

# **CONFLICT AND PEACE**

## **UNIT ONE: UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT**

A PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES COURSE  
FOR MYANMAR

## ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်အမည်

ရွှေပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (မြဲ - ၀၀၂၁၀)  
အမှတ် (၁၅၃/၁၅၅)၊ သစ်တောအောက်လမ်း၊  
မောင်လေးဝင်းရပ်ကွက်၊ အလုံမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်

## ထုတ်ဝေသူ

ဦးအောင်မြတ်စိုး

## စာပေတိုက်အမည်

မုခ်ဦးစာပေ

အမှတ် (A4)၊ မြကန်သာလမ်း၊ မြကန်သာအိမ်ယာ၊  
အမှတ် (၂) ရပ်ကွက်၊ ကမာရွတ်မြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်တိုင်းဒေသကြီး  
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## ပုံနှိပ်မှတ်တမ်း

ထုတ်ဝေခြင်းလုပ်ငန်း အသိအမှတ်ပြု လက်မှတ်အမှတ် - ၀၁၉၄၇

## ပုံနှိပ်ခြင်း

ပထမအကြိမ်၊ အုပ်စု ၁၀၀၀  
ဒီဇင်ဘာလ၊ ၂၀၁၆ ခုနှစ်



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BEFORE YOU START USING THE BOOK, PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION ON THESE TWO PAGES. IT WILL EXPLAIN HOW THE BOOK IS DESIGNED, AND GIVE A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC OF PEACE EDUCATION.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CONFLICT AND PEACE?

Conflicts are all around us. It is challenging to transform those conflicts into peace. *Conflict and Peace* will help you gain a deeper understanding about the reasons why conflicts exist, and the methods for transforming conflicts into sustainable and just peace. You will examine the impacts of conflict, violence, and peace on yourself, your relationships, and your communities. You will increase your understanding of empathy, tolerance, non-violence and pluralism, and develop critical and creative thinking skills. You will gain skills in the following areas:

- communication;
- management and awareness of emotions in situations of conflict;
- de-escalation of interpersonal conflicts;
- conflict analysis;
- non-violent conflict transformation;
- reconciliation of personal relationships;
- initiating peaceful social change;
- developing a peace project.

Some topics in this book will be new to you. Your teacher may also ask you to explore familiar topics in ways that you have not thought about before. Many tasks in this book do not have clear, “correct” answers, and the process of exploring these topics is more important than finding a perfect or correct answer.

The purpose of *Conflict and Peace* is to explore everyday conflicts in personal relationships, in society and as nations.

### THE “GROAN ZONE”

Peace education is different from other types of education. Knowledge about the subject of conflict and peace is useful, but it is more important to be ready and willing to explore complex ideas and topics.

You will be asked to think about topics and ideas that challenge your personal beliefs. This might feel uncomfortable and unpleasant to do at first. However, it is necessary in order to develop a deeper understanding about the complicated problems of conflict and peace. There will be times in this book when you may disagree with other students or your teacher. This is a normal and necessary part of developing the knowledge, skills, and values of peace education. There may be times when you feel yourself groan with frustration, or feel like it’s impossible to agree on something. This is also a normal and necessary part of the course.

Here are a few ways you can get through the groan zone:

- Take breaks.
- Work on small parts of a larger problem step by step.
- Organize your discussion and reflection tasks to include the perspectives of every group member.
- Don’t be afraid to make mistakes or have an incorrect answer.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers, even if you disagree with them.

## TRIGGER WARNING

*Understanding Conflict* includes images and descriptions of violence and pain. There are discussion and reflection questions that may cause you to remember traumatic events from your own life. If this happens, it is okay to skip the text or task, or take a break and come back to it later.

If you find a topic in this book that you know will cause you to feel extremely upset or frightened, please consider skipping it or waiting to work on it until you feel more comfortable.

## HOW TO USE UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

### COURSE STRUCTURE

Mote Oo's peace education course comprises two units.

**Unit One**, *Understanding Conflict*, looks at ways to analyse conflict, and describes destructive and constructive ways of dealing with conflicts.

**Unit Two**, *Understanding Peace*, focuses on how we can reach and maintain a peaceful society.

We have to learn about conflict before we can reach peace, because peace is *not* the absence of conflict. Peace is when people solve their conflicts constructively and without violence. Both books should be used together.

### BOOK ONE STRUCTURE

This book is divided into five chapters. Each chapter tries to answer a question:

- Chapter 1, What is conflict?
- Chapter 2, What actions make conflict worse?
- Chapter 3, What actions make conflict better?
- Chapter 4, What are the sources of conflict?
- Chapter 5, What do we want to know about a conflict, and what tools can we use to get that information?

### LEARNING GOALS

Each chapter begins with the learning goals for that chapter. These are the **KNOWLEDGE**, **SKILLS** and **VALUES** you will focus on throughout the chapter .

- **Knowledge goals** tell you what you should know by the end of the chapter.
- **Skills goals** tell you what you should be able to do by the end of the chapter.
- **Values goals** tell you what issues you will have reflected on by the end of the chapter

### TASK TYPES

To help you in your learning, there are several types of task in this book:

- **Previews**. Every section starts with a preview. These encourage you to think about the topic you are going to study. They may also focus on what you already know and think about the topic.
- **Exercises** focus on increasing your *knowledge* about the topic and checking your understanding of topics.
- **Activities** focus on developing and practicing important application, analysis and evaluation *skills*, and various types of critical thinking.
- **Discussions** focus on how the issues and ideas in the book affect your community and country. They encourage you to develop your understanding by expressing your opinion and listening to the views of others.
- **Reflections** ask you to think about your feelings. They encourage you to analyse the ideas in the text and how these relate to your personal *values*.
- **Conclusions** are exercises and activities that test your understanding of the chapter. You can use these activities to assess how well you understand each chapter.

