

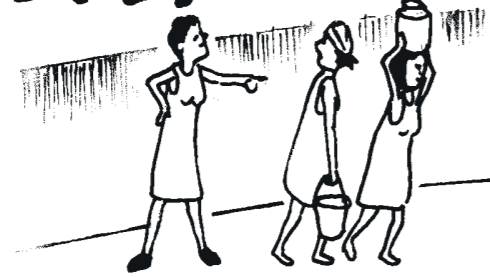
## DIFFERENCES

Discussions and differences can be healthy and productive if met with tolerance.



## TENSIONS

Promises may be broken. People's actions may not be the same as their words. Views become fixed and people begin to criticise their 'opponents' and view them as the enemy.



# Conflict: The long road back up

Once differences develop into tensions, there are unlikely to be any short-cuts to agreement. Both sides must start by opening channels of communication and working upwards to reach full agreement.

- Where are we on the way down?
- What is the way forward?
- Where do we start on the way up?

## AGREEMENT

Everyone agrees. They may agree to keep different views but always to accept the views of others. It may be helpful to have a written and signed agreement for future reference.



## FINDING SOLUTIONS

An approach is found that everyone agrees on – whether this uses the law, customary methods or partnership. Solutions are agreed and acted upon.



## MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

People come to understand the views of others and to respect them. The conflict is described (sometimes mapped) to help find possible solutions.



## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OPENED

Both sides agree that a solution is needed. Outsiders may be needed to help both sides communicate. Ways to move forward are established.

## DISPUTES

Neither side will admit they have made mistakes in case they are seen to 'lose face' in the eyes of their opponents. They become determined. More extreme positions are taken. Threats are made but not carried out.



## HOSTILITIES

People become convinced that their views are right. Opponents are mocked, scorned and isolated. Some threats are carried out.

## Key skills

in building and maintaining effective communications

- Listening, listening, more listening
- Understanding and describing the viewpoint of others
- Identifying needs, interests, concerns and fears
- Encouraging conflicting parties to listen to each other
- Setting and getting agreement on rules
- Starting constructive discussions (and keeping them going!)
- Creative problem solving
- Building relationships

## THRESHOLD OF VIOLENCE?



'No way back.' 'They must lose.' People in organisations may be sacked. Force is used, perhaps physical violence.

## ARMED VIOLENT CONFLICT?

Force may run its course until one party 'wins' or all are exhausted. Outsiders may intervene with force to bring violence to a halt.

## Key principles

in conflict management

- Conflict is often inevitable because different people have different needs, interests, concerns and fears.
- Conflict can be used creatively to develop improved relationships.
- Early intervention prevents conflicts getting worse.
- Focus on the **problem**, not the **people**.
- Focus on underlying needs, not immediate demands.
- Build on people's experiences.

By CRDT staff, with ideas used with permission from Frank Oomkes and Richard Thomas. *Developing Cross-Cultural Communication*. Connaught Training.