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Project acronym: **DEMo4PPL**
Project full title: **Digital Education Modules 4 Participatory Planning**

OPT-G5: MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING B: CONFLICT MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION - COMMUNICATION AND FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

1. Short description

The module immerses students in the principles and practices of participatory approaches within the unique context of participatory projects and their financial management. Students will gain an understanding of the essence of participatory projects, explore various sources of project funding, and develop knowledge of the financial management cycle–from budgeting to financial reporting.

Key topics include project feasibility studies and conceptualization, budgeting and financial planning, tools and techniques for effective financial management, and financial transparency and accountability. By critically analyzing the building blocks of a project and the categories of project budgets, students will strengthen their skills in managing participatory projects, budgeting, financial planning, and financial reporting.

The module culminates in a practical exercise in which students design a project log-frame, demonstrating their understanding of the financial management cycle and its application in participatory projects.

The main goals of the module are:

- Explain the principles of project funding and finance in the context of participatory projects.
- Discuss various sources of project funding, including grants, loans, and community contributions.

- Familiarize students with the financial management cycle, from budgeting to financial reporting.
- Equip learners with fundamental skills and techniques for managing project budgets within participatory projects.

The course can be supported by MS Teams tools and digital platforms for participatory planning.

2. Keywords

Participatory Projects; Project Management; Financial Management Cycle; Budgeting; Participatory Budgets; Transparency; Accountability

3. Content
3.1. Essence of conflicts, type of conflicts and reference to PPL

Conflict is generally defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. (Tjosvold, 2006) Conflict means expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. It is also associated with situations that involve contradictory interest between two opposing groups. It can be defined as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups with each individual or group trying to gain acceptance of its view over others. (Thakore, 2013)

Conflict is an outcome of behaviors. It is an integral part of human life - whenever there is interaction there is conflict.

Traditionally, conflict is thought to arise from opposing interests involving scarce resources and goal divergence and has often been proposed to occur in mixed-motive relationships where persons have both competitive and cooperative interests. The competitive elements produce the conflict; the cooperative elements create the incentives to bargain to reach an agreement. (Tjosvold, 2006)

Conflicts are categorized based on various criteria:

a) Parties involved:
- Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual, often due to frustration with personal goals, internal dilemmas, competing values, or ethical concerns.
- Interpersonal conflict arises between two individuals and can recur regularly in their interactions.
- Intergroup conflict takes place between different formal or informal groups, such as teams, departments, or social groups.
- Intrasocietal (or social) conflict refers to large-scale conflicts that have significant public impact, such as social movements or civil unrest.
- International/global conflict includes conflicts between nation-states, geopolitical struggles over resources, and disputes within international organizations over political issues.

b) Context: Conflicts can emerge in different areas of social life, including political, cultural, ideological, economic, and organizational spheres.

c) Subject: Conflicts can arise due to competition for power, resources/ materials, rights, values, culture, and identity.

d) Roots/ motives:

- Goal conflict occurs when individuals or groups have competing objectives, leading to a clash over whose goals should take priority. This type of conflict is common in organizations, workplaces, and teams when different stakeholders have conflicting priorities or visions for the future.
- Cognitive conflict can result when one person or group holds ideas or opinions that are inconsistent with those of others. This type of conflict is evident in academic, ideological, and political debates, where opposing viewpoints create tension and disagreement.
- Affective conflict emerges when one person's or group's feelings or emotions (attitudes) are incompatible with those of others. It is commonly seen in interpersonal relationships, where personality clashes or personal dislikes create tension. This type of conflict often disrupts teamwork and communication.
- Behavioral conflict arises from actions that are perceived as disruptive, aggressive, or inappropriate by others. This type of conflict can result from differences in communication styles, work habits, or behaviors that cause frustration or annoyance. It often leads to interpersonal tension and workplace disputes.

e) Duration: Conflicts can be short-term (temporary disputes that are quickly resolved) or long-term (prolonged conflicts that persist over time).

f) Consequences:

- Constructive conflicts – lead to positive change, growth, or improved relationships.
- Destructive conflicts – result in harm, division, or long-term negative effects.

g) Intensity: Conflicts can be slow and gradual, developing over time, or rapid and intense, escalating quickly.

e) The presence or absence of violence in the conflict: non-violent, minor armed conflicts, major armed conflicts, wars.

Rarely does a conflict exist in isolation. More often, multiple types of conflict are intertwined within each other and influenced by the surrounding context.