### FOCUS ON MYANMAR

In most sections of the book, there are "Focus on Myanmar" texts. These are Myanmar case studies of the issues in the section, and short exercises to check your understanding of these.

### GLOSSARY

To help you with the more difficult words used in peace studies, there is a glossary of these words at the back of the book, and Myanmar language translations for each.



# CHAPTER 1 – UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

## LEARNING GOALS FOR CHAPTER 1

### KNOWLEDGE

In this chapter, you will increase your knowledge of:

- levels of conflict;
- actors in a conflict;
- goals in a conflict;
- how relationships affect conflict;
- how gender roles teach us to respond to conflict;
- the advantages and disadvantages of conflict.

### SKILLS

In this chapter, you will develop your ability to:

- distinguish between different levels of conflict;
- explore issues that lead to conflict;
- identify main and supporting actors;
- contrast compatible and incompatible goals;
- identify actions that affect relationships.

### VALUES

In this chapter, you will reflect on:

- how different levels of conflict can affect you;
- important issues of conflict in your life;
- actions that affect relationships;
- gendered behaviours in conflict situations;
- the benefits of conflict.





▲ Conflicts happen on different levels  
– between individuals, between groups  
and between nations.

### PREVIEW

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

- "The world would be a better place without conflict."
- "A peaceful world can never really exist."
- "Once an enemy, always an enemy."

## ACTIVITY

### LEVELS OF CONFLICT, 1

## 1.1 – LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Conflict happens everywhere and at every level of society. We classify conflicts by the number of people involved or affected. Conflicts can occur between:

- individuals (interpersonal conflicts);
- groups of people (intergroup conflicts);
- nations (international or interstate conflicts).

1. List ten conflicts.
2. Group these conflicts into *conflicts between individuals*, *conflicts between groups* and *conflict between nations*.
3. How many people are involved in the smallest conflict? How many in the biggest?

### INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS

Interpersonal conflicts happen in all of our relationships. They happen with our classmates, friends, parents, siblings, partners, children, teachers, colleagues and neighbours.

Interpersonal conflicts affect only a small number of people – they do not affect a whole town, city or country.



## INTERGROUP CONFLICTS

Intergroup conflicts take place between groups of people. Groups can be small or large. In a small group, the members know each other personally, for example, families, youth **gangs** or small organisations.

Large groups have many members. One member cannot know all the other members of the group. When we describe these kinds of conflicts, we do not focus on individual people. Instead, we focus on whole groups. These groups can include:

- ethnic groups;
- religious groups;
- social **classes**;
- military;
- police;
- **unions**;
- political parties;
- companies.

Conflicts between large groups can affect the whole population of a country. There are two types of large intergroup conflicts:

- **COMMUNAL CONFLICTS** – In these conflicts, a group defines itself in contrast to (against) another group. For example, conflict might be between the “original” population of an area and recent “newcomers.” Usually, communal conflicts are between people of different religions, ethnicities or nationalities.
- **INTRASTATE CONFLICTS** – These are conflicts between a government group and a non-government group within a country. An example is the “People Power” movement in the Philippines. In 1986, people used nonviolent **civil action** to overthrow the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Another example is the conflict between the ethnic armed group “Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam” and the government of Sri Lanka between 1983 and 2009.

**Intrastate conflicts** – **Left:** Tamil refugees fleeing government attacks in Sri Lanka; **Right:** Magazine cover celebrating the Philippine people power revolution.



## INTERNATIONAL OR INTERSTATE CONFLICT

International conflicts are between two or more nations or states. Conflicts between nations can be violent or without violence. A violent conflict between two states is a war. The largest international conflict so far was the Second World War. It was fought from 1939 to 1945. Approximately 70 nations fought and about 64 million people died.

An example of a conflict without violence between two nations is between Thailand and Malaysia. Until the 1970s, they had a border conflict in the Gulf of Thailand. In February 1979, they agreed to explore for oil and gas in the area together. Since then they have discovered twenty two gas fields and begun production together. It is now the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area.

▼ What levels of conflict do these pictures show?



## ACTIVITY

### LEVELS OF CONFLICT, 2

- I. INTERPERSONAL
- II. INTERGROUP
- III. INTERSTATE

1. Identify the level of conflict for each situation: *interpersonal*, *intergroup* or *interstate*.
  - a. Two children fight for a toy.
  - b. The Second World War
  - c. Religious leaders protest against the government to demand democracy in their country.
  - d. The President of Myanmar has an argument with his wife about how late their children can stay out at night.
  - e. The President of Myanmar has an argument with the President of China about the sale of natural resources.
  - f. An ethnic group forms an army and fights against the national military.
  - g. On the street, a Burman man calls a Rakhine man rude names, referring to his ethnicity.
  - h. On the street, a Kachin man calls another Kachin man a rude name because of his bad driving.
  - i. Football fans from two different teams attack each other.
2. Which of the intergroup conflicts above are communal conflicts and which are intrastate conflicts?
3. Write five example situations of conflicts.
4. In pairs, get your partner to identify the correct level of conflict in your situations.



