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OVERVIEW

This is an expansion of Soliya's facilitator training program. It offers an additional, focused module on power dynamics that digs deeper into cultural differences identified as potential roadblocks to better understanding. Focused modules are lighter and shorter in nature.

It's worth acknowledging that while there will be power dynamics in play between Eastern and Western participants, much as in the larger world, these will perhaps not be as obvious as those between people who do not seek out the Soliya environment. The point is briefly this, it takes a certain, more open mindset on the part of participants, be these trainees or students, to join a Soliya session. This means that power dynamics may be subtler. Trainers should be even more diligent in identifying these and preparing to encounter and address. They also may have to challenge participants more to create situations where power dynamics will play out for purpose of training on them.

GOALS

This module was prepared to address the following goals but certainly is not exclusive to them:

1. To prepare facilitators for power dynamics in play and cultural differences they are like to encounter in session.
2. To arm facilitators with techniques that can be leveraged to diffuse difficult situations or broker understanding amongst students.

For the sake of clarity, the following words are used throughout this document, and these definitions apply:

Trainer - individual(s) teaching the module material to trainees who are in the process of becoming Soliya facilitators or are facilitators receiving advanced instruction; material meant only for trainers appears in orange.

Trainee - participants in the advanced module, who are becoming Soliya facilitators.

Facilitator - individuals that have completed training and are managing Soliya program sessions with student participants.

AGENDA SUMMARY

This module was designed to provide 10 hours of material and discussion, including room for short breaks. It can be expanded or shortened as needed, according to interest levels in certain areas or activities.

The module itself is modular in nature and broken out into the following three areas, with subsections for each. Approximately three and a half hours for the introduction and instructional material, six for the main material covering power dynamics and a final 20-30 minutes for the conclusion. Alternatively, areas have been identified within that could be converted to video material. This would allow some informational or learning areas to be condensed and done as prep, so that more "class" time can be spent practicing and / or in "fishbowls".

Material can be combined or reorganized as needed. For example, five days of two hour sessions (breaking up section two to span three days) or fewer days with longer hours.

In addition, multimedia can be leveraged as part of the actual sessions or given as homework in between. Suggestions are made, but it is ultimately up to the trainer to gauge how trainees are responding to material to leverage more discussion options or utilize video to incite discussion.

Material falls into three main areas:

- 1. Introduction (3 Hours)**
 - a. Meet participants
 - b. Reifying or defining culture
 - c. Cultural differences between East and West
 - d. Defining conflict for East and West
 - e. Cultural approaches to conflict resolution
- 2. Power Dynamics (6.5 Hours)**
 - a. Examples of Power Dynamics internally
 - b. Power Dynamics between East and West
 - c. Practice One
 - d. How to identify and diffuse these in Soliya setting
 - e. Practice Two
- 3. Conclusion (.5 Hours)**
 - a. Conflict resolution techniques, transformative and others
 - b. Summaries and lessons learned

PREP (OR PRE-TRAINING)

- Complete all readings (noted in following section) in advance of power dynamics session.
- Watch multimedia video of power dynamics in play during an actual Soliya session.
- Watch Babel movie clip and familiarize with movie by reading summary or watching entire movie; prepare thoughts on what transpires.
- Write a short text (1-2 paragraphs) sharing a personal experience or summary insights with power dynamics to be submitted to trainer no less than one week prior to session start.

READINGS



- Culture and Conflict Resolution, Avruch (pages 5-11, PDF attached)
- Culture's Consequences, Hofstede (pages 28-31, PDF attached)
- Theories of Conflict, Galtung (pages 159-166, PDF attached)
- Working With Groups in Conflict, Agbaria and Cohen (PDF attached)

MULTIMEDIA

- Video (Amy / Yasmina)
 - G27, Week 7, Spring 2010
 - https://rapidshare.com/#!download|821p12|415467063|Video_Seminar_Episode_1__Power_Dynamics__Amy__Yasmina__HQ.m4v|201794|0|0

AGENDA DETAIL & TRAINER MATERIAL

🕒 Introduction (3 Hours)

Readings

- Culture and Conflict Resolution, Avruch (pages 5-11)
- Culture's Consequences, Hofstede (pages 28-31)
- Theories of Conflict, Galtung (pages 159-166, PDF attached)

Discussion Points

1. **(20 minutes)** *Participant introductions* - overview and agenda
2. **(40 minutes)** *Reifying culture* - generally agreeing on what culture is to look at how it is impacted by and impacts the mediation process.
 - a. (5 minutes) Historical definitions
 - b. (2-3 minutes) Generic and local culture
 - c. (2-3 minutes) "Culture is context"
 - d. (5 minutes) Question(s): 1) What is culture to you? 2) How would your mother or father define culture differently than you?
 - e. (2-3 minutes) Conceptual inadequacies:
 - i. Culture is homogenous
 - ii. Culture is a thing
 - iii. Culture is uniformly distributed
 - iv. Individual possesses single culture
 - v. Culture is custom
 - vi. Culture is timeless
 - f. (5 minutes) Question: 1) What other "inadequacies" or pitfalls are there in attempting to relegate a group to a cultural definition?
 - g. (15 minutes) Activity
3. **(40 minutes)** *Cultural differences* - suppositions of East/West differences outlined to identify and work through possible barriers to mediation.
 - a. (15 minutes) Question: 1) What are words that spring to mind with regards to labeling Eastern culture and Western culture?
 - b. (5 minutes - most should have been read beforehand) Individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, high context/low context
 - c. (20 minutes) Activity: Be the other



