



# **BUILDING BRIDGES**

between citizens and local governments  
to work more effectively together

## **THROUGH MANAGING CONFLICT AND DIFFERENCES**

### **PART II: TOOL KIT**

By

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with the collaboration of experts from

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- Training Institutions from CEE/SEE Countries.

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## FOREWORD

This series of training manuals coincides with the launch of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) Global Campaign on Urban Governance. The theme of "inclusiveness", reflecting the Campaign's vision and strategy, is deeply embedded in the themes and learning strategies covered by these manuals. While they have been planned and written to serve the developmental needs of non-governmental and community-based organizations, their leadership and staff, the context for learning implementation is consistently conveyed within the spirit and reality of widespread collaboration.

There is growing evidence and increased recognition of several themes that define and frame the urban governance agenda for the new century and millennium. The first, inclusiveness, implies that local governments and communities that want to be on the leading edge of social and economic change must recognize the importance of including everyone, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, in the process of forging decisions that affect their collective quality of life.

The second recognition involves shared leadership that cuts across the spectrum of institutional and community fabric. Ideally, these shared leadership forums will be based on mutual trust, open dialogue among all stakeholders, and a wide range of strategies for turning good ideas and common visions into concrete actions.

As described in the Prologue, this series of learning implementation tools has been a collaborative effort by Partners Romania Foundation for Local Development, UNCHS (Habitat) and the Open Society Institute. Major funding for the project was provided by the Open Society Institute's Local Government Initiative Programme with other financial support from UNCHS (Habitat) and the Government of the Netherlands. Partners Romania managed the project under its Regional Programme for Capacity Building in Governance and Local Leadership for Central and Eastern Europe. These responsibilities included field testing the Participatory Planning and Managing Conflict and Differences manuals in a training of trainers programme involving 18 participants from 13 Central and Eastern European countries and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The initiatives for launching this series of training manuals came from two different regions of the world. The Steering Committee for the Regional Capacity Building Programme for Central and Eastern Europe identified conflict management and participatory planning as two of their region's training needs during their deliberations in 1997. In addition, a diverse group of NGO, CBO and local government leaders from across Sub-Saharan Africa met in 1998 and identified these topics, as well as others covered in this series, as important training needs.

Finally, I want to thank Fred Fisher the principal author of the series and the superb team of writing collaborators he pulled together to craft these materials. These include: Ana Vasilache, director of Partners Romania, who managed the process from Romania; Kinga Goncz and Dusan Ondrusek, directors of Partners Hungary and Slovakia respectively; David Tees, who has contributed to many UNCHS publications over the years; the trainers who participated in the field tests of the materials; and, the team of UNCHS staff professionals, headed by Tomasz Sudra, who brought their considerable experience and expertise to fine tune the final products.

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## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT USING THE TOOL KIT

**Part Two** of this manual is a tool kit for trainers and facilitators who want to plan workshops and other types of learning experiences based on the concepts and ideas covered in Book One. The tools are based on experiential learning approaches, designed to help participants tap their experience and knowledge about the subject and to enhance their skills to manage conflict and differences more effectively as a result of the training. The tools are not in any particular order of importance, nor are they sequenced to be “lifted out” and plopped into a workshop schedule as finished works of performing art. As with other training tools provided in this series, we want you to feel free to modify them to meet your learning objective needs and the needs of the audience you will be working with.

We have included a mix of tools that mirror the content covered in Part One as well as exercises designed to address various issues of group maintenance. These maintenance tools are most often referred to as *ice breakers*, *openers* and *energizers*. Sometimes these group maintenance exercises seem frivolous and can be if used too often or taken to extreme. Since these maintenance or “environmental” tools are sometimes confused with each other, it’s probably worth a few moments to discuss them.

Icebreakers and openers have a lot in common but also some differences. Icebreakers are relatively subject-free activities whereas openers, as usually defined, are related to the content being addressed by the workshop or learning event. Icebreakers are typically used when group members do not know each other. They are exercises designed to help members get acquainted and become more comfortable with each other as learning partners.

Openers, on the other hand, are tools to help participants ease into the subject matter. They tend to set the stage for interactive learning, help the group including the facilitator avoid abrupt starts, and generally help the participants get comfortable with the content material they will be addressing. They are work-oriented “preludes”.

The third type of climate building and group maintenance exercise is the energizer. Typically, it’s a fun event to get the group’s collective adrenaline flowing again when they are experiencing an energy slump. We have found that most training groups have participants who are skilled at leading these types of learning exercises. Don’t hesitate to use these people. On the other hand, don’t give up total responsibility for the program. Some trainees, we are convinced, only come to training programs so they can volunteer to organize icebreakers, energizers and openers. They can be great resources, but by the end of some workshops where the participants take responsibility for these maintenance tasks, it’s hard to tell who’s in charge.