## FOCUS ON MYANMAR: NURSES DEMONSTRATE IN SITTWE HOSPITAL

The Ministry of Health head office has sent two senior staff to the Rakhine State capital Sittwe. Nurses organised a protest after a conflict between a doctor and two nurses.

According to people at the hospital, the doctor got angry at two nurses. He said that they had not written reports about the patients in time. He pushed over their chairs and threw a bottle at them, hitting one of them in the leg.

The two nurses complained to the hospital's management. However, the hospital manager decided not to punish the doctor. He said that both sides were wrong. This caused many nurses to demonstrate by refusing to work for three hours. The regional authorities then came and **negotiated** with the nurses. They promised that if the nurses returned to work, they would solve the **dispute**.

When the demonstration ended, one of the nurses said, "The doctor said sorry to the nurses and at the moment there are no more problems." The hospital manager said that the case had been **resolved**, however the regional government said nurses at Sittwe Hospital were not yet satisfied.



Source: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/16722-inquiry-launched-after-nurses-in-sittwe-walk-off-job.htm>

1. At which levels did this conflict take place?
2. When did the level of conflict change?
3. Why do you think so many nurses demonstrated?

What interpersonal, intergroup or interstate conflicts are you involved in?

## REFLECTION

### PREVIEW

For someone else to understand a conflict, what things about the conflict would you tell them?

### ACTIVITY

#### IDENTIFY THE ISSUE

## 1.2 – HOW CONFLICT HAPPENS

Everyone has had interpersonal conflicts. These conflicts happen in our families, our neighbourhoods, at work and with our friends. Usually conflicts happen around an issue or a topic.

1. Which of the scenarios are familiar to you?
2. What is each scenario about?
3. Why is it useful to know the issues that cause a conflict?
4. Is knowing the issue enough to understand the conflict? Explain why or why not.
5. What else do you need to know to understand a conflict better?

In a family, there is a disagreement about where to spend an important festival. Nang Lern would like the family to visit relatives. Sai Kyaw Win would like the family to travel to an important temple. Both places are very far apart. Their two young children are not involved in the disagreement. As the festival gets closer, the argument becomes more emotional. Both feel that their idea is best for the family.

In a family, there is a disagreement about school. Saw Aung Myo wants to attend high school. His mother and father want him to start working and support the family. Saw Aung Myo's grandfather understands both points of view and wants to keep the peace in the household. The other family members are not involved in the conflict.

Thuzar wants to marry Sang Pi. He is from another ethnic group. Her parents are very much against this. They want Thuzar to be with someone from her own culture. Thuzar thinks that it is most important to marry the man she loves. Her parents believe that it is more important for the family to maintain its cultural identity.

