



Mekelle University
College of Law and Governance
Department of Political Science and Strategic
Studies
Center for Peace and Reconciliation-CPR
EUTF/CST/CRP Project

Trainer's Manual on Conflict Prevention, Resolution, and Peace-building for Religious Institutions in Tigray, Ethiopia

By Team of Experts

- 1. Haftom Gebregziabher Hagos (Team leader)**
- 2. Abrha Tesfay Asmerom (Team member)**
- 3. Gebrehiwet Hailemariam Abrha (Team member)**
- 4. Tsige Gebremichael (Team member)**

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I. Introduction of the Training Manual

This training manual is designed to empower religious leaders and institutions with the tools, knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to play a central role in peace-building and conflict resolution. In regions affected by conflict, such as Tigray region, Ethiopia, religious institutions have historically served as vital sources of guidance, offering spiritual, social, and moral support to communities in times of crisis. As conflict continues to strain relationships within communities and between institutions, it is crucial to harness the positive influence of religion in fostering reconciliation, building a sustainable peace, restoring trust, and promoting peaceful coexistence.

Religious leaders possess the high moral authority to inspire and guide individuals towards forgiveness, empathy, and respect values essential to long-lasting peace. This manual emphasizes the importance of interfaith dialogue, ethical leadership, and the active involvement of religious institutions in addressing the deep societal trauma caused by conflict. By drawing upon the teachings of the Bible, Quran, and other religious doctrine texts, this training provides a framework for religious leaders to engage their communities in meaningful dialogue and peace-building efforts.

Through a combination of theoretical discussions and practical exercises, participants will explore key concepts such as peace building conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the importance of forgiveness. The manual also highlights the challenges that religious institutions may face basically at ground level in implementing peace-building efforts and provides strategies to overcome these obstacles. Ultimately, this manual seeks to equip religious leaders with the tools to transform their communities into agents of peace, helping to rebuild social cohesion and lay the foundation for a more peaceful future.

II. Message foreword from the CPR

III. About CPR

The Center for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) is a center under the department of political science and strategic studies established in 2018 aimed at enhancing peace, facilitating

reconciliation and conflict resolution through research, rendering comprehensive training and community engagement. In addition to this, the center is deemed to fostering peace building, preventing violence and improving democracy, development and transforming war affected society to durable peace. Lastly, this center is founded as essential institution contributing for peace with various stakeholders through collaborative approach at local, national, regional and beyond.

IV. About the Manual

This training manual is a comprehensive resource aimed at equipping religious institutions and leaders with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to actively contribute to peace-building and conflict resolution. Developed with a focus on conflict-affected regions like Tigray region, Ethiopia, the manual serves as a practical guide for religious leaders who wish to play a pivotal role in promoting reconciliation, healing, and community cohesion.

The manual is structured to provide both theoretical insights and practical tools that religious leaders can apply within their communities. It draws on teachings from the Bible, Quran, and other religious books and texts, emphasizing how faith-based values can be used to foster dialogue, resolve conflicts, and support individuals in conflict-affected areas. The integration of religious principles alongside contemporary peace-building techniques offers a unique approach tailored to the context of regions where religious influence remains valuable and strong.

Each section of the manual is designed to be participatory and interactive, with exercises, discussion prompts, and case studies that encourage reflection and application. It covers key themes such as conflict analysis, mediation, ethical leadership, trauma healing, and interfaith cooperation. Additionally, the manual addresses the specific challenges faced religious institutions in post-conflict settings, offering strategies to overcome resistance and effectively engage in peace efforts.

This resource is intended to be a living document, adaptable to different contexts and continuously updated as peace-building efforts evolve. Whether used in workshops, seminars, or individual study, the manual seeks to empower religious leaders to act as peace agents, contributing to long-term stability and reconciliation in their communities.

V. Organizing principles of the manual

The training manual is guided by key principles that shape its structure, content, and intended impact. These organizing principles ensure that the manual is both relevant and practical for religious leaders working in conflict-affected areas. They include:

1. **Faith-Based Approach:** The manual integrates teachings from religious texts, particularly the Bible and the Quran, to offer faith-centered strategies for peace-building. It encourages religious leaders to draw from their prayer for peace and spiritual traditions to promote reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing within their communities.
2. **Context-Specific:** Recognizing the unique challenges faced by conflict-affected regions like Tigray, the manual is designed with local realities in mind. It addresses the social, political, and cultural contexts of post-conflict communities, making the tools and strategies relevant and applicable to the lived experiences of religious leaders and their congregations.
3. **Practical and Action-Oriented:** This manual emphasizes practical application through case studies, real-life examples, and interactive exercises. The goal is to empower religious leaders with actionable steps they can take to mediate conflicts, build peace, and foster community resilience.
4. **Interfaith Cooperation:** The manual promotes collaboration across different religious groups, advocating for interfaith dialogue and unity in the face of conflict. It encourages leaders from diverse religious backgrounds to work together towards common goals of peace building and reconciliation.
5. **Inclusivity and Participation:** The manual stresses the importance of inclusive approaches, ensuring that peace building efforts take into account the perspectives of all community members, including marginalized groups, gender composition, age, youth, and displaced persons.
6. **Sustainability of Peace Efforts:** The manual emphasizes long-term peace building strategies that promote sustainable reconciliation, ongoing dialogue, and community rebuilding, beyond immediate conflict resolution. It encourages continuous engagement and the development of local capacities for peace.

VI. Audience

This training manual is designed for religious leaders and faith-based practitioners who are at the forefront of peace-building efforts in conflict-affected regions, particularly in Tigray, Ethiopia. The primary audience includes clergy, imams, priests, pastors, and other religious figures that play influential roles within their communities. These leaders are often seen as trusted mediators and have the moral authority to guide their followers toward reconciliation, healing, and peace.

Additionally, the manual is intended for religious organizations, faith-based NGOs, and interfaith groups involved in conflict resolution, peace-building, and humanitarian work. It can also serve as a valuable resource for community leaders, youth leaders, and women's groups who work alongside religious institutions in fostering social cohesion and rebuilding trust in post-conflict settings.

While the focus is on religious leaders, this manual is also applicable to any stakeholders involved in peace-building, development, and conflict mediation efforts in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

VII. Objectives

This training manual aims to equip religious leaders and community actors with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively contribute to peace-building, conflict resolution, and social cohesion in Tigray and other conflict-affected regions. The specific objectives are:

1. **Strengthen the capacity of religious leaders** to mediate conflicts and promote dialogue within their communities using teachings from both the Bible and the Quran.
2. **Promote interfaith collaboration** by fostering a shared understanding among religious leaders from different faiths, helping them work together toward common goals of peace, reconciliation, and unity.
3. **Enhance understanding of peace-building principles** by providing religious leaders with a solid foundation in conflict resolution, peace-building strategies, and methods for addressing local conflicts.

4. **Empower religious leaders to address trauma** by equipping them with the tools to provide emotional and spiritual support to conflict-affected individuals and communities, facilitating healing and forgiveness.
5. **Encourage community engagement** by involving religious leaders in grassroots efforts that promote social cohesion, inclusive development, and long-term stability in conflict-prone areas.
6. **Integrate scriptural insights** into peace-building practices, drawing from religious texts to foster moral leadership and guide followers towards nonviolence, understanding, and justice.

Through these objectives, the manual aims to develop holistic peace-building initiatives that address both the spiritual and social dimensions of conflict, ensuring religious leaders play a central role in the restoration of peace.

VIII. Training process

The training process outlined in this manual is designed to be participatory, interactive, and contextually relevant. It aims to build the capacities of religious leaders and community actors in peace-building and conflict resolution through a structured, yet flexible approach. The process is divided into the following key stages:

1. **Orientation and Introduction:** The training begins with an orientation session where participants are introduced to the objectives, structure, and content of the program. This includes outlining the role of religious leaders in peace-building and the importance of using faith-based approaches.
2. **Interactive Lectures:** Trainers will deliver core lectures on peace-building, conflict resolution, interfaith dialogue, and trauma healing. The content will be based on both religious texts (Bible and Quran) and peace studies principles, providing a balanced framework for understanding conflict and promoting peace.
3. **Group Discussions and Reflection:** Following each lecture, participants will engage in group discussions to reflect on the content and relate it to their personal experiences and community challenges. These sessions will encourage dialogue among participants and allow them to share insights from their respective religious traditions.

