CPCS

CENTRE FOR PEACE & CONFLICT STUDIES

Dialogue Facilitation **Handbook**

FOR PEACE PRACTITIONERS

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Introduction

This handbook does not aim to suggest how a dialogue is to be done, but to share about techniques, tips and tricks gathered from field experiences and research. Therefore, it is particularly for assisting trained facilitators with their task to facilitate dialogues, and it can be used as a resource material to train up dialogue facillators. We would not advise that someone can become a dialogue facilitator just by reading this handbook and receives no proper training and coaching. As our experiences reflect, to become an effective dialogue facilitator, one requires more than just natural talents, but also training, experiences and recognition by a wider group of people. Having training is better than just reading books because without proper training the person may make things worse, instead of improving the situation.

The handbook consists of three parts - 1. Concept and Theory, 2. Design, Planning and Preparation, and 3. Characteristics and Techniques. It provides a foundation that every dialogue facilitation skill should contain. We are aware of the importance of pre- and post-dialogue stages, which we did not cover so much in this handbook. However, we encourage facilitators to see dialogue as a process but not an event or a short-term project, to lay the ground work for furture dialogues to happen, to continue to explore answers about what's next after dialogues, and to find how to build on the take-aways of participants and the common ground which they together have discovered. There are valuable things that can be picked from the dialogue and the direct encounter, which will help change the dialogue process.

We strongly hope that this handbook will be useful for practitioners as tools and resource materials in dialogue processes, as we believe that dialogue is one of the best ways to resolve conflicts and attain peace for human society.

Soth Plai Ngarm

Foreword

This handbook brings together the ideas and experiences of CPCS's colleagues who have worked extensively in dialogue events and processes in Asia. Because different people contributed what they thought would be most useful, there is not a single speaker throughout the handbook. Their contributions are, however, coherent and based on real-world experience. CPCS is grateful to the various colleagues for documenting, analysing, and offering what they have learned about dialogue.

Contributors who deserve credit for this handbook comprise Richard Smith, a peace activist, trainer and facilitator from South Africa, Soth Plai Ngarm, a peace activist, trainer, researcher and facilitator from Cambodia, Rachana Thummala and Nery Ronatay, dialogue project officers for Myanmar at different times, and Salai Aungling Dattui, a Myanmarese dialogue trainee who coordinated with other trainees in the development of the Code of Ethical Conducts in this handbook. Thanks to Sue Williams and Alison Lee, who helped edit this version of handbook.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all donors who supported CPCS and our local partners to carry out dialogue trainings in Myanmar as a way to strengthen the ongoing peace process. Without these opportunities and experiences, we would not have gained inspiration, and it would not be possible for this handbook to be published and shared as a resource contributing to peace work wherever it is needed.

Soth Plai Ngarm

Part

01

Concepts & Theories

1.1. The Essence of Dialogue

Dialogue can be thought of as a journey that people travel on together: A learning journey during which mindsets can shift and attitudes can change. Along the way, relationships are built and strengthened.

Thinking of dialogue as being like a river can also be helpful. In the same way a river flows from the mountain to the sea - a dialogue is also supposed to flow. Your primary role as the facilitator is to keep the dialogue flowing.

Dialogue emphasizes the centrality of people and the relationships between them. By establishing a space and a process through which people listen to each other, feel heard by each other and learn from each other, dialogues can change relationships.

An effective dialogue gives people the chance to hear and understand perspectives that are different from their own. The sharing of perspectives in the dialogue process, and the exploring of these perspectives, can lead to changes in the hearts and minds of the participants involved.

Dialogues that aim to establish shared outcomes and collective plans are usually part of longer-term processes, which may have many other activity streams. Dialogue sessions can follow an overall process, with each session contributing an element of understanding and perspective that allows for a more constructive dialogue when increasingly complex or contentious issues are introduced. Or, dialogue may be called on as a tool, when another part of the process is stuck or going badly.

The word 'dialogue' originates from Ancient Greek. It came from dialogos, which literally translates to 'through the meaning of the word'. In its original form, dialogue was about trying to find meaning through conversations, by sharing ideas and asking enquiring questions.

At the end of the Cold War, practitioners and scholars breathed new life into the concept. The new focus on dialogue recognised that there was a problem with the way people were communicating and the fact that not enough effort was being made to try and understand each other. Scholars and practitioners recognised that communication was not the only problem between warring sides, but they have been trying to develop dialogue into a process that allows us to better connect with each other, understand each other, and work together to solve our common problems. As facilitators, you are now a part of this community trying to develop a common understanding of dialogue and how it can be helpful to all of us.

The Essence of the dialogue approach that we have been emphasizing in the trainings includes a focus on the People in the room, the Relationships between them and the Power dynamics that form part of these

relationships. The key difference between dialogue and other forms of discussion or conversation between people lies in the Deepening Understanding that emerges between people involved in the dialogue.

This deepening understanding comes about when people are able to listen to each other, to hear the meaning of what is being communicated, and not just the words, and when people learn from perspectives and information that is new to them or that they have not fully understood before. For this to happen, the dialogue will need to foster relationships and a process which can withstand hard truths, so that people feel able to be honest as well as respectful.

Being able to read a room full of people and understand the dynamics between people is a key skill for you as a facilitator. This includes observing closely whether people who contribute to the dialogue feel as though their point has been heard and understood, and taking action if they do not. Many of the communication skills and facilitation techniques are psychological tools that can be used to help people to feel heard and understood, as part of a process that enables the potential for learning and building a deeper shared understanding of the different perspectives in the room.

1.2. Principles of Effective Dialogue

Dialogue is a process that is driven and guided by key principles. These principles help us understand what is important in a dialogue process:

We Include

As human beings, we all have very different perspectives. We see things differently because we are different. Our minds work differently, our experiences are different, our triumphs are different and our problems are different. This diversity in perspectives is particularly useful when we try to understand the puzzle of the world we live in. Equipped with our unique perspectives, each one of us holds a piece of that puzzle. Dialogue is about helping us examine those pieces together and understand both the differences and the commonalities.

As a facilitator, it is your role to work with the group to create a safe space where we can hear those different perspectives, acknowledge them, and use them to help us understand better.

We Own Together

All the participants own the dialogue collectively - including its successes, its failures, its future and its results. This means that we all share the responsibility of making the dialogue safe, meaningful and effective.

This is important for three reasons:

- ➲ It empowers. Dialogue participants need to feel as if they are in charge of deciding what to do and what to talk about. Decisions that will affect their lives are in their hands.

- ➲ It builds trust. Owning the dialogue together is a responsibility. It gives everybody a common purpose – to get the best out of the space we are in. Participants trust each other better when they know that we are all working toward the same goal: understanding..

- ➲ It makes results more sustainable. If participants are personally invested in the success of a dialogue process, they will push themselves beyond their comfort zones and be less likely to give up in the face of obstacles.

We Learn

Learning is one of the most important principles to help us understand dialogue. The quality of a dialogue is different from a conversation, debate or negotiation because it is fundamentally concerned with learning together. The issue of learning through dialogue is addressed in more depth in Section 1.5 of the handbook.

We Stay Human

Dialogue involves the whole of us - not just the head, but also the eyes, the ears and the heart. It means we need to be:

- **Authentic** – to speak honestly about what we feel, what we think, what we aspire to and what we struggle with
- **Courageous** – to be brave enough to discuss contentious issues and fully hear what others say, even if it deeply disturbs us
- **Empathetic** – to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, understand what it is like to walk in those shoes, and feel the stones that beat against those shoes

Being human is at the heart of every dialogue. It is what enables us to see the humanity in each other, build deep connections, learn from each other and transform ourselves and even our communities.

We Think Long-Term

Repairing broken or damaged relationships takes time. Finding solutions to problems that have been created over many years also requires long-term commitment and patience.

> When was the last time you shared something deeply personal about yourself to a person whom you didn't know too well? What made you do it? How did it feel? What did the other person do that was helpful? What was unhelpful?

Thinking long-term about the intentions of a dialogue and being patient enough to allow mindsets to shift, attitudes to change and relationships to move from adversarial, us versus them, to people with different perspectives working together to try and address common problems, allows us to unlock the real potential of a dialogue process.

In dialogue, we accept that the best solutions are not always the quickest ones.

1.3. A Theoretical Framework for Intergroup Dialogue[1]

There is much literature on theoretical framework for dialogue, which one may choose among to test and to apply. Often, we initiate a dialogue process from common sense, or basically from the belief that the approaches and methodologies coming along with the concept would eventually bring something positive for our human interaction, but without knowing the theories. It does often turn out that dialogue is useful in this way. This "Theoretical Framework for Intergroup Dialogue" is presented as an example of how to look at a specific dialogue in a more comprehensive way, so it helps us understand where such a sustained process of dialogue would lead us. This section would be also relevant to "the dialogue design" section of this handbook, when practitioners become more aware of some of the theories behind what they are trying to develop as a dialogue process.

"We often hate each other, because we fear each other; we fear each other, because we don't know each other; we don't know each other, because we cannot communicate; we cannot communicate because we are separated…"

Martin Luther King. JR

Talking about gender, race and ethnicity is challenging. We often avoid talking about that by diverting it into talking about something else, something simple, superficial and less threatening. Actually, if we can address it more deeply, consciously and intentionally; talking about this kind of topic can be greatly beneficial. People can enter into a serious conversation with each other, challenge each other's perceptions, and share with each other their points of view or stories with an open mind, respecting each other. They can carry out a communication process which includes dialogic and critical processes that lead to another layer of psychological processes, which help achieve understanding, relationships and collaboration between and among different groups.

Dialogue is helped by practice and experience. People learn to engage with each other by using questions like these:

- ➲ "How do you feel about that?"
- ➲ "What does hearing about that experience mean to you?"

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[1] This material is extracted and adapted from a book – Gurin, P, Ratnesh, B, Nagda, A, and Ximina. *Dialogue Across Difference*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2013, New York, USA.
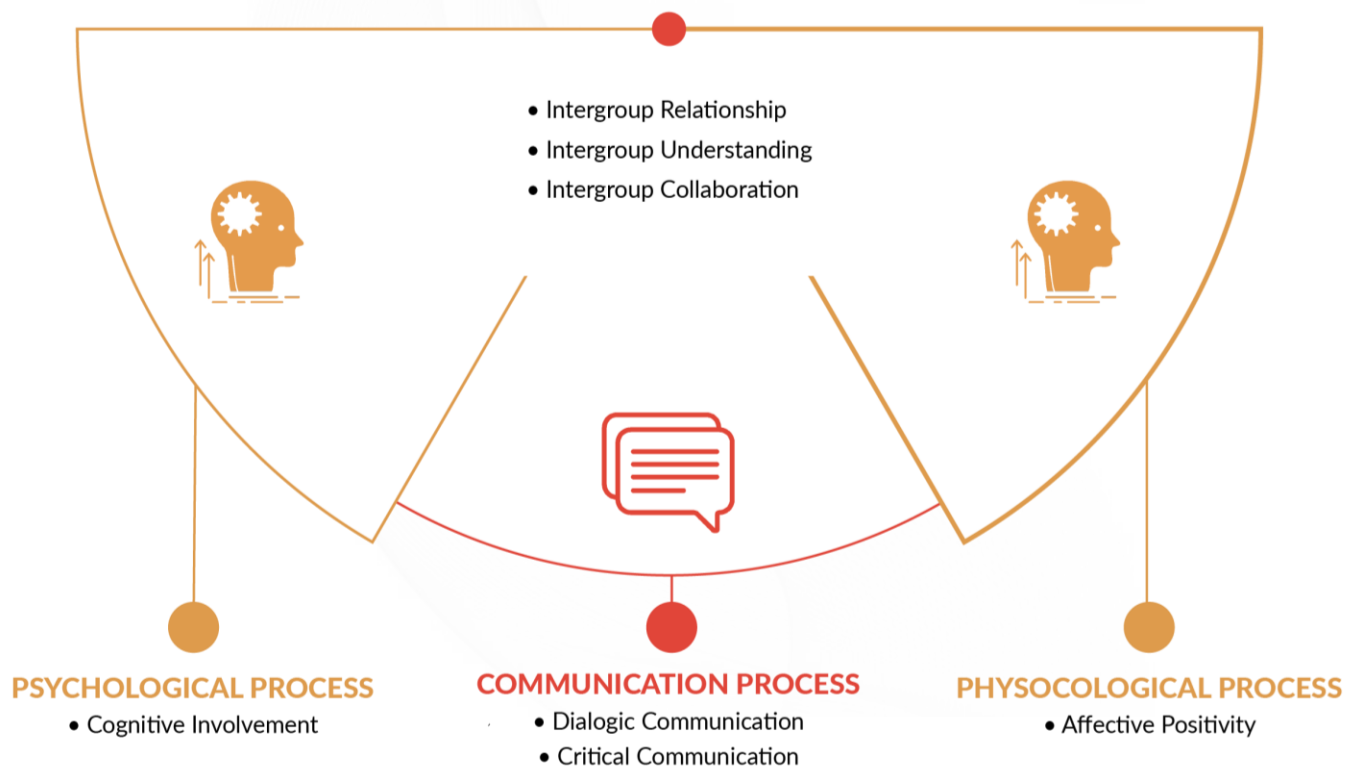
○ "How do our different life experiences affect our perspectives?"

○ "How do we interpret what we read, see or hear?"

○ And "How can we work together across our difference?"

The Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework helps differentiate between **the communication process** occurring among individuals, and the **psychological process** occurring within individuals. Together, the processes may lead to the outcomes of intergroup understanding, relationships and collaboration.

Facilitation of Structured Interaction

Facilitation of structured interaction is intentionally integrated to foster communication processes that play the central theoretical role in how to increase intergroup understanding, relationship and collaboration.

- Intergroup Relationship
- Intergroup Understanding
- Intergroup Collaboration

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS
- Cognitive Involvement

COMMUNICATION PROCESS
- Dialogic Communication
- Critical Communication

PHYSOCOLOGICAL PROCESS
- Affective Positivity

Dialogic and Critical Communication Process

The term dialogic denotes a relationship "between self and other". Critical, on the other hand, involves critical analysis.

The Dialogic process focuses on appreciating difference and engaging self (David 1996). It involves intentional listening and learning from others, especially those whose experiences and perspectives are different from us.

The Critical process focuses on critical reflection and alliance-building. This aspect engages our rational thinking and applies it to our own and others' experiences. It involves reflecting together about how power and privilege operate in society and in our social lives.

Create Critical-dialogic environment. In a critical-dialogic environment, critical reflection often involves examining past experiences in the light of new understanding and questioning every day, taken-for-granted ways of thinking and being. We bump up against our own assumptions, and examine them. We learn to see difference as a way to see experience and identity from multiple perspectives.