A

B

C

D

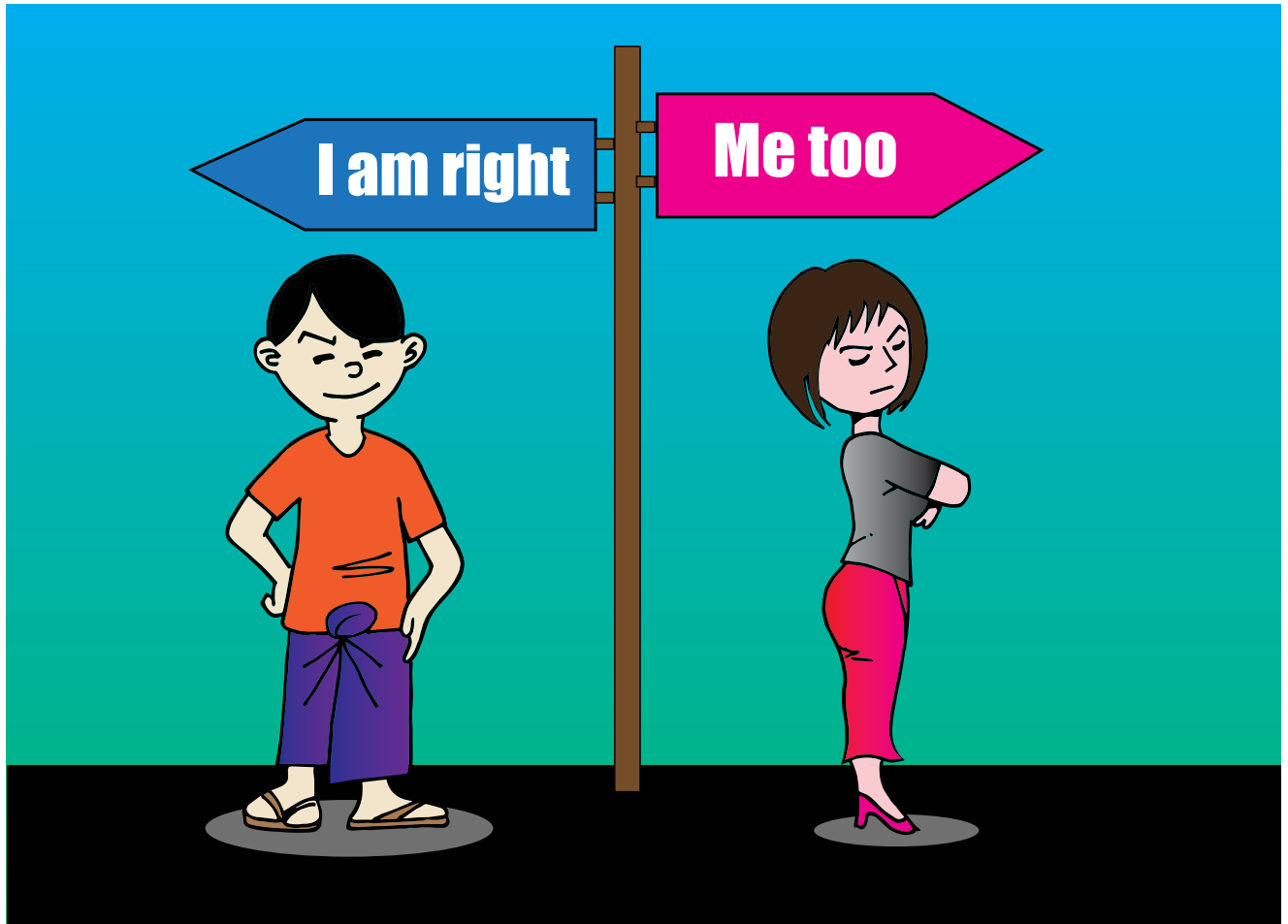
E

F

Ko Shwe Ya and Ko Phyo Maung are living together in a boarding house. Ko Shwe Ya is studying for a maths test, and he likes to study in silence. Ko Phyo Maung is playing his guitar because he is performing the next evening. Ko Shwe Ya wants Ko Phyo Maung to stop playing because he can't study. Ko Phyo Maung wants to practise for the big event.

Tsawm San and Seng Zi are sisters. They both want to play with a doll, but there is only one doll. They start to fight for the doll. Seng Zi pulls Tsawm San's hair. Tsawm San kicks Seng Zi. Soon they are screaming and hitting each other for control of the doll.

A teacher allows her class to choose their next project. Aung Aung wants everyone to make a PowerPoint presentation. Nandar would like groups to act out roleplays. Noon Harn does not want to do a project, but to have a test instead. They debate which ideas are the best. Different students support different ideas.



1. Imagine news stories about each of the scenarios of conflict on page 10. Write a headline for each story.
2. In groups, compare your titles. Choose the best one for each story.

### ACTIVITY

#### NEWS HEADLINES

1. What are the conflicts in your life usually about? Complete the sentences.
  - a. In my family, we argue about...
  - b. My neighbourhood has problems with...
  - c. My friend and I have a difficult time discussing...
2. Walk around the room. Compare your issues with other students. How many people have similar issues to you?

### ACTIVITY

#### CONFLICTS IN YOUR LIFE

1. What is the most common issue that causes conflict for class members?
2. What issues do people argue about in your community?
3. What are the biggest issues that cause conflict in Myanmar?

### DISCUSSION



PREVIEW

Are all people who are involved in a conflict equally important?

1.3 – ACTORS IN CONFLICTS

MAIN ACTORS AND SUPPORTING ACTORS

**Actors** are the people who are involved in a conflict. Just like in movies, there are main actors and supporting actors. The main actors have the main role in the conflict. We can also call them the **opponents** or the *different sides*. In Scenario A on page 10, the main actors are Sai Kyaw Win and Nang Lern. They are having the disagreement.

Supporting actors are involved in the conflict, but they do not have the main role. Their children in Scenario A are supporting actors. The children are not arguing, but the disagreement affects them. The parents may also want their children to choose sides and support one parent against the other.

EXERCISE

Identify the main and supporting actors in the examples of interpersonal conflict on page 10.

Conflict	Main Actors	Supporting Actors
Scenario A	Sai Kyaw Win, Nang Lern	their children
Scenario B		
Scenario C		
Scenario D		
Scenario E		
Scenario F		

ACTIVITY

SUPPORTING ROLES

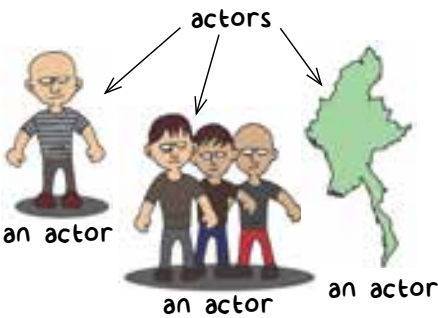
1. Choose one scenario from page 10. Think of other possible supporting actors who are not included in the text.
2. What actions might the supporting actors take?

**Example:** In Scenario A, some other possible supporting actors could be:

- Nang Lern’s parents. They might tell their daughter that they expect her to visit them during the festival;
- Sai Kyaw Win’s spiritual teacher, who might tell him to make merit;
- Sai Kyaw Win’s friends, who might tell him a husband should make decisions for the family.

“PERSON” vs “ACTOR”

An actor is not always only one person – an actor represents one side in a conflict. An actor in a conflict can be an individual, a group of people, or an entire nation. In Scenario B on page 10, Saw Aung Myo’s parents are two people: a father and a mother. However, they both want the same thing, therefore, they are one actor. In this conflict, they both want Saw Aung Myo to work, not study.





Nations, parties or religious groups can be single actors in interstate or intergroup conflicts. They are united by one goal and want the same thing to happen.

Are the statements true or false? If false, correct the statement.

1. A whole organisation can be an actor in a conflict.
2. If a group of people have the same goal in a conflict, they are considered to be one actor.
3. Conflicts do not have more than two actors.
4. Parents could either be one or two actors in a conflict, depending on if they agree or disagree about something.

