“Water Conflict: Global Issues and Opportunities for Cooperation”
Sandra Ruckstuhl

Resources for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Websites

Beyond Intractability: http://www.beyondintractability.org/ (general resources)

Global Water Partnership Toolkit: http://www.gwtoolbox.org/ (water conflict case studies, conflict resolution methods)


Dennis Sandole: “Three Pillar Model of Conflict Analysis and Resolution”

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Third-party Approaches
- Competitive/Cooperative
- Negative/Positive
- Track-1/Track-2


1. What are the SOURCES (or origins) of this conflict? Violent conflict did not begin yesterday, so here, write the objective history of the conflict. You can write down both sides and try to find the truth between both or any other method that eliminates the bias in what people tell you about the conflict. The emotions around the conflict need to be commented on and added to the mosaic of the total image of the conflict.

2. Who are the PARTIES to this conflict? There are usually primary and secondary parties to a conflict. First list the primary parties and their positions objectively. Be sure to include secondary parties because these are often more important than we give them credit for and can prolong and intensify or shorten and diminish violence in the conflict.

3. What are the ISSUES of this conflict? What are people arguing or fighting about? There is usually more than one issue and you should list all of them because not always is the principal issue the one that is presented to us. Occasionally you have to dig deep and find that there was actually another issue that was more important than the one that everyone thought was the main issue of the conflict.

4. What are the TACTICS being used by the various parties? Look around and find out who is doing what and saying what. What is going on between the two main sides that is leading this conflict towards violence? Tactics often have little or nothing to do with ending violence or solving conflicts; expose destructive tactics and ask all to refrain from using them. See where other tactics would be more helpful. This is an important part of the process and we will return to it later.

5. What, if anything, has CHANGED as the conflict developed over time? Many times a conflict will start over something and, in the course of time, the cause will disappear but the conflict will continue. If you can see how things have changed over time and what new elements have been brought into the conflict, your vision will be much more clear.

6. How did the conflict ENLARGE? This is similar to the previous question but now you are isolating aspects that made the conflict bigger and more dangerous. What made people angrier and what can be done about it? In the process of stopping violence, this is usually the place where you have to concentrate first: something made people fight when they were talking before. What was that something and what can be done to undo it or neutralize that something?

7. What ROLES did other parties play and how did this affect the continuation of the conflict? The secondary parties, we said, were important because they influenced the conflict. Now we must look at what they did, how they did it and what effect did that have on the conflict. If the effect was negative and contributed to violence or confusion can that party undo what they did? Can you undo what they did? Are they getting something out of making the conflict worse? What are they getting out of it? there may be other parties that are interested in helping you to reduce violence and solve the conflict also.

8. What has been the OUTCOME of the conflict up to now? Although this question is more useful in analyzing conflicts that have finished (historical conflicts), the usefulness for present conflicts is that it requires an objective evaluation of where everyone is at. If there is no outcome to speak of because the conflict is raging, then you can draw an image-objective of what you would like the outcome to be so that everyone can go home happy and alive.

9. Who can be said to have been the WINNERS of the conflict up to now? If the conflict is being won by someone then there may be reasons for keeping the conflict going that are not easily obvious. If the fighting is over and the winner is a minority or the weaker party, then the conflict may not yet be over; if it has been well resolved good but make sure that conflicts are really over before leaving them. There are many aspects to conflicts that smolder like hot ashes after a fire and can re-ignite at a moments notice. Ensure that is not the case here.