialogue. Is one meeting sufficient to start with? How long should the meeting be? Or is it already possible to see the need for several meetings? If so, how frequent should they be? While the facilitator might see the need for several meetings in order for all voices to be heard, or to address a variety of issues, participants might be reluctant to enter into a longer process without knowing whether it will be constructive. The dialogue might be easier to sell if presented as an initial meeting with a possible continuation to be determined. The facilitator will have to judge what is most appropriate in the situation. It is reasonable to expect, though, that the type of significant changes required in a dialogue will span years rather than months.<sup>38</sup>

It is possible that stakeholders may want to continue the dialogue process beyond the initial purpose of the dialogue. A platform for exchange between different stakeholders can only be beneficial, especially in a community with a history of tension and conflict. An existing dialogue process can be used to address new issues arising in the community and thus be used for conflict prevention. If there is engagement and interest in keeping the dialogue alive, the facilitator should encourage the continuation of the dialogue, even if she or he cannot continue to facilitate the process. Another facilitator or convener can take over, or the role could rotate among the participants in the dialogue. How to proceed with the dialogue can be discussed in one of the meetings.

## **Language and working with interpreters**

For the dialogue to be effective, it is important that all participants are able to understand and communicate freely. When dialogue participants have no common language that can be used with ease, an interpreter will be needed to enable the dialogue. The facilitator should assess the need for an interpreter by consulting the participating groups. Some individuals may be very comfortable communicating in a foreign language, while others will be restricted in their participation. The use of interpreters will delay the exchange, unless equipment for simultaneous translation is available, as all messages are voiced both in the original and the translated language. However, slowing down the pace will also give space to carefully consider the messages, to reflect and to 'decrease the temperature' where discussions become heated. Consequently, interpreting does not need to be an impediment to the dialogue.

When interpreters are used, the facilitator should verify that the individuals are acceptable to the participating groups. If no professional interpreters are available, the facilitator needs to ensure that the interpreters are aware of basic interpretation rules, like refraining from censoring or softening the message. The interpreter should translate in the first person rather than refer to the speaker as a third person (e.g. 'I am concerned' rather than 'She is concerned'.) Before the dialogue, the facilitator should also brief the interpreters about the topic of the dialogue and the type of discussion that might unfold, thereby allowing the interpreters to prepare themselves adequately. During the dialogue, the facilitator should speak to the participants and not to the interpreter, and should encourage the dialogue participants to do the same. Every now and then, the facilitator will probably need to actively tell the speaker to pause in order to give the interpreter a chance to translate.

Depending on the length of the dialogue, a minimum of two interpreters will be required, thus allowing them to take regular breaks. Interpreting is a demanding task requiring high levels of concentration. The interpreters are also the ones speaking the most during the dialogue.



## Working with interpreters in Trans-Nzoia

Owing to widespread displacement and violence among the Bukusu, Teso, Sabaot and Kikuyu communities during the election of 2007, the tripartite project supported one of its alumni to conduct a dialogue in Trans-Nzoia to prevent a similar occurrence in the 2013 general elections. Most of the participants understood Swahili, but were restricted when speaking, especially in relation to the issues discussed in the dialogue. Each group therefore brought their own interpreter, who could translate their message into Swahili, which the majority would then understand. Those who did not understand Swahili were assisted with translation by their own group members. In general, the translation went very smoothly and was not perceived as an impediment to the exchange. The dialogue allowed the communities to identify the deep-rooted issues causing tension among them. The elders presented the agreed-upon way forward on the county radio station.

### Reporting

Facilitating dialogue is a very intense exercise. It is difficult (but not impossible) for a facilitator to take detailed notes of what is discussed. At the same time, reports on the dialogue can be very helpful in keeping all participants 'on the same page' as to what has been exchanged, and in advancing the agenda from one dialogue meeting to another. Reports can also be helpful in informing the wider community of the process, especially if not everyone is included. Therefore it is helpful to have a specifically designated rapporteur for the dialogue. The presence of the rapporteur will need to be agreed on with participants beforehand. If the rapporteur is accepted, it is important to discuss what type of information is to be included in the report. Should names, for example, be omitted and can participants share stories during the dialogue that they do not want included in the report? Reporting should only be used if it is considered a constructive tool for the dialogue process and not an impediment to genuine sharing.

### The media

If the local or national media is interested in the dialogue process, or if the facilitator considers it beneficial to make them interested (as mentioned in Module 1), a communication plan or strategy should be developed, which includes a media strategy incorporating both how to handle the media and agreements and preparations needed with the dialogue participants. It is, for example, common to agree that only dedicated spokespersons (such as the facilitator) discuss the dialogue process with the media, and that statements are made after agreement among participants. It can easily impact the dialogue negatively if hurtful

comments are relayed to journalists ‘off the record’. Holding press conferences, writing statements and dealing with journalists’ enquiries require specific skills and proper preparation. It is better to be well prepared to engage professionally with the media. One of the resources that may be helpful to consult, and that is also available online, is: ‘Managing public information in a mediation process’ (which is contained in the Peacemaker’s Toolkit of the United States’ Institute of Peace.)<sup>39</sup>

### **Funding the dialogue process**

Funding of the dialogue process is an important consideration when designing a dialogue. The resources available can affect the number and length of meetings, the type of venue, and which kind of assistance participants receive. Funding can come from non-governmental organisations at local or national level, international donors, national government structures, religious institutions or philanthropists. In addition to money, actors can also contribute by making available a venue, providing food and transport, etc., thus paving the way for support from actors other than traditional donors. It is important to keep in mind, though, that a dialogue can be conducted with minimal resources. The venue could be under a tree and the community could bring food if needed. Lack of funding is no reason to refrain from organising a dialogue session.

### **Inviting and preparing participants**

Preparations for dialogue are crucially important. The bulk of the work happens in one-on-one meetings with participants. It is a mistake to invite participants upfront to a joint dialogue session before they have had an opportunity to develop trust in the process and the facilitator. The invitation to a joint session happens towards the end when sufficient political will has been confirmed and more clarity exists on the expectations, ground rules and agenda. The invitation of participants should not be the first contact with stakeholders. During the preparation phase, the facilitator explains the purpose of the dialogue and why it is important that the respective groups participate. The different participants do not always immediately accept the invitation to be a part of the dialogue. The facilitator should thus be prepared to listen to their needs and concerns and jointly explore how participation in the dialogue can contribute constructively to their situation, keeping in mind issues such as trauma discussed in Module 4.