### INCOMPATIBILITY OF ACTORS' GOALS

A goal (or objective, or aim) is what an actor wants in a conflict. Conflict happens when actors want different things. It also happens when two or more actors want the same thing but there is only one of those things available. This **incompatibility** between actors' goals is the basis of conflict.

In Scenarios A and C on page 10, it is not possible for both actors' goals to be achieved. Either the family spends the festival at the temple or in their village. They cannot do both at the same time. Thuzar will either marry Sang Pi or she won't. What she wants and what her parents want are incompatible.

1. Each of the following sentences contains two actions. Decide whether the actions are compatible or incompatible. Explain your opinion.
  - a. The door is open and closed.
  - b. Gum Ja La drinks beer and sings a song.
  - c. It is raining and the sun is shining.
  - d. Sai wants to see a movie with his brother at 8 o'clock and his brother wants to spend the evening at home.
  - e. Myo has 5,000 kyats. He wants to buy a 5,000 kyat jacket and a 5,000 kyat hat.
  - f. Kyaw Kyaw's father wants him to be in the army. His mother wants him to be a doctor.
  - g. Khaing Khaing wants to live in Lashio. Khaing Khaing's mother wants her to live in her village.
  - h. Khaing Khaing wants to wear a modern dress at her wedding but her mother wants her to wear a traditional dress.
2. Write an example of two compatible actions.
3. Write an example of two incompatible actions.

### EXERCISE

### ACTIVITY

#### INCOMPATIBLE?





## FOCUS ON MYANMAR: HERITAGE GROUP OPPOSES FOOTBRIDGE IN YANGON DOWNTOWN

The Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT) is opposing a plan to build a footbridge in downtown Yangon. They argue that the bridge will stop people from seeing the old buildings in the area and make the area very ugly.

YHT officer Shwe Yinn Mar Oo, said the footbridge will ruin views of some of Yangon's oldest and most beautiful buildings. "We discussed with international experts about the footbridge. They said it will not make it safer for people and will not help traffic problems." She said that traffic lights should be set up and road rules should be **enforced** instead.



A representative from the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) said that "It should be built because over 150,000 people come every day from Dala, across the Yangon River. These people must cross the road next to the ferry port where the footbridge is being built." A manager from the company building the bridge said "It will not block or ruin the heritage buildings. I think it will add to the beauty of them."

Ma Thandar, a mother of two who lives in Dala Township, said that she supports the footbridge. "I always take my children to their school in the downtown. That place is busy with trucks, cars, trishaws and hawkers all the time, and many accidents happen," she said. "If there is a footbridge, we can cross the road safely and traffic problems will be solved."

Source: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/heritage-group-opposes-footbridge-rangoons-historic-downtown.html>

1. Who are the main actors in this conflict?
2. What are their goals?
3. Are their goals incompatible?
4. What solutions to this conflict can you imagine?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your solutions?

## DISCUSSION

When we talk about conflicts between groups, are we really talking about every single person in that group?

## REFLECTION

1. Are you more often a main actor or a supporting actor in conflicts?
2. What are some of your goals as a supporting actor?
3. What are some of your goals as a main actor?

## 1.4 – RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT

The relationship between actors affects a conflict. In a good relationship, incompatible goals may not lead to a **confrontation** or a fight. The actors trust each other and consider each other's needs. Instead of seeing the situation as a conflict, they might see it as a problem: a situation or question that they can solve together.

If the actors' relationship is already **tense** or difficult, conflicts occur more easily over small differences, or even when there are no differences. In this case, the incompatibility between people's goals is not the cause of the conflict. It is the opposite: people look for an incompatibility to start a conflict.

To understand conflicts better, we have to look at two things: the incompatibility of goals and the relationship between the actors.

Which sentence summarises the main idea of this text? Choose the best answer.

- If the actors don't like each other, more conflicts occur.
- In a good relationship, incompatible goals do not always lead to a fight.
- The actors' relationships can make a difference in a conflict.

Read the situation then answer the questions.

Ko Shwe Ya and Ko Phyo Maung are living together in a boarding house. Ko Shwe Ya is studying for a maths test, and he likes to study in silence. Ko Phyo Maung is playing his guitar because he is performing the next evening. Ko Shwe Ya wants Ko Phyo Maung to stop playing because he can't study. Ko Phyo Maung wants to practise for the big event.

Ko Shwe Ya makes Ko Phyo Maung leave their boarding house because he wants to study for his test. The next day, Ko Phyo Maung complains about Ko Shwe Ya. He says that Ko Shwe Ya never cleans their shared room.

- In the scenario above, why does Ko Phyo Maung start an argument with Ko Shwe Ya?
- According to the text, what is the main difference between a positive (good) relationship and a difficult (bad) relationship?
- What is the difference between a problem and a conflict?

In this activity, you will experience how a good or bad relationship influences a conflict. Follow the teacher or trainer's instructions.

### PREVIEW

- What is a good relationship?
- What is a bad relationship?
- How does conflict affect the relationship between two actors?

### EXERCISE

### EXERCISE



### ACTIVITY

#### GOOD AND BAD RELATIONSHIPS



## FOCUS ON MYANMAR: FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE DRUG PROBLEM

In a small town, drugs are a big problem. Drug use affects every community regardless of ethnicity or religion. However, every religious group claims that the other groups started the drug problem.