A distinction should be made between the terms "conflict" and "dispute." While a **conflict** is a broader, long-term struggle that may involve deep-rooted seemingly non-negotiable issues and are resistant **to** resolution, a **dispute** is a more specific and short-term disagreement that often arises from a particular issue and can be easily resolved. All disputes reflect conflict, but not all conflicts develop into disputes. Some conflicts may develop into disputes quickly.

People have diverse needs for and uses of resources such as land, space, transportation, and water, leading to varying perceptions of how these resources should be organized and managed. These differences can give rise to conflict when:

- Competition arises over material goods, economic benefits, property, or power.
- Parties perceive that their needs are incompatible or cannot be fully met.
- Individuals or groups feel that their values, interests, or rights are threatened.

Hence, conflicts and disputes are an **inherent part of planning** and can occur both while the planning effort is underway arising from the process followed, the alternatives chosen for examination and the final decision making. (Mitchell-Blanks, 2006) Conflicts may emerge about process designs because people disagree about what is good in specific contexts (Webler et al. 2001, Mitchell-Blanks, 2006).

Policies, programmes and projects promoting resource management can unintentionally serve as sources or arenas of **conflict. This** situation generally arises when there is inadequate local participation in interventions, and when insufficient consideration is given to the conflicts that might emerge. (Engel & Korf, 2005)

Conflict can manifest itself in numerous ways, including: interpersonal tension, disagreement about facts, verbal arguments, being „stuck" on a problem, resistance to change, or inability to reach decisions. (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.) The intensity of conflict also varies greatly - from confusion and frustration among members of a community about poorly communicated development policies, to violent clashes among groups over resource ownership, rights and responsibilities (Engel & Korf, 2005)

Conflict, if properly managed, can inform and assist the planning process to capture the concerns of the stakeholders and can contribute to a more effective planning outcome, especially if the planning process is seen to be logical, and has the essential elements of being traceable (well documented), accountable (decision makers are clearly identified) and reproducible (the entire planning process can be reviewed effectively at a later date (Mitchell-Blanks, 2006). In participatory planning, conflict may generate some positive results, including:

- Identifying real problems needing solutions;
- Bringing about needed change;
- Permitting adjustment to be made without threatening the basis of relationship;
- Helping to build a new relationship;
- Changing the way, one party looks at issues, clarifying what is most important.

The very nature of participatory processes raises the issues (and sources of conflict) more effectively – and a key aspect of successful participatory process is to openly acknowledge and embrace the source of the disputes and then focus on finding acceptable tradeoffs that have to be made (Mitchell-Blanks, 2006).

3.2. Conflict processes

Conflict is not a static phenomenon but rather a dynamic process that evolves over time. No two conflicts are the same.