### Inviting and preparing participants

Before the start of the dialogue, the facilitator should have shared, and participants should have understood, at least the following points:

- The purpose of the dialogue;
- Why their participation is important;
- How the dialogue process will be conducted;
- The role of the facilitator;
- The ground rules (whether developed before or during the dialogue);
- Other participating stakeholders;
- Indicating the story they want to share; and
- Practical details about the dialogue (e.g. date and time, location, transport, food, etc.)

The facilitator should also explain the dialogue process and sequence. For people in situations of tension and conflict, it is often an emotional effort to attend the dialogue, share their stories, and listen to the perspectives of the other parties. If the process and framework of the dialogue are clear, it is more likely that they will come to the dialogue with less anxiety, thus allowing them to focus on the content of the dialogue. The facilitator can use the first contact with participants to build trust in himself or herself and in the dialogue process. This is an ideal opportunity to share the invitation and other relevant information with relevant individuals or group members.

Preparing participants for dialogue is important. If they feel they can contribute to the contents and agenda of the dialogue, they may feel more confident in also sharing with the other stakeholders. When a participant is dreading meeting someone from the other side (e.g. a victim who will see the perpetrator for the first time), it can be helpful to inquire beforehand what it will be like to face the other person, how they can find the strength to share their story, and if there is a support system in place (see, further, Module 4 on trauma and reconciliation).

It is recommended that the facilitator checks in with the participants again after the initial meeting, but before the start of the dialogue. New questions might have arisen regarding the dialogue or fears and anxiety could have built up. This follow-up meeting is an opportunity to confirm key messages and make sure participants are still planning on attending the upcoming meeting.

## Practical preparation

### Steps in practical preparation:

1. Agree on the day and time;
2. Select the venue;
5. Arrange transport,
3. Make seating arrangements; and
4. Arrange for food and drinks

The practical aspects of a dialogue process should not be underestimated. In contexts of sensitive conflicts, failure to take care of practical preparations could create unnecessary tension and discomfort. It will also undermine the quality of the dialogue. On the other hand, well-thought-through practical preparations can contribute positively to the dialogue and even create bonding opportunities over, say, a shared meal.

### Day and time

The day and time for the dialogue should make it as easy and possible for all participants to attend. Make sure that the date and the time of the year do not clash with seasonal activities (such as harvesting or planting), religious celebrations, 'crunch time' at work, etc. Finer details such as whether transport is available at the start and end of the meeting, climatic conditions, etc., are also important. Ensure that the timing of the dialogue is not favourable to one of the stakeholders at the expense of others.

### Venue

The choice of venue should be made with care. Everybody should feel free to come to the venue. If there is strong opposition to a particular venue, such as fear of proximity to one party, an alternative venue should be found. The location should not be associated with any of the participating stakeholders but should be considered neutral ground. In many cases, people would not mind coming to a venue when their safety is guaranteed and the preparation processes have been transparent and thorough. Make sure that the venue is spacious enough, even if a larger number than expected turns out, or make sure to at least have an alternative larger space in mind. The dialogue venue does not necessarily need to be indoors, but could take place under a tree (weather permitting) or a simple roof construction.

### Transport

If needed, everyone should be able to access transport to the dialogue. The facilitator should verify whether participants have their own transport to the venue or if they need to use public or private vehicles. If funds are lacking, consider whether resources can be pooled for transport.

**Staying with the principle of inclusivity is important, as all perspectives need representation.**

## **Seating**

The ideal seating for a dialogue is in a circular formation. This allows all participants to see one another, which is important when listening. A circle also symbolises equality and lack of hierarchy, which are important values in a dialogue session. When participants are seated in a circle, the facilitator can easily have an overview of the participants to verify whether everyone is following and listening attentively. For many communities, a circle is a familiar seating arrangement, as it has been used around the fireplace or under a tree for generations. Keeping the circle small enough is often a problem. If the number of participants attending the dialogue is above 50, participants will most likely need to be placed in several circles in order to be able to see and hear one another well. The facilitator will need to use his or her imagination and flexibility in finding an arrangement appropriate for the context where the participating groups can see one another well, but with everyone concerned still being included. Some people can sit on blankets inside the main circle, while others stand or sit behind. Be mindful, though, that the different levels may give signals that some participants are more important than others.

As was discussed above in the discussion on identifying participants, choosing representatives of the different stakeholders could be a way to limit the dialogue to a more manageable size. However, staying with the principle of inclusivity is important, as all perspectives require representation.

## **Food and drinks**

It is always a good idea to serve something to eat and drink before, during and after the dialogue. It could be to welcome or close the dialogue or simply to celebrate together. In a dialogue supported by the tripartite project in Laikipia in Central Kenya, roasted goat was shared before the start of the dialogue. The shared meal set a collaborative tone for the dialogue itself.

The distance that participants travel to the dialogue venue will determine whether or not food is a prerequisite or whether several shorter meetings without food are an option. If resources are scarce and no funding has been secured, the participants can be asked to bring food for a 'potluck'. Participants should know in advance whether refreshments and meals will be served.

## The dialogue process

### Steps in the dialogue process:

1. Introduction to the dialogue;
2. Perspectives on the situation;
3. Way forward; and
4. Closure.

The facilitator plays an important role in ensuring that everyone understands how the dialogue process will unfold, and to what end. This will help everyone to keep the discussions focused.

The dialogue meeting can be divided into four phases: the introduction, the perspectives on the situation, the way forward, and closure. The two middle phases, perspectives on the situation and the way forward, are where the core exchange between participants takes place, and these phases consequently make up the bulk of the dialogue process. The dialogue process can consist of one longer meeting incorporating all four phases, or a series of meetings where a phase can extend over several meetings.