The Christians say that the Buddhists started bringing drugs into the community, and that all the Christian youth are good young people who don't use drugs. The Buddhists say that the Christians are addicted to drugs and they need to steal to pay for them. They say that taking drugs is against Buddhism, so Buddhist youth don't take drugs. These arguments get very serious and sometimes lead to fighting and violence.



To solve the problem of drugs, a Christian group and a Buddhist group joined together to **raise awareness** about the problem.

They organise an anti-drugs day every month, and invite other religious communities to join. They have invited locally-respected Buddhist monks, imams and priests to give motivational speeches and to show that all religions can work together to solve a problem.

Source: Unpublished Report, Independent Researcher

1. What is the goal of the Buddhist community?
2. What is the goal of the Christian community?
3. In the beginning, why did the Buddhists and Christians not work together to solve the drug problem?
4. What has already been done to improve the relationship between the two religions?
5. What else could be done?
6. Can the drug problem help to improve the relationship between the different religions? How?

## DISCUSSION

Which is more important in a conflict: the incompatibility of the goals or the relationships between the actors? Why?

## REFLECTION

1. Think of three people who you have a good relationship with. What actions would harm the positive relationships?
2. Think of three people who you have a bad relationship with. What actions would improve these negative relationships?



▲ Are these people showing common gender roles?

## 1.5 – GENDER: WOMEN AND MEN IN CONFLICT

Our understanding about conflict is also connected to our understanding about gender. Gender is not about biological differences between the two sexes. It is about cultural ideas and **expectations** about men and women. It is about the different roles that males and females have in society.

Humans learn how to be women and men from other members of society. When they are born, they do not know how they should look, dress, speak, behave, think or act. Parents, teachers, friends, colleagues and the media all tell us to behave like “girls” and “boys”, who grow into women and men.

1. In groups, draw a picture of a woman or man. Add as many details as you can.
2. Work with a group that drew the opposite sex. Compare drawings. Are people born with these differences, or do they learn them?

### PREVIEW

Answer the questions about the words in the box.

kind, shy, independent, noisy  
emotional, pretty, brave, caring,  
bad-tempered, helpful, sporty,  
intelligent, a leader, gentle,  
a good listener

1. Which are more about men and which are more about women? Why?
2. Where do these opinions come from?
3. Do men and women behave differently in conflict? How?

### ACTIVITY

#### IMAGES OF MEN AND WOMEN



Many of the characteristics of being a man (or being **masculine**), encourage a competitive way of dealing with conflict. In most cultures, people associate masculinity with bravery, **aggression** and strength. People expect men to ignore pain and not talk about feelings. They are supposed to compete with others to show that they are real men. Violent behaviour from boys is tolerated more than from girls. Movies, stories of heroes and songs and books often show men taking risks and using violence in conflicts. Men who refuse to fight, men who talk about their emotions, men who show themselves to be **vulnerable** are thought to be weak, or cowards.

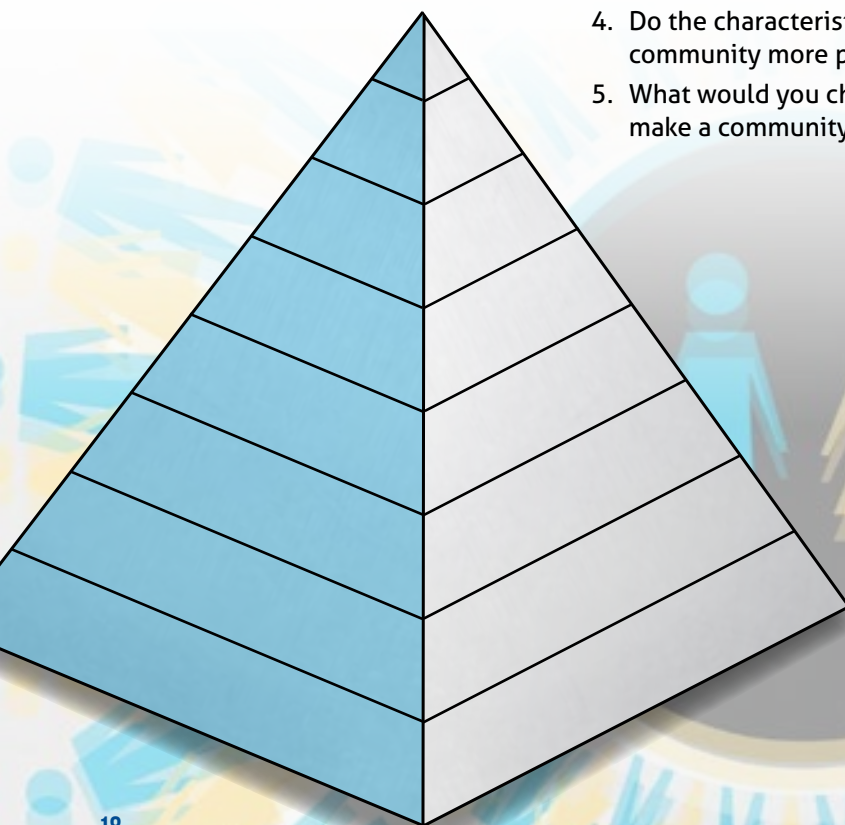
The characteristics of being a woman (or being **feminine**), are also associated with reactions to conflict. Traditionally, women are supposed to be mothers and wives. They are expected to care for the needs of others before their own. Being feminine often means being obedient and gentle. In movies and stories, women are often weak, and need protection from a man. Women are rarely shown as leaders. Strong, independent women, who take on traditional male roles, are less accepted in society.