The facilitator's role is to foster the communication process by helping people:

1.   Suspend judgments,
2.   Deepen listening.
3.   Identify assumptions,
4.   And reflect with enquiry,

Dialogue...aims to achieve... transformation of the relationship or system of communication. As people engage in dialogue, we may not necessarily change our opinions, but we will change our ways of communication and our relationships.

Psychological Process

The critical-dialogic framework for intergroup dialogue focuses on these two sets of psychological processes:

1.   Cognitive Involvement:

Cognitive involvement includes two pairs of concepts:

   ➲   **Complex thinking** and **Analytical thinking** about society.

- **Multiple perspective** (cognitive empathy, or ability to step outside constraints, Davis: 1983) and **Identity engagement.** Discovering the sources of our beliefs and those of others does not mean emotions are unimportant, but they are also addressed rationally.

2. **Affective positivity:**

This includes three concepts: positive intergroup interaction, positive emotion during intergroup interaction, and comfort in intergroup interaction.

All of these elements are, or may be, part of a dialogue process. The aim is to involve participants at many levels, drawing in their experiences, their ideas, their critical understanding, and their willingness to work together to solve shared problems.

Outcomes of Intergroup Dialogue

1. **Intergroup relationships, two major focuses:**

    - Intergroup empathy (emotional empathy respond to experiences)
    - Bridging differences (identity-based knowledge sharing, reciprocal exchanges for mutual benefits)

2. **Intergroup Understanding, stresses on two sets of outcome:**

    - Understand inequalities (concern about social justice, in its racial, class and gender aspects)
    - Attitude toward diversity (promoting diversities, and multi-culturalism)

3. **Intergroup Action:**

    - Emphasis on commitment to social responsibility and unity-based action to bring about greater social justice
    - Considering various types of intergroup collaboration which can promote positive social changes.

1.4. Types of Dialogue Processes

Dialogue can take place in many forms and consist of different characteristics. What dialogue is called and the extent to which participants are in the same space can become the typology of particular dialogue, which potentially confuses practitioners who try to make sense of the dialogue they are conducting. There are many types of dialogue happening at many places in many different settings. Practitioners who begin to professionalise their dialogue facilitation skills often learn about these different types of dialogue. So they may begin their task by asking themselves questions like: What type of dialogue am I facilitating? Is it community dialogue? Interfaith dialogue? Intergroup dialogue? Or other types? However, this does not mean that every specific type of dialogue must have distinctive ways to facilitate the process. Dialogue facilitators also should not cling to the idea that there is only way to carry out a dialogue process correctly. Creativity is very important for the dialogue facilitator. It is very important to understand that it doesn't matter what different dialogues are called; the core principles and the values remain the same, including the facilitation skills and techniques required.

Remember that dialogue does not necessarily aim to reach an agreement, though often it brings about consensus and identifies common ground as an initial platform for further development. Dialogue is about learning from each other's perspectives with respect and exploring new ideas through shared conversation. It is a non-polarised way of looking at problems and exploring insights.

Inter-Group Dialogue

"Intergroup dialogue has emerged as an educational and community-building approach that brings together members of diverse social and cultural identities to engage in learning together, sharing, and listening to each other's perspectives and stories, and exploring inequalities and community that affect them all."[2]

There are growing numbers of books and articles focusing on intergroup dialogue, due to the credible formulation of intergroup dialogue programs in school settings. These combine with solid, professional, social scientific experiments that provide clear, specific results. Results include understanding the processes of negative to positive change at several levels, including cognitive and psychosocial dimensions. Furthermore, there are measurable results in cross-cultural understanding of privilege and power and how these affect people and

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2 Kelly E., Biren, Nagda, B. and Monita, C. Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change. Stylus Publishing, 2011, pp.1. Virginia, USA.

systems. Processes that demonstrably raise empathy among the target privileged group toward the less privileged group would contribute to strengthening relationships and unity.

The APPENDIX contains a typology describing different types of dialogue, which you are encouraged to consult if you seek further, in-depth information about this. Given the experience of the authors of this handbook, and the interest of many practitioners of dialogue, the most useful focus is on intergroup dialogue. This refers to dialogue processes which are more than interpersonal, in which participants see themselves to some extent as divided by group differences and misunderstandings. The group differences may be social, economic, political, racial, gender, class, or other dividers.

1.5. Dialogue, Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding

The concept of **Dialogue** in itself has unique nature for problem solving and conflict resolution. Practices have been applicable in all fields from theology, scholastic intellect, business, trade, social, political and security. Knowing about the characteristics and the unique dynamics of a particular field is necessary for a dialogue facilitator, and knowing about conflict transformation and peace building concepts and theories will add so much value to the effectiveness of dialogue facilitation. This section presents some useful concepts from the field of conflict transformation and peace building.

ABC Triangle[3]

The triangle model highlights conflict as a dynamic process in which incompatibilities, attitude and behaviour are constantly changing and influencing each other (1981:33 CR Mitchell). The model was originally developed by Johan Galtung who described the dynamic of contradiction (C), attitude (A) and behaviour (B., Later Chris R. Mitchell adapted it and provided emphases on (C) the context/situation with its incompatible goals and differing understandings of objective aspects of the context.

CONTEXT / SITUATION

C

A
ATTITUDE

B
BEHAVIOUR

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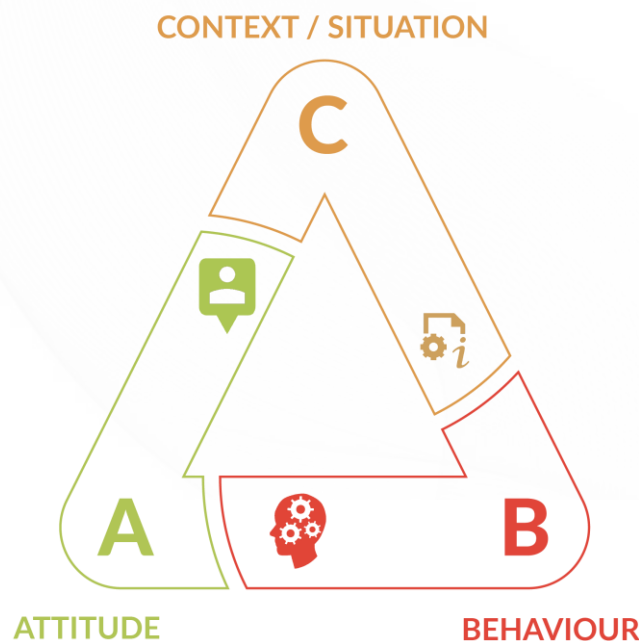
[3] Chris Roger Mitchell, Professor Emeritus of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Ph.D., 1966-71, University College, London.

The model provides an analytical lens looking at a situation consisting of dynamic inter-influencing in triad form where incompatibilities within the context (conflict situation) give rise to divergent attitudes and the interplay with violent **behaviour,** which in turn reinforces and vindicates prejudicial attitudes and perceptions. The change over time through this interaction: behaviour affects attitudes or attitudes change behaviour and vice versa, escalating violence and thus affecting the situation and the underlying social structure. At the same time, the focus on behaviours and attitudes invites change: changing a behaviour can change perceptions on the part of the opponent, whose changed behaviour can modify how his group is perceived, and so on, cyclically.

Using this model in dialogue helps categorise types of change in both aspects (attitudinal or behavioural), thus leading to the possibility of changing the conflict situation. For dialogue processes, understandably, this does not eliminate differences, but it will encourage positive changes that impact the formation of relationships in a wide variety of ways.
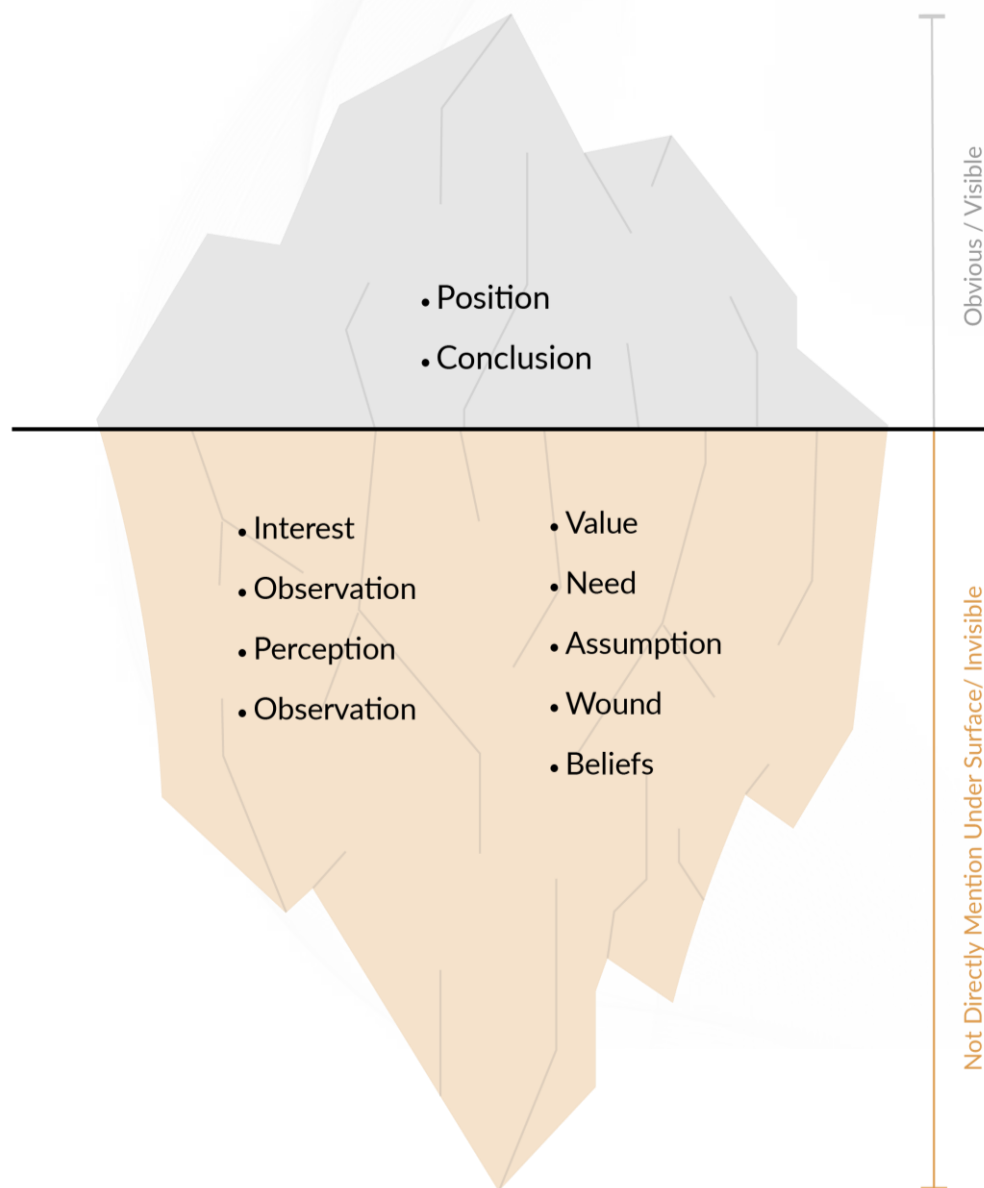
Practically, this analytical model can also help the dialogue facilitator at least two levels: 1) recognizing the dynamic interplay of attitudes and behaviours, including the emotional impacts underlying the different perspectives among the dialogue participants. For example, if someone says: "It is because they did this, that's why I did that," it means that there are underlying factors, related to the described behaviour and how the attitude leads to such reaction is worth exploring. 2) Helping the facilitator imagine possibilities for long-term transformation of the situation as a whole, as it takes only one of the two aspects, attitudinal or behavioural change, to begin a broader process of change. Dialogue processes would begin by building capacity for new behaviours, such as having better relationships and cooperation, and by sustaining these new positive behaviours, it would make an impact on the attitudinal change, and therefore the transformation process will also begin to take place.

At the same time, it is important not to overlook the aspect of context. In socio-political conflicts, there are often perceived injustices and imbalances between groups in the "objective" situation. There may be social or even legal discrimination, disagreements about borders and sovereignty, privilege legally attached to one religion, ethnicity, or language, and others kinds of inequities which are built into the situation, and which prompt attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence. For groups in conflict, not all the sources of conflict are within their power to change. This simple diagram can aid dialogue groups to see which problems can be attributed to people in the groups, and which may be caused by higher-level forces, whether national, regional, or international.

Iceberg Model

"The metaphor of an iceberg conveys the idea that, often, the visible characteristics of an entity or phenomenon are only a small portion of its totality, and that it is important to be aware of those aspects we cannot readily see".[4]

The iceberg model explains something very important for the dialogue facilitator: that as a skilled communicator, one must always pay close attention to what has not been directly said or seems unrelated; yet these are potentially the key to unlock misunderstandings and build trust.

- Position
- Conclusion

Obvious / Visible

- Interest
- Observation
- Perception
- Observation

- Value
- Need
- Assumption
- Wound
- Beliefs

Not Directly Mention Under Surface/ Invisible

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[4] Pruitt, B., and Thomas, P. *Democratic Dialogue: A handbook for Practitioner*. Trydells Tryckeri AB, 2007. Sweden.

We communicate with each other with shields to protect ourselves from vulnerability, because it is part of a natural defence mechanism embedded in our values, culture, and biology. Sometimes, people are not able to reveal their true thoughts or willing to change position because they feel there is no understanding of their needs and interests. Sometimes, when our position is to justify that we are right, at the same time our intention is to describe how the other is wrong. These factors make dialogue false and change difficult.

Dialogue is less meaningful when we are unable to deepen the conversations by exploring real conditions beneath the surface. By merely scraping the surface, we make the conversation less real and therefore less interesting. Then quantity can become the priority, so we tend to rush the discussion on many subjects, just to create the feeling that we have achieved something significant.

How can we create dialogue in settings where people may not have initially been willing to engage? Broaden the dialogue process to include more people? In his book "The Art of Thinking Together", William Isaacs discussed **three levels of action in a dialogue**[5] that address three fundamental levels of human interaction.

1.   Produce coherent actions. One of the more puzzling things about our species is that we sometimes live in folly: We do things we do not intend. You may have noticed this about yourself. A dialogic approach requires that we learn to be aware of the contradictions between what we say and what we do. Dialogue requires that we learn four new behaviours to overcome these limits. Developing the **capacity for new behaviour** puts us in a position to resolve incoherence and produce the effects we intend.

2.   Create fluid structures of interaction. Human beings do not always see the forces that are operating below the surface of their conversations. As individuals, people to misread both what others are doing

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5 Isaacs, W. The Art of Thinking Together. Doubleday, 1999, pp. 29-31. New York.

and the impact that they themselves are likely to have on others. In groups and organizations, it leads people continuously to find that efforts to make change are neutralised by other, well-intentioned individuals who have very different goals and ways of seeing the world. It is possible to develop an intuitive understanding of the nature of these forces, and to develop ways of anticipating and managing them. We can develop **"predictive intuition".** Predictive intuition is the ability to see these forces more clearly, enabling us to liberate stuck structures of interaction, free energy, and promote a more fluid means of thinking and working together.