4. **(40 minutes)** *Defining conflict* - acknowledging that individuals categorize an event as conflict or not differently, so then is it likely that a culture would. Examine what actually is conflict itself to Easterners and Westerners to identify whether the two regions both view the same event or events as conflict. Review where resolution techniques are needed and/or have highest chance of success.
 - a. (10 minutes) Question(s): 1) What is conflict to you? 2) How does your culture define conflict?
 - b. (5 minutes) Definition discussion
 - c. (10 minutes) Question(s): 1) Were you ever in a conflict that you weren't aware was a conflict until much later in or after the issue?
 - d. (5 minutes) Galtung "negative peace" and "positive peace"
 - e. (15 minutes) Activity
5. **(40 minutes)** *Cultural approaches to conflict resolution* - how do Eastern and Western cultures approach conflict differently and to what end goal?
 - a. (5 minutes) Barriers to a universal approach
 - b. (10 minutes) Question(s): 1) Are there Eastern events where Western methods of conflict resolution may be appropriate and vice versa? 2) What, if any, are the limits to dialogue? 3) Have they witnessed a time where dialogue utterly failed? If so, how could it have gone differently?
 - c. (15 minutes) Eastern conflict resolution techniques
 - d. Islamic region, Tahkim, Wisata and Sulha
 - e. (5 minutes) Social Justice vs. Oppression Story (Bush, Folger)
 - f. (5 minutes) Transformative mediation
 - i. Evolved out of Western
 - ii. Individuality key
 - iii. Empowerment and recognition
 - iv. Can it apply as one resolution path

Participant Introductions (20 minutes)

Set the tone as students are joining the session, indicating by example that this will be an informative and welcoming environment. Use the opportunity to check on tech, identify student background and demeanor. When all are present, take about two-three minutes to provide a high level overview of the session's purpose and goals. You might take this opportunity to relay at the outset that the nature of the material may prove emotionally charged through the attempt to encourage power dynamics to emerge, so they can be trained on.

Then take another fifteen or so to go around the "room", having each trainee introduce his or herself.

Consider having them state:

- Name
- Country of origin
- Country of residence
- Personal goal for attending the session
- If they are from the East, have they spent time in the West and vice versa
- Existing experience dealing with cultural differences and power dynamics as facilitators (their prep work submissions can be

drawn upon here either directly by trainer or indirectly through general questions posed to group based on the submissions)

Reifying Culture (40 minutes)

What is culture? Reviewing source reading and exploring in group discussion, there need be general understanding on what culture is as defined here. This enables us to then look at how it is impacted by and impacts the dialogue process.

Question(s):

Kick off with a very general, open ended question to start the thinking process and prepare for further information and dialogue.

1. What is culture to you?

Theodore Schwartz defined culture as consisting of "...the derivatives of experience...learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals..." meaning culture is generated both from within and without - individuals and their varying personal reactions contribute to a cultural fabric as does the history of a group or people provide for cultural elements - so while there can be commonalities, it is never evenly distributed or universally applicable to a group or even subgroup.

Political, religious, local, regional and even individual qualifications all serve to stratify the discussion of what culture is. Without first defining what culture is, it's impossible to demonstrate how it affects dialogue or what it may mean to a discussion or dispute.

Note that entire bodies of work, educational debate and discussion have been dedicated solely to the act of defining what culture is. This lends itself a lot of room to good debate. However, it's vital that the act of defining culture not take so much time so that relative agreement isn't reached, making it impossible to move to next sessions. In fact, only forty minutes or less should be spent on this discourse. The main goal here is to acknowledge culture is a varied and differently viewed thing, while getting trainees on the same foundational platform for which to engage in further dialogue.

Historical definitions: To kick off, provide some historical definitions as to what culture is, showcasing the evolution of the term. [CONSIDER TURNING PORTIONS OR ENTIRETY OF THIS INTRODUCTORY SECTION, LEADING UP TO LATER QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITY, TO A WRITTEN DOCUMENT OR SCRIPTED VIDEO THAT WILL BE PREP FOR COURSE VS. PRESENTATION/INTERACTIVE.]

- Early mentions include Roman philosopher Cicero (106 B.C.) with "cultura animi" or literally, cultivation of the soul, applying an agricultural metaphor to the intangible.
- Moving from a philosophical tenet to that of a central concept to anthropology, Edward Tylor, in "Primitive Culture" published 1871, took us closer to the modern concept with it being "that

complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" - key here being the complexity with much feeding into it.

- Then in 1930, we have Franz Boas, in writing for the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences said that "Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individuals as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the products of human activities as determined by those habits..."
- As a metaphor for purpose of illustrating, Hofstede stated, "culture is to a human collectivity what personality is to an individual."

Just looking at the few here, there are philosophical, social, moral, anthropological and even political applications to the one single word that attempts to speak for a set of concepts, beliefs and behaviors attributable to a group.

In short, while the definition has evolved, there also has occurred the complete rejection of previous definitions.

Generic and local culture: Defined by Black and Avruch,

"Generic culture is a species-specific attribute of Homo sapiens, an adaptive feature of our kind on this planet for at least a million years or so. Local cultures are those complex systems of meanings created, shared, and transmitted (socially inherited by individuals in particular social groups" Essentially, generic as "human nature" and local as "diversity, difference and particularism."