### Introduction to the dialogue

The facilitator welcomes participants and sets the tone for the dialogue. When introducing the dialogue, it is appropriate to restate the purpose of the gathering and compliment participants on their participation. Give participants an opportunity to speak as early as possible. It might be appropriate to do a simple round of names early on in the introduction phase. For a more substantive round of introductions, participants can share why they are participating in the dialogue. A shared commitment to, and motivation for, a peaceful future is often discovered, which sets a positive tone for the start of the dialogue.<sup>40</sup>

In order to reduce anxiety about the dialogue, the facilitator should explain how the dialogue works. Participants should know what to expect in terms of process. Everyone shares their understanding of the situation and the facilitator helps participants to move from individual or sectoral understanding to a joint understanding of the root causes of the problem. The facilitator keeps the purpose of the dialogue alive, which is to arrive at the best possible solutions acceptable to everyone.

A crucial component in setting the tone for the dialogue is the development of ground rules or principles of collaboration. These provide a framework for participants' behaviour towards one another during the dialogue. This can happen through brainstorming at the first dialogue meeting or during consultations with the participating groups before the dialogue. Further directions on developing the ground rules can be found in Module 6.

**The facilitator in the introduction phase:**

1. Welcomes participants;
2. Explains the purpose of the dialogue;
3. Initiates participants' introduction;
4. Explains the set-up of the dialogue and the role of the facilitator; and
5. Leads the development of the ground rules.

Appropriate religious, cultural and traditional practices can be observed.

**Perspectives on the situation**

The purpose of the perspectives phase is to generate a shared and deep understanding of the current situation so that common ways to address the situation can be developed.

The facilitator invites and encourages participants to share their stories and perspectives. She or he could probe through well-designed questions, such as those described in the first four modules of this handbook.

Those who participated in the preparation phase will most likely be prepared to share. Throughout the dialogue, the facilitator manages the contributions, checks the understanding, paraphrases, summarises, and reframes what is being said. The facilitator, as the process manager, keeps track of what is shared and helps to uncover all important aspects. If several different issues are raised, it might be useful to draw up an agenda and deal with issues one by one.

As the dialogue deepens, it is important that the facilitator highlights common ground among participants, but also the differences in experiences and perspectives. The facilitator continues to reframe and ask questions – both of individual participants and the group as a whole – to better understand the underlying issues and reasoning. Before entering into the next phase, that is, the way forward, the facilitator can check whether any participant has anything more to add in order that he or she (the facilitator) can better understand the current situation.

**Way forward**

After participants have shared various perspectives, experiences and thoughts on the current situation and what led up to it, the dialogue

usually evolves into focusing on the future. As a result of a broader perspective on the situation and a new-found understanding of one another, it often comes naturally to participants to reflect on how to continue from here. The facilitator can summarise the main perspectives, differences and commonalities regarding the current situation and then ask participants how, based on this new understanding, they want to move on.

As mentioned in Module 2, a dialogue process does not need to produce a formal agreement. Depending on the subject of the dialogue, it may be sufficient to have listened to the different perspectives and achieved a better understanding of one another. Nevertheless, the 'way forward' phase still has its place in the dialogue. In some instances, it might simply entail recognition that the dialogue has created an enhanced understanding and perhaps reduced fear among participants. It is also useful to explore possibilities for more positive interaction after the dialogue.

In other cases, participants may want to share ideas about how to change their situation. The phase may then evolve into a brainstorming session where the different ideas are discussed and eventually agreed on. In addition to leading the discussion, the facilitator needs to collect the ideas and organise them in a way that is visible to participants. Depending on the number of proposals, a discussion on what ideas are the most constructive, or in what order they should be carried out, might be necessary. If participants need to take the initiative and follow up on something, it should be clear who will carry the process forward. The facilitator should initiate a discussion on the sustainability of the dialogue, as highlighted below.

### **Closure**

The facilitator leads the closure phase in an appropriate manner. It is useful to make a brief reference to what was achieved during the dialogue and to compliment participants for their efforts. It can be very powerful to do a round among participants where everyone shares one word or one sentence on how they experienced the dialogue. If appropriate, a cultural or religious ceremony can be led by a participant or other appropriate person.



**In the closure phase, the facilitator:**

1. Summarises the (result of the) dialogue process;
2. Compliments participants for their efforts;
3. Leads appropriate sharing among participants to draw the dialogue to a close; and
4. Possibly arranges a closing ceremony.

## **Sustainability of the dialogue**

When the dialogue is concluded, the facilitator has fulfilled his or her duty in starting the process. If agreements were made, the community takes the lead in implementing these agreements. However, how to sustain the dialogue should be a key discussion point during the dialogue. For a start, the design of the dialogue process itself can contribute to the sustainability of the outcomes. If the dialogue has been an inclusive process with all involved stakeholders, and where everyone has been able to contribute on equal terms, the likelihood increases that the results of the dialogue will be long-term ones.

In addition, during the 'way forward' phase, the facilitator should initiate a discussion with participants on how they can ensure that the outcomes of the dialogue are sustainable. The participants should propose ideas, with ownership and decision-making remaining with the dialogue participants. The approaches outlined below should thus be seen as examples of what might be suggested by the community. In rare cases where there is a lack of ideas on the part of the participants, the facilitator can share what has worked in other dialogues and ask if participants consider any of the ideas appropriate for their situation.

### **Implementation committee**

An inclusive implementation committee, mandated by all stakeholders involved in the dialogue as a forum for continued dialogue, can assist with implementing the change process in the communities and with settling disagreements about the details of what was agreed. The role of the facilitator normally ends with the dialogue process. There is an advantage to the community in taking ownership of their continued co-existence and in engaging directly with one another. However, if there is a natural role for the facilitator, and if asked to participate, she or he can do so provided that the time, energy and resources are available.

### **Traditional ceremony**

A ceremony based on the traditions and cultures of the participating stakeholders can be a powerful way to conclude the dialogue process and 'bind' the participants to the outcome. The facilitator should ask the participants how they normally ensure that an agreement is sustainable. In many communities, traditional ceremonies and practices can make the agreement more binding than simply signing a piece of paper. A ceremony can also be a welcome celebration of the progress achieved to date.

### **Visibility for the dialogue outcomes**

Receiving support for the dialogue and/or its outcomes from high-profile people in the community can contribute to the visibility of, and support for, the process. In general, sharing the results of the dialogue widely can lead to a sense of accountability among the dialogue participants. Linking a possible agreement to existing institutions such as local governance structures will formalise the outcomes and hopefully contribute to their longevity. Receiving support from high-profile people may be facilitated by approaching them during earlier stages of the dialogue – for example, by inviting them to visit or take part in the dialogue as proposed above in the discussion about identifying stakeholders.