4. **Role-Playing and Simulations:** To build practical skills, participants will engage in role-playing and simulations of conflict scenarios, where they will practice mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution techniques in a safe environment.
5. **Case Study Analysis:** Participants will analyze case studies from real-life conflicts in the region and other parts of the world, focusing on the application of faith-based approaches to peace-building. This will allow them to learn from both successes and challenges.
6. **Action Planning:** The training will conclude with a session on developing individual and group action plans, where participants will strategize how to apply the skills and knowledge gained in their communities, fostering long-term peace initiatives.

This process ensures a comprehensive learning experience that is both theoretical and practical, tailored to the specific roles and influence of religious leaders in conflict-affected areas.

IX. Training Materials

The training materials are designed to support the comprehensive delivery of the peace-building and conflict resolution program, providing participants with the resources they need to engage effectively and apply their learning. The materials include:

1. **Participant Handbook:** A detailed guide containing an overview of the training modules, key concepts, exercises, and reflection prompts. It includes summaries of religious teachings related to peace and conflict resolution, practical case studies, and space for personal notes and reflections.
2. **Trainer's Guide:** A comprehensive resource for facilitators that includes detailed instructions for each session, key talking points, suggested activities, and solutions to common challenges. It also contains tips for managing group dynamics and fostering an interactive learning environment.
3. **Visual Aids:** Slideshows, charts, and info-graphics to visually represent key concepts, frameworks, and case studies. These materials help to illustrate complex ideas and facilitate understanding.
4. **Case Studies and Scenarios:** Real-life and hypothetical case studies relevant to the participants' contexts. These materials are used for group discussions, role-playing

exercises, and analysis, providing practical examples of conflict and peace-building situations.

5. **Religious Texts Excerpts:** Selected passages from the Bible and Quran that are relevant to peace-building and conflict resolution. These excerpts serve as a basis for discussions on religious teachings about peace, reconciliation, and moral conduct.
6. **Interactive Exercises:** Worksheets and activity guides for individual and group exercises, including role-playing scenarios, problem-solving tasks, and action planning templates. These materials are designed to engage participants actively and enhance their practical skills.
7. **Evaluation Forms:** Tools for assessing participant progress and gathering feedback on the training process. These forms help trainers to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and make necessary adjustments.
8. **Resource List:** A curated list of additional reading materials, online resources, and organizations related to peace-building and conflict resolution. This list provides participants with opportunities for further study and engagement beyond the training.

These materials are essential for delivering a structured and effective training experience, ensuring that participants have access to the information and tools needed to contribute to peace-building and conflict resolution in their communities.

- Suitable class room
- LCD
- Chart
- Marker
- Laptop
- Handouts as instructional materials

Chapter One: Understanding Conflict

Aim of the chapter/topic

The aim of this chapter is to provide religious leaders and institutions with a comprehensive understanding of conflict, its causes, consequences, and dynamics. This chapter will also highlight the importance of conflict analysis as a crucial tool in promoting peace, reconciliation, and sustainable relationships in their communities.

Learner's Objectives:

At the end of this session, trainers will/should be able to:

- Define the concept of conflict and understand its complexities.
- Define conflict analysis and explain its importance in resolving disputes.
- Apply conflict analysis tools to examine the context, issues and parties involved in conflicts.
- Identify and discuss the causes and consequences of conflicts.
- Differentiate between actors in conflict, such as primary and secondary actors.
- Use conflict analysis tools to analyze conflicts within their communities.
- Develop strategies for conflict resolution rooted in religious teachings and community engagement.

Expected outcome of the chapter/topic

Participants should be equipped to:

- Recognize and address conflicts within their communities with a deeper understanding of their roots.
- Utilize conflict analysis principles and tools to resolve disputes peacefully and effectively.
- Apply their religious teachings and influence to promote reconciliation and peace

Questions for reflection

- ? *Write down types of conflicts that you have experienced or intervened in your social life.*
- ? *Put yourself in a group and discuss the stages of conflict.*

1.1. Meaning and Nature of Conflict

Brainstorm questions:

- What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word "conflict"?
- Do you think conflict is inherently good or bad? Why?
- How do you distinguish conflict from violence?

Definition:

Conflict is defined as a clash or struggle between groups that perceive that their needs, goals, or strategies are incompatible, mutually exclusive, or antagonistic. It involves a perception of incompatibility, attempts to control each other, and antagonistic feelings.

1.1.1. Components of Conflict

Conflict has three components:

Perception: thought or believe about the relationship or situation

Emotion: what people feel about the situation?

Behavior: the action people take in response to relationship or situation

Conflict is an inevitable social phenomenon that occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. It cannot be inherently good or bad; rather, the way we solve conflicts or the outcomes of conflicts can be good or bad.

Conflict is an inevitable social phenomenon that occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings.

Conflict by itself cannot be good or bad. Rather, the way we solve conflicts or the outcomes of conflicts can be good or bad. Thus, conflicts can be constructive and destructive.

Brainstorming: compare and contrast between constructive and destructive conflicts?

Constructive conflicts: are conflicts that have many positive outcomes like: addressing root causes and ending violence to ensure equity, build trust and forging relations to work together.

Destructive conflicts: are violent and have negative outcomes. Lead to negative outcomes like increased violence, mistrust, and limited opportunities for collaboration

The outcomes are: aggravate structural and cultural violence, denial of the root causes, increase mistrust, limit connection and jeopardize the opportunity to work together.

1.2. Definition and Types of Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation.

Direct Violence: The application of force and various forms of violation, to cause physical, emotional and psychological harm or death (Human agent): e.g. children are murdered in war.

Structural violence: subtle violence embedded in the structures of society and state policies which cause human suffering and avoidable gradual death (Structural agent): e.g. children die of poverty.

Cultural Violence: Cultural norms, practices & traditions that cause discrimination, fear, suffering and injustice

Reflection Question: How can religious leaders work to mitigate each of these types of violence in their communities?

1.3. Causes and Consequences of Conflict

1.2.2. Causes of Conflict

Conflict causes can be defined as those factors which contribute to people's grievances. Some of causes of conflicts include:

Resources: territory, money, energy sources, food and how they should be distributed.

Power: who controls political power and how participation in the political decision-making is being allocated.

Identity: the demand for recognition over the once ethnic culture, language and social fabric to which people feel tied.

Status: whether people believe they are treated with respect and dignity and whether their traditions and social position are respected.

Values: to what extent particular tenets of a given society are embodied in systems of government, religion, or ideology

1.2.3. Consequences of Violent Conflicts

✚ The impact of violent conflicts is multidimensional and identifiable at different levels.

Generally, the following are identified as major impacts of conflicts

- Loss of life, Conflict related sexual violence, Destruction of houses, business and social services, Destruction of farmlands and public infrastructures
- Erosion of social cohesion, Inability to uphold common cultural and social values (wedding, mourning, etc...), Large scale and frequent displacements of peoples
- Disruption of inter-communal relations and mistrust, Closure of common market places
- Feeling of insecurity with persistent fear (psychological dimension)
- Increase of crimes, Rise in illegal arms trafficking
- Increased corruption and absence good governance, Deforestation
- Promote war economy and hampers sustainable economic development

1.4.Types (Typologies) of Conflict

Conflict types are described and classified by the number of actors or parties involved the in the conflict in. Accordingly there are about five typologies' of conflict.

1.Intra-personal conflict: refers to conflicts occurring within a person.

2. Inter-personal conflict: refers to conflicts occurring between two or more peoples.

3. Intra-group conflicts: conflicts within a smaller (team, organization, family, etc.) or larger group (religious community, within elites in a country, etc.).