3. Provide wholesome space for dialogue. What is often missed when people try to create dialogue is that our conversations take place in an envelope or atmosphere that greatly influences how we think and act. The space from which people come greatly influences their quality of insight, clarity of thought, and depth of feeling. This space is composed of the habits of thought and quality of attention that people bring to any interaction. By becoming more conscious of the **architecture of the invisible atmosphere** in our conversations, we may have a profound effect on our worlds.

Theories of Change (Common Strategies To Affect "Peace Writ Large")[6]

The cells on the matrix are operating on a theory about how change (or peace) comes about. For example, activities concentrating on achieving peace may be reflecting this strategy or assumption: "Engaging political leaders in the negotiation process will result in a comprehensive peace agreement, a crucial ingredient of peace." However, other activities which focus on grassroots community may be reflecting: "Achieving reconciliation at the community level, sustainable peace will prevail." The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) matrix can be used to explore and test the Theories of Change underlying our program choices and strategies.

RPP is used for promoting change in "peace writ large," that is, full peace in all parts of our society. It is represented by a simple, four-cell matrix describing the basic approaches and levels of peace activities. This is also applicable for dialogue projects, which strategically try to engage change through impacting on either key people or more people or perhaps both.

➲ "More people" approaches aim to engage large number of people in actions to promote peace. Practitioners who take this approach believe that peace can only be built if many people become active in the process, i.e. if there is broad involvement of "the people" in political dialogue.

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[6] "Reflecting on Peace Practice Project 2004." CDA_Collaborative Learning Projects, www.cdainc.com.

◐ "Key people" approaches focus on involving particular people, or groups of people, deemed critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict because of their leverage or their roles. "Key" people may be political leaders, warlords, or others necessary to a peace agreement.

As the rows of the matrix show, RPP also found that activities may work at two basic levels: the individual/personal level and/or the socio-political level.

◐ Programs that work at the individual/personal level seek to change the attitudes, values, perceptions or behaviours of individuals, in the belief that peace is possible only if the hearts, minds and behaviour of individuals – of people – are changed.

◐ Programs that concentrate at the socio-political level are based on the belief that peace requires changes in socio-political, or institutional, structures and cultures. These programs aim to support the creation or reform of institutions that address the grievances that fuel conflict and those which can institutionalise non-violent modes of handling conflict within society.
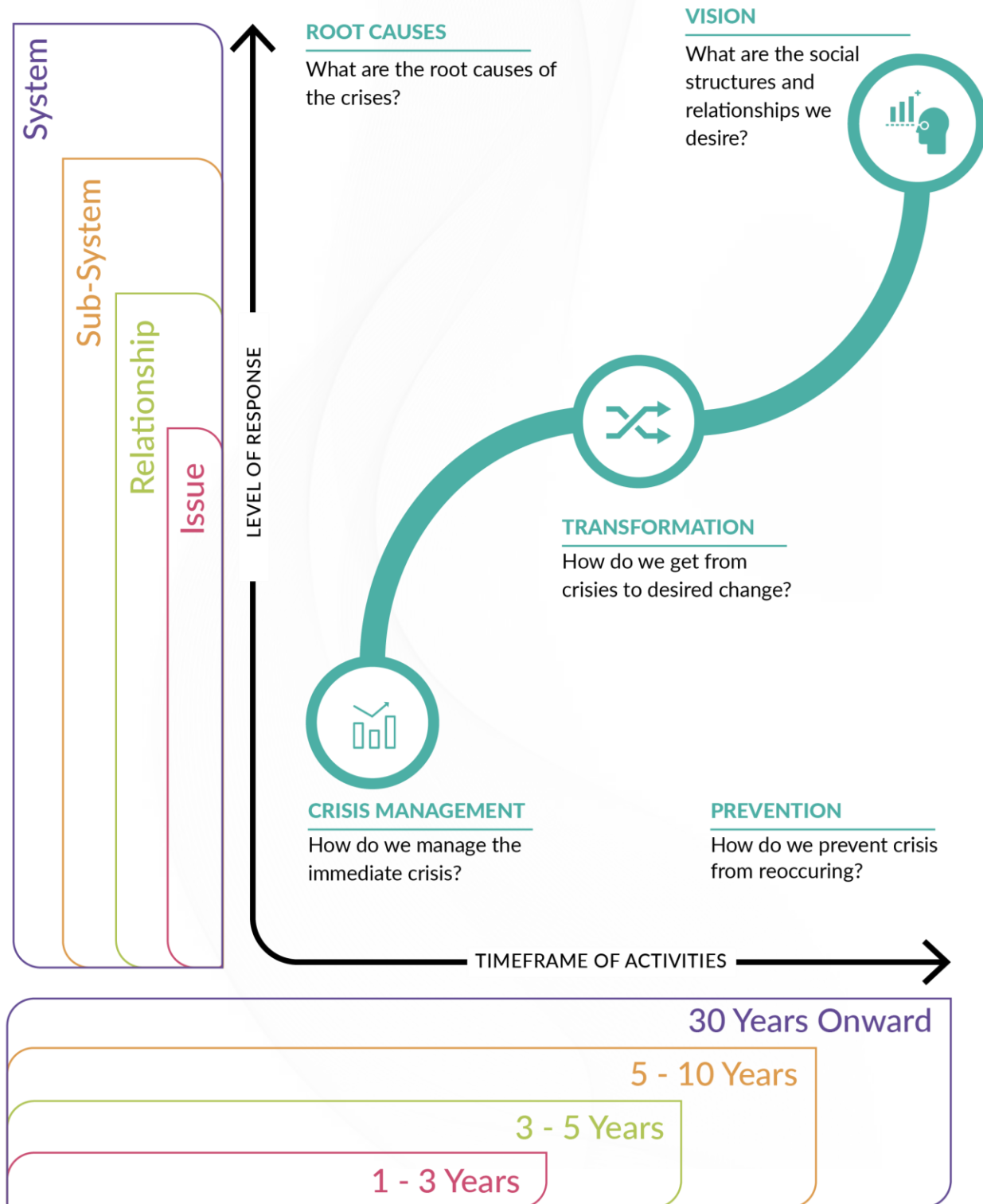
An Integrated Framework for Peacebuilding[7]

A peace researcher and theorist, Maire Dugan has developed what she calls a "nested paradigm" as a mechanism for considering both the narrower and the broader aspects of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This paradigm explains how a particular issue is to be resolved and also a relationship that needed to be addressed. In this case, the issue would be embedded within a relationship that needed to be reconciled. From practitioners' experience in Asia, the paradigm also can be explained in another way. Addressing the issue is creating a new relationship which leads to developing subsystem (informal system) and when the subsystem becomes a generally accepted norm for interaction, it becomes a platform for a formal system change to occur. For example: In Myanmar, violent conflicts for decades is the **issue** that comes to the point where conflicting parties begin to see there is no hope to achieve their goal through armed struggle. Then they decide to sit down and negotiate peace instead. This new **relationship** begins in the early stage of the peace process. When they reach a ceasefire agreement, it mitigates as a sort of **subsystem** where parties feel obliged to refrain from military activities according to the terms of agreement. That development pauses the confrontation of armed conflict that allows space for political dialogue and then political negotiation. The eventual political settlement formulates an acceptable constitution that in itself becomes a new **system** for the whole country.

The nested paradigm underscores the need to look consistently at the broader context of systemic issues. People need to feel that their grievances have been understood, but, if we remain at the level of events and local issues, we can spend all our time attacking each other. The nested paradigm suggests that, at the subsystem level, our actions must connect immediate **issues** to the broader **systems** in which they operate. Activities should be focused on different timeframes in correlation to the levels of response, e.g. immediate short term activities such as crisis management, and addressing root causes of crisis responding to the **issue and relationship level**; medium term activities such as conflict transformation, moving from crisis to desired changes responding at the **subsystem level**; and long-term activities, such working to prevent crisis from recurring, modifying institutions toward justice and fairness, and building future shared visions to respond at the **system level.**

Dialogue can turn issues into new a positive relationship by building trust, exploring common ground and encouraging more participation, contributing to developing formal systems that satisfy people at all societal levels. We can see the big picture. Dialogue projects are part of the peace infrastructure, so that they can be sure about their position to help strengthen in short, medium and long-term peacebuilding efforts.

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[7] Lederach, J. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. US Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

System

Sub-System

Relationship

Issue

LEVEL OF RESPONSE

ROOT CAUSES
What are the root causes of the crises?

VISION
What are the social structures and relationships we desire?

TRANSFORMATION
How do we get from crisies to desired change?

CRISIS MANAGEMENT
How do we manage the immediate crisis?

PREVENTION
How do we prevent crisis from reoccuring?

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITIES

30 Years Onward

5 - 10 Years

3 - 5 Years

1 - 3 Years

Adapted from The Nested Paradigm of Conflict Foci. Source: Maire Dugan, "A Nested Theory of Conflict," Women in Leadership 1, no. 1 (Summer 1996)

1.6. The Difference Between Dialogue and Other Conflict Management Processes

Dialogue and Deliberation

It is very important that a dialogue facilitator believes in a dialogue approach, not merely seeing it as the last option that people must try. Dialogue can always bring something positive, if we do it right by managing to reach a deeper level, which is deliberation. Trust and confidence are not static elements, but evolve through the dialogue process. When people begin to observe real progress happening, their trust and confidence is more likely increased. There may grow a deeper level dialogue - deliberation, which develops from understanding into consideration of the deep issues in the conflict.

The followings are the differences between Dialogue and Deliberation:

☞ **Dialogue:**

Open-ended discussion that builds trust and understanding

In a dialogue circle, people are free to speak honestly and disagree respectfully. They are encouraged to consider different points of view but they are not required to reach consensus. Looking at a range of viewpoints can help people overcome a history of conflict, work out their differences, find areas of common concern, and come up with solutions together.

☞ **Deliberation:**

Careful consideration of complex issues

When participants move from dialogue to deliberation, they explore the complexity of the issues and the trade-offs that are necessary to make progress, and they see these issues from the perspective of others as well as themselves. As people consider a range of solutions, they are more likely to come up with action ideas and strategies that make sense in their community, while addressing the needs of others. The facilitator plays a key role in making these discussions productive.

Be aware and sensitive of nonverbal communication

In the beginning of a process, face-to-face conversation can help to build trust, though in some cultures trust must be established before face-to-face communication is acceptable. Direct communication provides direct interaction using more communication channels including non-verbal channels (voice, tone, body language) that offer more opportunities for fostering trust and relationships. When the participants are ready to initiate dialogue conversation:

- The facilitator should be prepared to adjust methods of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, by observing reactions from the participants.

- Check for body language that marks emotions, e.g. rage or anger, worries or discomfort… The facilitator has to consider addressing them early on. These emotions may be triggered unintentionally, and may depend on history, perceptions, and narratives, so directly pointing them out may not be the best way to address them. It may be helpful for the facilitator to schedule a session in which participants can "tell their stories" about the past, and hear how others experienced and understood past actions.

An environment in which dialogue participants can feel comfortable talking and listening openly is an important aspect of how dialogue processes contribute to change. Therefore, small adjustment that can be made earlier on may be important. People feel 'safe' in this way when they are comfortable on all three dimensions as discussed above. They feel respected and valued. They feel they are entering into 'conversations that matter', and they understand and trust the process. Effective facilitation can be an important part of achieving a safe space, but by itself it is not always enough. The physical setting in which dialogue events take place and the quality of logistical support can help determine how comfortable, welcomed and relaxed people feel, while clear ground rules can provide them with a sense of confidence about what they can expect from the process.

The facilitators are also responsible for what happens "inside" a dialogue. They help participants…

- ✓ Speak honestly and listen to others with respect.
- ✓ Build trust across differences.
- ✓ Explore a range of viewpoints on the issue.
- ✓ Explore a range of approaches to address the issue.
- ✓ Explore disagreements and identify areas of common ground.
- ✓ Develop action ideas to make progress on the issue.
- ✓ Think about how they might help implement solutions.
- ✓ Understand how their work connects to the larger community effort.

Facilitators inspire confidence in their leadership

Dialogue requires a facilitator to guide the dialogue and where to take the conversation to the next steps. For much of the time, participants may be so engrossed in the exchanges that they lose track of the larger flow of the dialogue process. On occasions where the group's attention is drawn to the process, it is important that the facilitator appears capable of helping the group to move forward. The group must feel that it can trust the facilitator's judgment, and that the facilitator trusts her/his own judgment and trusts the dialogue group as well.

Natural charisma to inspire confidence in others is useful in the facilitator's role as the leader on the journey. S/he will need to be thoughtful and consultative about which topics and comments are important to pursue, and which are not. A personality that inspires trust certainly helps create an atmosphere that people feel safe and productive. In the long run, however, personality-based trust will not be enough. Participants must come to understand and trust the process, in order to be able to say and hear the hard truths about the conflict situation.

Dialogue Facilitation

The key features of dialogue facilitation are the same as for mediation. However, dialogue facilitation represents a distinct approach insofar as it is a more open-ended communication process between different points of view in order to foster mutual understanding, recognition, empathy and trust. These can be one-off conversations or sustained over a longer period of time. Although dialogues can lead to very concrete decisions and actions, the primary aim is not to reach a specific settlement, but to gain a better understanding of the different perspectives involved in a conflict.

Part **02**

Design, Planning and Preparation

One of the keys to dialogue success and also a big challenge to any dialogue is having an "effective strategy for continuity". That may not within a given mandate of the facilitator, sometimes it is important to be aware of this crucial element, so s/he can help parties or groups or stakeholders start thinking about it; even better come to some sort of agreement how they can sustain the dialogue for an appropriate length of time. However, we do not want to be prescriptive about it as every situation is deferent and should leave stakeholders to work it out themselves. To have something done about "continuity strategy" prior actual dialogue started can become a big step for the whole dialogue process.

2.1. Steps in the Dialogue Process

It can be helpful to think of a dialogue as being made up of three distinct stages, the **Opening,** the **Middle** and the **Closing.** In many cases, a dialogue process consists of several face-to-face encounters. Each encounter would need to have its own opening, middle and closing. And the process may circle around, beginning again when there are new participants or new topics. Some dialogue processes continue for months or years, in which the facilitator will need to assist the group to remember or learn the "institutional history" of the process. In this sense, a dialogue process is dynamic and organic.

An effective dialogue needs to be well-planned and organised and so the period **Before** a dialogue begins is as important as the dialogue itself. This part of the dialogue process includes the Design, Planning and Preparation and will be dealt with separately in the sections that follow.