Conflicts often share similar patterns and stages of development (dynamics). Conflicts can generally be thought of a cycle from emergence to resolution. However, they do not always progress in a strictly linear fashion, from stage A, to B, to C, and so on. Instead, conflicts sometimes unfold in non-linear ways, moving backwards and forwards between different stages, skipping a stage altogether, or stopping at one stage for a long time before suddenly moving on. (Engel & Korf, 2005)
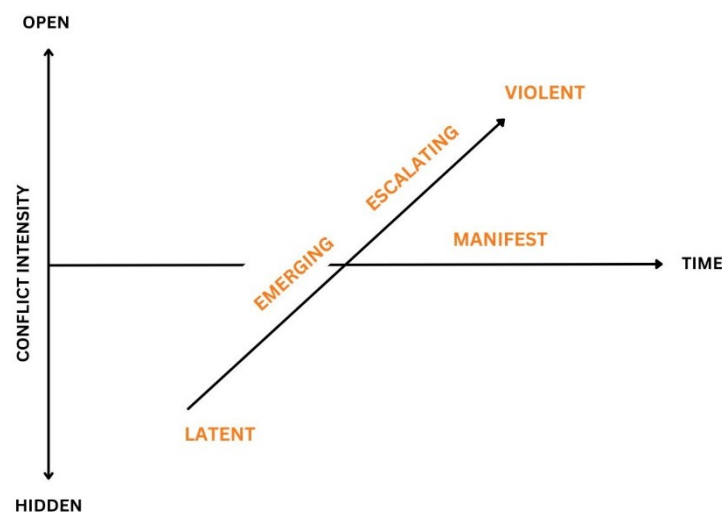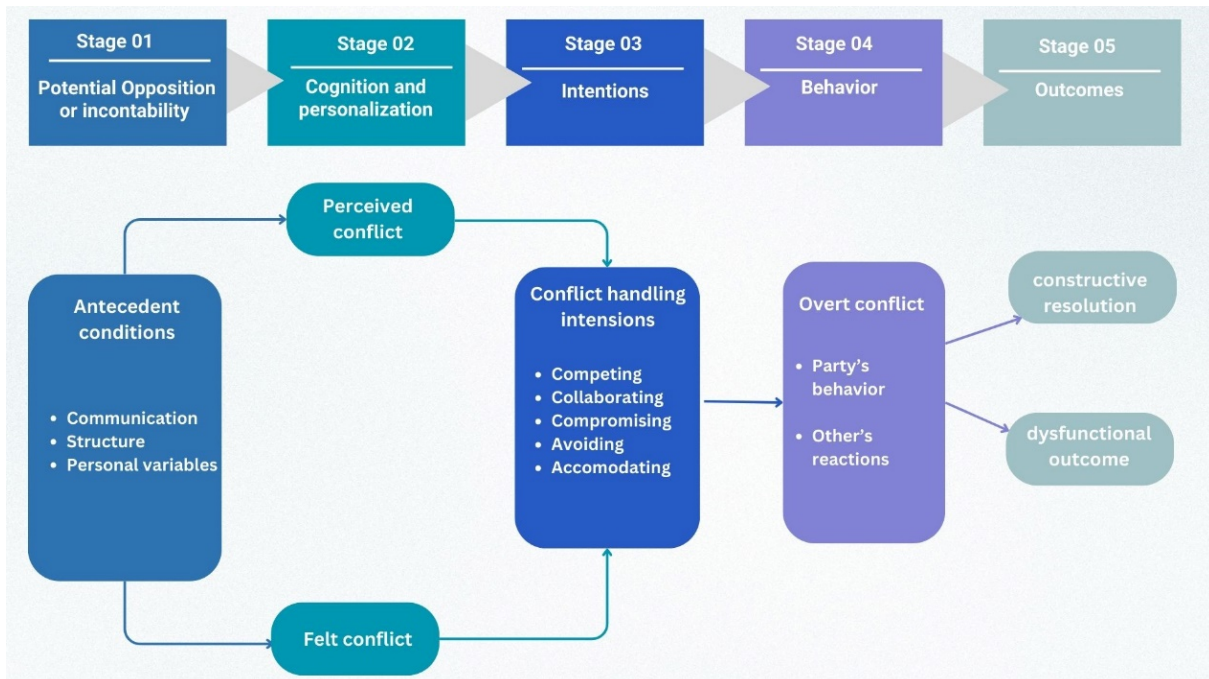

Figure 1: Conflict stages (source: own elaboration based on Engel and Korf, 2005)

Latent conflict exists when underlying tensions, differences, and disagreements remain hidden or unexpressed. Although incompatible goals may be present, parties may be unaware of them or choose not to reveal their interests due to fear, distrust, peer pressure, or financial concerns. In such cases, conflict may manifest subtly through resistance tactics, such as **foot-dragging, false compliance, sabotage, or passive defiance**. Over time, these tensions build, creating the potential for escalation.

Conflict can develop gradually or escalate rapidly due to key events. As tensions grow, differences become more pronounced, leading to **manifest conflict**, where disputes shift into the public domain. At this stage, opposing sides define themselves in terms of "us versus them," with divisions fueling group mobilization. If unchecked, conflicts may escalate into violence, often triggering counter-violence and further intensification.

Going deeper into the stages of the conflict process, many academics have outlined various models. Some of the most influential contributions come from Louis R. Pondy (1967), Stephen P. Robbins (1974) and **Kenneth W. Thomas** & **Ralph H. Kilmann (1974).** The Conflict Life Cycle Model and the Spiral Model are also widely discussed in the literature.

However, one of the most widely used frameworks describes the conflict as a process consisting of five key stages: **(1) potential opposition or incompatibility (2) cognition and personalization, (3) intentions, (4) behavior and (5) outcome.**

Figure 2 : The Conflict Process (source: own elaboration based on literature review)

The **Potential Opposition of Incompatibility Stage** includes the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflicts to arise. The most common conditions that can cause conflicts fall into three categories:

(a) Communication: Misinterpretation, insufficient or excessive information, and communication barriers.

(b) Structure: Group size, decision-making frameworks, and conflicting mandates among stakeholders.

(c) Personal Variables: Individual values, biases, and emotional intelligence affecting interactions.

In fact, many conflicts – including transboundary ones – are not solely about issues being debated but often stem from historical power struggles, institutional mistrust, and personal rivalries.

The **Cognition and Personalization Stage** is essential because it determines how parties perceive and internalize conflicts. Awareness by one or more stakeholders about the existence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict is called perceived conflict. Emotional involvement in the conflict–leading to anxiety, frustration, and hostility–is called felt conflict. While negative emotions can escalate tensions, positive emotions can facilitate problem-solving and negotiation.