4. Inter-group conflict: Between different groups

5. Intra-state conflict: are conflicts which happen within a state, like civil war.

6. Inter-state conflicts: are conflicts that happened between and among different states.

1.5. Actors of Conflict

Actors in conflict can include individuals, groups, and institutions. They may be classified as:

Primary actors: are actors who are directly involved in the conflict or have a direct stake in the outcome of the conflict (e.g., warring factions).

Secondary actors: are actors who are indirectly involved or affected by a certain conflict and have also an indirect stake in the outcome (E.g., NGOs, community leaders).

***Group Exercise:** Participants should map out the actors involved in a recent local conflict and categorize them as primary or secondary. How did these actors influence the outcome of the conflict?*

1.6. Phases/Stages of conflict

Conflicts develop in phases and can change their level of escalation over time, passing through different stages of activity, intensity, tension and violence. This is conflict dynamic or conflict cycle.

Different authors name and describe these stages differently, but most include, at a minimum the following main stages:

Latent conflict: in this stage the potential for conflict definitely exists hence people have different needs, values, or interests. However, the differences are not great enough to cause one side to act to alter the situation using force.

Emergence: This is the beginning of explicit conflict among the actors. Any triggering event or proximate issue marks the emergence or the "eruption" of explicit conflict.

Escalation: It is marked by intense crisis which involving institutionalization of the issue under contention. Conflicting parties use severity of tactics against each other. This makes the conflict more and more unmanageable and destructive

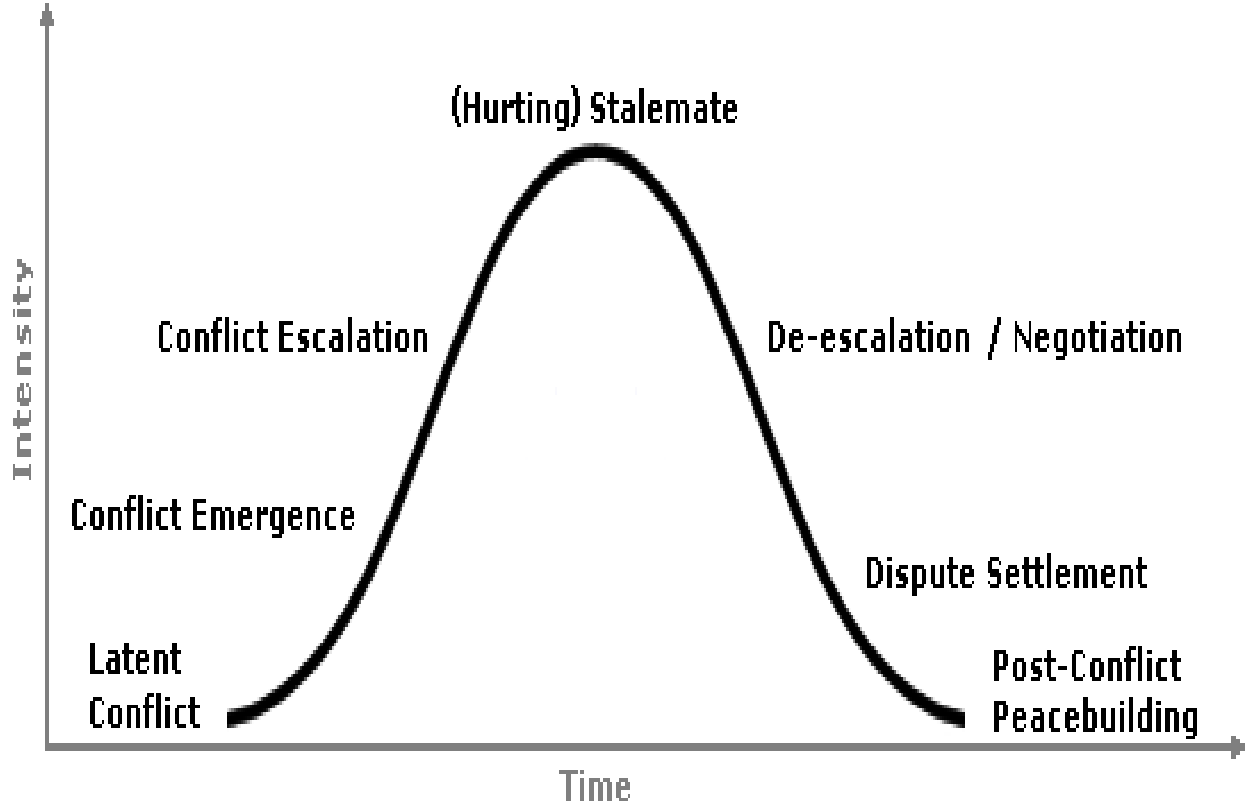
Hurting Stalemate: it is a situation in which neither side can win, but also neither side want to retreat or accept loss/defeat.

De-Escalation: it is reverse direction of an escalation with decreasing in intensity. Provide an ideal opportunity for negotiation and a potential settlement

Settlement/Resolution: In this stage the parties search for mutually beneficial ways of resolving their conflict. The settlement stage marks that the parties conclude cease-fire to end of the active violent conflict and promote resolution.

Post-conflict peace building and reconciliation: in this stage, the primary actors in the conflict begin to heal and to rebuild relationships, slowly putting their society back to live together.

NB. It is not necessary for all conflicts to pass only through this linear life cycle of conflict.



Picture: stages of conflict Adopted from (Author, year: page) (Sources)

Case Study: Present a case study of a conflict in a religious or community setting. Ask participants to identify which phase the conflict was in at different points and suggest interventions for each phase.

1.7.Conflict Analysis

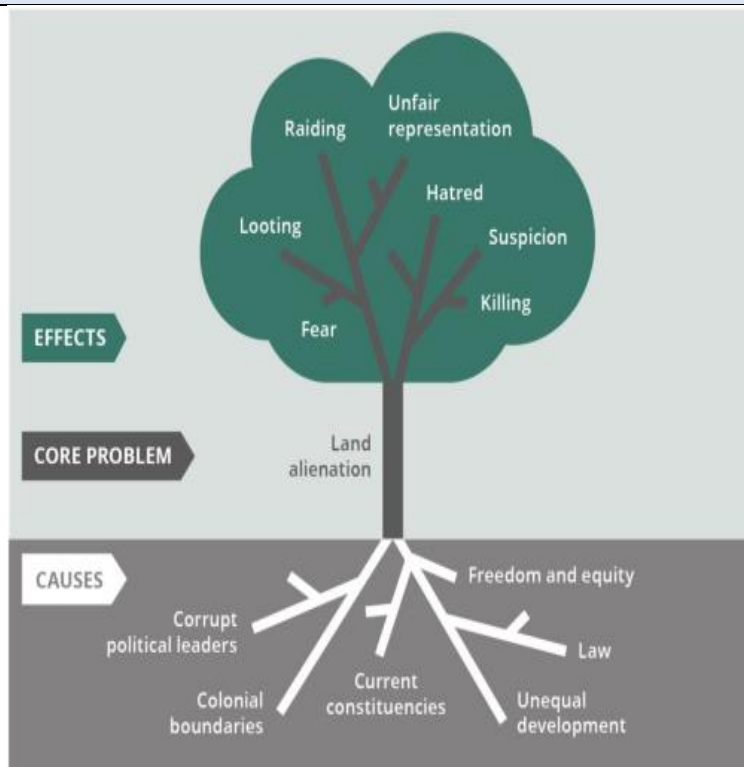
Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the interaction of the conflict origin, nature, context, actors, and dynamics of the conflict to gain deeper understanding. It helps for the reaction,

humanitarian intervention and peace building activities in the context of the conflict by relevant stakeholders.

When we are required to analyze a given conflict, we should have to ask the following key issues:

1. What is the political, economic, and socio-cultural context of the conflict?
2. What are emerging political, economic, ecological, and social issues?
3. What specific conflict prone/affected areas can be situated within this context?
4. Is there a history of conflict? If yes when and where?
5. What are the structural, proximate and triggering causes of the conflict?
6. What factors can contribute to peace? Who are the primary and secondary actors?
7. What are the needs, interests, and positions of the actors in the conflict?
8. What are the current trends of the conflict?
9. What are the windows of opportunity for negotiation and peace?