Sometimes a dialogue can also include outcomes or agreements that need follow-up to ensure they are properly implemented. Even when there is no specific outcome, a dialogue also affects people, beginning a process of relationship-building or leaving people feeling fired-up or excited about the future, or disappointed that there is no follow-up. This kind of dialogue also requires some work to be done After the face-to-face encounter is over, which includes follow-up Communication, Reflection and Monitoring.

A Dialogue Process

During the dialogue itself, each of the Opening, Middle and Closing stages has a distinctly different approach.

☞ **Opening**

The Opening of the dialogue is also referred to as the Eliciting Stage of the Dialogue. The Opening follows a basic process that contains the following elements:

⮑ Welcome and introductions

⮑ Establishing Norms, Values and Common Agreements on how the dialogue will be conducted

⮑ Agreeing on the timing for the dialogue

⮑ Reassuring participants if there are any concerns

⮑ Framing the dialogue

⮑ Asking opening questions or inviting opening comments

⮑ Drawing out the various perspectives in the group

⮑ Building trust and confidence in the process and in the facilitation team

⮑ Building relationships

☞ **Middle**

The Middle of the dialogue is primarily about exploring some of the issues and perspectives that have been raised during the Opening. The following elements would be part of the Middle Stage of a Dialogue.

⮑ Summarizing perspectives, differences and similarities

⮑ Tracking the issues that have emerged

⮑ Analysing the issues, and thinking critically about them

⮑ Managing tensions as they arise during the dialogue

⮑ Going deeper in an effort to get to the roots of the differences

⮑ Strengthening the common ground

⮑ Helping people feel heard and understood by asking clarifying questions and reframing

⮑ Affirming and validating the contributions

⮑ Synthesizing contributions

➲ Managing the time and ensuring there is sufficient space within the agreed time-frame to bring the dialogue to a healthy conclusion

☞ **Ending**

To ensure that participants are able to draw out the insights and learning that have arisen during the dialogue, and to clarify and summarise whatever areas of agreement and difference have emerged, it is important to ensure that every dialogue has a distinct Ending.

The Ending of a dialogue is essentially about focusing on what has happened during the dialogue. The ending gives the facilitator a chance to ensure the dialogue process ends with a sense of purpose. It would typically include the following elements:

➲ Highlighting similarities

➲ Acknowledging differences

➲ Summarising

➲ Setting out the different issues that have arisen

➲ Categorising the insights and agreements and areas of disagreement that have emerged

➲ Validating the outcomes, including any agreements that have been reached

➲ Establishing next steps and the way forward

➲ WHO, WHAT, WHEN

2.2. Design and Planning

The design of a dialogue is about thinking in advance about what may happen and what you can do as a facilitator to help the process and the participants achieve their objectives.

Design is separate from the practical preparations that need to be made. Taking time to think through the design and discuss it amongst your team and with your co-facilitators can build your confidence and help you to make better decisions when you are 'thinking on your feet' in front of a group of people. Keep in mind that you will need to re-check your design at frequent intervals, or re-design it, to take into account what is developing in the process. The participants in the dialogue are not your servants; you are theirs.

Elements of Design

Design includes a number of important elements:

☞ **Clarifying and establishing the purpose and objectives of the Dialogue**

Knowing what those involved are doing the dialogue for, what they hope to get out of it, and what you hope the participants will get out of it, is the starting point of the design process. The process cannot be built in your head; you will need some sort of reference persons who know the participants better than you do, and from different angles, in order to design a process, for them and then with them. At every step, check that you are listening carefully, and note whether participants are listening to each other.

In addition to the more technical or formal written objectives for the dialogue, it is important also to remember the underlying purposes that accompany every dialogue. These include: increased trust, confidence and relationships, as well as the potential for building confidence in the dialogue approach.

☞ **Clarifying what outcomes are expected or hoped for**

Being realistic about what can be achieved, and being clear on how these achievements will be presented back to participants at the end of the process, are also important. An outcome does not have to be an agreement or a commitment to any future action, though sometimes this is needed. It can include the softer elements of building relationships and trust, or simply an acknowledgement of the value of dialogue and the willingness to keep trying a dialogue approach in trying to resolve differences in the future.

☞ Design of the overall process of the dialogue

It is helpful to think first about the overall process, before getting into the details of particular stages. Keep in mind the overall situation: How do the participants relate to each other now, how do they behave and feel toward each other, and what do they hope and fear? Think about the stages to go through, and which aspects of the purpose and objectives will be achieved at each stage. Think about how long you will have for each dialogue session, and how the dialogue will include an opening, middle and a closing.

☞ Thinking through the stages of the dialogue and the sub-objectives within each stage

As you build on your thinking about the overall process, keep checking back with your reference group or the representatives of the participant groups, to ensure that you understand what is needed and what is realistically possible. It should be possible to arrive at a tentative outline of the likely stages. You may even be able to begin to develop sub-objectives for each stage. What is the intention and purpose of the opening, what are you trying to achieve? How will you encourage people to explore the issues during the middle stage? How deep are you hoping the discussion will go, how will you separate the different issues that emerge? How will you ensure that the group focuses on exploring specific issues, and how will you make sure that those issues that emerge that cannot be discussed in detail do not get lost? How will each session wrap up, including participants' wrap-ups and your own? What will you be trying to achieve during the closing?

☞ Establishing the questions and inputs that will be required at each stage

Think in advance about questions you can ask to probe and stimulate the dialogue. Such questions may arise naturally from the group, which is ideal. If not, how can you acknowledge where the group is right now, and where it might go next? Where might it be helpful to give people information? What are the different questions that can be asked at each stage? How will these questions keep the process flowing and move the dialogue closer to achieving its overall objectives?

☞ Visualisation

This is about going through in your mind what you expect each of the stages of the dialogue to look like. Picture yourself in the room in front of a group of participants. How will you begin? What will happen next? How will the participants respond? How will you respond to them? How will you move the process from an opening into a space for exploring? How will you begin to move the discussion to closing? Creating a visual image in your mind in advance of the dialogue, in as much detail as you can, with as many variations as possible, will help you when the real dialogue begins. You may want to think of this as "scenario-building." What might happen, and what options can you imagine then? You can't anticipate everything, and may not be able to remember everything you visualised, and unexpected things will always happen, but you will be more confident of some options you have thought out..

☞ Anticipation

Thinking through what you hope will happen and what might go differently at each stage is also valuable. Anticipating problems in advance, thinking through the difficult issues that will arise during the dialogue and planning how you will manage these problems and difficulties should form part of your design and preparation. Keep in mind that the unexpected is not necessarily a problem. It may be a gift.

2.3. Preparation

Preparation includes going through the checklist of things that need to be organised. You probably won't be responsible to do everything, but you'll want to check that it all gets done. This includes:

- ➲ Work on all of the logistics that will need to be put in place
- ➲ Has the venue been organised, is it suitable for the dialogue you have in mind?
- ➲ Do arrangements need to be made for transport and accommodation?
- ➲ Has attention been paid to the layout of the room, including seating arrangements?
- ➲ Do you have all of the materials you may need, including flip chart stands and writing materials?
- ➲ Is everybody aware of the starting time and the date?
- ➲ Have people been properly invited and reminded?

Working with the organising teams to ensure that everything is prepared well in advance is part of your job as a facilitator. You may not be directly involved in the details of making sure the logistics are all properly taken care of but you should be as aware as possible in advance. This includes having a good idea of who the participants will be and how the announcement and invitation to the dialogue has been communicated.

Communicating with participants directly or through the organising team is critical in terms of ensuring that confidence in the value of the dialogue is being built right from the beginning. Communications should be guided by the same values and principles that you will be trying to instil during the dialogue process.

Preparing any reading materials or background information that would be helpful to the discussion can also be useful. Background reading materials can be provided to participants in the dialogue in advance of the process, or made available during the process to inform and clarify issues.

Research and reading of relevant materials is also part of the preparation for an effective dialogue facilitator. While you do not have to be an expert in the subject of the dialogue, you will need to know enough to be able to respond sensibly to the flow of the dialogue and to understand what is being discussed.

REMEMBERING AT ALL STAGES TO MAINTAIN FOCUS AND AWARENESS OF PEOPLE – PROCESS – PURPOSE				
BEFORE	**OPENING**	**MIDDLE**	**ENDING**	**AFTERWARD**
PLANNING • Clarifying and establishing the **purpose and objectives** of the Dialogue. • **Clarifying what outcomes** are expected or hoped for. • **Design of the overall process** of the dialogue. • **Thinking through the stages** of the dialogue and the **sub-objectives** within each stage • **Establishing the questions and inputs** that may be required at each stage • **Visualisation** – going through in your mind what you expect each of the stages of the dialogue to look like • **Anticipation** – thinking through what you hope will happen, what might go wrong, and possible options **PREPARATION** • Ensuring that all the **logistics** are put in place – venue, transport, layout of seating arrangements, etc. • **Working with the organising teams** to ensure everything is prepared well in advance • **Communicating** with participants directly or through the organising team • **Preparing any reading materials** or background information that would be helpful • **Research and reading** of relevant materials	**ELICITING** • Welcome and introductions **Establishing Norms, Values and Common Agreements** on how the dialogue will be conducted • **Agreeing on the timing** for the dialogue **Reassuring** participants if there are any concerns • **Framing** the dialogue Asking **opening questions** or inviting opening comments **Drawing out** various perspectives in the group • **Building trust and confidence** in the process, in the facilitation team, and among participants • **Building relationships** among participants	**EXPLORING** • **Summarising** perspectives, differences and similarities. **Encouraging the group** to track the issues that have emerged • **Analysing** the issues and thinking critically about them along with the group • **Managing tensions** as they arise during the dialogue ●**Going deeper** in an effort to get to the roots of the differences • **Strengthening** the common ground • Encouraging group to ask **clarifying questions and reframe comments** so everyone feels they've been heard • **Affirming and Validating** the contributions **Synthesising** contributions • **Managing the time** and ensuring there is sufficient to bring the dialogue to a healthy conclusion	**FOCUSING** • **Highlighting** similarities • **Acknowledging** differences • **Summarising, Sorting,** • **Categorising, Validating** the outcomes, including any agreements that have been reached • Establishing **next steps** and the way forward • **WHO, WHAT, WHEN**	**FOLLOW-UP** • **Communicating** the outcomes to all participants and relevant interested stakeholders • **Reflecting** on the dialogue with the rest of the facilitation team and with participants and pulling out insights and learnings • **Monitoring** the implementation of any outcomes or actionable next steps

2.4. Facilitation as both Art and Science

An effective dialogue facilitator needs to think of their facilitation role as being both an art and a science. Beyond the technical skills outlined in this handbook, a facilitator also needs to be conscious and in touch with their own emotions. A facilitator needs to be aware of their prejudices and the way in which they respond internally to the views and perspectives that are shared, especially those that differ from their own.

A facilitator also needs to be aware of and understand the dynamics between people in the dialogue, and able to read the body language of the group and able to tap into and feel the mood and energy of the group. This deeper understanding of what is going on between the people in the group and the heightened sense of self-awareness can be helpful in trying to keep the dialogue process flowing.

This softer side of facilitation is not just about being sensitive, but also thinking about why the dynamics in the room are changing, being able to analyse and understand the reasons underlying the tensions, dynamics and changing connections between people in the room.

Focusing on people, and being able to put yourself into the shoes of people that are different from you, and seeing things from their perspective, can assist a dialogue facilitator to make connections between people and link ideas and perspectives they are sharing. A dialogue facilitator needs to constantly be asking themselves: "How are people seeing things differently on this issue?", "Why are they seeing things in the way that they are?". Modelling this behaviour explicitly can encourage the group to do it, too.

While each dialogue will have its own purpose and objectives, every dialogue will have at its core the goal of trying to build stronger, healthier relationships between people. These stronger, healthier relationships are built around the deeper shared understanding of different views and perspectives that emerge during the dialogue process. The dialogue facilitator is essentially a nurturer of healthier relationships between people, using the safe space of the dialogue process to encourage people to hear each other and learn from each other, not just to listen or talk.

This is especially important in a context where people are emerging from war and violence. The role of dialogue is to rebuild relationships that are full of hate, competition and jealousy and replace these relationships with something positive where people recognise the commonalities between them and begin to imagine a shared future together.

2.5. Understanding Power

Building healthier relationships between people also means being aware of the power dynamics in a group. Being aware of power means observing and analysing the sources of power in the group, and being conscious of the power differences between people, and how people use the power that they have.

Power can come from many different sources, including knowledge, information and confidence in your ideas. But traditionally gender, age, status and wealth dominate the power differences between people. Because power often comes with rank and privilege, people who are powerful often interrupt the flow of a dialogue, dominating discussions or intimidating people who lack the confidence to participate.

The use of power has a big effect on the flow of a dialogue process, and the extent to which people learn from and understand each other. Your role as a facilitator is to balance the power and try to ensure that power differences between people don't undermine the principles of effective dialogue. It's okay for some people in the group to have more power than others, but they can be encouraged to use their power to influence the process in a positive way. Part of your job is to analyse and understand these dynamics and ask yourself, "Are they blocking the river from flowing?" If yes, you need to do something about it.

So, essentially, at the core of your awareness as a dialogue facilitator is your ongoing focus on the people in the room, the relationships between them and the power dynamics within those relationships. People-Power-Relationships is the triangle at the centre of understanding dialogue. Listening-Learning-Understanding the three processes run alongside each other.

2.6. Dialogue and Transformation

Of course, dialogue is also a contribution to wider and deeper processes of building peace and transforming society. This makes the element of change a central part of what you hope will result from a dialogue process. Of course, dialogue in and of itself cannot change some of the systems, structures and institutions in society. But there are changes that accompany listening, learning and understanding that deeply affect the participants involved in an effective dialogue process. These include shifts in mindsets and changes in attitude, as well as the relationship changes that can take place when people really hear each other. People grow because they are affected by what happens; what people hear and how they feel influence their attitudes and mindsets. Sometimes, people hear perspectives that they haven't heard before and that leads to a shift in thinking, or they feel the emotions of the people around them and that leads to a change. But this only happens if people are listening to each other, and if they feel that others are hearing them when they speak.

That's why we pay so much attention to creating a space where power and relationships are managed. Listening and learning from each other is what leads to change at the individual level, and it is changes at the individual level that enable groups of people to work together on navigating the complex challenges in any context.

Dialogue should give people new ways of looking at themselves, new ways of looking at and relating to other people, and new ways of thinking about the topics being discussed. But it's also about trying to get people to develop new attitudes: to decrease suspicion that they have between them, to have more tolerance for each other and to acknowledge the feelings of others in the group. It is this aspect of dialogue that makes it so important to be comfortable recognizing and acknowledging emotions in a group. That's why we spend so much time talking about emotions, and what the group is feeling.