The above is the basic view to get trainees to adopt, if only temporarily, but for purpose of moving forward. Ensure understanding if not agreement is made here. The key is that both generic and local culture coexist and are necessary to capture as much as is possible of the competing and partnering aspects that can encompass a complete cultural view. If useful, perhaps a metaphor that generic is the fabric, and local is the individual threads, comprising the whole.

Culture and context:

Avruch stated that "culture is context, not cause." By considering culture as the framework for understanding a mode of behavior, we're better able to navigate the behavior. Blaming culture for behavior gets us nowhere.

Conceptual inadequacies (Avruch):

1. Culture is homogenous - "presumes a culture is free of internal paradoxes"
2. Culture is a thing - erroneous thinking that culture itself "can act"
3. Culture is uniformly distributed - assuming that everyone within a culture behaves uniformly
4. Individual possesses single culture - ignoring that "a person possesses several cultures" at once



5. Culture is custom - thinking that "what you see is what you get", focusing on tradition as culture vs. what informs the tradition
6. Culture is timeless - assuming that culture does not change

Question(s):

Having leveraged some background information, engage trainees in further discussion with questions like but not limited to the following. Keep an eye out for examples of culture in play as trainees interact to be able to name these for illumination purposes.

1. What aspects of cultural definition are we missing in discussion thus far?
2. How would your mother or father define culture differently than you?

Take careful note of answers, but let it free-flow as much as possible. Look out for whether trainees have "bought in" to Avruch's definition provided earlier. Are they paraphrasing it or revealing personal information, assumptions or values within their discussion? Consider posing back to the group whether they noticed this themselves while answering and listening to others. If time doesn't allow for deeper discussion, make a few high level observations yourself.

Question:

1. Considering Avruch, what other "inadequacies" or pitfalls are there in attempting to relegate a group to a cultural definition?

For example, can culture conflict with itself? If someone originally from a culture and raised partially in it, moves at a young age to an entirely different culture and spends a significant amount of time immersed in it, how do we begin to ascribe a culture to this individual? This is sometimes described as "living in two worlds", culturally speaking. Is it relevant?

Additionally, if conversation is halted, focus on one of Avruch's six inadequacies, and ask trainees in what way they agree or disagree with that particular one. For example, is it dangerous to ascribe cultural attributes to a new acquaintance upon meeting him or her? What could this lead to in a useful and detrimental way? Do trainees have examples of this happening in their lives?

Activity options follow, but even if you've kept to a tight timeline, it will likely only be possible to engage in one.

Activity Detail Option #1

Ask members of the group to describe a situation where they felt at odds or out of place. To what did they attribute this feeling at the time? Has introspection or time changed the initial attribution? Was it a matter of cultural difference? If it occurred on a very local level, explore extrapolating this to a much larger stage.

Look for what the trainees are sharing and how they share it.

- Are they revealing personal information indicative of having felt a lack or presence of power?
- Do you see evidence of a power dynamic in their description of the event?
- Were they the one in control or the one at mercy of the others present or the situation itself?
- Is there a pattern forming for East or Western participants in the situations they're describing?

Take note of language and / or emotion and be prepared to mention these, acknowledging the trainee in a respectful way that helps illustrate the point.

Cultural Differences (40 minutes)

Accepting a common frame of reference for culture, we next look at the differences between two large "local cultures", namely that of East and West. We're only one step shy of "generic culture" in lumping these two large groups together, but that said, there are certain East/West differences that stand out. These are worth outlining for identification as possible barriers, watching for these during discussion and working through these as needed.

Kick this off by posing questions to the trainees. If discussion is at first halted, jump into Hofstede's "dimensions" and focus trainees on one area.

Question(s):

1. What are words that spring to mind with regards to labeling Eastern culture and Western culture?
2. If your culture has been defined as "x", give an example on a scale that received some global attention where the contrary was in effect.

Individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, high context/low context

There are numerous lines where cultural differences can be examined. A few can be defined for purpose of inciting discussion, and the trainer may also draw upon a table such as the following provided by Hofstede, as well as the PDF reading assigned as pre-reading.

Hofstede's "Cultural Dimensions"



Individualistic / Collectivistic	How personal needs and goals are prioritized vs. the needs and goals of the group/clan/organization.
Masculine / Feminine	Masculine societies have different rules for men and women, less so in feminine cultures.
Uncertainty Avoidance	How comfortable are people with changing the way they work or live (low UA) or prefer the known systems (high UA).
Power Distance	The degree people are comfortable with influencing upwards. Accept of inequality in distribution on power in society.
Time Perspective	Long-term perspective, planning for future, perseverance values vs. short time past and present oriented.
Indulgence / Restraint	Allowing gratification of basic drives related to enjoying life and having fun vs. regulating it through strict social norms.

Individualistic vs. Collectivistic: With West as individual and East as collective.

Revisiting culture with regards to context, anthropologist Edward T. Hall gives us "high context" and "low context" cultures, with high comprising many Eastern countries and Western countries being low. Simply put, high context cultures value trust and relationship in an interaction whereas low context focuses more on facts and directness.

To put briefly, East wants to "get to know you" and West wants to "get to the point."

In the scope of a discussion, what this could mean is that the Eastern students seek, possibly subtly, to know each other first, while the Western would rather get started on the material and move through it quickly. This is a very broad generalization of what might take place, but worth keeping an eye out for.

According to Hall, "Culture hides more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants."