Case study: locate any social conflict in your community and provide proper analysis of the context, causes, actors and dynamics of the conflict using the above questions?



1.8. Conflict Mapping

Conflict mapping is visualizing of the conflict using different tools for the purpose of understanding the relationships of actors involved in the conflict. It is an art of presenting the causes, actors and their interrelationships in the context of the conflict using conflict tools, like conflict map, diagram, and conflict tree.

It is usually done after a conflict analysis to make it easily comprehensible for anyone who is interested in the issue.

Case study: Analyze a social conflict in your community using the conflict analysis questions.

Trainer's Note: Encourage participants to discuss their experiences and insights, and to share examples of conflicts they have encountered. Facilitate group discussions and provide guidance as needed.

Exercise: Participants will create a conflict map of a local issue, illustrating the main actors, their interests, and the root causes.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of conflict, its causes, consequences, and dynamics. Participants have explored the concept of conflict analysis as a valuable tool for understanding and addressing conflicts peacefully. By understanding the various types of conflicts, their underlying causes, and the potential consequences, religious leaders and institutions can better equip themselves to promote reconciliation and peace within their communities. Through the application of conflict analysis principles and tools, participants can develop effective strategies to navigate and resolve conflicts constructively, drawing upon their religious teachings and influence to foster understanding, compassion, and cooperation.

Reflection: What have you learned in this chapter that will help you resolve or prevent conflicts in your community?

Chapter Two: Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, and Transformation

2.1. Conflict prevention: Approaches and skills

The term conflict prevention is used in this manual guide to describe a fast-developing field that covers broad areas of intervention: This course module provides the fundamental concepts of Conflict Prevention and helps participants to develop the knowledge and skills on issues of conflict and conflict prevention tools. The course begins with a focus on Conflict Prevention Tools, such as Dialogue, Negotiation, Mediation, collaboration conflict resolution, and conflict management which are essential instruments that facilitate proactive conflict prevention

2.2. Conflict management

- Explain conflict management principles, approaches, and interventions

2.2.1. Definition of conflict management

Conflict management is an umbrella term for the way we identify and handle conflicts fairly and efficiently. The goal is to minimize the potential negative impacts that can arise from disagreements and increase the odds of a positive outcome. Conflict management refers to measures that limit, mitigate and/or contain a conflict without necessarily solving it. Conflict management is the process of containing violent conflict, from escalating and spreading to other regions, including other parties. Once violent conflict is managed from escalation, the follow-up action would be seeking for sustainable solutions for the causes of conflicts.

2.2.2. Conflict management Approaches

It's human to deal with conflict by defaulting to what's comfortable. According to University of Pittsburgh professors of management Ken Thomas and Ralph Kilmann, most people take one of two approaches to conflict management, assertiveness or cooperativeness.

Assertiveness approaches to conflict management: Involves standing up for one's own needs or opinions.

Cooperative approaches to conflict management: Focuses on accommodating the needs of others.

2.2.3. Conflict Management models/styles

From these approaches come five modes/styles of conflict management:

1. Accommodating

An accommodating mode of conflict management tends to be high in cooperation but low in assertiveness. When you use this style, you resolve the disagreement by sacrificing your own needs and desires for those of the other party.

This management style might benefit your work when conflicts are trivial and you need to move on quickly. At home, this style works when your relationship with your roommate, partner, or child is more important than being right. Although accommodation might be optimal for some conflicts, others require a more assertive style.

2. Avoiding

When avoiding, you try to dodge or bypass a conflict. This style of managing conflicts is low in assertiveness and cooperativeness. Avoidance is unproductive for handling most disputes because it may leave the other party feeling like you don't care. Also, if left unresolved, some conflicts become much more troublesome. This style denotes low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. Avoidant people neither accede to others' needs nor assert their own. They are diplomatic and perceive conflict as lose-lose. Thus, they prefer to flee than to face it.

However, an avoiding management style works in situations where:

- You need time to think through a disagreement.
- You have more pressing problems to deal with first.
- The risks of confronting a problem outweigh the benefits.

3. Collaborating

A collaborating conflict management style demands a high level of cooperation from all parties involved. This mode is, Individuals in a dispute come together to find a respectful resolution that benefits everyone. Collaborating works best if you have plenty of time and are on the same power level as the other parties involved. If not, you may be better off choosing another style.

4. Competing

When you use a competitive conflict management style (sometimes called 'forcing'), you put your own needs and desires over those of others. This style is high in assertiveness and low in cooperation. In other words, it's the opposite of accommodating. While you might think this style

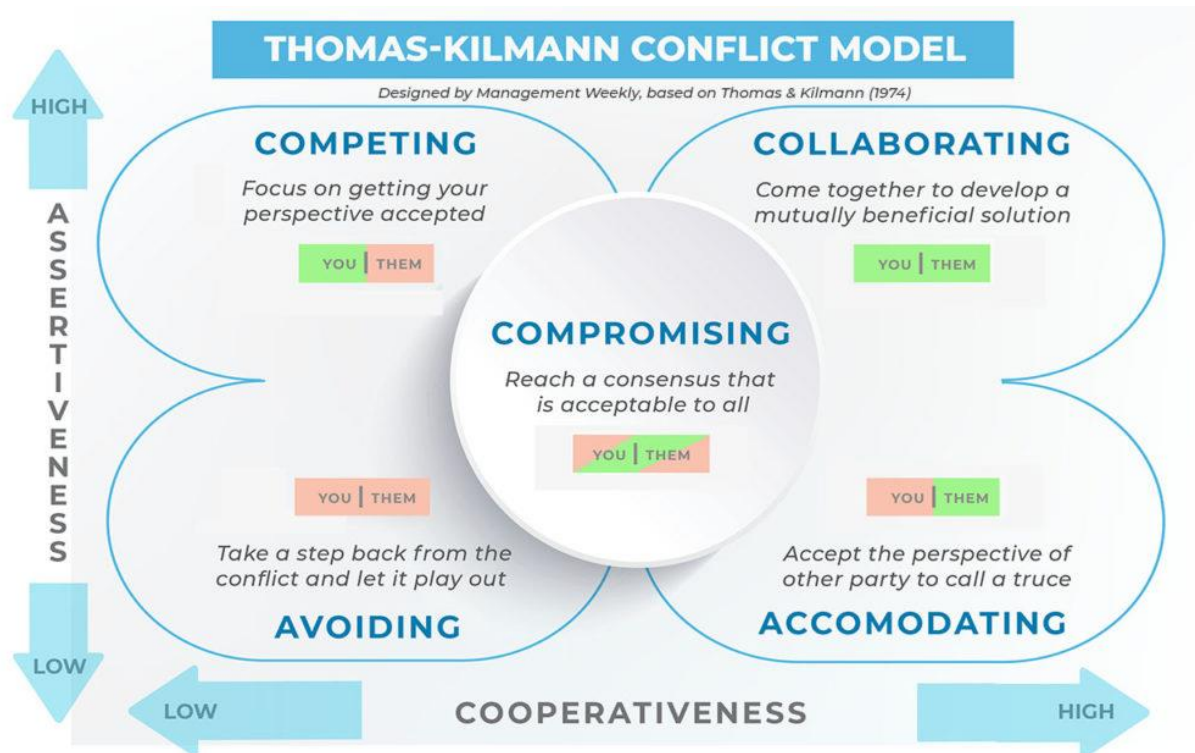
would never be acceptable, it's sometimes needed when you are in a higher position of power than other parties and need to resolve a dispute quickly. Competing mode denotes high assertiveness and low cooperativeness. Competitive people will be aggressive about getting their needs met while being unresponsive to others' needs. Competitive people tend to use their perceived power or throw their weight around They perceive conflict as win-lose.

