



World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout



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It's not always easy!

Managing our conflicts

THEME: Conflicts exist everywhere, in personal life as well as in society. If managed well, they can constitute a dynamic force and lead to new, better balanced and more appropriate reasoning. Learning to understand and manage conflicts better is, however, quite an art.

DURATION: 2 hours (up to 2 1/2 hours)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: up to 40

STAFF REQUIRED: Essentially, one leader would be enough. However, it would be better to arrange for two or three additional leaders to run the group work.

BACKGROUND

In the introduction to Chapter 3, "Culture of Peace", we saw that peace is a dynamic notion which evolves continually and that the culture of peace must therefore be defined in terms of a world in constant evolution.

In the reference document "Scouting and Peace", five dimensions of peace are considered: peace with oneself (inner peace), peace in interpersonal relationships, peace through intercultural understanding, peace and justice, and peace between man and the environment.

This workshop looks at peace in the sense of its bearing on the presence of conflicts. Conflicts are inevitable, both in daily life (at home, school, work, in the neighbourhood) as well as at the level of ethnic and social groups, or between nations. This workshop will consider the different origins of conflicts and show how they evolve as the world evolves. If we do not want conflicts to degenerate into wars and their consequences of ruin and desolation, we have to learn how to manage them positively.





This is an essential task for formal and non-formal education. Young people need to be guided to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them manage conflicts rapidly, fairly, effectively and calmly. If perceived and resolved from this perspective, a conflict can become a positive element in interpersonal and social relations, in personal development, and in the emergence of new forms of structural relations between social or ethnic groups, and between nations and peoples of different cultures.



CROSS REFERENCE

Within the framework of the culture of peace, this workshop focuses on three of its treasures: democracy, tolerance and the rejection of violence.

The workshop aims to explore ways of helping young people to understand each other better, to encourage amicable behaviour and rules of the game that are right and just towards each party in a conflict.

KEY MESSAGES

- The prevalence of options of force for the resolution of conflicts disrupts personal and social life.
- To resolve a conflict, one has to know how to manage it. This implies first identifying the real causes and then following a systematic process to arrive at the best solution possible.
- Within the context of the culture of peace, it is important to learn and to practise this process, which will always be useful in life.

PURPOSE/AIMS/OBJECTIVES

At the end of the workshop, the participants should:

- Be able to see the positive and negative aspects of a conflict.
- Know how to manage a situation of conflict in order to arrive at an effective solution that is acceptable to all the parties concerned.
- Realise that a basic attitude of "fair play" and non-violence is a valuable aid to the peaceful and fair resolution of conflicts.
- Be ready to share what they have learned when they return home.

METHOD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

Preparation

Although there is not a lot in the way of material to prepare for this workshop, it does require some intellectual preparation (see Remarks to Leaders, below).

Apart from prior knowledge of the subject, it is important for the leaders to agree on the objectives and running of the workshop, to decide who does what, and to prepare themselves accordingly. One formidable pitfall can be the terminology, especially if the leaders come from different countries. Despite appearances, words like "conciliation", "mediation", "arbitration", etc. do not mean the same to everybody.

A good remedy is to test the workshop on people who resemble the actual participants as closely as possible. Of course, this is impossible in the case of a World Scout Jamboree, but even a test at a smaller national level would be a good idea.

Implementation

Plenary session

1. Introduction

The leader welcomes the participants and invites them to introduce themselves in a few words: Where do they come from? What do they do?

He then presents the workshop, explaining that it is based on UNESCO's Culture of Peace concept (see Background, above).

2. Step 1: Identify the roots/origins of conflict

Small-group activity

The participants divide into small groups of five or six who can communicate in a common language.

Instructions: Try to think of a conflict you have had recently and share it with the rest of the group. Identify and analyse the origins of the conflict and share your experience and analysis with the rest of the group. Together, compile a list of the possible causes of a conflict.





Plenary session

One member of each small group reports on his group's work.

The leader summarises the reports and groups the possible causes according to the major sources of conflict:

- Different aims, needs and values. This is the primary cause of conflict.
- Poor reciprocal perception: the other party is viewed from a negative angle.
- Different appraisal of the issues at stake: feelings and emotional reactions often distort the reality.
- Inability to make concessions and settle differences. Positions stiffen, which hinders the pursuit of constructive dialogue.



3. Step 2: List possible ways to resolve conflict

Small-group activity

The participants divide into the same small groups as for Step 1.

Instructions: Each group picks one of the conflicts presented by one of its members and brainstorms to come up with as many solutions as possible, listing them in order of preference.

Once the groups have finished this exercise, each member responds to the following question in turn: When you faced this problem/conflict, did you seek anyone's advice? If YES, whose advice? What qualities, characteristics and special skills did this person have?