As we said earlier, these tools are not intended to be used in the order they are presented. They are tools to be used if and when they seem appropriate to your needs. We also encourage you to modify them in ways that make them more appropriate and usable based on the learning needs of the participants.

## TOOL I: WARM-UP/ICE BRAKER

### ***Mapping the conflict management territory***

*Travel advisory:* This exercise has much potential beyond what is suggested in the following process. For example, you can return to these participant generated expressions of conflict and tie them into Moore’s Conflict categories (see Tool #4). You could ask the participants to put them into levels of conflict, e.g., interpersonal, organizational, cross border. Or, return to the cards at the end of the workshop and ask participants to add to their cards or otherwise change them. We’re sure you and the participants will have many other ideas about how to mine these ideas for more precious metal once the workshop is underway, so keep the cards handy.

### ***Learning objective***

This exercise is intended to provide participants with an opportunity to get acquainted with each other and to begin exploring the concepts and ideas associated with conflict management.

### ***Time required***

About 60 minutes. If it takes longer, it probably means the participants have come up with some good maps of the territory to be covered in the workshop. Rearrange your time and anxieties accordingly.

### ***Process***

1. Explain the exercise as a way for participants to get acquainted with each other and to express and share their feelings and experiences with conflict. Give participants 4-6 large index cards and ask them to put their name

on one card. It helps if this card is a different color from the rest. On the remaining cards, ask them to write one word, phrase, picture or symbol that expresses their personal feelings about conflict on each card. To be sure the task is clear, we suggest you write the following question in large letters on a flip chart:

**When you think of “conflict”, what thoughts, feelings or images come immediately into your mind?**

2. When participants have entered their ideas on index cards, ask them, one at a time, to introduce themselves and state what is on their cards. Ask for only questions of clarification at this time. Ask them to tape their cards on the wall putting the card with their name on top and the other cards underneath.
3. Ask the group for any general impressions of the ideas and images that have been posted.
4. Break the group into three or four smaller groups of no more than six participants per group and ask them to create a conceptual map on newsprint paper of the ideas that have been presented. You might want to remind them since somebody is likely to ask that a conceptual map is simply a way to cluster and organize ideas, information, data, and other snippets of insights so they convey a framework for thinking about a particular issue like, conflict management.
5. Convene the groups and have them display their conceptual maps on the wall.
6. When participants have completed this task, encourage a discussion of the exercise and its meaning as a way to become better acquainted with the nature of and consequences of conflict. Consider using some of the following questions to stimulate discussion:
  - **Were you surprised by any of the images or statements? What surprised you most?**
  - **What are some of the similarities and differences in the ways participants perceived and described conflict?**
  - **How might you, as a trainer or mediator, use this type of exercise to help those who are experiencing conflict to move toward peaceful resolutions?**

*Don't hesitate to reinvent this exercise to meet the needs of the group you are working with. It is designed to be modified or remodeled on the spot as insights and ideas emerge from the experience.*

## **TOOL 2: PRESENTATION POSSIBILITIES**

"Thoughts without content are empty. Intuition without concepts are blind"  
**IMMANUEL KANT**

Since most lectures are inconsistent with the principles of experiential learning, we suggest in its place a two-way dialogue or guided discussion to introduce a pertinent piece of information or concept that is germane to the next stage of the group's learning implementation. The following outline is designed to help you prepare an interactive presentation of new concepts, ideas, data, information, or materials.

***Title of your guided discussion topic:***

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***Key points you want to make:***

(Three or four are probably enough if you want participants to remember them)

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*Real life examples you want to use to make your points:*

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*Questions to your audience:*

These should be designed to evoke comments based on their experience about the points you are making.

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*Summary of your key points or telling them what you told them!:*

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*Describe how you plan to use visual aids to reinforce your presentation:*

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*Another Travel Advisory:* This voyage of discovery is beginning to get interesting. Before you go any further, we suggest you review the tools we have clustered under the label Tool 5. These icebreakers, openers, and energizers are just a few of the many you may want to use throughout the life of the workshop.

Also at this time we encourage you to think about how you can select a series of these tools to design a workshop for one of your client groups. What tools you finally decide to use will depend on your intended audience, their learning needs and your ability to deliver the training based on their perceived needs. Don't hesitate to pick and choose what you think will work from the tools in this manual, modify them to better fit the learning needs of your clients, fill in the gaps with tools from other sources and most importantly, invent some of your own.

## **TOOL 3: PERCEPTION EXERCISE**

In Chapter 2 on *Understanding the Nature of Conflict* there is a discussion of the role of perceptions in fostering and fueling disagreements and conflict. Perceptions are often the surface manifestations of more deeply ingrained biases or prejudices. This short exercise is designed to help participants recognize that the way they perceive things may be different from the perceptions of others. It also illustrates that in some situations there are no right or wrong answers, just different ones based on how we see things.