At the **Intentions Stage**, the involved parties decide how to respond to the conflict. There are five primary conflict-handling intentions:

(a) Competing (Assertive and Uncooperative): This approach involves pursuing one's own interests at the expense of others.

(b) Collaborating (Assertive and Cooperative): This approach seeks win-win solutions by integrating diverse perspectives.

(c) Avoiding (Unassertive and Uncooperative): This occurs when parties choose not to engage in conflict, either due to a lack of interest or to prevent further escalation.

(d) Accommodating (Unassertive and Cooperative): This strategy involves prioritizing the interests of others over one's own.

(e) Compromising (Moderate Assertiveness and Cooperation): This involves finding a middle ground where each party gives up something to reach an agreement.

The **Behavior Stage** involves the actual actions and interactions between conflicting parties. It is where conflicts become visible and can escalate if not managed effectively. Conflict at the lower part of continuum (fig. 3) is small conflict. Those in the upper part of the continuum are highly destructive and include strikes, riots and wars.

Figure 3: Behavioral continuum (source: own elaboration based on literature review)

The **Outcomes Stage** determines whether the conflict leads to a positive or negative resolution. The outcomes of conflict can be classified as:

(a) Functional Outcomes: These include improved decision-making, increased innovation, and strengthened relationships between stakeholders. Managed conflict can lead to better understanding, refined policies, and stronger community engagement.

(b) Dysfunctional Outcomes: When conflict is not effectively addressed, it can result in reduced cooperation, strained relationships, and a loss of credibility for the planning process. Persistent conflict can also lead to project delays or failure.

3.3. Conflict solving vs. Conflict Management

Conflict is typically short-lived, temporary, and intermittent in nature. Ideally, conflicts should be addressed at the latent stage before they escalate. Once it begins, the conflict process can be difficult to halt. It tends to become increasingly bitter as it progresses. Without a conscious effort to resolve it, conflict may escalate beyond reason.

There are different ways for addressing conflict, depending on what the conflict entails and the level of ambition. The three overarching approaches to dealing with conflicts include:

- Conflict resolution: Many conflicts can be resolved if the proper, careful attention is given on time. Conflict resolution can be achieved if parties are helped to explore, question, and reframe their positions and interests. Intervention by skilled third parties can help foster new thinking and new relationships. Exploring the roots of the conflict and identifying creative positive-sum solutions that the parties may have missed is a way to loosen commitment to entrenched positions and achieve resolution (Tremblay-Lévesque, Warner, Gribanenkova, & Robbins, 2022).

- Conflict management: Not all conflicts can be resolved. In this case, the best that can be done is to manage and contain them. Conflict management is the process of finding and designing interventions to reach agreement between two or more stakeholders. (Tremblay-Lévesque, Warner, Gribanenkova, & Robbins, 2022). The goal is thus to make an ongoing conflict more beneficial and less damaging to the parties involved. Managing a conflict may also involve a prevention aspect or stage, whereas resolving the conflict mainly focuses on addressing the issues after their occurrence. (Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Hub, n.d.)