### **Conflict-resolution structures**

As the dialogue draws to a close, it is important to recognise that conflict is a natural part of human interaction. What determines the peacefulness of a community is its capacity to deal with conflicts in a constructive, non-violent way. We can thus expect that other disagreements will arise among the participating stakeholders, especially since stereotypes and a history of conflict have characterised the relationships previously. Unfortunately, a recurrence of unresolved conflict risks throwing the community back into violence. In order to make the continuation of the peace created during the dialogue more likely, the facilitator should address the question of how the community will deal with new conflicts that might arise. Some societies already have existing, sometimes traditional, structures for resolving conflict. These structures might need to be strengthened, or new structures could be created. Capacity-building on how to work with conflict can be useful for the entire community or the assigned conflict-resolution structure.

## Summary of module

- This module provides an overview of the different phases of a dialogue and of the role of the facilitator in each phase.
- The module is divided into: process design (the foundation of the dialogue that is laid at the start of the dialogue and determines how the rest of the process will unfold); practical preparation, including a contextual analysis, considerations in the selection of facilitators, co-facilitators, stakeholders and organisers, the length of the process, the language, reporting, the media, and other logistical arrangements; the dialogue process (this includes the introduction to the dialogue, perspectives, the way forward, and the conclusion); and, lastly, the sustainability of the dialogue.
- The ways in which this process can be carried out are context-specific, but this Handbook provides the range of considerations that will need to be factored in when planning the dialogue process.
- The module concludes by looking at the process of sustaining the dialogue, which ensures that there are means to carry the acquired skills forward within the community, even after the facilitator leaves. This can involve the creation of structures such as implementing committees, traditional ceremonies, and articulation of the way forward, but, most importantly, there should be mechanisms to deal with conflict resolution in the event that there is a recurrence of violence.

## Endnotes

**31** For further information on the role of insiders in dialogue and mediation processes, see, for example, the work of the Berghof Centre for Peace Support, *Insider mediators: Exploring their key role in informal peace processes*.

**32** Schirch & Campt, 2007: 31.

**33** See, for example, UN DESA, 2007: 65.

**34** 'Capacities for peace' are actors with a positive agenda and an interest in a peaceful community.

**35** UN DESA, 2007: 79.

**36** See, for example, the 2012 World Bank report: *Gender equality and development*.

**37** Pruitt & Thomas, 2007: 93.

**38** Ibid.

**39** Online publication available at: [http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/managing\\_info.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/managing_info.pdf).

**40** Schirch & Campt, 2007: 38.

## MODULE 6

### **Roles and skills of a facilitator**

Therese Jönsson



## Introduction

**The facilitator must actively build trust in himself or herself and the dialogue process.**

This module looks further into the important roles and skills of a dialogue facilitator. Dialogue facilitation is an art and a science. The roles and skills of a facilitator can be learnt, practised and perfected, and good facilitation is not only about personality. We therefore refer to *skills* and *roles* rather than *characteristics*. While some individuals might find themselves more naturally inclined to the facilitator role, as is the case with other professions, everyone can improve their facilitation skills. It is recommended that facilitators see themselves as continuous learners and treat every dialogue as a unique process.

The module is divided into three sections that describe the main roles in which the skills of the facilitator are needed. The sections are: 'the framework of the dialogue', 'introducing the dialogue' and 'facilitating the dialogue'. Each section looks at the role of the facilitator and the different skills, approaches and techniques that can be used to support a successful dialogue.

## The framework of the dialogue

In order to create conditions that are conducive to dialogue in which participants feel comfortable in sharing their stories, the facilitator must actively build trust in himself or herself and the dialogue process. This may be achieved by using the dialogue principles and approaches discussed below.

### Create a safe space

In the context of a dialogue, a 'safe space' refers to a situation in which participants feel protected from physical and verbal attacks, their viewpoints will be listened to, and they will be taken seriously and respected as human beings. Such a safe space is necessary for the type of open and honest exchange required for a successful dialogue. The more 'at ease' the participants are with the dialogue situation, the more confident they will be in constructively contributing to the process.

Making preparations for a safe space starts during the preparation phase itself. When the facilitator meets participants, she or he should enquire about those elements of the space that will make it safe enough for people to participate freely.

At the start of the joint dialogue session, the facilitator should create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere by, for example, starting the first session with a round of introductions. In addition to presenting themselves, the facilitator may ask participants to talk about why they are participating in the dialogue. This will direct the focus at the importance of the dialogue, while at the same time inviting participants to learn more about one another. The facilitator can also introduce an accommodative tone by encouraging participants to raise any concerns they have in relation to the dialogue, and by making sure to act upon such concerns. Moreover, informing those participating about the process and developing ground rules as discussed below will also contribute to a safe space.

### **Impartiality**

Treating all participants fairly and equally is a core principle of reconciliation dialogues. Every group or participant must be given the same opportunity to express themselves, and anyone who violates this principle should be reprimanded. The process should not be biased towards any group. However, as discussed in the previous module, a facilitator can belong to one of the groups in the dialogue, as long as he or she is trusted by all participants to provide an unbiased platform.

### **Basic human values**

The facilitator is responsible for helping participants to understand the problem and develop joint solutions. These solutions should be in line with basic human values. Even if there is no agreement, or ownership of, these core values in the group, the facilitator must not legitimise a process that results in discrimination, marginalisation, exclusion, forced movements or similar types of results. Everyone should be clear that 'solutions' that directly or indirectly hurt other human beings are inherently wrong and will not be sustainable. The facilitator can emphasise that such actions are often the reason for conflictual relationships and that what seem to be possible gains are, in fact, short-sighted approaches.

**The facilitator is responsible for helping participants to understand the problem and develop joint solutions.**

### **Confidentiality**

In some instances, it is appropriate to ensure confidentiality in the dialogue. Individuals might share particularly painful stories of rape and abuse that they may not want to be shared outside the dialogue. Confidentiality or 'Chatham House Rules' – that stories can be shared

**A good facilitator will recognise the importance of culture and customs.**

but not attributed to specific individuals – may give some participants sufficient confidence to share their stories. However, it is usually not constructive to make the entire dialogue confidential, as important realisations and insights need to be shared with the wider community. Confidentiality can thus be used by participants as a tool to be invoked when needed. The facilitator should present the option of confidentiality when introducing the dialogue. It is also helpful to agree on what can be shared afterwards and by whom.