Question(s):

Having discussed some of the "dimensions" in more detail, pose follow up questions to the trainees that address specific examples.

1. Was China's implementation of the "one-child policy" a move independent of, in line with or contrary to its label as a collectivistic society?
2. Can, and if so, how can cultural attributes become moral dilemmas?

Again as above, look for repetition and patterns.

- Are they repeating what was discussed above or offering entirely different lines of thought?

- Do they appear to be focusing on one particular area of differentiation?

Be prepared to offer examples that contradict the uniformity of one culture, as its dimensional attribute.

- For example, how can a tragedy showcase collectivist tendencies in a traditionally individualistic society?
- Did Americans during 9-11 exhibit particular tendencies contrary to what they're usually defined as?

Also keep an eye out for "moral" judgments during this type of discussion.

- Are trainees from their respective cultures defending the labels placed on them?
- Are they getting emotional or judgmental of the opposite label?

Activity: Reverse the situation

As mentioned at the beginning of the module, we are trying to ensure differences become obvious so as to provide something to train on; however, please approach all such attempts with care. While we do want to reveal this in group, it's important to keep conversation respectful and step in if debate does become emotional.

That's what we're trying to engage in to a point, but keep an eye out for emotional reactions and be prepared to name the power dynamics should these come into play as value judgments from either side.

Activity Detail Option #1

Choose an event, contained and occurring in a Western country and a separate one that took place in an Eastern country. Taking 20-30 minutes per event, ask the group to reverse the situation. For example, if the event had occurred in the opposite region, how would it have played out differently? Would it have? Where did culture come into play?

For the activity, be prepared with some examples if trainees are having difficulty arriving at their own. For example:

- When the U.S. president, Clinton, was facing impeachment over the issue with Monica Lewinsky, if that were to have occurred in an Eastern country, what would have gone differently if anything. There are many questions within the question, would he have faced impeachment at all, would he have been impeached (or the equivalent outcome in the respective culture)?
- How would genital mutilation be viewed or handled in a Western country?

Again, please bear in mind that these can be highly charged topics.

Activity Detail Option #2

Trainer selects one word in advance of session. At time of activity, present the word to the group, and ask each student to take five minutes to think about and define the word. Have students kick off discussion with their definitions of the word. The goal is to

demonstrate how differently we can all perceive one singular word in one language.

Words may include:

- Love
- Home
- Family
- Honor
- Community

Think beyond these as well. What singular words are likely to have a broad difference in meaning between East and West, using Hofstede's dimensions as a key?

If time allows, ask each student to parallel the word as closely as possible in another language. If their first language is not English, have them describe how their native word is similar and how it's not. This secondary portion may be more difficult for native English speakers but will hopefully bring them out of a comfort zone if relying upon a few earlier years of a language in high school, etc. Make it comfortable if English speakers do not have a parallel. This in itself might make for an interesting power dynamic reversal.

What is Conflict? (40 minutes)

We know that culture is present in the conflict space and cultural differences can both cause conflict and affect its course. And even if we would generally label a conflict, is all conflict necessarily bad? Across the conflict spectrum, where do dialogue and resolution techniques stand a highest chance of success?

As put by Avruch, "Conflict resolution looks rather different depending on which sense of conflict we begin with."

Kick off discussion in this section by posing the question of what conflict is to the group. Have them first respond from a personal and then from a broader, cultural perspective. If discussion is halted, have them narrow it down to one or two "characteristics" that best describe what conflict is.

Question(s):

- What is conflict to you?
- How would your culture define conflict?

Definition Discussion

We define conflicts differently as individuals, and it could be said that we also do so as cultures.

- Webster's dictionary defines conflict as "competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)".
- Historically speaking, one might define conflict as a simple strive to control scarce resources, and realistically, not a



lot has changed. If cultures fought over land 2,000 years ago, we see evidence they are still doing so.

- Perceived and real... Conflict doesn't have to be acknowledged by both parties to exist. As in, both parties do not have to consider themselves in conflict. The mere perception by one that a conflict is in play can be all that is needed to create an actual conflict.

For purpose of this discussion, we might define conflict simply (to borrow from Galtung) as "actors in pursuit of incompatible goals" or even "a disagreement combined with strong emotions."

Is emotion necessary to label a thing conflict? If time allows, perhaps pose this to the group. Where nuance immediately enters into the situation, can a conflict exist without visible or highly charged emotion, depending on the actors? Probably. Conflict might be as simple as a raised voice for some whereas for another, not a single word might have been exchanged. Let's assume for the sake of the Soliya discourse that emotion is necessary, as these dialogues are less likely to pursue resources or incompatible goals.

So, what constitutes a conflict to the trainees? In what types of situations do they feel themselves to be in conflict? Do they attribute this feeling of conflict to themselves as individuals or find it common throughout their particular culture?

As always, look for patterns, and if you see them, be prepared to call them out, as in, "I hear many Western students describing a raised tone as evidence of conflict..."

Question(s):

- Where you ever in a conflict that you weren't aware was a conflict until much later in or after the issue?

The scripted video, which is a part of the multimedia, will be referenced in more detail within the power dynamics section. Trainees should have viewed in full as part of their prep work, so you could reference the way the Easterners did not know their behavior was translating to Westerners and in fact creating conflict.

It can be said that Westerners are not often aware of the perception of power their government displays upon Eastern nations. It could also be argued that typically power rich groups may go so far to appear unbiased that this is actually a different kind of bias.