This **squares** exercise can also be the *Warm Up* for deeper discussions about perceptions that are prevalent in the participant's organizations or communities that could lead to more serious disagreements or even conflict if not surfaced and addressed. Be creative in the ways you might use this simple exercise to dig deeper.

### **Learning objective**

To adopt the viewpoint that there is more than one way to look at a problem or opportunity.

### **Time required**

20-30 minutes, or more if you take it to Stage II.

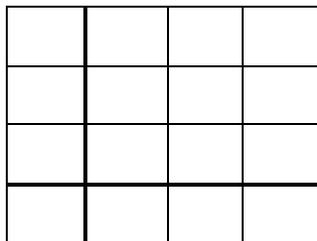
### **Required resources**

None

## Process

### Stage I

1. Draw the following figure on a flipchart making it large enough so that everyone in the group can see it clearly. Hand out small pieces of plain paper to each participant. Without explanation or introductory remarks, ask participants to observe the figure and to write on the piece of paper an answer to the following question: *How many squares do you see?*



2. Give participants 30 seconds to record their answers.

**Trainer's note.** Figures at the end of these task statements illustrate ways to determine the number of squares that individuals will see and incorporate into their answers. They will usually range from 16 squares to 30.

3. Collect the answers and record the numbers from their responses on the same flipchart, keeping the figure exposed to view.
4. When all their answers have been recorded, ask participants which of the answers is the right one. The answer to this question will often depend on the largest number of squares recorded. Some may say all of the answers are right since the question asked was about the number of squares you see and not how many squares there are. This is the response you are hoping for since it makes the point that what is correct for each of us is what we see at the time. Our perceptions are the reality we see and often reveal or communicate to others.
5. Ask participants *how they felt* when someone claimed to have seen more squares than they saw, e.g., I was skeptical, felt inadequate, felt curious. Ask them *what they did* when they realized that someone else had seen more squares than they saw, e.g., looked again to see what I had missed the first time; tried to find fault with the exercise or the instructor for making me look bad.
6. Encourage a discussion of the exercise by asking participants what differing opinions about the number of squares on a flipchart might have to do with the way people see issues in conflict situations.

### Stage II: Digging deeper

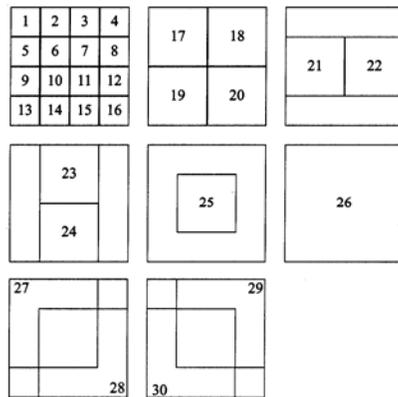
Based on the squares exercise discussion, we think the participants might be prepared to look at an issue in the community or in their organization where there are differing perceptions that could lead to greater disagreement or even conflict if not surfaced in the immediate future. For example, it might be the initiation of a new performance appraisal system for employees that will be used for promotions and raises, a new sales tax to be levied on all sales of goods and services by NGOs and CBOs, or the perceptions of citizens about the influx of rural families into an urban neighbourhood. Perceptions about situations like these can escalate quickly into a more deep-seated set of perceptions that take on different labels.

Based on a real situation confronting the work place or community of the workshop participants, follow the perception exercise in Stage I with the following set of tasks. We can imagine this stage taking several hours based on the issues being discussed. Use your judgement about how long it might take.

1. Have the total group suggest an issue or issues that exist in their organizations or communities that are common and understood by most participants. Narrow the list to one or two if possible. This task will be easy if the group has been assembled to address a particular issue.
2. Form small task groups. Have them list on newsprint paper the various perceptions they either have about the situation, have heard from others or have learned about in other ways, e.g., read in the local newspaper.

3. Have each group prioritize the perceptions in terms of their level of seriousness as flash points for potential conflict, or have them assign a degree of heat to each, recognizing that the higher the temperature, the greater the chance of spontaneous combustion.
4. If the groups are working on the same issue, have the groups reconvene and report out their list for comparison.
5. Reconvene the task groups to determine what could be done to alter the perceptions that exist to help reduce the potential for greater disagreement about the issue or to lessen the potential for future conflict.
6. Report out the action plans and discuss them.

*A graphic explanation of the possible number of squares that can be perceived by participants in this exercise. Any number fewer than sixteen and over thirty deserve a very creative answer.*



## TOOL 4: CONFLICT CAUSES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

### **Learning objectives**

To obtain knowledge and skills in identifying the causes of conflict and potential interventions.

### **Time required**

about 75-90 minutes.

### **Required resources**

Handout provided with this exercise and the usual supply of newsprint paper, magic markers and some type of adhesive material that preferably doesn't leave permanent damage to the walls of the facility.

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