### **Ownership**

Ownership is a key principle of dialogue processes. Agreements and solutions produced in participatory processes are more sustainable if they are owned by the community. In addition, ownership is often a prerequisite for the continued participation of the stakeholders. Parties in conflict do not want to be lectured on how to resolve their conflict by someone who thinks she or he knows better. It is important to recognise the experience and expertise of the participating stakeholders by maintaining a humble attitude. That said, it requires technique and restraint to keep to the principle of ownership, as participants sometimes look to the facilitator for answers. The facilitator should not fall into the trap of providing advice or solutions, but should rather direct the question back to the participants. The facilitator should remind participants that the role of the facilitator is to manage the process and that participants should be the experts regarding their particular situation.

### **Cultural sensitivity**

A good facilitator will recognise the importance of culture and customs. If the facilitator comes from a different cultural background from the groups of participants, paying tribute to cultural practices such as, for example, greetings and ceremonies might help to gain participants' trust. In addition, as the dialogue process should be owned by participants, creating room for cultural practices within the dialogue will make the participants feel at home. If participants belong to different cultural groups, the facilitator should make sure to give equal space to different cultural practices. However, it is important to recognise that not all cultural practices are positive. It is better to discuss with the cultural leaders what would be appropriate and acceptable in the current context. The facilitator should not support any practices pertaining to discrimination, exclusion or inequality. While maintaining respect for

'how things are usually done', the facilitator should use his or her creativity and diplomatic skills to create a dialogue built on inclusion, equality and respect.

## Introducing the dialogue

The facilitator is the guardian of the dialogue process. While the participants add content to the dialogue by contributing their stories, perspectives and values, it is the task of the facilitator to make sure that the dialogue process is based on equality, respect and listening. It is crucial that participants experience the process as just and fair, in the sense that the same rules apply to everybody and everyone's voice is heard. If the process is just, it is more likely that participants will remain committed, even if they may not appreciate, or fully agree with, what they hear from others. The facilitator can perform a number of tasks to ensure that the dialogue process is well managed, such as reaffirming the commitment of participants, informing participants of the process, clarifying the role of the facilitator, and developing ground rules (explained in more detail below).

### Build relationships

The facilitator must recognise that his or her relationships with dialogue participants and the community in general are important. The facilitator should make a conscious effort to build constructive, honest and authentic relationships – with all different stakeholders – right from the beginning of the dialogue preparations. The facilitator needs to earn the trust of the participants and must be willing to listen to their stories and learn from them.

### Inform participants of the process

The facilitator should make it clear to participants how the dialogue process will unfold. Even when it has been explained in separate meetings with the different stakeholders, it needs to be repeated in the first dialogue meeting. This will help participants to be clear, at least, on where the process is going, especially when the situation is tense. Confusion as to the direction and management of the process may lead to uncertainties about, and distrust in, the process, which could eventually jeopardise the entire dialogue. The facilitator must, therefore, clearly explain the different steps in the dialogue. This applies equally to the

**The facilitator is the guardian of the dialogue process.**



**It is important that commonly accepted ground rules are established from the beginning.**

overall dialogue process involving the different and separate gatherings, as well as to how a specific dialogue meeting will proceed. It is very important to involve participants, or at least key representatives, in setting the agenda for the first gathering (such as starting with a word of prayer, the order of contributions, etc.) Springing surprises on participants is not a good idea. Updating participants throughout the dialogue on the unfolding and progress of the process is very important. This will help to build confidence as the dialogue shifts phases and when participants do not seem to understand what is expected of them, or at any time the facilitator finds it valuable to reinforce the direction or pedagogical understanding of the dialogue.

### **Clarify the role of the facilitator**

Similarly, it is important that the role of the facilitator is explained. This explanation should include the fact that the facilitator manages the process to ensure that it is fair and respectful, but that ownership of the dialogue lies within the community. Furthermore, it should be indicated that the facilitator serves the dialogue participants and does not express his or her own opinion. The role of the facilitator should be explained in the pre-dialogue meetings with stakeholders and again be addressed in the first dialogue meeting. The role of the facilitator in affirming the ground rules can also be highlighted.

### **Develop ground rules**

Ground rules, or group commitments, regulate how dialogue participants will behave towards one another in the dialogue and with regard to the dialogue process itself. As dialogue between groups that have perpetrated violence against each other is inevitably emotional, it is important that commonly accepted ground rules are established from the beginning. In general, participants can easily relate to the rationale of ground rules and will have no difficulties in proposing and agreeing to appropriate ground rules. When the ground rules are violated, it is the role of the facilitator to remind the participants respectfully about the ground rules jointly agreed to. The facilitator must reinforce the ground rules in the same way, regardless of who or which party breaks them.

In order for the ground rules to be effective, it is important that dialogue participants feel a sense of ownership. This can be established in different ways:

1. The facilitator can explain the purpose of the ground rules when meeting the groups separately and ask for their suggestions. After speaking to both groups, the facilitator will present a joint list of ground rules that can be shared with the groups separately or during the first dialogue meeting. It is very likely that several of the proposals from the different groups are the same, which can be pointed out to increase trust and commonalities at this early stage of the dialogue. After presenting the list, it is important to receive confirmation from all participants that they will adhere to the ground rules. This approach of speaking to the groups separately – initially, at least – is especially advisable in situations of high tension where it is even more important that participants feel comfortable with the process.
2. The facilitator can lead a brainstorming session with all participants during the first dialogue meeting to establish the joint ground rules. This exercise could create momentum for the dialogue, as the group jointly produces the ground rules across their divides. However, the exercise could also be used by participants to make a polarising statement such as *‘they shouldn’t be able to steal the word as they have stolen our land’*. The facilitator must then respond to the participant so that she or he feels heard, but, at the same time, must reaffirm the purpose of the exercise. For example, she or he could reframe what was said as follows:

*‘I understand that there is a lot of frustration in relation to the land issue, but you will all have a chance to express yourselves during the dialogue. What we want to do now is to develop a set of ground rules we can all adhere to in order to have a successful dialogue where everyone is respected. Would you like to propose a ground rule on not interrupting each other?’*

When this approach is chosen, it is very important that the facilitator is firmly aware of the purpose of the ground rules and their place in the process as a whole.