Americans specifically sometimes hear of "the ugly American" when traveling in another country.

Check with trainees on how often they think unawareness of a conflict may be a result of a power imbalance?

Galtung "negative peace" and "positive peace"

Having defined conflict, we're next going to take a look at where it is and isn't presently. Also, is the absence of conflict as we've defined it, mean there's peace? Galtung points out that the absence of war is not necessarily indicative of a true peace. He calls this a

“negative peace” where something is missing whereas in a “positive peace” we’re not “limited to the idea of getting rid of something”; we’re in fact “establishing something that is missing.”

Understanding this concept is important to tackling the activity, as we’re asking trainees to identify an area or region where there may not be war or conflict per se. However, the area is “charged” as in past conflict is still fresh and could easily reignite. Is Northern Ireland possibly an example of this? Where there are stretches of “peace”, these have no feeling of permanence.

For example, let’s take Ireland and Northern Ireland. They’re part of the same land mass, but we wouldn’t really expect Ireland to break out in conflict, whereas Northern Ireland is a tense area whether a fight is specifically occurring at any given point or not.

If, for the sake of argument, we say that Ireland has developed measures that promote a “positive peace” and Northern Ireland hasn’t and is sometimes experiencing a “negative peace” or specific lack of war at a given point, what are trainee ideas to move a negative peace to a positive one.

Activity Detail

Identify a situation where a negative peace exists and have students pair up to come up with and later in group outline measures that could be implemented to convert this to a positive peace.

As mentioned above, Ireland is perhaps one such example. You could also assign as work beforehand that students themselves come prepared with an example of an area that has freshly fought but is not currently fighting. Is this area now at “peace” or is conflict simply on hold?

Cultural approaches to conflict resolution (40 minutes)

Avruch said, “Resolution aims somehow to get at the root causes of a conflict and not merely to treat its episodic or symptomatic manifestation...” This speaks to Galtung’s negative and positive peace and cannot be achieved without addressing any asymmetrical aspects to a conflict. What is culture, what is different between cultures, what is conflict, what power differentials in a conflict and what techniques ultimately can be applied to mitigate the conflict - all is inextricably tied together in the course of conflict resolution.

Barriers to a universal approach

While this might seem obvious that there will be barriers to applying any one approach on any topic to all situations, here’s a place to revisit cultural, conflict, power dynamic differences already discussed as relates to conflict resolution techniques themselves.

John Paul Lederach proffers information on two third party roles, that of the insider partial vs. outsider neutral. Where the East tends to prioritize the insider partial and the West could be said to largely prefer the outsider neutral, have trainees tie earlier discussion to this.



- Why could this be the case?
- Example, does mediation as a Western technique necessarily fail or have less impact due to the traditional prizing of mediators as "neutral" whereas Eastern justice frequently seeks out a trusted community member who has more knowledge of participants than a neutral would and realistically isn't there to provide neutrality?

Question(s):

- 1) Are there Eastern events where Western methods of conflict resolution may be appropriate and vice versa?
- 2) What, if any, are the limits to dialogue?

The Middle Eastern/Islamic Model	The Western Model
Go-between negotiation	Face-to-face negotiation
Social harmony, social status, relationship	Problem-solving
Group-oriented	Individual-oriented
Verbal agreement	Written agreement
Socially/morally binding	Legally binding
Value-based	Interest-based
Insider-partial	Outsider-impartial
Traditional/religious values and norms	Civic laws
Face-saving/Indirect communication	Direct communication
Rituals and symbols	Rules and guidelines
Experience, status, kinship	Professional certificate
Social institution	Pseudo-legal institution
Public/Pseudo-public setting	Private and formal setting
Triadic structure	Dyadic structure

(Excerpted from Özçelik, Sezai, "Islamic/Middle Eastern Conflict Resolution for Inter-personal and Intergroup Conflicts)

Eastern conflict resolution techniques

Examining some Eastern conflict resolution techniques within the Islamic region - Tahkim (arbitration), Wisata (mediation) and Sulha (peacemaking):

1. Do Arab trainees agree?
2. How do these vary from Western and could they reversely be applied with any effectiveness to Western situations?
3. Boiled down to its simplest differentiator, the facilitators in the Eastern cases of conflict resolution are typically "insider partials", appointed for their high status within the community.

Social Justice vs. Oppression Story (Bush, Folger)

According to "Social Justice", "mediation offers an effective means for organizing individuals around common interests and thereby building stronger community ties and structures."

In the "Oppression Story", "mediation has turned out to be a dangerous instrument for increasing the power of the state over the individual and the power of the strong over the weak."

Given the above, opposed views, can mediation as a conflict resolution technique be applied to Eastern situations?

- Transformative mediation
 - Evolved out of Western
 - Individuality key
 - Empowerment and recognition

🕒 Power Dynamics (6.5 Hours)

Readings

- Working With Groups in Conflict, Agbaria and Cohen

Multimedia

- Video (Amy / Yasmina)
 - G27, Week 7, Spring 2010
 - https://rapidshare.com/#!download|821p12|415467063|Video_Seminar_Episode_1__Power_Dynamics__Amy__Yasmina__HQ.m4v|201794|0|0
- OPTION: Movie clip, Babel (2:29 minutes);
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pa2aTSYLUps>

(Clip summary courtesy of Wikipedia)

Babel is a movie about miscommunication told in four interlocking tales. The background on the clip is that the Mexican caretaker for two American children decides to take them to a wedding in Mexico while their parents are on vacation, as previous arrangements for the children to be minded while the caretaker attended the wedding fell through. The caretaker's nephew offers to take her and the twins to and from the wedding. The nephew has been drinking heavily, and the border guards become suspicious of his behavior and the American children in the car.