Good dialogue is not just when people treat each other sweetly and are polite. An authentic process needs to have lots of emotions, and it must be resilient enough to withstand hard truths. But attitudes don't change quickly or easily. It is not often that a single dialogue leads to a change in attitude, even in an individual. Attitudes change over time, and systems even more slowly. So when we think of dialogue, it's not a one-off event, but part of a long-term process of interacting and engaging with different people. And the dialogue itself has impact when it influences long-term processes of social change that lead to a just and peaceful society.

2.7. Trust and Confidence Building

If you're in a room full of people in a conflict, trust doesn't come easily. Their history may include pain, suffering, prejudice, unfair treatment at each other's hands. As a facilitator, you know that you want people to trust each other, but you also know that's a difficult thing to do. So how do you begin building trust amongst the people in the group?

- ➲ Focus on relationships - Deeper relationships mean healthier relationships and more trust.

- ➲ Follow through on what you agreed to do.

- ➲ Building trust needs to start with you as the facilitator. If you can build trust with the group, trust in your abilities as a facilitator and in the process that is outlined in the Opening of a dialogue, then you create the conditions for more trust to be built between the participants. But trust in you is not enough; they must find a way to trust each other, at least somewhat.

- ➲ Building trust is different based on who is in the group and what you are trying to have a dialogue about.

- ➲ Trust building needs to begin before you enter the dialogue as a facilitator. It needs to be part of planning and preparation, asking yourself: What can I do to help the people involved trust me and each other more?

- ➲ People won't trust you right away. Initially people may be suspicious of you, wondering about your motives and intentions. You may need to reveal more about who you are, who funds your work, and whether you have a vested interest in the issues of the dialogue.

- ➲ People might also be nervous or uncertain about what to expect, from you, from the process, and from the other participants. Trust may be built slowly, as people learn to know each other better.

- ➲ Building confidence in the process is also a big part of creating the right conditions for trust- building. People need to believe that the journey you will be taking them on will be affirming and safe and valuable and that you will be able to move things forward.

- ➲ Building confidence in the process includes telling people about what you've planned, and taking them through an outline of the process. This step of outlining the process will make it easier for people to trust you and for them to trust each other.

- ➲ There is also a connection between preparation and confidence. If your facilitation team has done enough to prepare properly for the dialogue, you will be more confident and this will come across to the group you are working with.

- ➲ As you concentrate on preparing the facilitation of the process, you can also look for ways to help the group members prepare themselves. This is a dialogue process, not a single meeting, so what can they do between now and the next meeting that may help them understand or accept what is happening?

Background readings may help, including not only history or analysis, but also literature or art or films that may help them understand how others have experienced their situation.

‣ It can be helpful sometimes to begin a succeeding session with a reflection on what has happened so far. This also gives the process a sense of movement in a direction toward something. It is easy to take for granted what has already been done, and not notice how far you have come.

2.8. What can be expected from a dialogue:

Dialogue is a non-threatening approach to problem solving, anyone should enter into a dialogue without having pressure that he/she has to agree to something s/he does not want to or has to compromise with the other side. Therefore, the real expectations of a dialogue can be ranging from:

1. People get a chance to talk to and hear from each other, at the end there is nothing has changed

2. If it is fortunate, together, they (dialoguers) are able to identify common ground or find clear focus for further dialogues

3. If it is lucky, they have developed opportunity to negotiate an agreement or having a joined plan of actions to address their joined problem

Most importantly, any positive thing come out from the dialogue process is counted. Even how small it is, a skilled facilitator should do very best to maximise on that.

Characteristics and Techniques

3.1. Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator

As dialogue facilitators, it is our role to create a space in which people feel safe to talk openly about issues that are relevant to them. By sharing their own thoughts, and listening to those of the others in the room, people should feel connected to each other and committed to the common objectives of the dialogue.

What are some qualities that we can seek to develop in order to help us create and maintain spaces like these? Drawing from our discussions during the trainings, here are ten characteristics of an effective facilitator.

Being Confident in Ourselves

When we can show the group that we are self-assured and comfortable in our own skin, the group feels more comfortable as well. They can trust us more easily when they see that we trust ourselves. Confidence does not mean knowing all the answers. It means not being anxious when we don't have the answers – trusting that we have the collective potential to handle even challenging situations.

Being Perceptive

In order for us to be effective facilitators, we need to keep our eyes and ears wide open. We should be carefully observing the faces and body language of the people participating in the dialogue to get a better sense of what they are thinking and feeling – consciously and unconsciously. We should also be listening intently when they are talking, not just to understand what they are saying, but to also understand what they are not saying. Paying close attention to these things allows us to empathise with people in the group better, and tells us how best we can keep the dialogue meaningful and relevant to the people involved.

We should also be looking for indicators that tell us the power dynamics at play. Noticing how people interact with each other, and addressing imbalances in power is crucial in ensuring that the dialogue is truly inclusive.

Empowering the Group

A large part of the group dynamics in the dialogue is the way that people respond to us, as facilitators. People are mostly used to one or two people taking charge in a group, and they tend to treat these people as more important, intelligent and wise. We should be very careful to ensure that we are not given more power than the rest of the people in the group, simply because we are playing the role of facilitator.

We need to take conscious steps to empower the group to trust themselves, and believe in their own decisions. We can do this by reminding ourselves and reminding them about our role – we are not here to control or direct them, but to help them listen to each other. This is why it is important for us to not impose our views on the group, and listen to inputs from others and validate and affirm them. We can balance out our disproportionate power by remembering to be friendly, helpful, approachable and humble.

Having Enough Knowledge

We do not need to be experts on the subject matter of the dialogue. As a facilitator, our role is not to influence the content of the dialogue, but to pay attention to the dialogue process, and ensure that people are listening to each other and are feeling heard. However, it is always useful to have some basic background knowledge or experience with the subject matter. This is because it better enables us to empathise with members of the group on certain substantive issues, and use that knowledge to draw the group out.

In addition to this, it is also helpful to have some knowledge about the cultural context of the group. Understanding and being sensitive to the cultural norms of individuals in the group will help us relate to them and build trust with them more effectively.

Being "Multi-Partial"

While facilitating a dialogue, it is natural for us to agree with some people, and disagree with others. We sometimes like some participants more than others, and might have more in common with a few people. We should remember to not let these inclinations affect our capacity to treat everybody equally, and continue to play our role in maintaining the dialogue as an open and inclusive space.

This is very challenging. We are often not conscious of our own actions. Even if we believe we are treating everyone equally, we sometimes show our hidden biases and assumptions as we are facilitating. In an attempt to curb this, we risk trying to be impartial – distancing ourselves from all the participants equally, so we don't mistakenly show a bias. However, creating a distance is counter-productive to building trust and comfort between the people in the group and us. If we are interested in genuinely connecting with the group, and encouraging them to connect with each other in the same way, we should not be forcing ourselves to maintain a safe distance from them.

We also sometimes try to be neutral – project to the group that we see all viewpoints as equally valid, and not value any one over the other. But we are never going to be completely neutral – even as facilitators, we are committed and passionate about certain values and principles. We would be lying to ourselves, and everyone else if we projected ourselves as neutrals. So what should we do instead?

One approach, as suggested by Franciso Diez, a dialogue facilitator working in Latin America, is the term multi-partiality. According to him, we can consciously create closeness and trust with the group and be transparent about our own values and principles. They should know about us, but also be assured that our positions will not affect our capacity to facilitate effectively.[8]

☞ **Being Self-Aware**

When we are facilitating a group, we are making ourselves completely vulnerable to them. Consciously or unconsciously, our every action is influencing the way they feel and interact with each other. Because of this, we need to work towards understanding ourselves at a deep level, and knowing the way we make people feel. This is especially true when we are working with groups that do not see eye-to-eye, or have difficult or contentious relationships. Being aware of our own vulnerabilities and triggers is helpful, so that we can find ways to be present and available to the group, even when tensions are high.

Becoming more self-aware is also important because it helps us stay multi-partial. We need to become more conscious of our hidden biases and prejudices so that we can overcome them, or at the very least, not allow them to affect our facilitation.

☞ **Being Patient**

Dialogue is a long-term process. Listening, learning and growing take time. We need to be patient about the impact we are hoping dialogue will have in the groups that we are working with.

We also need to be patient while we are facilitating. We should constantly be reminding ourselves about how difficult dialogue truly is for the people participating in it. It will often be the case that people in the group will revert to old positions, demonstrate confrontational behaviour and refuse to listen to each other. This is normal. We cannot lose hope or patience with people when this happens.

Being Flexible and Responsive

As we discussed earlier, when we design a dialogue process, we are drawing on our existing knowledge of the group, and visualizing how best we can help the group connect with the purpose of the dialogue and with each other. As we are facilitating, we should be open to the idea that the needs of the group could be different from those that we imagined as we were designing the process. If we see this happening, it would not be very helpful for us to continue moving the group through a process that is not relevant to them. We need to be flexible in our

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[8] International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*, p.112-113.

facilitation to accommodate unexpected changes in our environment and in the group. Our facilitation should be based on responding to the needs of the group.

Modelling and Encouraging Reflection

In a dialogue, we should be encouraging the group to listen to each other at a deep level. This is what will help them understand each other in new and constructive ways. In order to do this, we need to show them how to challenge their own positions and critically reflect on the way they understand themselves, each other and the context that they are in. This is no easy task. Part of our challenge as facilitators is to create a space where people feel safe and comfortable enough to do this openly, and support each other in doing so. From the time we first meet the group, we should be modelling this attitude of seeking depth, and challenging ourselves.

Developing our capacity to reflect is valuable for another very important reason. The more we reflect on our experiences of facilitation, the more we learn about how to be better facilitators. While it is often helpful to read about how to facilitate, and even participate in workshops, the bulk of our learning comes from facilitating dialogues and reflecting on these experiences, either by ourselves or with our peers.

Being Open

In order for the group to trust us, they need to see that we trust them. Trusting them means opening up to them and giving them a chance to understand who you are. We need to show the group that we genuinely care, and find ways to connect with them at a human level. Being authentic and transparent is therefore crucial to our development as effective dialogue facilitators. This is often tricky to implement, because as we discussed above, we must be careful about introducing or imposing our own views on the content of the dialogue.

While we have highlighted ten characteristics that we can develop to become more effective dialogue facilitators, there are certainly more. We chose these because we believe these are at the core of what it means to facilitate effectively. But as you continue to facilitate dialogues and reflect on your experiences with your peers, you will discover more such characteristics.

Having said that, it is important for us to remember that this is simply a list of traits that we aspire to internalise and embody, and not a definitive set of rules about who can and who cannot be an effective facilitator.

3.2. Values and Principles of an Effective Facilitator

In the previous section, we examined some ideas about what kinds of traits we should develop to be more effective facilitators. Here, we will explore some principles to guide our actions as facilitators - what we should and should not be doing. Participants from Cohorts 1 and 2 have developed the following Code of Ethical Conduct to set out the principles and values that they aspire to hold themselves to.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT (COEC)

FOR DIALOGUE FACILITATORS

The Code of Ethical Conduct is a list of fundamental principles for interpersonal and intergroup interactions, which participants are required to pay their respect to follow in the facilitation process, given their differences in interests, practices, skills and personality. Likewise, it establishes standards and values about what is right or wrong, and good or bad during facilitation. Also, it is a useful self-evaluation guideline for facilitators and stakeholders during the facilitation process.

1. **Process Monitoring**

Although the facilitator is responsible for facilitating the whole process, s/he is not the judge of the results. Thus, the facilitator has to document the original process without adding or removing any discussion outcomes, common agreements and mutual understanding during the facilitation process.

2. **Service Delivery**

Facilitators have to understand all participants, and their expectations on the workshops; and take a supportive role in achieving relevant outputs. If the discussion is not aligned with their expectations, s/he has to get them back on the right track.

3. **Conflict of Interest**

Facilitators must recognise the conflict of interest between persons and among groups, and s/he needs to keep the whole facilitation process free from misunderstanding and disputes. The facilitator herself/himself has to be self-aware of and acknowledge her/his own personal interest.

4. Absence of Bias

Facilitator is neutral on ethnicity, policy and religion. S/he is not allowed to express personal feelings or persuade participants to her/her side.

5. Humanity Oriented

Respect and appreciate every person and her/his identity, rights and dignity. Also, facilitator has to facilitate without any discrimination regarding educational qualification, age, services and property ownership.

6. (6) Building Peaceful Environment

Facilitators have to build mutual respect and trust among groups and persons during the whole process. In addition, a facilitator has to create a safe environment for participants to share and discuss openly. Emphasize equality in discussion and give everyone chances to participate.

7. Local Culture and Self Independence

The facilitator has to pay her/his respect to culture of local contexts and situational contexts among groups. Ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in the process while giving them free options. S/he must avoid exploiting the local environment and people's dignity.

8. Accountable facilitation

Facilitator is accountable for all the facilitation approaches, plans, designs and methods s/he uses. S/he is prohibited from using unfamiliar facilitation tools for testing and from persuading participants using self-expertise.

9. Confidentiality

Facilitator has to keep a confidential document on the information, discussion, common agreements and outputs of the whole process. If it is to be disclosed, s/he has to ask for permission from participants.

10. Continuous Learning

Facilitator has to learn continuously to improve skills and knowledge.

Developed by Sai Sai Ngin, Khon Myo

Myanmar Dialogue Facilitators' Network (MDFN)

3.3. Facilitation Skills and Techniques

Listening Skills

This section discusses the kind of listening that makes dialogue authentic and effective. It focuses on the "listening that makes others feel heard," and delves into listening as an inquiry and resilient listening. The section also discusses other communication techniques that enhances potency of the listening process.

The power of listening in a dialogue is its ability to meet head on people's hardened positions on the issues and perceptions of others, and in the process, clear the barriers for both the listener and the speaker to truly understand herself/himself in relation to the issue. The transformative power of listening could be gleaned from the words of journalist Brenda Ueland:

"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. When we listen to people there is an alternating current, and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other ... and it is this little creative fountain inside us that begins to spring and cast up new thoughts and unexpected laughter and wisdom. Well, it is when people really listen to us, with quiet fascinated attention, that the little fountain begins to work again, to accelerate in the most surprising way." (Brenda Ueland)

We hear about listening all the time and but it is more challenging than most dialogue facilitators realise. Most of our training in listening ends up with two advice: maintaining eye contact and nodding the head to acknowledge the message. Listening in dialogue goes beyond eye contact and nodding. While listening is an intuitive function, listening in dialogue requires more than a simple act of "downloading" information. Listening in dialogue is a kind of listening where other person genuinely feels heard and understood. Fundamental to dialogue facilitation is an active listening skill that attempts to enlarge our understanding and capacity for empathise with people, and a kind of listening that nurtures an environment where all the participants are encouraged to collapse their assumptions and examine their positions inside the dialogue.