   Importantly, conflict management is not about avoiding, ignoring, suppressing, controlling, or eliminating the adversary. Rather, it starts with accepting a certain incompatibility of interests, views, and standpoints, trying to understand key issues, then taking steps to reach an agreement. (Tremblay-Lévesque, Warner, Gribanenkova, & Robbins, 2022)
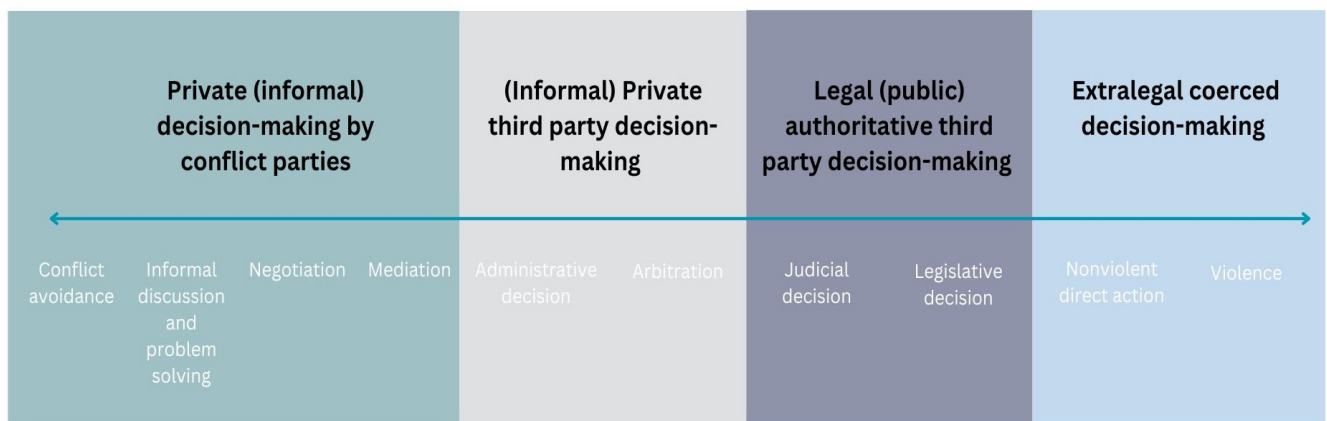
- Conflict transformation: All conflicts can change. Conflict transformation entails putting an entirely new lens on the conflict. In some situations, it may be that the very structure of parties and relationships has conflictual relationships embedded within it. Conflict transformation is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming relationships, interests, and discourses in a way that supports change. This requires a comprehensive and wide ranging approach. Conflict transformation approaches prioritize building support for the people and resources within the conflict setting, as opposed to depending on outside mediation resolution (Tremblay-Lévesque, Warner, Gribanenkova, & Robbins, 2022).

3.4. Conflict solving skills – mediation and negotiation

The way a conflict is addressed depends on its nature, the context in which it occurs and the specific situation. The options and tools used to manage conflict should be proportionate to the nature and severity of the problem(s).

Figure 4 shows a continuum of conflict management approaches. These range from conflict avoidance at one extreme to physical violence at the other. In between these two extremes, there are many different approaches and options for managing conflict. As one moves from left to right on the continuum, approaches become increasingly directive and authoritative, with decision-making shifting from collaborative negotiation toward external enforcement. The further to the right, the less influence stakeholders have over both the process and the outcome, reducing opportunities for meaningful

Private (informal) decision-making by conflict parties				(Informal) Private third party decision-making		Legal (public) authoritative third party decision-making		Extralegal coerced decision-making	
Conflict avoidance	Informal discussion and problem solving	Negotiation	Mediation	Administrative decision	Arbitration	Judicial decision	Legislative decision	Nonviolent direct action	Violence

participation.

Figure 4: Continuum of conflict management approaches (source: own elaboration based on Engel and Korf, 2005)

Out of those conflict management options, negotiation is perhaps the commonly employed. **Negotiation** refers to the voluntary discussion process in which parties reach agreement through consensus. Consensus means a decision that all can support. (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.)

For negotiations to be successful–especially in participatory planning–certain foundational principles and conditions must be met:

- **Interdependence of Parties:** Negotiation is only meaningful when parties rely on one another to meet their needs. If one side can achieve its goals independently, there is little motivation to engage in dialogue. Stakeholder analysis can help uncover mutual dependencies and shared interests.

- **Readiness to negotiate:** Both sides must be open and ready to enter into dialogue. This involves sharing relevant information and developing a clear negotiation strategy.

- **Resources to negotiate:** Effective negotiation requires that all parties commit essential resources—whether time, personnel, or funding—to support the process.

It is important to recognize that differences that exist in negotiation styles (Engel & Korf, 2005):

- Consensual negotiations are based on stakeholders identifying their own needs and interests, and thereby finding ways to promote mutual gains. This approach seeks high levels of collaboration, and presumes that the parties have the necessary good will to communicate throughout the process. Consensual negotiations are particularly important when an aim is to strengthen long-term working relationships. They also produce potentially more satisfying and enforceable settlements, because the disputants work out their own resolutions.

- Hard-style negotiations **often** rely on the use of more coercive strategies to encourage each side to make concessions and reach agreement. They are particularly applicable when a conflicting party has taken up an extreme and inflexible position. Hard-style outcomes tend to be based on compromise, rather than on mutually satisfying agreements.