**In order for the ground rules to be effective, it is important that dialogue participants feel a sense of ownership.**

The facilitator could, to a lesser or greater degree, propose useful ground rules. While the process will inevitably be quicker if the facilitator proposes ground rules, a certain level of ownership is lost if she or he alone proposes the rules. Ideally, the process should be participatory and based on participants’ suggestions.

If participants are initially not making any proposals, the facilitator can, for example, explain what she or he is asking for in different words, followed by some more time to reflect.

It is very important that the facilitator ensures that the ground rules are conducive to the success of the dialogue. The facilitator should use his or her expertise regarding the dialogue process to assist participants in identifying constructive ground rules. Generally, all suggestions are useful and the facilitator therefore only needs to formulate the suggested ground rules in a succinct way so that everyone can understand them. However, if a suggested ground rule will be counter-productive in relation to the purpose of the dialogue – for example, that no contributions should be longer than two minutes – the facilitator must propose that such a ground rule be modified. As with the rephrasing of the contribution of a participant during the dialogue, the facilitator should adopt a humble and pedagogical attitude. The facilitator can achieve this by employing a combination of the following approaches:

1. Ask the participant why she or he thinks the ground rule is important. This enhances understanding of the reasoning behind the proposal (if it is not already clear) and might reveal some important need that should be recognised and built on in a modified ground rule.
2. Recognise the need, fear or reasoning behind the proposal.
3. Explain, based on experience, what the risk of adopting the proposed ground rule might be.
4. If possible, suggest a modified ground rule, either alone or with the help of participants.

Depending on the contribution by the participant and on what has happened up to then in the dialogue, together with the preference of the facilitator, different combinations may be suitable. In the above-mentioned example of a proposed ground rule to limit contributions to two minutes, the facilitator might recognise the reasoning behind the proposal (maintaining the relevance of the dialogue), but will need to explain that it is difficult to set an exact time limit, as some stories that need to be shared might be longer. Instead, the facilitator could propose a ground rule stating that contributions should be kept to the point.

Take a look at some example ground rules in the following box.

## GROUND RULES

- Be on time; be present in the moment; practise active listening; avoid interrupting, engaging in side conversations when others are talking, and speaking for too long
- Participate in constructive dialogue
- Celebrate diversity
- Keep confidentiality - don't attribute information without permission
- Use 'I' statements and speak for yourself - avoid generalisations and trying to fix others
- Avoid blaming, assumptions, abusive language, tribalism
- Own your own feelings of anger, shame or guilt, avoid being defensive and honour the experience of others
- Be supportive and sensitive, and honour emotional, physical and spiritual safety

## Facilitating the dialogue

Throughout the dialogue, the facilitator employs several crucial skills. Listening is a core skill of any dialogue, as is managing the contributions and participation of participants.

### Listening

Listening is a key skill of the facilitator and, in fact, the foundation for a successful reconciliation dialogue. Good listening skills on the part of the facilitator fulfil three purposes:

1. *Being present for the speaker.* It takes great courage to speak about traumatic events and conflictual relationships – especially in the presence of a former enemy. The speaker deserves to be listened to with undivided attention. Being listened to can lead to relief and connection. On the other hand, not being listened to can increase hurt and frustration (see Module 4 on trauma in reconciliation dialogues).

**‘An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.’**

Gene Knudsen Hoffman

2. *Facilitating listening.* It requires focus to listen to violent stories, especially in a tense situation and where the participant listener possibly perpetrated or was affected by the violence. In addition, stereotypes might shadow the message of the speaker, so that the listener hears what she or he expects to hear. Listening closely requires a readiness to question one’s own assumptions and experiences and exposes a person to the prospect of changing one’s beliefs and actions<sup>41</sup> (see Module 2 on active listening). Listening therefore requires courage. The facilitator can assist by making sure that the participants who listen capture the message through the techniques of summarising and paraphrasing (see below).
3. *Facilitating the dialogue.* In order to lead the discussion in a meaningful way, the facilitator needs to listen attentively with a view to understanding the deeper meaning of the messages being transmitted. A deeper understanding by the facilitator will assist in asking the right questions, finding commonalities and building a shared narrative.

When listening to participants, the facilitator must focus all of his or her energy on capturing the message. If thoughts drift away, important facts or nuances might be lost. In addition to listening to the words, the facilitator should also try to comprehend what is not stated by reading facial expressions, body language, emphasis, etc. Based on the entire message communicated by the participant, the facilitator will build his or her understanding of the situation.

When the message is not clear, ask the speaker to repeat it or explain further. If you do not capture the essence of the message, it is likely that others will not have either.

Based on your listening, reading of body language and, to a certain extent, assumptions, it can be helpful to name the needs and emotions of the speaker when summarising (see the five-level model of listening on the next page). By naming needs and emotions, even when not verbally expressed by the speaker, you increase understanding of the speaker’s situation while also helping the speaker to process what she or he experienced. For instance: *‘I understand that you feel scared when meeting the person who killed your husband.’*

## Five-level model of listening<sup>42</sup>

### 1. *Facts*

By listening to the facts or thoughts of the speaker, you can make sure that the full and accurate story is being told. By summarising and checking with the speaker that you have understood correctly, she or he will complement the story. Make sure, though, not to guide the story; rather let the speaker determine what to share.

### 2. *Emotions*

We do not often put words to our emotions, but naming them can help defuse tension. Feelings often experienced, but rarely named, in a conflict context include fear, anger, confusion, embarrassment, exhaustion, devastation, hurt, loneliness, remorse, hopelessness and vulnerability. By naming the emotions as a listener, you also increase the speaker's understanding of his or her feelings.

### 3. *Needs*

Conflict can be seen as the symptom of unmet basic human needs.<sup>43</sup> We share the same nine basic human needs, although their deprivation can be manifested in different satisfiers. According to Max-Neef, the basic human needs are subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity and freedom. By helping the speaker to identify a violated basic need, a possible constructive solution might be easier to find. In a conflict situation, we might also find the other side's actions easier to understand when its needs are similar to ours.

### 4. *Will*

By listening for the will of the speaker, you can help the person or group obtain clarity on how they want to move on. It is important that the speaker or dialogue participants own the solution on how to proceed. Hold back on any inclination to give advice!