Listening is compromised when participants pay little attention to what is being said, while mentally constructing and rehearsing their next comments at the same time, which you see a lot in debates. The atmosphere is likely to be filled with anxiety and antagonism. Speakers anticipate being criticised, dismissed, or being put on the spot. Those who are shy or need time to formulate their thoughts speak less frequently or not at all.

Listening as an Enquiry

Be curious and communicate to all the participants this curiosity. The dialogue facilitator's curiosity helps heighten people's interest towards each other.

In a dialogue, the facilitator needs to foster curiosity from the participants about what other people say and why. What is the experience that led to this belief? Can I imagine that I might have ended up like this person if I had those experiences? Maintaining this curiosity, as opposed to being sure you know what others would say, could help the group manifest a genuine interest in what everyone is bringing to the conversation.

The facilitator's role is to draw people into the dialogue, not to force a dialogue on them. It draws people to common issues they see as important, and seeks to look at others not as an enemy but just another human being who shares a common problem. Being curious about people is a gentle way of connecting them as human beings and treating them with respect. This frames the questions not just to gather information, but also to understand the place where her/his ideas are coming from and learn from others. (Reworded from Democratic Dialogue, page 50)

In many ways, an enquiry is a dialogue facilitator's effective visual tool. To bring about a dialogue, adopting the stance of an enquirer rather than that of an advocate will do much to establish the open relationships that are conducive to dialogue. (Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitionerpage 23)

Resilient Listening

Many of the dialogues one will facilitate are among groups with adversarial relationships. In addition, a facilitator will frequently find her/himself facilitating among people whose ideas, stance on issues or even ways of communication could offend both the facilitator's and the opposing group's sensitivities or core values. No one is completely neutral. There are times when our capacity to listen will be tested with the harshness, indifference, and upsetting language or demeanours by the participants. These are times that resilient listening will be critical. The facilitator is mirroring fairness during the dialogue.

To listen with resilience in dialogue is giving your undivided attention even when something is hard to hear. To listen with resilience doesn't mean taking it all in and shutting up, nor immediately stating opposition. It only requires us not to react hastily and be thoughtful in how we respond when the opportunity comes.

This means not only knowing when is the best time to react, but being able to communicate the negative feeling without depicting the speaker as a negative person. If, during a more free-form part of dialogue, the facilitator hears insulting words and could not continue listening further without acknowledging the offense, the facilitator could acknowledge by saying "Ouch" or "That hurts." The facilitator could also give a time-out signal and pause

to discuss what you heard and s/he intended to say. It is important to check whether the speaker actually intended to offend, and, if so, why. Often, dialogue participants are unaware of how words or phrases in common usage on "their own" side may offend the "other side."

When tempted to react hastily in the presence of an offensive statement, one simple trick is to breathe deeply, which lowers our heart rate, and to be aware of this breathing. This awareness of the "now" reconfigures energies and makes us aware of our feelings more astutely.

Another trick is to use an "anthropologist hat". An anthropologist is interested in the "how and why" of human behaviours. In a dialogue, if a facilitator encounters this, he can mentally pause and silently ask questions such as "I wonder what compels him to say such? How did he arrive at these conclusions? What is the underlying message beneath this? What experiences led here? "

Useful Techniques in Listening

There are a few commonly-used communication techniques that make listening deeper, and could make the speaker feel truly heard. The facilitator will find these techniques useful in a dialogue, and can also model them so that participants also learn to use them.

 These techniques include: validating and affirmation, paraphrasing, probing, summarizing and reframing.

Validating and Affirmation. Validation is the recognition and acceptance of another person's ideas and feelings as "understandable" and understood. Validation doesn't necessarily mean agreeing or approving. Validation communicates that their ideas/emotions are important - even when you disagree on issues.

The following phrases can be useful when validating:

- ⮩ "Thank you for being authentic and honest about this issue."

- ⮩ "I recognise your struggle when you said _____, and I think it was very brave of you to say that."

- ⮩ "I had a few concerns when you said _____, but it was clarified when you said _____."

- ⮩ "It was difficult for me when you said _____, but I recognise how important it is for you to say it and I appreciate your genuine effort to help us understand your perspectives"

Facilitators can affirm the speaker for contributing something important in the dialogue. The following are useful phrases:

- ⮩ "I'd like to take this moment to say that what you just explained is very helpful for me and I hope the others as well to understand the issue."

- "When you said _____, I thought you were able to capture what others are also struggling to say in this dialogue."

- "What you said made me reflect a lot and look at the issue in a different light." "Thank you for sharing a very unique (or thought-provoking) analysis."

- "Listening to you, I realise I have so much to learn on this issue."

- "The way you said it makes the issue clearer to me, and to others as well."

- "I think what you just said is a powerful illustration of what we are trying to achieve in this dialogue."

☞ **Paraphrasing**.

Paraphrasing is repeating in your words what you understood the speaker to be saying. In listening, paraphrasing is a powerful means to further the understanding of the other person and your own thoughts. It can greatly enlarge the impact of the speaker's ideas. It also helps the speaker hear how others are hearing her/his ideas. It is especially useful when a speaker's statements are convoluted or confusing. Some of the useful tips you can use when paraphrasing:

- Put the responsibility of paraphrasing to yourself. Example, "If I understand you correctly …?" or "Let me see if I'm understanding you…"

- Be careful not put push for your own ideas in ascertaining what the speaker wants to imply. Avoid, "I think what you meant was …" Instead, say "If I'm hearing you right, you wanted to say that …?"

- Construct the paraphrase as a question, "So you're saying that …?"or "Correct me if I am wrong, did you want to say_____ "or "Did I get it?" so that the speaker can refine the original statements.

- Avoid judging the other person's ideas when you paraphrase. Be careful with, "Are you joking when you said____?" or "I wonder if you really believe that?" or "Don't you feel confused (frustrated) making that comment?"

If the speaker responds to your paraphrase but it is still unclear, give the speaker another chance to restate the ideas. Don't overuse paraphrasing, as it can be embarrassing or annoying to the speaker and seems quite mechanical.

Probing. Probing is an opportunity for the listener to clarify and investigate ideas said by the speaker. If this probing feels to the speaker like an interrogation, it will cause a negative reaction, so be sure to watch and listen carefully to the tone and the reactions. The following phrases can be useful in probing:

- "I am curious why you said_____."

- "Why is it important to you?"

- "Can you elaborate when you said _____"

- "I wonder how you came up with this conclusion _____"

- "When you said _____, how does that make you feel?"
- "When you said_____, I wonder what was the thinking behind it?"
- "I was surprised when you said _____, can you enlighten us more about it?"

☞ **Summarising.**

By summarising, the facilitator and speaker can verify that they are understanding each other. To summarise is to present a concise overview of the most important points from of the speaker, in the words of the listener. It ensures that the communication is more efficient, and the highlights of conversations are captured.

Some of the useful tips you can use when paraphrasing:

- Focus on the main ideas being conveyed. "After listening to you, what I understand is/are _____"
- Organise the main ideas, and use numbering if it is useful. Example. "There are three things that I can hear from your statements, first_____, second _____ and third_____. " or "Two things stood out for me from what you have shared: one _____ and two _____. "

You can also cross-check if your summary is correct. " These are the take-aways I got from what you said: _____ . Are these correct?

The summary should always be shorter than the original communication.

Avoid introducing any new ideas into the summary. If you have to, make it clear that you're adding them.

☞ **Reframing.**

In dialogue, reframing helps a person more constructively move on from a current mindset, attitude or situation s/he feels stuck in or confused about. Reframing is tremendously helpful in problem-solving, decision-making and learning. The aim of reframing is to shift one's perspective, to put an idea in a different framework, to open up possible actions or results – and, with luck, to learn at the same time. Sometimes reframing involves asking new questions that allow participants to engage more calmly and minimise emotion and offensive language.

Cartner Macnamara presented useful guidelines to use reframing. Some of these include:

Shift from passive to active. If the speaker said, "I really doubt if this dialogue will accomplish anything," a possible response could be, "Can you think of a way to make this dialogue mean something to you? Is there something you can point to that has been a positive step?"

Shift from negative feeling to positive feeling. If the speaker said, "I feel frustrated when we don't seem to agree on anything," a possible response can be, "It is perfectly okay to feel frustrated (normalise the emotion). I do get

it, too. I also recognise that frustration happens a lot among very committed and passionate people (positive qualities). It comes from a place inside us that wants to see an agreement (desired positive outcome). How do you think we can best deal with frustrations in this group?"

Shift from past to future. If the speaker said, "This government was never good at dealing with ethnic issues," a possible response could be, "If you imagined a government that deals well on ethnic issues, how would that look to you?"

Shift from future to past. If the speaker said, "We are now losing the trust between armed groups and the government," a possible response could be, "I believe that feeling is also shared by many in the armed groups and the government. But have there been times when you think that the trust between them was built? How might you approach that now?"

Shift from others to oneself. If the speaker said, "The leaders of our ethnic organizations are not listening to us," a possible response could be, "If they could hear you now, what are the important things you want them to hear from you?"

Shift from a liability to an asset. If the speaker said, "I am so angry about this." a possible response could be, "True. There are so many things to be angry about. But at the bottom of our anger is a desire for change. We don't stop at just being angry. What is this anger telling us about what we want to change? And how do we go about that?"

Shift from victimization to empowerment. If the speaker said, "We lost our land. We lost our family. We always lose in this war. We will lose again in this peace process." a possible response could be, "There is no doubt so many people have lost so much in the wars, and I cannot even begin to imagine what it feels like for you (recognise the pain of being a victim). I feel that all of us here present in the dialogue must have lost something dear to our hearts in this war — land, friends, home, family, dreams (recognise the shared experience of pain). But I also believe that one thing this war has not taken away from us is to decide what happens next, and our individual and collective ability to decide what our future can look like (shift of mindset). "

There are different ways we can reframe but the bottom-line is always presenting a different perspective.

Using Non-Verbal Signals In Listening.

It is believed that more than 50% of communication is understood in a non-verbal manner, that is, not in the words people say, but in the way they say them. Our brains are trained to look for cues of affirmation, disinterest or rejection from both the speaker and the listener. Non-verbal communication is seen though our:

- **Body Movements.** It can be seen through hand gestures, head movements or overall body movements, or in a more intimate set-up, a gentle pat on the shoulder or a touch on the arm while listening to your mate says that you hear and empathise. Also, gestures can mean different things in different cultures. In some cultures, waving a hand means, "hello," and in others, the same movement means rejection or something offensive. Be sensitive, and help dialogue participants to notice these differences. It will help if they can learn to make explicit what different body movements mean in their cultures.

- **Posture.** The way we sit or stand, whether our arms are crossed, and so on affects our message. Slightly leaning forward and facing the speaker unconsciously communicates receptiveness and interest. Turning away or staring off into space says you're not really there.

- **Eye Contact.** Direct eye contact can be interpreted as focus and attention, although in some cultures, eye contact is seen as aggressive, or may not be allowed, for example between people of different statuses or between a man and a woman.

- **Facial Expressions.** Our face, by itself, speaks volumes. A smile at an appropriate time can send a message of warmth, or perhaps be received as scorn. A frown, a disapproving look, or rolling your eyes will communicate judgment.

- **Para-language.** The voice's pitch, tone, and speed may unintentionally suggest arrogance, fear, or confusion.

- **Personal Appearances**. In many cultures, appearance signals respect and seriousness. Smells, clothing, and colour choices all send messages. Our clothing can say our ethnicities, social statuses, or values (conservative, religious, etc). As facilitators, pay attention to how others react to your personal style and make sure you're not sending unintentional messages. And help them consider this in their relations with each other in the dialogue.

Non-verbal communication is informed by the culture of the speakers and the listeners. Hence, while we can come up with useful tips for effective non-verbal communication, the dialogue facilitator has to be thoughtful and sensitive to its unexpected effects. It is important that we recognise and understand how people communicate without using words. As facilitators, it is critical that we constantly ask ourselves: "What signals am I sending with my body? What signals am I reading from others? How do I signal encouragement?" And, when communication among dialogue participants seems to be going strangely wrong, always consider that the problem may be with non-verbal communication.

It is important to avoid distractions. Be careful when you have to take notes, that the note-taking becomes more important than the act of listening. If you are not fully focused, the speaker will notice that you are not completely engaged in the conversation. This sends the message that you don't care.

Trust and Confidence Building

As facilitators, we hope and expect to set up a process where people in conflict can begin to build confidence and trust. A first simple step is to ask ourselves: "How do we gain confidence to express ourselves in front of people whom we do not know or have a relationship with?" "What does it take for us to trust and have confidence in somebody we do not know or have a poor relationship with?" Similarly, "how do we learn from our own and from others' advice and experiences?"

If we have suffered at each other's hands, how do we begin to build trust and confidence? How does anyone get past all the pain, patterns and mistrust that were built over the years, even though they weren't necessarily created by anyone in this room specifically? It is difficult to advance to the next step unless we're able to do that, and it seems a monstrous job. You hear some of the worst words that you can think of, and our dialogue process will have to be resilient enough to withstand the pain and the hard truths. How can we get beyond this? Realistically, can we get beyond this?[9]

Trust and confidence-building can be analysed through to a satisfactory outcome based on three dimensions: People, Problem and Process:

- ⮕ Whether *people* have an emotional or psychological interest in feeling recognised, respected and heard.
- ⮕ Whether the *problem* to be addressed is central to the content or goal of the dialogue initiative and directly or indirectly is an important concern of the participants. Do they want to solve what they see as the problems?

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[9] Adapted from Issacs, W. *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together*. Cambridge, USA, 1999, pp. 154.

◐ Whether the *process* which unfolds helps determine whether the dialogue is legitimate, fair and worthwhile. Is there any chance this is leading where they hope to go?

Conflict situations can cause damage to some people's self-respect, dignity, honour, reputation or pride. This can reduce an individual's confidence and ability or willingness to engage fully in direct conversation. Sometimes, individuals require communication interventions in order to protect their confidence and ensure that they can interact with others. The following communication strategies by a facilitator can help establish and maintain respect for all individuals:

✓ Use courteous language and a polite tone of voice.

✓ Make sure that all processes and activities are fully and clearly explained.

✓ Encourage questions when people are confused.

✓ Use culturally and gender-appropriate humour.

✓ Focus on the issues and avoid blaming or criticising individuals.

✓ Avoid using judgmental language.

✓ Take notice of and attend to practical needs during the discussion.

✓ Find ways to acknowledge past acts and pains, including collective trauma.

✓ Find ways to allow people to change their minds without having to give up their primary interests.

Stay impartial

In order to maintain everyone's trust, facilitators have to be very careful about sharing their experiences and usually refrain from expressing their beliefs relevant to the issue. The facilitator's role is to help participants wrestle with the similarities and differences in the views they express.