- Soft-style negotiations **can** go to the other **extreme, with** parties concentrating more or preserving relationships than on furthering their own interests. Under these conditions, concessions might be given too easily, leading to resentment or frustration later on. Difficult issues that may provoke disagreements are often avoided. More powerful stakeholders may use soft-style negotiation to increase rather than moderate their demands. Outcomes tend to be based on **accommodation.**

- Positional bargaining **can** be an impediment to consensus building. In a conflict situation, parties tend to lock themselves in positions, which they have to defend and argue for. Conflict stakeholders often exaggerate their differences by adopting positions that do not necessarily correspond to their interests. They may think that taking a strong position will help them to give as little as possible to the other party. Once the parties have identified themselves with their positions, the arguments and offers of the other side will no longer be evaluated rationally. To "give in" may appear equal to loosing face. Negotiations become a contest of wills in which each side tries to win. During such positional bargaining processes, the parties view themselves as adversaries; the goal is victory. As a negotiation style, positional bargaining is usually applied when parties perceive that the contested resources are limited and that a "distributive solution", which allocates gains and losses to each party, is the only possible outcome. It may also be adopted when a party places more importance on achieving its own goals than on the continuance of good relationships with other parties.

Some negotiation strategies that are appropriate in the context of participatory planning include:

• Brainstorming: Generating a wide range of potential solutions before narrowing down options, encouraging creativity and inclusivity.

• Collaborative Problem-Solving: Working together to identify solutions that meet the needs of all stakeholders, promoting cooperation over competition.

• Conflict Resolution Meetings: Organizing structured meetings to address conflicts, facilitate discussions, and find mutually agreeable solutions.

The criteria used to evaluate the extent to which a negotiation can be deemed successful include: (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991)

- An outcome that satisfies both parties or at least one that both sides can live with.
- Negotiations should be efficient and sustainable, respecting the resources and time that parties have agreed to allocate.
- The relationship between participants should be improved or at least not damaged.

Some conflict situations may require a third party intervention. **Mediation** is the intervention into a dispute or negotiation of an acceptable, impartial third party who has no decision-making authority. The objective of this intervention is to assist the parties in voluntarily reaching an acceptable resolution of issues in dispute. Mediation is useful in highly polarized disputes where the parties have either been unable to initiate a productive dialogue, or where the parties have been talking and have reached a seemingly insurmountable **impasse.** (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.)

Mediators may hold private meetings, or caucuses, with each party to explore feasible options or craft proposals that could help move the process forward. The level of involvement or directiveness varies among mediators. Some take a hands-off approach—simply facilitating dialogue, offering minimal procedural guidance, and stepping in only to prevent or resolve deadlocks. Others are more actively engaged, helping shape the specifics of the final agreement.

There are numerous types of mediation approaches, including (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.):

- **Interest based:** focused on identifying the underlying needs, or interests, of the parties, and developing a mutually acceptable solution that addresses the interests that matter most to the parties.
- **Facilitative:** focused on guiding participants through a multi-phase process that is designed to result in the parties' development of a resolution.
- **Transformative** : focused on the relationship between the parties, and supporting their ability to understand and share their views, regardless of whether a clear resolution is reached.

- **Narrative:** focused on the story or stories that participants understand about the situation and helping them to understand and forge a new story (more below). More than one approach might be used in any given mediation:

Regardless of style and approach undertaken, the mediator's role is that of a catalyst, empowering the parties to make progress and take ownership of resolving their dispute.

3.5. Conflict solving techniques - communication and facilitation

All conflict management processes. particularly those based on consensual negotiation–rely heavily on information sharing and mutual learning. Through the exchange of information, stakeholders aim to influence one another's understanding, perceptions, preferences, and approaches to problem-solving.

Effective conflict solving depends on the availability, accessibility, and credibility of information. Information plays a central role in identifying interests, clarifying shared objectives, and evaluating the practicality of proposed solutions. Throughout conflict management process, there must always be space to check for information needs.

To be useful, information must be communicated in a way that clearly connects to the interests and concerns of all stakeholders. At the same time, each party will naturally frame information to support their perspective and make their case more persuasive. Therefore, a shared understanding of the relevance and balance of information is critical.
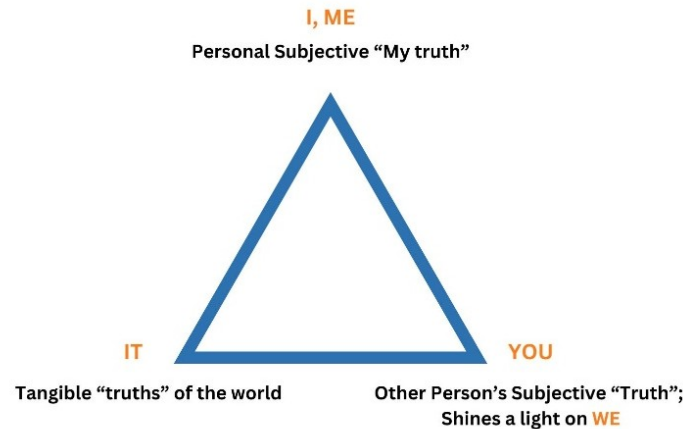
Some strategies for improving communication in the context of participatory planning include:

- Transparent Information Sharing: Diversifying informational resources to ensure clear, open, and accessible communication with all stakeholders fostering trust;
- Joint Fact-Finding Missions: Organizing a variety of actions (focus-groups, discussion workshops, open discussions, etc.) to bring stakeholders together for joint data gathering and analysis, ensuring a shared understanding of the issues and promoting collective solutions;
- Participatory Planning Workshops: Organizing workshops and events where stakeholders collaborate in decision-making and solution-building.
- Stakeholder Dialogues: Faciliting open discussions between stakeholders to build trust, share perspectives, and resolve differences.