Discussion Points

1. **(15 minutes)** Power Dynamics foundation
 2. **(5 minutes)** Agbaria & Cohen article
 3. **(1.50 hours)** Video
 4. **(25 minutes)** Activity One: Perceived Power
 5. **(30 minutes)** Trainer's role as relates to identifying and leveling power dynamics and cultural differences
 - a. What to look out for
 - b. When and how to interrupt
 - c. Opportunities to bridge understanding
- **(60 minutes)** Fishbowl 1
 - **(15 minutes)** Power dynamics affected by language, technology, cultural background
 - **(15 minutes)** Conflict arising from cultural differences
 - **(15 minutes)** Cultural differences affecting conflict

- **(60 minutes)** Fishbowl 2
- **(15 minutes)** Challenge to group dynamics
- Identifying power dynamics in play
- **(20 minutes)** Question(s): 1) Describe a time where you felt powerless to affect an outcome and how this event played out.
- **(25 minutes)** Activity Two: Words are Power

Power Dynamics Introduced

Whether we're aware of them or not, and particularly when we're not aware of them, power dynamics between East and West affect the course of dialogue, negotiation and conflict resolution. These will likely show up in any given discussion however subtly they may arise.

Adam Curle posited based on his personal experience mediating in Africa that "Sustainable resolutions to conflict require progression from unbalanced power relations between parties to relatively balanced relations." On a much larger scale, Curle describes stages to the asymmetrical conflict, yet even in a small arena like a classroom discussion, a facilitator would see differences in power show in certain students being quieter, seeking out "advocates" behind the scenes or acting aggressively.

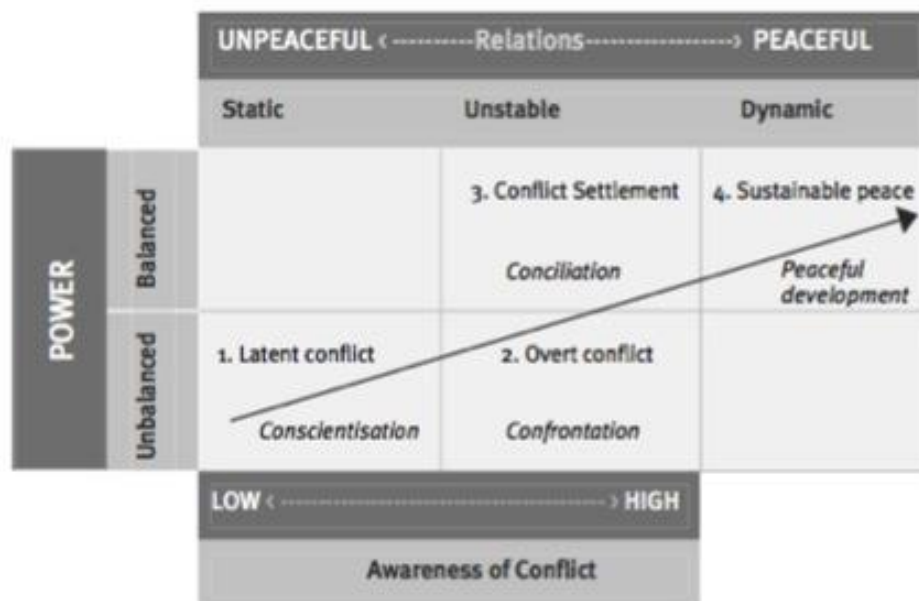


Figure 4: The progression of conflict in unbalanced relationships (adapted from Curle 1971)

Agbaria & Cohen

Pose to trainees as to what important points they noted in the article. If they aren't forthcoming, be sure to touch on:

- The authors' thesis is that if you do not address power dynamics you can cause more problems than you address through dialogue processes.



- The authors also say that dynamics within a small group can reflect broader societal dynamics.

What do trainees think happen if power dynamics aren't addressed? They're welcome to paraphrase the article or may have their own ideas.

Video

Trainees should have already watched the video prior to session, but it would be worthwhile to take some of the allotted time to show it or a few significant portions of it.

Explore what main points they took from the video.

- o Were Eastern trainees as surprised as the Eastern student participants to learn of the Western perception as the video unfolded?
- o Do Western trainees have a different take than the Western students in the video?

What are their thoughts on the power dynamic situation being flipped? Have they seen examples of this in the news or locally?

How did they think the facilitators handled the discussion?

- o Were they appropriate in stepping in? Too often or not often enough?
- o Are there opportunities they missed to effectively intervene?
- o What technique could have been leveraged to kick off discussion were there only a Western facilitator and not an Eastern one as well?

Activity One: Perceived Power

Start by explaining the activity to the trainees:

Prior to meeting anyone from another culture, think of the first example of meeting someone where an attribute or characteristic stood out in your mind that labeled this person as "other", culturally speaking and what that meant from a power dynamics perspective. Things to have trainees consider include:

- o What was different enough and / or what was it about the difference that cultural possibilities stood out as cause even if you might not have thought, "this is culture" at the time?
- o For example, let's say an exchange student arrived at your school one day, and you observed or participated in an event with the student, where that student's reaction or behavior was so alien to the common course of those around you that it stood out.
- o Did you consciously notice a power differential between you and this other?
- o If so, what were the factors creating this difference or equity? Was it just you two? Were others around of the other's culture or yours? How long did the engagement last?