If we want to find peace, or better ways to deal with conflict, we need to question traditional roles of men and women in society.

## ACTIVITY

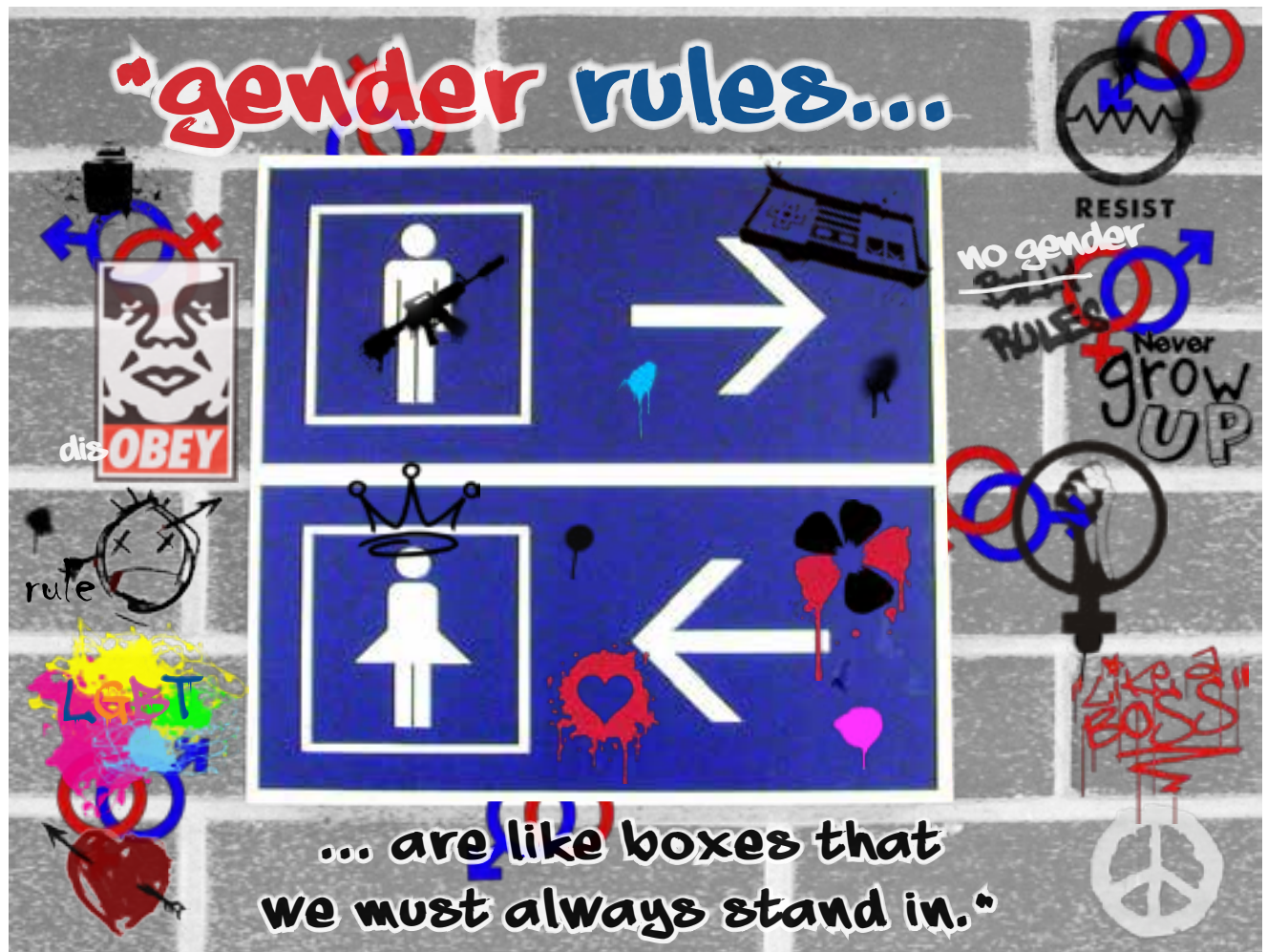
### CHARACTERISTICS PYRAMID

1. Read the list of characteristics. Put them on the pyramid in order of how much society values each characteristic.
  - Put the characteristics that society values more at the top.
  - Put the characteristics that society values less at the bottom.
2. Are the top three characteristics associated more with men or women in your society?
3. Do the characteristics at the top of the pyramid make a community more peaceful? Why or why not?
4. Do the characteristics at the bottom of the pyramid make a community more peaceful? Why or why not?
5. What would you change about this pyramid if you wanted to make a community more peaceful?



- a. control over others
- b. physical strength
- c. obedience
- d. intelligence
- e. caring for others
- f. willingness to listen
- g. power
- h. willingness to work together





**"Gender rules are like boxes that we must always stand in."**

1. Stand in a box or on a piece of paper. Think of all the rules that you have to follow for your gender.
2. Now "step out of the box." Imagine if you stopped following some of the rules. What would people say or do to you?
3. Answer the questions.
  - a. Do you ever step out of your gender box in real life?
  - b. What are some ways that we can make "stepping out of the box" easier and safer?

1. Who benefits more from the gender differences in society, men or women?
2. How do men and women address conflict in your community? Do they address conflict in similar or different ways?
3. Do all men deal with conflicts in similar ways? Do all women deal with conflicts in similar ways?