In her book Everything is Workable, Diane Musho Hamilton presents her 'three sides of a story' approach that applies to a range of situations. According to it every situation can be viewed through three distinct perspectives (see Fig. 5), and none is more "true" than the others–each reveals a different facet of reality.

- The "I" perspective reflects one's personal experience, beliefs, and feelings.

- The "You" perspective represents the other person's viewpoint, equally valid from their position.
- The "It" perspective is the more objective view—facts, data, external observations, or evidence from a third-party standpoint.

I, ME
Personal Subjective "My truth"

IT
Tangible "truths" of the world

YOU
Other Person's Subjective "Truth";
Shines a light on **WE**

Figure 5: Tree sides of a story (source: own elaboration based on **(Tremblay-Lévesque,** Warner, Gribanenkova, & Robbins, 2022))

In conflict resolution, it can be useful to explicitly discuss all three viewpoints. Doing so helps lay the groundwork for mutual understanding and supports the development of a shared vision for moving forward.

Through the use of wide-range of techniques, **facilitation** can improve the flow of information in a meeting or other process, among multiple participants. The techniques may also be applied to decision-making meetings where a specific outcome is desired (e.g., resolution of a conflict or dispute). The term "facilitator" is often used interchangeably with the term "mediator," but a facilitator may engage in a wide variety of collaborative processes, whereas mediators typically only engage in resolving conflicts that have already emerged between parties and helping the parties to reach **an agreement.** (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.)

The facilitator is generally an impartial third-party who is not a member of one of the parties and focusses on the process involved in helping participants resolve a situation or achieve their goals.

Facilitators focus on procedural assistance and remain impartial to the topics or issues under discussion. Facilitating is most appropriate when:

(1) the intensity of the parties' emotions about the issues in dispute are low to moderate;

(2) the parties or issues are not extremely polarized;

(3) the parties have enough trust in each other that they can work together to develop a mutually acceptable solution; or

(4) the parties are in a common predicament and they need or will benefit from a jointly-acceptable outcome.

4. Classroom Discussion Topics

Topics that can be discussed in the classroom include:

- **Understanding Conflicts in Participatory Planning**
  What is conflict, and how does it typically arise in participatory planning processes? Can conflict be beneficial? Discuss the nature, causes, and potential positive outcomes of conflict when managed effectively.

- **Assessing Conflict**
  At what stage should conflicts in participatory planning be assessed? What indicators or conditions signal the need for a formal conflict assessment? Discuss key factors to consider, such as stakeholder dynamics, timing, and context.

- **Conflict Management Techniques:**
  What are effective methods for managing disputes and preventing conflict escalation in participatory planning? Which specific techniques can improve communication and build trust among stakeholders or conflicting parties? Explore examples such as mediation, stakeholder dialogues, joint fact-finding, and facilitation.

5. Assignments

In groups of 4-6 students choose one of the following conflict scenarios:
  i. A dispute between municipal authorities and environmental groups over a proposed highway expansion
  ii. A conflict between developers and local residents regarding a new conference center project
  iii. A disagreement between different community groups regarding the redevelopment of public space.

Each group must:
  A. Identify the stakeholders involved and map their interests, positions, and potential power dynamics.

  B. Analyze the root causes and contributing factors of the conflict (e.g., values, resources, communication gaps).

  C. Propose at least three conflict resolution strategies, using tools such as:
  - Stakeholder dialogues
  - Mediation or facilitation techniques
  - Participatory planning workshops
  - Joint fact-finding missions.

  D. Prepare a 15-minute presentation outlining:
  - The nature of the conflict
  - Stakeholder analysis
  - Proposed resolution strategies and why they were chosen
  - Anticipated challenges and how they might be mitigated

Evaluation Criteria:
- Depth of conflict analysis and stakeholder mapping
- Creativity and feasibility of proposed strategies
- Integration of participatory and interest-based principles

6. Summary of Learning

Q1: What is a conflict?