Have trainees offer their experiences, and for each, pose questions to uncover power dynamics they may or may not be naming. If someone

didn't feel there were power dynamics, why was that? Were they not alone? Were they in a familiar place? Was the other person not? Encourage trainees to handle the interrogations themselves, but be prepared to drop in with questions such as above.

Trainer's Role (and ultimately the Facilitator's)

The trainer's role should be to actively identify, name for the group and level power dynamics in evidence. Since you're in part trying to draw them out, the role is slightly more involved than would normally be ideal in a Soliya session.

1. What to look out for
2. When and how to interrupt
3. Opportunities to bridge understanding

What to look for:

1. Language: With the conversation largely taking place in English, does it appear that any/all non-native English speakers are able to express what they need to?
2. Word Choice: Subtleties of language used. For example, "if we give you the land", are the terms used controversial?
3. Framing: From whose perspective is the conversation taking place? The one who frames the issue controls how it is debated.
4. Space taken up & timing: Who is speaking and when?
5. Emotional vs. Analytical language: Do people seem to be engaging in a theoretical way, or is it personal to them? Often the group that feels most threatened about the issue uses the most emotional language.
6. Reactions, body language: Are these matching the words trainees are using? Is there a disparity?
7. Technology: Keep an eye on calls for help or evidence that someone's technology setup isn't working out for them.

When and how to interrupt:

- SELF awareness: Helping the group gain this empowers them to move things forward.
- Naming: If you see a dynamic very clearly, don't shy away from NAMING IT, but be aware of how early you are in the trust forming process.
- All the other tools: observations/asking questions can be very helpful here.

Opportunities to bridge understanding:

- Remind the group that while there are some in-built power imbalances in Soliya Connect Program, addressing these helps reduce potential harmful dynamics.
- Pointing out that language and technology can create structures of exclusion also identifies them as in need of special attention, which then can be a way to promote inclusion, as it encourages the group to watch out for these and assist each other.

New facilitators should understand that language and technology in particular are two power dynamics that are essential to go through with groups. If not, they could be reproducing the power dynamics from the broader world in their groups without anyone questioning them. Trainers here are showing by example to trainees what should be done. Cover the following in more depth:

Fishbowl 1

Take time here to have trainees practice leading a facilitation practice. Utilize approximately 60 minutes total, so depending on how many trainees there are, take half the group, and split up the 60 minutes between them ideally allowing for at least 10-15 minutes facilitating a power-based scenario. These could include:

1. Setting up Western students in the group to use forceful language such as "your country must" or "your people need to learn how to..."
2. Setting up Eastern students to use language such as "your country is always pushing us to..." or "you couldn't understand what it's like..."
3. Giving Eastern students "technical" problems with Internet or computer usage.
4. Having Western students be aggressive in discussion, doing things like talking over all participants or forcing a quieter person to answer direct questions.
5. Seeding strong opinions amongst students that may not necessarily be their own and asking them to voice/defend these at all costs.

Power dynamics affected by language, technology, cultural background

- Often universities from non-Western societies don't have as powerful or consistent Internet connection. We talked before about how to deal with tech issues, and how to keep those with technical issues on board. Other than dealing with the technical side of things, how could we address this power dynamic of imbalanced participation because of technology?
- What are some ways to reduce the imbalance of power that is inherently there because of language?
 - o Make it clear from the beginning that this is a bilingual medium.
 - o Keep careful notes in the chat box.
 - o Check in via private chat - but don't put the person on the spot
 - o Spend a bit of time speaking in Arabic the first or second day. Make sure you translate.
 - o Do a round that raises the issue of language (funny story about being in a place when you didn't understand the language, meaning of name, how feel when speaking different language)

Conflict arising from cultural differences

Encourage trainees to name their own examples and discuss, but be prepared with a few if topics are not forthcoming.

Realistically, there are many on a civil and international scale, but focusing on those with broader ramification, there's:

- Berlin Wall
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Soviet war in Afghanistan
- Apartheid in South Africa
- Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- The Crusades and any number of wars

Choose one of if necessary and explore what trainees may consider to be the root cause of any one of these disagreements. If culture was a significant factor in their eyes, how was it so?

Alternatively, you could look at where cultural differences were present in a power dynamic situation and how sensitivity did or did not produce a more productive outcome. One possible example is how the victors in World War II negotiated peace as opposed to how it was determined at the end of World War I.

- Specifically, could one argue that World War I victors leveraged their power so detrimentally that its application bred the situation leading to World War II?
- Was there a lesson learned and therefore applied to the close of World War II?
- In what way, if at all, did the treatment of the Japanese emperor broker a more lasting peace?

Cultural differences affecting conflict

Revisit some of Gostede's "dimensions" from earlier, and look at how these differences could affect a conflict in progress from a power standpoint.

- For example, in a hypothetical conflict over something simple such as a perceived insult, how can high context and low context individuals bridge the gap?
- Could their cultural tendencies exacerbate the issue they're trying to resolve, and if so, how so?

Have the trainees themselves evidenced dimensional attributes throughout the discussion to date? If a good example between trainees has presented itself, name this. Encourage trainees to reframe the discussion, as in have the low context participant try to behave in a high context manner and vice versa. The main goal here as with most methods and points is to achieve better understanding, so be on the lookout for emotion getting in the way.