☞ **Behavioural Guideline**

Participants need to know what will be expected of them and what they may expect of others as a basis for judging whether they want to get involved. Facilitators can help participants determine whether they will be able to participate effectively. Then, when the group members meet for the first time, they should discuss and agree to the ground rules together, perhaps even formalizing them as a written 'covenant' to further emphasize their importance, such as a covenant of behavioural guidelines used for a 'sustained dialogue' process to address situations of deep-rooted problems. Some possible behavioural ground rules are as follows:

◐ Be present and punctual.

◐ Be attentive both to what other people are saying and to your reaction to what is being said.

- ➲ Speak for yourself.

- ➲ Be concise and concrete.

- ➲ No advising, no setting each other straight, no putting words in someone else's mouth.

- ➲ Do not interrupt speakers; listen.

☞ **Ground Rules**

The purpose of ground rules is to create an atmosphere of safety and fairness. Ground rules provide a structure that can help lessen anxiety and build confidence in the dialogue process. They can be an important expression of core principles and can help establish habits of dialogic interaction. Sometimes, the structure of an event, as much as or more than the facilitator, carries the burden of creating an environment conducive to dialogue. The ground rules in many cases require some discussion and acceptance by participants. They also depend on the context and real situation. The ground rules may usefully provide guidelines in several different areas.

☞ **Suitability of facilitator / convener**

People seek the involvement of trustworthy facilitators / conveners or co-conveners. In some situations, we serve as both facilitator and convener, but in many cases we need to partner with individuals or groups who are known and trusted by different participants / target groups and who are willing to cooperate and help in the dialogue.

Who can play the role of convener with credibility?

Conveners need to be people who are trusted and respected by potential participants. In a particular organisation or community, sometimes the convener is an identified leader, for example, a clergy member, the elected official of the community, or the chair of a committee. However, one mustn't assume that a leadership position gives someone credibility as a convener.

In many situations the people involved in a conflict are affiliated with a variety of organisations, political perspectives, and/or stakeholder groups; there is no single organisation or leader who can serve as a solo convener. In these situations, it's best to work with a set of conveners with varied views and/or affiliations with the hope that everyone who is invited to the dialogue will know and trust at least one of them. In such a case, establishing teamwork among the conveners and facilitators is important.

It is good to identify individuals or group who have built a foundation of personal trust and connection with people in order to maintain the spirit of dialogue when discussing hot issues. It is important to move slowly.

3.4. Managing Challenging Scenarios

This section looks into some of the most difficult scenarios a facilitator encounters in a dialogue. It includes discussions on these difficult scenarios and practical guidance how to deal with them. It is not meant to be exhaustive, as many of the problems need to be contextualised on the political, socio-cultural and conflict realities in which the dialogues are nested. Hence it is advisable to make use of these guidelines as far as they are appropriate to the conditions of the particular dialogue.

Dialogue among people with conflictual relationships can be fraught with deep-seated grievances, mistrust, and a history of trauma and brokenness such that dialogue facilitators may very well prepare for untoward events that can come out during the dialogue process. Nonetheless, dialogue is also a place where participants should feel safe in dealing with these issues, and everyone must be prepared to give some commitment of time and energy to resolve them.

Having stated this, challenges in dialogues are not failures or evidence of something going wrong; they may very well mean things are going as they should. For it is in these difficult situations that authentic feelings can be drawn out, and in these difficult moments that participants can reflect, individually and collectively, on their own commitments to resolve these issues in a dialogic space.

The first rule in managing a difficult scenario is: Set the ground rules. This is not just an enumeration of what people can and cannot do in the dialogue, but it is the setting of the collective norm, common values and rules that will govern the process. The norm setting is so critical that dialogue facilitators are advised not to rush through this, but make sure everyone reflects, commits to and trust these norms so s/he can refer to these ground rules whenever the dialogue hits a bump along the road. Ground rules establish the boundaries of productive dialogue. The hope is that once they realise the higher quality of conversation that occurs under these rules, it then normalises the conversation dynamics that impacts the quality of their communication style in multiple settings. It is painful to learn that there is an implicit ground rule by violating it, so it is wise to discuss and agree ground rules in advance.

As the dialogue progresses, the facilitator must be mindful of small signs that something is going off track. Below are some of the red flags that a dialogue facilitator must be cautious about, without waiting for them to snowball into very difficult scenarios:

- ➲ Participants speak theoretically or analytically and the dialogue is turning cerebral and lacks feeling.
- ➲ Participants are mechanically waiting their turn to "have their say".
- ➲ All comments are directed to the facilitator.

- The group mainly concurs on each action with no disagreement or discussion on negative consequences.
- Comments are ignoring previous discussion.

Emotions in Dialogue

It is important to understand, first and foremost, that emotions are not detrimental to dialogue. In fact, it requires them. Lacking emotional authenticity, rather than a manifestation of a strong emotion, could be more problematic. The expression of emotion is a fertile opportunity for participants to move from hardened positions to revealing the underlying experiences, interests and needs that truly matter to their lives.

Essential to the dialogue facilitator is to help create a conversation where people can become able to show their emotion in a safe environment that results in greater learning about each other. It is also important to note that emotions will affect others in a different ways: expressions of grief, pain or remorse will generally be received with some, compassion and empathy. Emotions that could have negative consequences are those related to anger, aggression, and hate where people could easily feel threatened and could spiral into violence. In any case where an expression of emotion is received inappropriately, in a way that could hurt the speaker, the facilitator should be prepared to intervene.

Dealing with emotions will require multiple or combinations of communication techniques, but the following tips could be helpful:

- Think twice before interrupting. Be careful not to be defensive or turn a comment into an argument. Respect the speaker's opinion and her/his right to it.
- Listen very well. Ask questions to clarify the source of the speaker's anxiety, concern, fear or anger. In cases of anger, sometimes it comes from their frustration to get their message across, so techniques such as paraphrasing, summarizing and validating are important.
- Ask the speaker what s/he would like done to address these concerns (shift from past to future).
- Pause if you need to, and declare a break. Pause is your friend and you can constantly use these to calm emotions, give a chance for people to process feelings or reflect on what they have witnessed.

While facilitators are expected to manage the process in the dialogue, one essential question a facilitator must deal would be: Are you ready to manage your own emotions?

Facilitators are advised to be mindful of their own emotions, especially if the topic is significantly close to her/his life experience. They are also advised to be mindful of the warning signs when emotions (especially negative ones like anger) are going to break forth. Taking a pause may help. But, in the long term, the dialogue will need to be resilient enough to withstand expressions of strong emotion.

Using Silence

When there is silence, some people start to feel uncomfortable. Many facilitators might feel compelled to fill the air. They may feel pressured to keep the conversation flowing, so they seek to fill it with probing questions or a shift of topic.

Silence is a natural occurrence in a dialogue. Moments of silence are to be expected and a facilitator need not feel responsible that such silence must be interrupted. Sometimes the right thing to do is to sit with the silence and give people a little space to find their way to what they want to say.

Pause/silence helps promote better listening. To an outsider, silence in a dialogue might look like boredom or disinterest, but in most instances, silence allows participants to digest some ideas and allows internal dialogues to take roots. Silence also allows people to manage their own emotions. Confronted with sensitive and potentially offensive conversation, many people go silent to check their feelings and formulate ways to continue the conversation. This is a healthy sign.

Hence, the facilitator needs to be able to send the message "it is okay if you feel like not talking, but there is always opportunity for you when you want to speak up."

Common Facilitation Challenges

In this section, we present common problems in dialogue facilitation. After each problem, we present both (1) "probably a problematic response" and (2) a more effective response.

Problem: An eloquent participant is unduly dominating the discussion

Probably a bad response. Try to control or silence the person with "Excuse me, Sayar P, you are taking too much time. I'd like to listen to others."

A more effective response. Over-participation of one means others are participating less. Focus on the silent majority without taking too much attention to the dominant one. "I'm curious what others are thinking about this matter. Any ideas?"

One possible response is to break them into smaller groups.

Problem: Two participants are debating too much.

Probably a bad response. Deal with the two people as if they are the only legitimate participants in the dialogue. "Can we resolve this argument now?"

Another is throwing shade at the behaviour: "Don't you feel bad that you are consuming the group's time?"

A more effective response. Very similar to the response on the previous problem. Focus on the silent majority. "I'd like to hear what others' thoughts on the issues are?" Expand the focus and the conversation to make sure others are speaking as well.

Problem: The participants are starting to force agreements.

Probably a bad response. Decide there and then that the group is not ready to reach an agreement. "Wait a minute. I don't think you are ready to be in this stage yet. I'd like us to talk more." (This sounds as though the group is expected to perform according to your script.)

A more effective response. Remind the participants to the purpose of the dialogue and the dangers of not fully understanding all the issues before making a decision. "When we started this dialogue, we committed to fully understand the issues and the perspectives of the people. I can see that some of us think it is now time to make a decision, which I have no problem with, if everyone feels the same way. But, as your facilitator, I need to make sure we are not rushing a decision for the sake of a decision. I'd like hear from others if there are issues that need to be considered before we go for an agreement."

Another response is to explore potential negative consequences of reaching the agreement at this stage. "Clearly there are participants who want to decide. Has anyone thought of any potential consequences if we decide _____ and if there is any implication if we decide this early?"

Another is to review where the discussion has got to, which are the areas of agreement and disagreement, and check whether there are some points the group wants to decide are agreed. Registering this, perhaps on a wall board, will help the group not to keep going over the same points.

Problem: The participants are starting to blame the facilitators for the problems in the dialogue.

Probably a bad response. Be defensive. "Your accusation is unfair. It is your problem to begin with, why would it be my fault if you can't work with each other?"

Demand respect and make vague threats. "If I do not get respect here, I'd rather be somewhere where I am valued."

Walk out.

A more effective response. This is likely to happen in a situation where norms and ground rules are not clear or well set; the role of the facilitator is not well understood; or the legitimacy of the facilitator is in question. It is therefore critical for dialogue organisers that the norm-setting is well-thought out, the ground rules internalised,

and the participants have agreed that you will be the facilitator and your role is well-defined and understood. These have to be part of preparations for the actual dialogue.

In a case where it is the mistake of the facilitator, you need to own your mistake and apologise. That is why it is important to conduct dialogue in a team, so others can look out for you, especially if you are committing missteps.

If you need time to process their concern on your facilitation, you can call for a break and discuss the matter with key people (including the organisers) at an informal setting.

If you have already lost your legitimacy, then you can relinquish the role to other facilitators.

Problem: One participant has made veiled threats of violence to others.

Probably a bad response. Ignore it and hope that it will not be carried out.

Treat it as a joke: "Don't make a joke like that, Mr. X."

Respond with similar threat: "If that happens, we know where you live Mr. X."

Pacify: "I know you must be upset and I know you will not do that."

A more effective response. Violence or threat of violence is inimical to any dialogue. For the dialogue to be effective, first and foremost, it must be a safe space. The ground rules must be very clear about that. Therefore, to prevent this kind of behaviour, it must be well laid out from the beginning that violence or threat of it is unacceptable.

Take a break and speak with the participant about her/his threat. If the ground rule was clearly set, remind the participant that what he said was unacceptable, and issue a warning that s/he may lose the chance to participate in the dialogue if s/he continues to do so.

Should the participant repeat giving threats, the facilitator can talk to the organiser to remove her/him from the dialogue.

3.5. Bringing Dialogue Across Societal Levels

An effective practicing dialogue usually contains the belief that dialogue eventually brings about solutions to problems. The dialogue process, however, requires patience, commitment and goodwill.

At a basic level, dialogue aims to share and learn from each other's perspectives, or hear each other out without needing to win over the other side. It is a serious decision to participate in a dialogue. If the dialogue goes well, many positive things will happen through interaction, and perhaps mutual understanding. Most outcomes are likely to be non-threatening, perhaps more so than with other problem-solving methods. Facilitators should help participants see dialogue as a process, not as an event. In fact, dialogue could be one step in a series of events with subsequent activities. This is not to lower the expectation, but to balance expectation with the commitment, and to recognise that other activities may be working toward compatible outcomes. So, no one should expect that everything can be sorted out in a single dialogue event. In general, the best things that dialoguers can expect from their early participation are:

1. Having a chance to talk to each other and share each other's perspectives on certain topics or issues. So, it should not be a surprise that there are no dramatic changes from a few dialogue sessions.

2. Often, the best outcome from dialogues is Learning and Insights gaining from the conversations. That learning will improve the chances for independent readjustments or small changes, so the relationships will be also improved.

3. It is possible that dialogue helps participants identify some common grounds concerning the issues discussed.

Dialogues can also contribute to long-term, sustainable changes, when they have become:

1. An opportunity to inspire cooperation or do something constructively together.

2. An opportunity to develop frameworks or clear structures for a longer-term dialogue process.

3. An opportunity to develop a platform for negotiating agreements on specific issues.

The key word above is "opportunity": Dialogue offers participants an opportunity to do something; participants have the right not to accept.

To maximise the effects of a dialogue process or to further the impacts of the dialogue process on systemic and structural change, dialogues must be part of a systematic effort to bring the dialogues across societal levels. This needs even stronger commitment, time and resources.

In general, decision-making is not the key for dialogue, and dialogue may not be the best way to reach decisions. However, the Learning, the Insights and the Sharing would eventually provide clear indications about common visions, and at the same time, suggest varieties of options of how to move beyond the current conflictual situation. Then, those options can frame decision-making in order to achieve sustainable positive changes.

It is impossible to bring every opinion and perspective expressed or discussed from one dialogue to another dialogue. But from every dialogue, participants would be able to gain a general sense about what the commonalities, the differences and the matters are most needing focus during the discussions. That is the notion of the dialogue outcome that becomes the basis for participants to bring to other dialogues at the same level horizontally or another level vertically. Though not all dialogue maintains written records, if there is one, it can be a very useful reference. Either through written records or through participant representatives[10] having an influence horizontally and vertically engages the dialogue with the agenda-setting at other levels in a form of pyramid structure.