5. Compromising

Compromising demands moderate assertiveness and cooperation from all parties involved. With this type of resolution, everyone gets something they want or need. This style of managing conflict works well when time is limited. Because of time constraints, compromising isn't always as creative as collaborating and some parties may come away less satisfied than others. The compromising style denotes moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperativeness. All parties bargain and no one gets his/her needs fully met.

Practical exercise:

Expand the discussion on the styles and fundamental skills of conflict resolution through asking the participants to write and talk about how do people normally behave or respond in conflict situations?



2.2.4. Conflict management principles

To effectively manage conflict, certain principles should be followed:

- I. Acknowledge the conflict
- II. Maintain a neutral position
- III. Keep the discussion issue-orientated, not person-orientated
- IV. Facilitate exploration rather than responsibility
- V. Focus on interests rather than on positions
- VI. Generate agreement rather than decision
- VII. Be wary of using power
- VIII. Understand the underlying dynamics of the conflict

2.3. Conflict Resolution

What is conflict resolution?

“Stop fighting start talking”

2.3.1. Definition of conflict resolutions

Conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the underlying incompatibilities in a conflict and mutual acceptance of each party's existence. It is identifying and addressing the root causes of violent conflict. A more comprehensive term, which implies that the deep- rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed. This implies that behavior is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed.

Conflict resolution is a broad term which refers to the many ways disputes are resolved. Conflict resolution is a progression from an order based on coercion to one based on voluntarism. It creates a relationship not characterized by hierarchy but one marked by equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth. The term also refers to addressing the causes of conflict and seeking to build new and lasting relationships between hostile groups.

2.3.2. Conflict resolution approaches

Cooperative problem solving is an unassisted procedure which includes formal or informal discussions between individuals or groups. With this process, parties work jointly to determine the nature of their differences and look for creative alternatives which will allow them to meet their needs, desires or concerns. Parties using cooperative problem solving do not need to have an especially strong relationship but they must acknowledge a need to collaborate with one another to resolve their differences (CDR, 1997).

Negotiation refers to either competitive processes (positional negotiation) or cooperative efforts (interest based negotiation). In positional negotiation, parties make offers and counter-offers which they feel will resolve the conflict. These exchanges of offers typically start to converge on a solution which both parties find acceptable. Success at positional negotiation is based on a party's ability to bluff the other party about its positions of strength and weakness in order to gain an outcome which is in their favor. Interest-based negotiation is designed for parties who have a need to create or maintain healthy relationships. In this type of process, parties discuss the issues which face them and express the interests, values and needs that they bring to the table. Instead of focusing on competitive measures and winning the negotiation, parties collaborate by looking to create solutions which maximize the meeting of their interests, values and needs (Ibid.).

Mediation refers to a process through which a third party provides procedural assistance to help individuals or groups in conflict to resolve their differences. Mediation processes vary throughout the world in form and underlying philosophy. In many Western countries, the mediator is usually an independent, impartial person who has no decision-making authority. In other societies, it may be more important that the mediator is known and trusted by the parties rather than being seen as impartial. Mediation is a voluntary process and its success is linked to the vesting of decision-making authority in the parties involved in the dispute. The mediator structures the process in a way which creates a safe environment for parties to discuss the conflict and find solutions which will meet their interests.

Facilitation is an assisted process which is similar to mediation in its objectives; however, facilitated processes typically do not adhere to a tightly defined procedure. In this type of proceeding, the facilitator works with parties to increase the effectiveness of their communication and problem-solving abilities. The facilitator may be either a third party or a person within one of the groups who is able to provide procedural assistance and to refrain from entering into the substance of the discussion.

Arbitration is a form of dispute resolution where a third party makes the decision on the outcome of dispute. Typically, the parties appoint the arbitrator to render this decision. The arbitrator's decision is either binding or non-binding on the parties depending on the arrangement made prior to entering the arbitration process. Non-binding arbitration is frequently used to assist parties who are deadlocked on a certain issue. While there is no obligation for parties to accept the outcome, the weight of the arbitrator's decision may provide the impetus for parties to reconsider their settlement options (Ibid.)

Role Play Activity: create a group of three cohorts named “GN”, “GM, and “GA”. Finally, by selecting any issue of contention, simulate to the participants of the training on how to resolve the issue under contention through negotiation (GN), mediation (GM and arbitration (GA).

2.3.3. Fundamental Skills in Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution skills, commonly summarized as the "three R's"—Recognize, Respect, and Resolve—are essential for practitioners. Key skills include:

- ✓ Recognizing that conflict is a natural part of life.
- ✓ Selecting the appropriate conflict resolution approach (e.g., contending, yielding, problem-solving, or avoiding).
- ✓ Preparing for different scenarios, such as BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) and WATNA (Worst Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement).
- ✓ Listening and learning from others.
- ✓ Respecting differences and finding common ground.
- ✓ Believing in the principle of give and take.
- ✓ Being creative, not reactive

2.4. Transformation conflicts

This module introduces you to the concept of conflict transformation and how it differs from conflict resolution, management, and prevention. Conflict transformation is a concept designed to reframe the way in which peace-building initiatives are discussed and pursued, particularly in contexts of ethnic conflicts. Transformation happens through the process of empowerment and recognition that is a potential part of every conflict resolution process. Conflict transformation refers to the process of moving from conflict-habituated systems to peace systems. This process is distinguished from the more common term of conflict resolution because of its focus on systems change.

2.5. Mediating conflicts

Mediation is a critical tool for conflict resolution, providing structured guidance for resolving disputes while allowing parties to maintain control over the outcome. Mediators play a neutral role, ensuring fair discussions and helping parties find mutually acceptable solutions.

2.6.Conclusion

Understanding the various approaches and tools for conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation is key to effectively addressing conflicts. Through the development of skills like negotiation, mediation, and collaborative problem-solving, individuals and groups can better manage conflicts and work towards sustainable peace.

Chapter Three: Peace and Peace-building process

Chapter Overview: This module delves into the concept of peace and peace-building, drawing from the teachings of the Holy Bible and the Quran to empower religious leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to cultivate peace within their communities. By engaging in interactive activities and discussions, participants will gain a profound understanding of their pivotal role in preventing conflicts, fostering reconciliation, and advocating for lasting peace.

Brainstorming:

- **What is peace-building? How does it differ from conflict prevention and resolution?**
- **How does peace-building relate to your role as a religious leader?**
- **What are the key aspects of peace-building in your context?**

Peace: often refers to harmony and healthy relationship of human kind that lacks conflict/violence

Peace-building refers to the comprehensive process of addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting sustainable peace within a community or society. Unlike to conflict resolution, it goes beyond conflict resolution, aiming to create the conditions necessary for lasting peace by strengthening institutions, addressing inequalities, and fostering reconciliation.

Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." This verse highlights the importance of actively working towards peace, aligning with the peace-building concept. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10) - "The believers are but a single brotherhood. So make peace between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy." This verse underscores the responsibility of believers to foster peace and resolve conflicts within their communities.

In Tigray, Ethiopia, where recent conflicts have profoundly impacted communities, religious leaders play a vital role in guiding these efforts. This module explores the concept of peace-building and equips religious leaders with the knowledge and skills to foster peace within their communities.

Biblical Support:

- **Matthew 5:9** - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
- This verse highlights the importance of actively working towards peace, aligning with the peace-building concept.

Quranic Support:

- **Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10)** - "The believers are but a single brotherhood. So make peace between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy."
- This verse underscores the responsibility of believers to foster peace and resolve conflicts within their communities.