## ACTIVITY

### STEPPING OUT

## DISCUSSION

## PREVIEW

1. What would a world without conflict be like?
2. List reasons why this world could or could not exist.

## 1.6 – CONFLICT: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

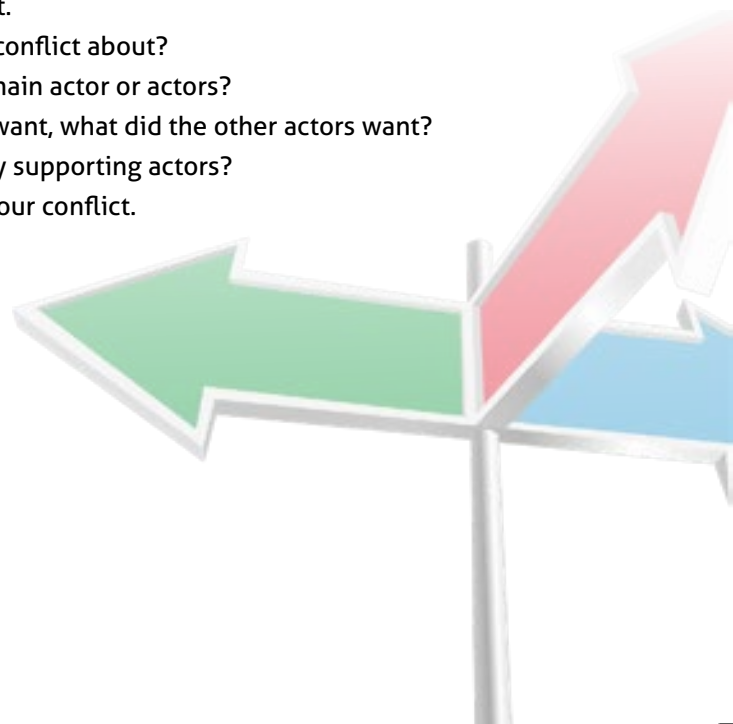
Our beliefs about conflict are important. Is a world without conflict possible? Or do we believe that conflict is a part of our lives? If we want a relationship with no conflict, then we will see conflict as a failure of that relationship. If we accept that our relationships will always have conflict, then we will look for ways to deal with these conflicts.



## ACTIVITY

## A CONFLICT OF YOUR OWN

1. Think about a conflict where you were one of the actors. (Choose a conflict with more than two actors.) Write a paragraph about this conflict.
  - What was the conflict about?
  - Who was the main actor or actors?
  - What did you want, what did the other actors want?
  - Were there any supporting actors?
2. In pairs, discuss your conflict.






1. In groups, choose one group member's example of conflict (from the previous activity). Prepare a roleplay about it.
2. Perform your roleplay to the class.
3. Answer these questions about other groups' roleplays.
  - a. What is the conflict about?
  - b. Who are the main actors?
  - c. Who are the supporting actors?
  - d. What are the actors' goals?
  - e. What do the main actors do to reach their goals?
  - f. What actions do the supporting actors take?
  - g. Did any of the actors' actions positively affect the relationships? How?
  - h. Which actions negatively affect their relationship?
4. Compare your answers as a class, and with the student whose conflict was roleplayed.

## ACTIVITY

### ROLEPLAY

1. Write all the words that you think of when you hear the word "conflict."
2. Show your list to a partner. Do you have any of the same words?
3. In pairs, classify the words on your lists into three categories – *positive*, **neutral** and *negative*. Write them in the table.

4. Which type of words are most common? Why do you think this is?

Most people do not like conflict because conflict causes pain in their lives. But conflict has benefits. Conflict happens for a reason. It shows us problems in our relationships, our groups or our society. It encourages us to deal with those problems. It is an opportunity to improve a situation. Whether we make use of this opportunity depends on how we deal with it.

Conflict is not good or bad. What is good or bad is how we deal with conflict.

1. What is the main benefit of conflict, according to the text?
2. What other benefits of conflict do you know?

## ACTIVITY

### IS CONFLICT GOOD OR BAD?

## DISCUSSION



## FOCUS ON MYANMAR: CONFLICT RESOLUTION: WHEN BOTH SIDES WIN

In a rural township, many local people were very angry because they did not get jobs at new factories there. They heard **rumours** that the local government made deals with the factory owners and gave the jobs to people from other areas. This made them angry. However, they did not feel confident to speak about their problems to the local government.

A local NGO knew about this problem and organised trainings in villages around the state. They found a gap in understanding between high-level political leaders and local communities. Local people were often very angry about things that were just rumours, and local politicians often didn't know the problems of the people.



In one training, villagers requested to meet parliament members, so the organisation made plans to bring the two groups together in a training.

Parliament members joined a training with local villages. At first, some of the local people were afraid to speak to higher-level political leaders. When they found that the parliament members were interested to learn from them, the local people began to speak about their problems.

In the end, parliament members found out about local villagers' needs. Local villagers learned about higher-level political **processes** and provided input. This led to more opportunities for training and jobs in the township, and a better relationship between local politicians and the people.

Source: Unpublished Report, Independent Researcher

1. What were the benefits of this conflict for the parliament members?
2. What were the benefits for the local villagers?

## REFLECTION

After reading Chapter 1, has your attitude towards conflict changed? How has it changed?

## CONCLUSION

### PRESENTATION

Choose a conflict and present it to the class. Describe the issue, the actors and their relationships. How do people suffer in this conflict? What opportunities does this conflict offer? What role does gender play?