### 5. *Perspective*

Our culture, values and beliefs shape our understanding of the world and what it should be like. Perspectives are not only shared by ethnic communities, but also professions, age groups or different genders. By identifying the belief structures, both the speaker – who is not always sure where certain behaviours or perceptions come from – and the other dialogue participants will increase their understanding of the speaker and of how best to move the situation forward.

## Being conscious of body language

As the facilitator listens to participants, she or he must be conscious of his or her own body language. It is important both to enhance the listening and actively communicate to participants and the speaker that the facilitator is fully present and engaged. Firstly, the facilitator should face the speaker. As the seating may not allow the facilitator to be completely turned towards the speaker, a slight turn of the shoulders, legs or head might be sufficient. Secondly, the facilitator should look directly at the speaker, thus ensuring eye contact when the speaker looks towards the facilitator. Thirdly, the facilitator can further acknowledge and encourage the speaker non-verbally by nodding when appropriate to confirm that the message has been received.

Concentrating on other things, for example a phone or screen, or whispering to a co-facilitator – however discretely – should be completely avoided. In addition to being inattentive, it will send a signal to participants that the story of the speaker is not important.

### Practice

Our body language is, to a large extent, subconscious. Nevertheless, body language is thought to account for 50 to 70% of what is communicated. To make sure you communicate the right message as a facilitator, start paying attention to the body language of people around you. When you engage with someone whom you consider to be listening, encouraging and supportive, what is their body language? What is the body language of a person whom you consider to be disinterested and disrespectful? Also start observing your own body language as you listen to different individuals and reflect on which messages you are communicating.

## Summarising and reframing

After listening to a long story, it might be helpful if the facilitator summarises the key points of the message. This serves the purpose of ensuring that all participants capture the main message, but also allows the speaker to confirm whether the story has been correctly understood. A summary by the facilitator should capture the main points of the speaker's story, but not all the details. Using flip charts is a simple way of summarising and keeping the dialogue focused on what is discussed, rather than who said what.

Because of the tense situation, participants do not always express themselves in a manner that is constructive with regard to sound dialogue. The facilitator can assist by *reframing* the messages of participants, that is, by using different words to express the meaning of the participant – often with a different focus. The objective of reframing is to help participants phrase their messages based on facts, needs, emotions and experiences rather than stereotypes and accusations. The former can contribute to resolving the conflict, while the latter often exacerbates it. An example of reframing is a participant saying, ‘I could never live with these people in our community; they are hypocritical pigs who take any chance to abuse us.’ The facilitator reframes the message by responding, ‘I heard you say that you presently do not want to live with the other group because of negative events in the past.’ In this way, the message is made more factual and the negative name-calling is removed. When reframing, it is important always to check with the speaker that you have understood her or his message correctly. By confirming, maybe simply with a nod, the speaker legitimises the rephrased message. The reframing can be followed by a question to deepen understanding along constructive lines. In this example, the facilitator could continue with, ‘In this dialogue, we will explore what has happened in the past and what has brought us where we are today. Can you start by telling us about the incidents which have made you fear living together with the other group?’

Depending on the flow of the dialogue, the facilitator needs to adapt how much she or he interjects. If the communication is flowing well and participants are listening attentively to one another, paraphrasing and summarising should be kept to a minimum. The facilitator must make sure that his or her contributions are advancing and aiding the dialogue process rather than stalling it.

### **Reaffirming commitment**

By reminding participants of why they have come together, and complimenting them for their efforts, the facilitator can try to keep the discussions focused, even when emotions run high. The stated objective of the dialogue should always be positive and should unite all participants. Such an objective could be a peaceful future, coming to terms with past



violence, developing the community, etc. (for more on the objective of the dialogue, see Module 5). By reaffirming the joint purpose of participants from all sides, the facilitator further emphasises the commonalities among participants across divides. It may be useful to note the objective of the dialogue at a central place in the dialogue venue in order to assist the facilitator in focusing the discussion.

### **Managing participation**

One of the roles of a facilitator is to balance the contributions from the different stakeholders in the dialogue. Recognising the ‘power and value of introverts’, the facilitator should encourage everyone to participate and should keep track of who speaks and who does not. It is not only the different individuals who need to be heard, but also the various perspectives that need to be heard and understood. The facilitator uses questions to clarify the various perspectives and to highlight perspectives that have hitherto not been presented during the dialogue (perhaps regional- or national-level perspectives). If the same individuals dominate the discussion, the facilitator can ask for other views that have not yet been heard. However, there is a fine balance between encouraging people who are slightly uncomfortable with speaking and creating a humiliating situation that has a negative effect on the long-term dialogue process. Some people prefer to listen and do not want to be put on the spot. The facilitator can check in with quiet people during a break and ask how they feel about the dialogue. Temporarily breaking up into smaller groups could also be an alternative so as to increase participation.

Yet another technique is a *round robin*, which is used to break the monotony if only a few individuals are active. The facilitator comes up with a question appropriate for the situation. It can be something simple like, ‘What do you think of the dialogue so far?’, or something deeper like, ‘What is needed for us to live peacefully together?’. The facilitator asks everyone to contribute briefly in the order in which they sit. If there are some shy people in the group, it might be useful to mention that the contributions can be very simple and brief. The contribution of each individual will make the dialogue richer and possibly encourage the continued engagement of more individuals. Another method the

facilitator can use if the dialogue is not flowing well is, for example, to call for a reflection period during which everyone writes down their thoughts on the question concerned on a piece of paper. Everyone will have had a chance to think through their viewpoint and will be more likely to contribute. Songs and breaks might also contribute to a creative and constructive environment.

Using a 'talking-object' is a very useful way of managing the sequence of participant contributions. A participant can only talk when she or he holds the talking-object in his or her hand. The facilitator can also place two or three talking-objects in the middle of the floor in the circle and encourage participants to pick them up before speaking and return them after speaking so that the next person can do the same.

### **Developing an agenda and sequencing**

If the dialogue contains different components, each of which needs to be discussed in depth, it might be helpful to develop an agenda. Participants can assist the facilitator to develop an agenda in the early phases of the dialogue, or as soon as different topics emerge. Different topics or aspects can be captured on a flip chart. The agenda brings structure and focus to the dialogue. It also serves as insurance for participants that aspects important to them will be dealt with in due course. If the dialogue addresses several complex issues, it is important to analyse and discuss whether the more difficult issues should be dealt with first or later. Sometimes, it might be beneficial to sequence the agenda with the easier aspects first. This may give positive momentum for the more entrenched issues.