Question for Reflection:

1. Conceptual understanding of Peace-Building?

- Define peace-building and explore its key aspects in light of religious teachings.
- *"Seek peace and pursue it" (1 Peter 3:11) encourages active efforts in maintaining peace. "if they incline to peace, then incline to it also" (Quran 8:61) emphasizes the importance of accepting peace when offered.*

2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Religious Institutions in Peace-Building:

- Reflect on how religious institutions in Tigray, Ethiopia, can contribute to peace-building, considering their moral authority, community reach, and potential biases.
- *"Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). This highlights the collective wisdom within religious institutions. "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction" (Quran 16:125) encourages using moral authority to guide others towards peace.*

3. Peace Education in Religious Institutions:

- How do your religious teachings promote peace and address potential sources of conflict within the Tigray community? Analyze current practices and identify areas for improvement.
- *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). This verse advocates for early education in peace and righteousness. "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire" (Quran 66:6). This suggests the importance of teaching peace and virtue to prevent future conflict.*

4. Advocacy for Peace:

- How can religious leaders use their platforms to advocate for peace in Tigray, Ethiopia, through public pronouncements, policy lobbying, and collaboration with NGOs?
- *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8) encourages advocacy for justice and peace. "Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and transgression" (Quran 5:2). This verse calls for cooperation in good causes, including peace advocacy.*

5. Communication Strategies for Peace Advocacy:

- Explore effective communication strategies for religious leaders to advocate for peace.
- *"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6) emphasizes the importance of effective and respectful communication. "And speak to people good [words]" (Quran 2:83). This highlights the need for kind and constructive communication in advocating for peace.*

6. Addressing Root Causes of Conflict:

- How can religious teachings and practices, such as promoting forgiveness, advocating for social justice, and fostering dialogue, be used to address the root causes of conflict?
- *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). This promotes addressing conflicts with positive actions such as forgiveness. "The repayment of a bad action is one equivalent to it. But if someone pardons and puts things right, his reward is with Allah" (Quran 42:40). This encourages forgiveness and reconciliation as key to resolving conflicts.*

Trainers Note:

- ✓ **Facilitate Group Discussions:** Lead discussions on the core principles of peace-building, referencing scriptural guidance from both the Bible and the Quran.
- ✓ **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Use role-play to explore how peace-building principles can be applied to real-world situations in Tigray.
- ✓ **Brainstorming Sessions:** Encourage participants to brainstorm creative ways to deliver peace education within their religious communities.
- ✓ **Showcase Success Stories:** Discuss successful examples of faith-based peace advocacy efforts in Africa.
- ✓ **Guest Speakers:** Invite local peace-building organization representatives to share their experiences and discuss potential collaborations.
- ✓ **Develop Action Plans:** Guide participants in creating personal or institutional peace-building action plans with clear goals, timelines, and evaluation methods.

Activity 3.1: Building Peace

- **Objective:** Equip religious leaders with practical peace-building skills through collaborative activities.
- **Materials:** Whiteboard or flip chart, markers, handouts with brainstorming prompts.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Divide participants into small groups based on religious affiliation or geographic area to foster interfaith collaboration.
 2. Brainstorm joint peace-building initiatives for Tigray, addressing challenges to peace, potential collaborations, and specific initiatives for promoting peace and reconciliation.
 3. Present group ideas to the larger group for discussion and feedback.
 4. Trainers summarize key discussion points and provide constructive feedback.

Storytelling:

Share success stories of faith-based peace-building initiatives in Tigray, Ethiopia. Guiding questions include:

- What was the nature of the conflict?
- How did religious leaders intervene?
- What role did their faith play in the resolution process?
- What lessons can be learned for promoting peace-building today?

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of their role in peace-building and develop concrete action plans to promote peace within their communities.

Aim of this module:

- ✓ The training aims to equip religious leaders in Tigray with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote peace-building and conflict prevention within their communities.

Brainstorming Peace:

- ✓ Begin by asking participants to write down words or phrases that come to mind when they think of "peace." Collect responses and discuss the different connotations and aspects of peace from both religious and secular perspectives.

3.1. Understanding the concept of peace

Traditionally, the term peace is an absence of violence, conflict and war. The concept peace is often equated with harmony and lack of conflict or violence. It conjures images of accord and bliss in psychological, social and political science (Geong, 2005).

3.2. Types of Peace (Explain the negative peace and positive peace)

Peace can be classified as negative and positive peace

- A. Negative Peace:** is a state in which there is an absence of violence and war. It can be achieved by violent means and still have unrest.
- B. Positive Peace:** is the absence (or reduction of violence) and the presence of “positive components” that enable and sustain peaceful growth and peaceful change. A condition in which there is relatively robust justice, equity, and liberty, and relatively little violence and misery at the social level.

3.3. Comprehend the concept culture of peace

The idea of promoting a culture of peace was embraced at a UNESCO congress in 1989.

A culture of peace “...consists of values, attitudes and behaviors that reflect and inspire social interaction and shard based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human

rights, tolerance, and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue negotiation (UNGA, 1998).

The United Nations General Assembly, 1997 adopted a resolution calling for nations and citizens to promote values, attitudes, and behaviors that reject violence, address the root causes of conflict, and focus on the resolution of disputes through discussion and negotiation.

The idea of the promotion culture of peace has been growing and establishing itself, and is becoming a reference point for a great social movement worldwide scale.

To shift thinking and action away from a culture of war in to culture of peace the UNESCO and the UN developed declaration on a culture of Peace that elaborates eight areas of focus as part of an action plan:

1. Education,
2. Sustainable development,
3. Human rights protection,
4. Gender equality,
5. Democratic participation,
6. Advancement of understanding,
7. Tolerance and solidarity

Group discussion to elaborate on the subject matter of the top:

- *Discuss how the above issues can used to promote culture of peace and Social cohesion in your community?*

3.4.Peace-building: conceptual definitions

Peace-building is a long-term process rooted in the teachings of the Holy Bible and the Quran, encompassing all activities intended to build and promote peace while overcoming violence. It involves creating structures that foster lasting peace and prevent future conflict, going beyond merely ending strife.

Peace-building, as defined by religious teachings, involves measures to consolidate peaceful relations and create an environment that deters the emergence or escalation of tensions. It assumes that conflict is a natural part of human existence, with the goal of transforming

destructive behaviors into constructive outcomes. This process involves building or rebuilding relationships through justice, human rights, reconciliation, and restorative practices, such as forgiveness and community building.

Peace-building can occur before violent conflict erupts or after it ends, promoting peaceful coexistence by addressing deep-rooted causes of conflict. Religious institutions, with their moral authority and deep community roots, are uniquely positioned to play a vital role in peace-building efforts, especially in a faith-based society like Tigray

3.5. Peace-building principles and frameworks

Peace-building agents work towards addressing the core issues causing conflict, changing patterns of interaction between involved parties. Core principles peace-building include:

- **Dialogue and Communication:** Emphasize active listening, respectful communication, and fostering understanding between different groups, as advocated by religious teachings. *"Come now, let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). This verse encourages dialogue and understanding. "And lower your wing to the believers who follow you" (Quran 26:215). This promotes humility and open communication.*
- **Non-Violence:** Explore peaceful methods of conflict resolution, aligned with the teachings of the Bible and the Quran, which advocate against violence. *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil" (Romans 12:17). And let not the hatred of others make you avoid justice" (Quran 5:8). This emphasizes justice and restraint.*
- **Reconciliation and Forgiveness:** Promote healing and reconciliation between those affected by conflict, rooted in scriptural teachings on forgiveness and mercy. *"Bear with each other and forgive one another" (Colossians 3:13). "But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Quran 64:14).*
- **Social Justice and Equity:** Address root causes of conflict by promoting fairness and equal opportunity, drawing from religious principles of justice. *"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression" (Isaiah 1:17). "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice" (Quran 4:135).*
- **Sustainability:** Build a culture of peace that can be maintained over time, ensuring long-term stability in the community. *"Let us not grow weary of doing good" (Galatians 6:9).*

This verse supports enduring efforts in peace-building. "And do not cause corruption upon the earth" (Quran 2:11). This emphasizes long-term sustainability and peace.

- **Comprehensiveness:** this is the ability to see the broad picture and effect change. It means identifying the felt needs of those involved, developing a vision of what should be worked towards, and coming up with actions to achieve them. The community should be involved throughout the peace-building process.
- **Interdependence:** this involves the engagement of different stakeholders/ actors. Therefore, the role of the peace-building agent is to improve the quality of relationships within the community. Peace-building supports the interdependent relationships that are necessary to effect and sustain the desired changes.