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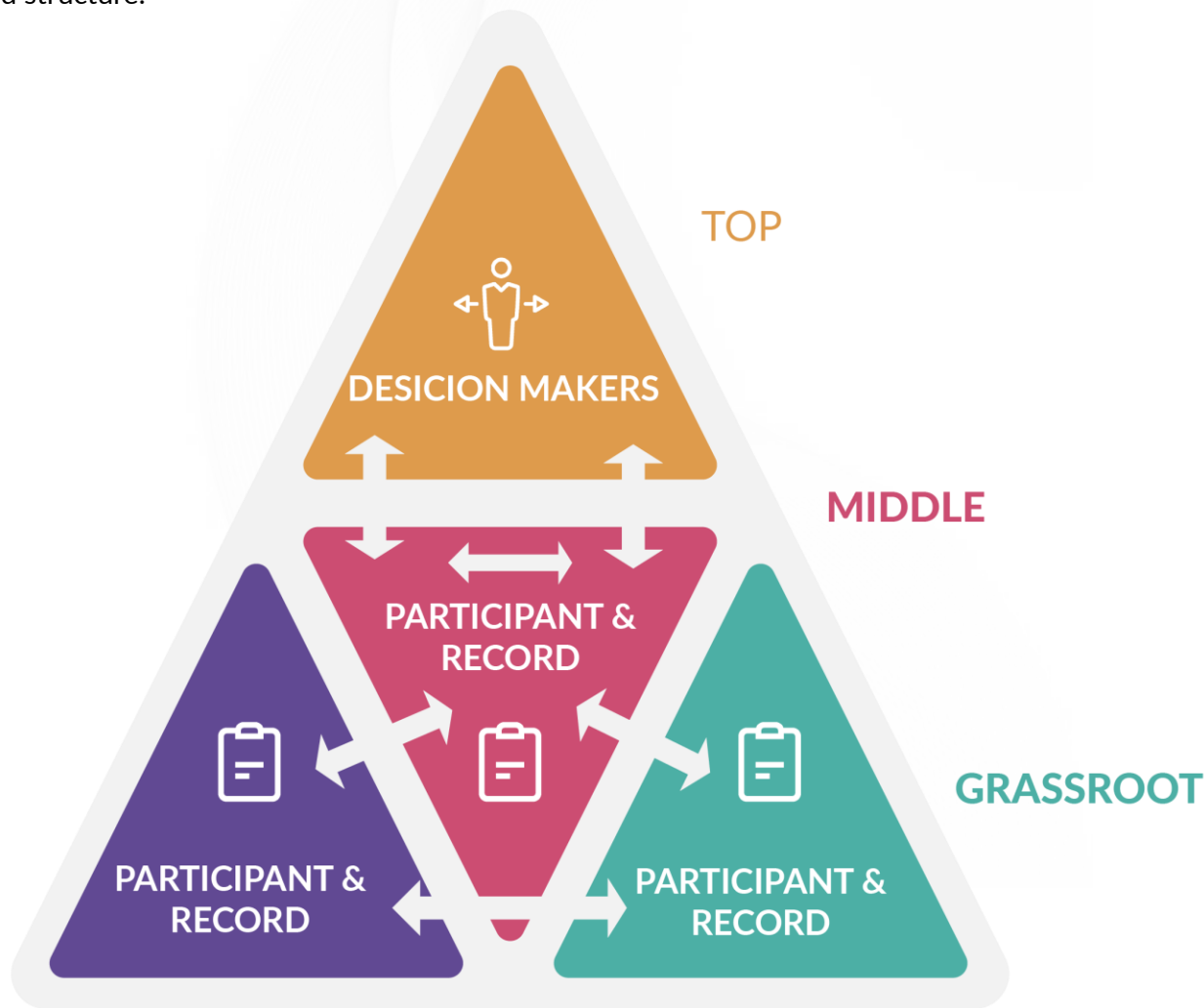
[10] Representatives who have participated in the dialogues.

At the grassroots level, **participant representatives** can communicate ahead of time what may be important issues for the discussion, and follow up by communicating salient points from the dialogue to higher-level processes. It is a building-up process of what are matters for discussion at each level and the understanding behind their conversations. The **participant representatives** at various grassroots levels and sectors can come together for a synthesis session in order to identify the important topics raised at the grassroots levels conversations, by providing a fair balance of issues, and representing voices of the communities without bias or judgment. Thus, the processes at different levels inform and support each other, and gain impact from each other, so that the eventual results are understood by more people.

Some democratic forms of decision-making process will be really useful for selecting **participant representatives** from the grassroots level to participate in the middle level dialogues. Culturally and contextually, the preference for representatives from grassroots level at the middle level may be expected to be those leaders from administrative or traditional structures. However, it is strongly recommended that representatives be actual participants in grassroots-level dialogues.

Dialogue settings may include National Political Dialogues, National Policy Discussion, Political/Peace Negotiation and Constitutional Reform Process. Any of these may be considered as top-level dialogues. There are a number of possible ways in order to bring dialogues from the grassroots, and the middle societal levels to the top/national level. Each process depends very much on the political system and the context of that society. First of all, it is very important to know who will be taking part in the top-level dialogues? Are they the representatives from the administrative structures that best represent the population under them? Or are they the politicians from the parties whose members are elected by their constituencies? Or are they the representatives or leaders from national states level of the union, including the armed groups? Do they consult with and represent someone?

The main principle of a comprehensive national dialogue process is that the top leaders or decision - makers must respect the voices and views raised by participants across from the grassroots and the middle levels and they must be willing to include them into their own top level political and policy discussions, whether or not they agree with the diagnostic prospects brought forward by the processes. The top leaders will want to add their own agenda, of course. The outcomes will have greater integrity and legitimacy if they include who comes from the grassroots and mid-level processes.

Appendix

Typology of Dialogue, In Greater Depth

This section is not about facilitation skills or techniques, but is about general knowledge and the recognition of discursive elements that are also necessary. Some may argue that a dialogue facilitator does not need to be an expert on the subject, which is valid. However, this does not mean that there is no knowledge related to the subject required. On the contrary, a facilitator does need some knowledge about the subject, at least some background, concepts and important terminologies. Because dialogue is about conversation, conversation using language, a facilitator needs to understand what people are talking about in order to help facilitate their conversation. Sometimes, the typology of dialogue helps facilitators look for the right information in order to prepare themselves properly. Particular types of dialogue connect directly to the language and the terminologies used for communicating perspectives. For example, a "National Dialogue on Sustainable Development" would suggest preparation through reference articles in the field of development. There are many concepts, words and jargon in this field, so a facilitator who has a basic understanding about development concepts can better facilitate conversations around the subject.

Dialogue is not a new thing. In fact, the concept of dialogue can be traced back to the oldest human society. Contextually, people may not have used the English term derived from Greek "Dialogo" but the practices had been familiar in local cultures for a very long time, using equivalent terms in their own local language. In some cultures, people especially use dialogue for facilitating their joint decisions and solutions to their problem. However, the prominent types of dialogue today are believed to have surfaced from contemporary social and international issues transcending many boundaries. It might be that the world is getting smaller, so unthinkable interactions have now become possible.

"Not surprisingly, differing definitions of typology - typological classification, typological generalisation and functional typological explanation/approach - have led to some confusion about what typology is, or is supposed to be. For example, it is sometimes claimed that typology is "merely descriptive or taxonomic". Typological generalisation represents a well-established method of analysis, and the typological approach is now a well-articulated approach to language."[11]

This section provides only a basic sense of characteristics of a few known types of dialogue in operation today. Practitioners who wish to deepen knowledge on specific types of dialogue can do so by further study/research on their own.

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[11] William, C. *Typology and Universals*. Second Edition (Kindle version), Cambridge University Press, 2003, New York, USA, pp. 3.

Inter-Faith Dialogue

Inter-faith dialogue is a dialogue between people or communities of different faiths and beliefs. The aim of inter-faith dialogue commonly is to strengthen inter-faith relationship, either for sharing among faith leaders, or in order to explore and promote peaceful coexistence. The way that an inter-faith dialogue is organised can vary, sometimes involving only lay people or not always religious leaders as key persons in the dialogue. The characteristic of a particular inter-faith dialogue, however, depends on the theories and the analyses behind the initiative, which in turn will suggest appropriate participants.

"The term interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions (i.e., "faiths") and / or spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels."[12]

Typically, the word interfaith itself labels the activities to be taken, which provides some directive or focus of the dialogue toward what it aims to achieve at the end, e.g., building mutual understanding, trust, good relationships and cooperation. At the same time, the name begins to define the importance of whatever is entailed within the context that dialogue activity is taking place. For example, the title "Interfaith dialogue between communities in Myanmar" may mean more than merely the limited words given. In this case, it indicates the important of dialogue, focusing on faith/spiritual belief in particular, but not the other type of diversities. And it stipulates these are dialogues between communities, identifiable groups of individuals.

Why "interfaith, not inter-religious dialogue?" Interestingly, there may be reasons that people seem to avoid using the term inter-religious dialogue. The term religious or religion requires the use of acceptable theological interpretation, which is in itself not an easy task for everybody to bring to the conversation. And the term "interfaith" is taken to encompass a dialogue with another religion, as well as among sects of a single religion, and perhaps persons who describe their faith as "humanitarianism" or some ethos that others might not recognise as a religion.

Another important observation is that interfaith dialogue is not always through conversation or talking, but also involves doing activities together such as praying together for peace and tolerance, and symbolic cooperation to address social issues which affect everyone such as planting a tree together, joining a campaign to combat drug abuse, crime, or HIV/AIDs, etc.

From a peace-building perspective, at local and national level, interfaith dialogue is a process to develop a social norm or an informal system so that tensions or conflicts related to religious and ethnic identities can be expressed

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[12] "Interfaith Dialogue." Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interfaith_dialogue.

within a safe and peaceful environment that allows participants the opportunity to explore mutual understanding and to promote cooperation, rather than let conflict grow until it becomes a crisis.

Ashutotosh Varshney, who conducted an extensive study on communities with Hindu versus Muslim conflict in India, argues that:

The most important factor contributing to communal peace is the pre-existing presence of local networks of civic engagement between different ethnic communities. Where these are missing, communal identities and conflicts lead to violence; and, where such networks of engagement exist, tensions and conflicts are regulated and managed in ways that prevent violence.[13]

In some contexts, where local networks of civic engagement do not exist or may be dysfunctional, official structures or formal bodies such as a ministry of religious affairs or national religious council can be set up to deal with inter-religious tension. However, Varshney's point is that structures of civic engagement help limit all kinds of conflicts, even though the community structures may be commercial, voluntary, religious, or even sporting.

For interfaith dialogue, it may help to involve skilled facilitators to assist participants with the process of addressing key factors, as pointed by out Michal Peterson, who used emotion-based discourse to understand why an individual would use violence or discrimination against another individual.[14]

- **Fear** prepares the individual to satisfy safety concerns;
- **Hatred** prepares the individual to act on historical grievance;
- **Resentment** prepares the individual to address status / self-esteem

Interfaith dialogue in some practices oriented around a belief that the process can help reduce fear, hatred and resentment within individuals and between communities in a way that violent conflicts can be prevented and relationships can be maintained to ensure mutual understanding and cooperative efforts to resolve the shared problem which is key to peace in their communities.

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[13] Varshney, A. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2002.
[14] Peterson, M. *Reason and Religious Belief*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2002.

Community Dialogue

Often the term community dialogue and community-level dialogue are seen as interchangeable. Nonetheless, to discuss the terminology strictly, these two dialogues have different meanings. Taken from some literatures, community dialogue may imply practices within professional groups such as farmer groups, small business groups, health care groups, civil society groups, and so on. Community-level dialogue, on the other hand, is talking about grassroots dialogue where members of a geographic community come together to dialogue on issues affecting them directly or indirectly.

It is advisable for community dialogue to add a specific title to the word dialogue, for example "farmer community dialogue on New Effective Ways of Farming". This provides the advantage of highlighting the dialogue's focus, so participants can spend time digging deeper, rather than staying on the surface with all the things farmers may have to talk about.

Community-level dialogue can be part of the overall national dialogue structures, where multiple dialogue processes contribute to a formal framework. Myanmar is an unusual case, as community-level dialogue is a significant element in the peace process.

Separately, community-level dialogue (community dialogue) could be designed as a project, where the resources and attention are intentionally given to the grassroots population. And, in many cases, the community people begin the dialogue initiative by themselves, because they feel they need to respond to an urgent problem facing them and the community. They may not seek an outside facilitator, but begin with their own approach. Then the dialogue could be with the following processes:

Community Dialogue Processes

This process may involve public participation, citizen participation and/or focus groups. There are a range of processes, with considerable variations in the way in which these different terms are used for different settings. However, there are two elements that are believed to characterise a genuine community dialogue process: (Kass 2000)[15]:

- **Deliberation** – careful consideration of evidence, social interaction, discussion and carrying out conversation, consideration of a range of views, and the opportunity to re-evaluate initial positions.

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[15] Parker, J, and P Duignan. "Dialogue Methods: A Typology of Community Dialogue Processes." 2005, www.parkerduignan.com.

⊃ **Inclusion –** involvement of a diverse range of individuals and groups, including previously excluded groups who are not represented in the normal stakeholder discussions.

Fiorino (1990) identified three major reasons lying behind the desire to conduct community dialogue processes[16]. These three reasons are:

⊃ **A normative argument –** that the community has a right to such dialogue processes simply as a consequence of its right to democracy. In our terminology we call this a citizens' rights-based reason.

⊃ **A substantive argument –** that such processes are as likely, or more likely, to get to a correct conclusion than a system just using expert advisors (some believe an example of this is the discovery of the hazardous nature of Agent Orange). In our terminology we call this a quality-based reason – improving the quality of decisions that are made.

⊃ **An instrumental argument –** that community dialogue processes increase the legitimacy and ease of implementation of the results of decision making processed. In our terminology we call this an acceptance-based reason.

A Typology of Community Dialogue Processes

A community dialogue process is possible either by copying a model (existing type: both name and process) or by generating a creative model (inventing or reinventing a dialogue: focus more on the feasible relevance). Complexity of the context becomes an important matter in deciding whether a certain model is applicable for the local situation. For example, a dialogue where members of the public engage with experts to jointly design solutions can include brainstorming issues and possible solutions. There can be good opportunities for participants to deliberate with others. Participants usually have some decision-making authority. This type of dialogue may not be conducive for sharing in a closed or restricted society or an immediate post-violence situation, where people are fear for their safety or political security.

The following table outlines names and descriptions of the two dialogue processes which are commonly used both in field experiences and in literature. Either one can be good process to follow or adapt. However, for a facilitator, the main question is: What are the skills and techniques that can be drawn most useful with these different models?

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[16] Fiorino, Op. cit. //www.parkerduignan.com/documents/132pdf.PDF.

Names of Dialogue Process	Description
Consultative conference or panel, citizens panel	A group of citizens are brought together to learn about, discuss, and give their views on an issue. Participants do not usually have decision-making authority. It is not intended as a mechanism to determine, but rather to inform public policy and stimulate debate.
Public hearing	Open, public forum in which interested citizens hear presentations regarding plans/issues and, ideally, voice their opinions and influence the direction of policy. Participants do not have decision- making authority but can have some opportunities to deliberate with others. It involves little power equality with process administrators.

In each case the key features of the processes can be described. The description includes: a list of issues addressed by the process; those who participate in the process; the settings in which they take place; those who use the process; the resources required by the process. References to the relevant literature are also given in the appendix. These processes provide a smorgasbord of options for selection by those planning dialogue processes.

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