During complex discussions, the facilitator can help participants to be on the same page by highlighting commonalities reached, challenges identified and proposals made. In this regard, a flip chart or large sheet of paper placed where everyone can see it is very helpful. The flip-chart can help the facilitator to keep participants on track by noting or 'parking' issues raised that should be explored in greater depth at a later stage of the dialogue. The flip chart can also be used to explain the process of the dialogue, to take note of ground rules, to develop the agenda or to make illustrations.

## Being creative and flexible

While the facilitator has a variety of approaches and principles at his or her disposal, it is more likely that facilitators will use their ability to invent and respond creatively to the ongoing situation. Creativity often comes more naturally with experience, when the facilitator has been exposed to various dialogue situations and has tried a number of different approaches. However, until personal experience is acquired, the facilitator can learn about strategies and tools employed in other dialogues from reading and from talking to more experienced facilitators.

Dialogue is not only about talking. The facilitator needs to create spaces for genuine interaction using audiovisual elements (art, artefacts, colours, videos, photos, symbols, illustrations, etc.), music, drama, poetry, movement, human sculpture, spectrum exercises, as well as spaces for complete silence. More importantly, if the process is safe enough, participants should be encouraged to propose forms of expression other than words.

## Staying grounded

The facilitator will be exposed to horrific stories, situations of tension and heated discussions. In the midst of the storm, the facilitator must be able to stay focused and navigate the process forward. This requires a certain amount of inner strength and calm, and a belief in the power of dialogue. Proper practical and mental preparation will help, and familiarity with the participants and the issues at hand will make it easier for the facilitator to maintain a strong presence and fulfil his or her role. Facilitators should be willing to sit with people as they talk about trauma and tension. Each facilitator should engage in activities that help him or her to be grounded and centred. The activities vary from person to person, but could, for example, include quiet reflection, time with loved ones, religious practices, and exposure to nature or exercise. (See Module 4 for examples of strategies that facilitators can use in order to deal with secondary trauma.)

### Notes for the facilitator

Reflect on what makes you grounded. When do you feel the most centred and composed? How can you use these practices to be a better facilitator of reconciliation dialogues?

## Modelling dialogic behaviour

Dialogue requires the curiosity to listen to, and learn from, one another. In addition to listening attentively, the facilitator should model and encourage such behaviour by showing an interest in understanding the various perspectives presented, as well as an appreciation for participants sharing their underlying thoughts, interests and needs. The facilitator demonstrates an interest and unpacks what lies behind participants' behaviour by asking questions that reveal their reasoning.

### Summary of module

- This module looks further into the key roles and skills of a dialogue facilitator. The approach taken is that the roles and skills of a facilitator can be learnt, practised and perfected, rather than being a question of personality. The emphasis is therefore on skills and roles rather than characteristics.
- The module is divided into three sections that describe the main roles in which the skills of the facilitator are needed: the framework of the dialogue (the creation of a safe space, impartiality, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity); introducing the dialogue (relationship-building, informing participants about the process, developing ground rules, and explaining the role of the facilitator); and facilitating the dialogue (which includes listening, body language, summarising and reframing, the agenda, and sequencing). Each section looks at the role of the facilitator and at the different skills, approaches and techniques that can be used to support a successful dialogue.

### Endnotes

41 UN DESA, 2007: 21.

42 Adapted from Spiers (2004)

43 Max-Neef et al., 1989: 1.

## Glossary of terms

**Conflict transformation:** Is a broader concept than that of conflict resolution in that it requires a transformation of the parties, of their relationships with one another, and of the structural elements that underlie the conflict. These relationships and social structures are often unjust and unequal; hence, transforming conflict seeks to alter these structures in ways that build a more just society. 'Conflict transformation' is thus a term that implies a long-term perspective on conflict and its transformation.

**Identity conflict:** Involves self-defined or 'other-defined' groups whose identity is based on shared racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or kinship characteristics.

**Peacebuilding:** Is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and endeavours to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation.

**Political reconciliation:** Focuses on the characteristically impersonal relations among members of a political society. The actors involved in this form of reconciliation would include political parties and their leadership, as well as institutions of state such as the security sector and judiciary, among others.

**Post-conflict state:** Is a state that is in 'transition' and that is shifting from periods of gross human rights violations, mass violence or protracted armed conflict towards a peaceful, democratic future characterised by respect for human rights and the rule of law.

**Reconciliation:** Is the process of repairing damaged relationships. Reconciliation is often thought to originate in religious discourse and around the notions of forgiveness and mercy, but it has now transcended religious discourse into the other components of, and disciplines in, society. As an activity, reconciliation aims to achieve right and proper relationships between individuals and communities.

**Reparations:** In transitional justice, reparations are measures taken by the state to redress gross and systematic violations of human rights law or humanitarian law through the administration of some form of compensation or restitution to the victims. Of all the mechanisms of

transitional justice, reparations are unique because they directly address the situation of the victims. Reparations, if well designed, acknowledge victims' suffering, offer measures of redress, as well as provide some form of compensation for the violations suffered. Reparations can be symbolic as well as material. They can be in the form of public acknowledgement of, or an apology for, past violations, thereby indicating state and social commitment to respond to previous abuses.

**Restorative justice:** Is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victims and the offenders, as well as of the community involved, instead of on satisfying abstract legal principles or punishing the offender. Victims take an active role in the process, while offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

**Retraumatisation:** Is generally defined as traumatic stress reactions, responses and symptoms that occur subsequent to multiple exposures to traumatic events that are physical or psychological in nature, or both. These responses can occur in the context of repeated multiple exposures within one category of events (e.g. sexual assaults on children and adults) or multiple exposures across different categories of events (e.g. physical abuse during childhood and involvement in violent conflict within a community later in life).

**Transitional justice:** Is generally defined as the process that seeks to address legacies of large-scale past abuses. It includes initiatives such as acknowledgement and truth-telling, criminal trials, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, memorialisation, and institutional reform. The anticipated outcome of such processes is the creation of a platform where dialogue aimed at national healing, cohesion and reconciliation can begin.

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