The frameworks of peace-building take a people-centered, relationship-building, and participatory process approach. They focus on promoting peaceful coexistence and addressing structural causes of conflict. As summarized from the work of Joan B. Kroc (2008), peace-building:

- Involves values, goals, and a commitment to human rights and human needs;
- Goes beyond conflict transformation;
- Cannot ignore structural forms of injustice and violence;
- Is founded on an ethic of interdependence, partnership, and limiting violence
- Depends on relational skills
- Includes complex analyses of the underlying cultures, histories, root causes, and immediate stressors;
- Creates spaces where people interact in new ways, expanding experience and practicing new means of communication;
- Heals trauma, and promotes justice, and transforms relationships;
- Requires capacity and relationship building at multiple levels;
- Is complex and has multiple actors

3.6. Peace-building approaches and skills

Peace-building approaches aim at preventing violent outbreaks of conflict or to make a sustainable transformation of violent conflict into peaceful actions. Approaches to peace-building

fundamentally have different opinions about how peace-building should be approached. One approach categorizes peace-building into a prescriptive and elective approach.

In a prescriptive model, a peace-building process works through a top-bottom approach to intervene in a specific issue. The solution or strategy for change wholly depends on an 'outside' expert who utilizes his/her skills and techniques to offer alternate solutions to the conflict without major recourse to the prevailing techniques or opportunities in the target community. Elective model, on the other hand, addresses conflict through a popular participatory process, thereby allowing target communities to utilize existing local resources to resolve their conflict or bring about sustainable peace and development.

Effective peace-building requires a diverse set of approaches and skills. You can employ interfaith dialogue to foster understanding and cooperation between different religious communities.

Peace-building skills are a toolbox for fostering cooperation and understanding in the face of conflict. They can be applied on a personal level, in communities, and even internationally.

Effective peace-building requires a diverse set of approaches and skills. Religious leaders, guided by their faith, possess unique **skills** such as:

- **Mediation:** Facilitate communication and negotiation between conflicting parties, guiding them towards peaceful resolutions without imposing solutions. *"Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). "And if two parties among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them" (Quran 49:9).*
- **Dialogue Facilitation:** Create safe spaces for open and honest conversations, fostering communication between conflicting parties. *"Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19). "And consult them in the matter" (Quran 3:159).*
- **Conflict Transformation:** Shift negative attitudes and behaviors towards peace-building. *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). "The good deed and the bad deed are not the same. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better" (Quran 41:34).*

- **Education:** Promote peace values and conflict resolution skills within communities, incorporating these into religious teachings.
- **Advocacy:** Lobby for policies that promote peace and justice, using religious teachings to guide their efforts.

3.7. Peace education

Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavioral changes that will enable people to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully.

- *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Peace education promotes humility and peace, leading to harmony. "Cooperate in righteousness and piety" (Quran 5:2). Peace education fosters cooperation and piety.*

Peace education is a transformative process that equips religious leaders and institutions with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to foster peaceful coexistence. It goes beyond merely avoiding conflict, empowering leaders to foster dialogue, promote understanding, and challenge prejudice. By integrating peace education into their teachings, religious leaders can play a vital role in promoting harmony within their communities.

Anticipated Challenges of Peace Education:

- Engaging religious leaders effectively to promote peace and live out the values taught.
- Overcoming institutional resistance to peace education, especially when vested interests may oppose it.

3.8. Peace advocacy

Religious leaders have a powerful voice and significant influence. They can use their platforms to advocate for peace initiatives and policies that promote justice and equality. This can involve public statements condemning violence, lobbying for peaceful solutions, and collaborating with civil society organizations on peace-building initiatives.

- *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8). "O you who have believed, stand up firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah" (Quran 4:135).*

Activity 3.2

Participants develop a sample press release condemning a hypothetical act of violence and promoting peace in Tigray.

3.9. Peace practice

Peace-building is an ongoing process that requires sustained commitment. Identify concrete actions you and your religious institution can take to promote peace in your community. This could involve organizing interfaith peace dialogues, supporting reconciliation efforts, or providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations.

- *"Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building" (Romans 14:19).*
"Make peace between them in justice and fairness" (Quran 49:9).

Peace-building is an ongoing process that requires sustained commitment. Religious leaders can demonstrate their dedication to peace by:

- ✚ Establish peace committees to address community conflicts.
- ✚ Leading by example, fostering peace and reconciliation within their communities.

3.10. Conclusion

The module on peace-building emphasizes the crucial role of religious leaders in fostering sustainable peace in Tigray, Ethiopia, by drawing on teachings from the Holy Bible and the Quran. Peace-building is portrayed as a comprehensive and long-term process that goes beyond merely resolving conflicts; it seeks to address the root causes of conflict and create conditions for lasting peace. By equipping religious leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills, the module aims to empower them to lead peace-building initiatives within their communities. The training highlights the importance of interfaith collaboration, dialogue, reconciliation, and social justice in promoting peace. It also recognizes the unique position of religious institutions in influencing community values and emphasizes the need for integrating peace education into religious teachings. Through activities such as brainstorming, role-playing, and developing action plans, the module encourages religious leaders to actively engage in peace advocacy and practice. Ultimately, the module underscores that peace-building is an ongoing and participatory

process, requiring the sustained commitment of religious leaders to promote harmony, reconciliation, and social justice within their communities.

Chapter Four: The Role of Religion in Peace-building and Conflict Resolution

4.1. Introduction to Religion/Faith and Peace-building: the interplay

Brainstorming

What is the nexus between Religion and peace-building/conflict Resolution?

The role and interplay between religion, peace, and conflict is a contentious and polarizing subject, attracting a wide array of arguments and contrasting opinion, often grounded in popular belief rather than empirical facts. Despite the contentiousness of these debates and the perceived importance that is placed on religion, the link between religion, peace and conflict is visible. Thus, the role of religion in building peace or igniting conflict is possible. However, this manual does not attempt to give an ultimate answer to the very tough question of whether religion is a cause of conflict or not. It will rather reflect on the positive role of religion in peace building in contexts of conflict and peace building around the world.

From this point of view, religion is a positive force in promoting peace-building, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Indeed, religious actors play a paramount role in ensuring peace, encouraging peace building and practice of conflict resolution and conflict prevention at local, national and international level. The role of religious institutions includes building peace, resolving conflict, preventing conflict and creating harmony. Religious institutions have a long history of playing a vital role in fostering peace and resolving conflict within communities. In Tigray, Ethiopia, these institutions continue to be a source of guidance and support during challenging times.

Can religion play a positive role in peace building?

Current events stand in contrast to the positive role that religion and religious leaders have played in building peace over the course of time. Some of the greatest peace builders of the 20th century have also been religious leaders. To mention few; Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King are names synonymous with the practice of non-violence. Many non-violent movements have been based on religious principles and the major religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam all have forms of non-violence and peace as part of their

religious traditions. This highlights a contradiction which has been played out through history; on the one hand religion had been a motivator of conflict, yet it has also been pivotal in developing key concepts of peace and non-violence as well as creating peace.

What Bible and Quran say about peace and peaceful coexistence?

Remainder for Trainers

*It is very imperative to have participants spend some time discoursing and reflecting about peace and peace-building as a basis for future discussion in the workshop. Among essential works that can bring good success is to motivate people come up with their own words that are used for peace promotion, reconciliation, and look at what they mean and/or how they are applied. Very interesting practice here is to look at proverbs of **Bible and Quran** that deal with peace, reconciliation and harmony.*

4.2.Importance of Conflict Resolution and Peace-building in Tigray

We know that the devastating war in Tigray brought unforeseen social, economic and political crises. Religious institutions not only their servants and followers were targets and victims of the crises but also the institutions themselves were victims of all types of atrocities. The impact of the war spills over the overall day to day life of the community. Mistrust between religious institutions, family, neighboring community, society and government, employee and employer, conflict within the community etc are active experiences. Besides, unethical or immoral and illegal acts like theft, killing, kidnapping, injustice and corruption are reflected as normal values. The society is in deep trauma and hopelessness due to these dreadful conditions. Hence, conflict resolution and peace-building activities are the core pillars of healing the society from its pain. To build peace and resolve these conflict induced challenges, religious institutions and leaders take a lion share. The mistrust, injustice, corruption, intolerance, hopelessness and the like that get a fertile ground within the society can be uprooted through real education of religious institutions. The very effort of religious institutions must focus on bringing back the social cohesion, peace and moral values of their adherents. To do this the religious institutions must

equipped with the knowledge, skill and attitude as well as religious ethical values necessary to thriving peace and undermine conflict.