Plenary session

Summary and generalisation One member of each group reports on the first part of the exercise. The groups should be encouraged to present their work creatively, in the form of playlets, role play or other active means of expression.

Based on the reports made by each of the small groups, the leader summarises the results, which can be divided into two main parts:

ANNEX

CONFLICT-RESOLUTION PROCESS

This takes the form of six steps:

1. Clarify the origin of the conflict. (See point 2. above.)
- Different aims, needs and values: Establish the causes as objectively as possible. Put yourself in the place of an "impartial" observer and ask what he would think.
- Poor reciprocal perception: Exchange impressions; develop your communication skills.
- Different appraisal of the issues at stake: Try to go beyond the emotional aspect and to focus on the "objective", on what is real and can be borne out for the two parties.
- Inability to make concessions and settle differences: Develop attitudes and behaviour of negotiation and compromise, rather than trying to be proved right on all accounts.

2. *Compile a list of possible ways to resolve conflict.*
3. *Assess each proposed solution – negotiate.*
4. *Together, agree on the best ways to resolve conflict.*
5. *Anticipate the implementation of the solutions: How and when?*
6. *Anticipate follow-up arrangements and the evaluation of the results.*

(It is possible that the solutions put into practice will prove to be inappropriate. Together, new objectives will therefore have to be set.)

LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE

1. *Ability to determine the nature and origin of a conflict*
2. *Ability to engage in dialogue*

Don't start by attacking the opposite point of view because doing so will provoke a defensive reaction ("I'm not listening to the other party any more") that will only block any dialogue.

3. *Ability to listen to and understand the other's point of view*
 - *Know how to listen to the other's point of view.*
 - *Avoid defending oneself, justifying one's position, making demands and threats.*
 - *Practise active listening.*
 - *Listen and summarise, clarify the other's position until they agree with the summarised position.*
 - *Let the other party express themselves without making any value judgements.*
 - *Focus on the points on which there is agreement, on what is negotiable, and on the tangible results.*
 - *Defuse aggressiveness by the different parties.*
4. *Ability to find a way to resolve the conflict that is acceptable to all parties concerned*

4. Step 3: Describe/state the major conflict of the countries of each of the participants

Small-group activity

Divided into small groups, each participant is invited to express: What, in your view, is the major conflict that your country is involved in?

5. Step 4: Commitment

Still in small groups, the participants are invited to make a personal resolution/commitment: "When I return home, I plan to promote peace by..."

The process starts with individual reflection, the result of which is then communicated to the group.

Plenary session

6. Conclusion

Each participant briefly reads out his personal commitment. (NB: There will be no comments or discussion on these commitments.)

The leader briefly presents UNESCO's Culture of Peace programme and activities.

He then stresses that any peace process requires personal commitment, and invites the participants to organise the same type of workshop in their Scout units, schools, neighbourhood, etc., according to their possibilities (see Suggested Follow-up, below).



REMARKS TO LEADERS

Though it seems relatively simple at first sight, this workshop may prove to be extremely complex. It is therefore advisable to insist that the leaders are skilled in this field and that the workshop is prepared carefully.

In part 4 (See Implementation, point 4, Summary and generalisation, above), after summarising the group reports (see Conflict-resolution Process and Learning to Negotiate) and if there is time, small exercises could be organised to apply the different points mentioned: communication, active listening, analysis of information, etc.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP

One must be aware of the fact that this workshop only touches on the subject. Practical training guides exist in this field, notably aimed at the leaders of youth NGOs, clubs and voluntary organisations in general. One of the most interesting and most well-conceived is "Playing with fire; Training for the creative use of conflict", written by Nic Fine and Fiona Macbeth, published by Youth Work Press, London, © 1992.

In the context of special training, the socio-cultural aspects of conflict should be broached (What produces antagonism and tension?), as well as a more detailed view of conciliation, mediation and arbitration techniques, which may be different in each socio-cultural setting. A good example that you will find in this kit is Workshop No. 3, "A traditional African folk-tale for democracy and peace education"

SOURCES

This workshop is based on the workshop "Conflict-resolution process" conceived by Mrs Jocelyne Gendrin for the Global Development Village at the 18th World Scout Jamboree in the Netherlands in 1995, and on the report presented to UNESCO on that workshop.

It has also been influenced by three other workshops:

- "Resolving inter-personal conflicts", carried out by the Peace Education Foundation.
- "Peaceful solution of conflicts", carried out by "Servicio Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ)", Chile.
- "An incredible journey for peace", based on the document "Cooperation for Peace", IDEAS Foundation, Report of the United Nations World Commission for Culture and Development, 1995.

These three workshops were run at the Global Development Village at the 19th World Scout Jamboree in Chile in 1998-99.