A: Generally defined, conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. It refers to the expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. It is also associated with situations that involve contradictory interest between two opposing groups. It an outcome of behaviors and is traditionally thought to arise from opposing interests involving scarce resources and goal divergence.

Q2: Why is important to address conflicts at the latent stage?

A: Once it begins, the conflict process can be difficult to halt. It tends to become increasingly bitter as it progresses. Without a conscious effort to resolve it, conflict may escalate beyond reason.

Q3: Why is negotiation the most commonly used method of conflict management?

A: Negotiation is the most commonly employed conflict management approach because it is voluntary, collaborative, and flexible, allowing parties to retain control over the outcome. It is cost-effective, time-efficient, and promotes confidentiality, which encourages open communication. Negotiation fosters mutual understanding, empathy, and trust, helping to preserve relationships while creating tailored solutions that meet the needs of all parties. Its adaptability makes it suitable for various contexts, from interpersonal disputes to complex participatory planning processes, making it a preferred method for resolving conflicts.

7. Quiz

Q1: True or false: Conflict and dispute are interchanging terms.

A: False

Q2: True or false: Policies, programmes and projects promoting resource management cannot serve as a sources of conflict.

A: False

Q3: True or false: Conflict is a dynamic process that unfolds in a linear sequence of stages.

A: False

Q4: True or false: The way a conflict is addressed depends on its nature, the context in which it occurs and the specific situation. The options and tools used to manage conflict should be proportionate to the nature and severity of the problem(s).

A: True

Q5: True or false: The mediator's role is to provide and impose possible solutions to a dispute.

A: False

Q6: Which of the following is not amongst the positive results of conflicts in participatory planning?

  A. Resource allocation
  B. Bringing about needed change
  C. Indication for level of participatory involvement
  D. Changing the way, one party looks at issues, clarifying what is most important

A: A

Q7: Which of the following is NOT amongst the primary conflict-handling intentions?

  A. Communicating
  B. Avoiding
  C. Compromising
  D. Accommodating

A: A

Q8: Which of the following is NOT a necessary condition for entering into a successful negotiation?

  A. Interdependence between the parties
  B. A clear willingness to negotiate
  C. External enforcement of decisions
  D. Commitment of resources like time or personnel

A: C

Q9: Which of the following is a key criterion for evaluating a successful negotiation outcome?

A. One party achieving full control of the outcome
B. A process that avoids any allocation of resources
C. An agreement both parties can accept, even if not ideal
D. Avoiding any form of compromise to maintain position

A: C

Q10: When is facilitation of a conflict appropriate? (Select all that apply)

A) One of the parties involved in the conflict receives strong support from public authorities
B) The parties have enough trust in each other that they can work together to develop a mutually acceptable solution; or
C) An active and engaged civil society insists on involving facilitator for solving the conflict
D) the parties are in a common predicament and they need or will benefit from a jointly-acceptable outcome
E) The conflict involves various stakeholders, including NGOs and academia

A: B, D

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9. Glossary

Dispute Resolution (ADR) refers to a range of processes used to resolve conflicts outside of traditional courtroom litigation. These methods—including negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration—are typically more flexible, informal, and cost-effective than judicial procedures. ADR emphasizes collaboration, voluntary participation, and mutually beneficial outcomes, making it especially useful in contexts where preserving relationships is important, such as community planning or organizational disputes. ADR can be facilitated by neutral third parties who help structure the dialogue, manage emotions, and guide parties toward constructive and consensual agreements.

Position-based approach in negotiation centers n the specific demands or outcomes each party wants ("what"), often treating the other party as a barrier to achieving those goals. This method emphasizes claiming value, where success is seen as winning or gaining the most benefits, sometimes at the expense of collaboration.

Interest-based approach in negotiation —also called principled or integrative negotiation—focuses on understanding the underlying reasons or motivations behind positions ("why"). It encourages cooperation, seeks mutually beneficial outcomes, and promotes problem-solving by separating people from the problem, identifying shared interests, generating options collaboratively, and using objective criteria to guide decisions.

Multi-actor environment - a situation or context in which multiple stakeholders or parties, each with their own interests, values, and perspectives, are involved in a process or decision-making activity. These actors can include individuals, groups, organizations, government bodies, businesses, and civil society, among others. In such environments, the interactions between these diverse actors can lead to collaboration, competition, or conflict, as they negotiate and influence outcomes based on their respective goals. Multi-actor environments are common in complex settings

like participatory planning, policy-making, and community development, where the input and cooperation of various stakeholders are essential to achieving balanced and sustainable results.