Group discussion

1. How do you build trust between religious institutions and adherents?
2. Discuss various strategies that can be applied to give people the opportunity they need to become agents of peace?
3. How can your religious institution leverage on followers engagement to uproot conflicts and build peace within the community?

4.3.Challenges for peace-building and conflict prevention/Resolution: from religious perspective in Tigray

It is clear that we all as human being in general and as followers of our respective religion in particular learn best by example. Religious leaders or institutions are one of the key actors in the lives of their followers particularly the youth when it comes to transferring and facilitating knowledge, attitudes and values that foster peace so as to shape the mind of followers. Hence, Religious leaders are expected to teach and inspire their followers and often become important role models. When programmes and activities are implemented role modeling becomes a central element of the preaching process via transformative approach. Beyond preaching on religious and social gatherings, religious leaders need to: 1) demonstrate and follow attitudes, behaviors and actions that are ethical 2) show mutual understanding, respect and appreciation for others 3) be aware and welcoming of diversity 4) demonstrate consistency between their words, behaviors and actions, they have to walk their talk 5) be reflective and conscious of the impact that their behaviors and attitudes have on their followers.

Religious leaders are requested to always reflect on the ethical implications of their behavior and to act upon those reflections, much like what their followers are asked to do the same. This also means that as religious leaders, they need to model failures and vulnerabilities as much as they model success, since these are important parts of the human condition. It is not only from success that we can learn but also from our failures. However, nowadays, religious institutions lack implementing what the principles of the institutions says. There is no as such an open ear to

listen more what the public says. They fear change; they do not want to introduce new idea and approach to reach their followers. Religious leaders talk and preach about moral values of religion but not walking what they talk in the ground.

Brainstorming

Assume that there is a religious leader who preaches deeply and daily about peace, mutual-coexistence, love, truth, trust, empathy, respect, forgiveness, reconciliation and so on, and condemn hate, animosity, false, theft, and corruption etc on different stages. But practically he is living none of these moral values. What will be the response and fate of the respected followers of the religious institution? Does the seed he sows get a fertile ground to grow?

4.4.The Importance of interfaith dialogue in peace-building and Conflict prevention: Interfaith Engagement for Peace

The importance of interfaith dialogue in peace-building and Conflict prevention is very critical. It can nurture key values for peace-building through dialogue and peace education to find common ground. Interfaith dialogue brings healthy social cohesion among different religious followers.

Reflection

What do you think are the building blocks of a religious and peaceful society?

The key building blocks of peaceful society are respect, empathy, responsibility, reconciliation, trust and forgiveness. They create the basis to foster positive relationships with others and to respond to the ethical demands of followers of respective religion. These key values must be integrated in any interfaith dialogue and religious institutions since they are fundamental to nurturing mutual understanding, to accompanying the religious community in the journey of appreciation and openness to diversity and respect, as well as to building a culture of peace. Religious leaders need to encourage and nurture **respect, empathy, responsibility, reconciliation, trust** and **forgiveness** in the community as indispensable attitudes and competencies to contribute to peace. It is vital that religious leaders and their followers able to reflect on what is ethical and nurture their own values in a positive way to ensure dignity for all.

Discuss what each of these terms mean: respect, empathy, responsibility, reconciliation, trust and forgiveness from your religious perspective.

- ❖ **Respect:** it is the positive spirit that we show regard and appreciation for people around us, for their cultures, beliefs and ways of thinking. It is very difficult prevailing peace without respect. Mutual respect is the fundamental attribute for building peace and is essential value to build relationships among ourselves. It is central to human rights and human dignity. It is by respecting others that we acknowledge and appreciate diversity, that we are able to build friendships and relationships regardless of our differences. In some cases, we perceive respect as compliance where we can follow instructions from authority. Contextualization is important to understand respect and religious institutions need to be aware and mindful of the context in order to help communities be respectful.
- ❖ **Empathy:** it is the capacity to connect with others and try to understand how other people are feeling. It starts with listening with both our heads and our hearts. It requires a willingness to go beyond our own framework of understanding. It is also the capacity to “put yourself in another’s shoes and share the burden and pain of others as yours” and to reflect on how you would behave, react and feel if you were experiencing what the other person is experiencing. Empathy leads to compassion and to seeing the humanity in the other, even when they have wronged us.
- ❖ **Responsibility:** it can be described as the ability to respond to the ethical demands of our societies but also to our common humanity and interconnectedness. We do not live in isolation and each one of our actions (or failures to act) has consequences for others and for the world around us. Responsibility is as much an individual value, as it is a collective duty to care for our communities and our planet.
- ❖ **Reconciliation:** it is a method of bringing closer once again people or families who were split apart or destroyed by massacres, wars, etc so as to rebuild community again. It helps to bring back social cohesion which is the quality of bonds and dynamics that exist between the groups within a society. Reconciliation requires dialogue and willingness to mend a broken relation, to restore a difficult situation and to transform the relationship and ourselves. It is the key to build long and lasting peace and bridges of trust among divided communities. It is an approach to life that values change and transformation, that allows resolving differences and conflicts and to progress towards building inclusive and

peaceful communities. Unlike forgiveness which is a one-way process (we can forgive even if the other has not forgiven us), reconciliation is a two-way process – it requires both parties. Reconciliation becomes necessary when negative conflict has occurred and relationships have been damaged. It is especially important in situations of high interdependence where a complete physical or emotional barrier between parties in a conflict cannot be maintained. Reconciliation thus refers to the restoration of relationships to a level where cooperation and trust become possible again. It promotes an encounter between the open expression of the painful past and the search for articulation of a long-term, interdependent future. It provides a place for truth and mercy to meet; where concern for exposing what happened and letting go in favor of a renewed relationship is validated and embraced. Hence, it recognizes the need to give time and place to justice and peace, where redressing the wrong is held together with the vision of a common, connected future.

- ❖ **Forgiveness:** how can we build peace if we do not mend broken relationships and learn how to forgive, heal and restore them? Forgiving is the only path to acknowledge the pain caused by others and to let it go, while looking towards the future and healing ourselves. It is a one-way process, as it does not require the other party to agree.

Generally, the relational dimension among religious institutions that focuses on reconciliation, forgiveness, healing and building trust and future vision is very essential. It entails reducing the negative effects of conflict by repairing and transforming relationships. Therefore, religious leaders and faith-based organizations in our society can play a critical role in providing the moral fabric that reduces the likelihood of conflict and increases peace through ethical reflections. They also offer a solid basis for spiritual healing of trauma that victims experienced during conflicts and encourage forgiveness and reconciliation. They can cultivate spaces for the community to learn to live together and build a better future. However, religion can also be used to fuel violence if it is not handled correctly. For instance, the immoderate religious leaders of Ethiopia encourage violence in the name of their respective religion during the 2021 destructive war against Tigray, even if such violence/war runs counter to the teachings of the religion itself.

4.5. Conclusion

The role of religion in peace-building and conflict resolution is complex, as it can both foster peace and incite conflict. This module emphasizes the positive potential of religion, highlighting

the historical contributions of religious leaders to non-violence and peace. In the context of Tigray, Ethiopia, religious institutions play a crucial role in healing the deep societal wounds caused by war, promoting reconciliation, trust, and moral values. However, the potential for religion to be misused to fuel conflict is acknowledged. Therefore, religious leaders must embody the values they preach, ensuring their actions align with ethical teachings to effectively contribute to peace-building efforts.

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