Fishbowl 2

Taking another opportunity to provide the rest of the group with a practice session, set up group members with scenarios, so that facilitators have a chance to employ power dynamic tools. In addition to options offered above, consider:

1. Assigning students roles similar to the real roles played out in the video session they already watched.



2. Flip the attributes, and assign high context personalities to the Western students and low context to the Eastern. Are they playing their roles or reverting to their cultural backgrounds?

Challenge to group dynamics

Turn this back to the trainees based on their understanding so far...

- How can some of these cultural differences lead to power dynamic differentials in a group setting?
- How can they be a challenge to the overall cohesion of the group?

Be prepared with follow up questions and / or points such as:

- Are certain trainee cultures naturally more withdrawn in discussion? Have they seen evidence at any point in the session so far?
- Does it take more effort to draw certain cultures out?
- Are some trainees overbearing and does that stem from culture or simple personality?

Look for attributes to name these such as referring back to the dimensions. If not in evidence, put them out there for discussion, and ask trainees why they're perhaps not seeing them.

- Are participants being "polite"?
- Are the cultural attributes discussed so far too stereotypical to be relevant?

Identifying power dynamics in play

By observing the power dynamics (as they happen) trainers can help the group to note the power dynamics not only in their group, but how these affect the world outside the room. Trainers should always encourage the group to draw parallels to what is happening in the room to what is going on outside it in the world politics/arena.

Ask the group to come up with concrete observations, to help them to think as concretely as possible.

Examples include:

- "One way that groups can learn through their work together is by noticing the ways in which their dynamics reflect broader social or global issues. I notice that today- as so often happens- the participants from the US and Europe have better technology than the participants from the Middle East. Do you see this as reflecting any broader global issues or challenges?"
- "How do these imbalances in access and voice affect our global society?"
- "How do they affect us as a group?"
- "Is there anything we can do as a group to address these imbalances?"
- "Are there other power imbalances in this group? What is the source of this power?" (Some answers, which could be

suggested, include: information, personal experience, education)

Question(s):

- 1) Describe a time where you felt powerless to affect an outcome and how this event played out. What was the root cause?
- 2) Was there a time where technology failed you at a critical moment, whether you typically have technology that works well or not? What happened and what did you do to resolve the issue (not in terms of fixing the tech, but did you have to, for instance, run down the street to a neighbour's house)?
- 3) How would you notice power dynamics? Do you ever think power dynamics from global dynamics are reflected in interpersonal relations? Then you can ask them what THEY think the dynamics are in the group, and if the dynamics reflect broader global dynamics in any way.

Activity Two: Words are Power

Facilitator divides trainees into two groups with a mix of Eastern and Western students in each. The goal is to mimic a power situation where one has it and is able to communicate while the other is completely in the dark.

One group is given a "key" of no more than five or so made up words, but these words represent specific simple meanings, and this group with the language has the ability to eliminate the others from participating. The other group isn't given a "language". The goal is to mimic a power situation where one has it and is able to communicate while the other is completely in the dark. Note that the point is not for the group with "the language" to have an actual conversation, but giving them "real" words to use should hopefully lend more feeling to the activity.

Key:

- Goff = Give
- Fobe = Food
- Tobe = Take
- Moy = Money
- Wana = War

Afterward, you'll want to talk through how the group felt about this imbalance, and how does it make the participants feel when they are not able to contribute in the program the same way as others, or that the language of the program is English, not Arabic. Are there any examples they can think of - and how would that affect the participation

For example:

- "One way that groups can learn through their work together is by noticing the ways in which their dynamics reflect broader social or global issues. The medium in this group is English, but it isn't a first language for many of us.
- Does the choice of English as a language reflect broader



global dynamics?"

- How does this affect the group dynamic? Does the dynamic in this group reflect broader global dynamics?
- Do you ever feel that you aren't FULLY able to make your voice heard because English isn't your first language?
- If English isn't your first language, how do you think the conversation would be different for you, if it was in your first language?

Use the opportunities that arise in the activity to help the group realize the inherent power dynamics of the program, and how that affects the participants. For example, turn to those without the language "key" and ask:

- How did it feel when the others began talking and seemed to know what they were discussing though it was gibberish to you?

While you don't want to call out anyone as "weaker", use this activity to provide guidance for how trainees can empower weaker individuals in their subsequent facilitations. Suggest they:

- Make note of the generally more talkative and quieter individuals.
- Making use of tools such as private chat, encourage the talkative students to reach out to the quiet ones thereby providing the quieter ones with a chance to engage safely if something is preventing engagement in the larger group.

Also, suggest giving a topic the "weaker" party might know more about than others. Pose that topic, giving the trainee more room to speak.

In addition, consider approaches such as to:

- Directly intervene: Invite people who haven't spoken to speak, or do a round so that they are automatically given the floor.
- Make an observation. For instance, "I notice that someone from the US is always the first to speak." Or "I notice the people in this group from the predominantly Muslim societies are really quiet today."
- Ask a question: after you observe that there is an imbalance in the level of participation ask: "why do you think that is?"

Further maintaining active listening during group discussion and direction, help underline or clarify learnings:

- Observing the reaction of the group: "I thought that I noticed that others in the group had a reaction to the word 'help', is that the case? What does the word 'help' mean to you? What do you hear when someone uses the word 'help'?" This can be a good time to bring up the concept of "trigger words"- words (like "terrorist") that are based on a whole series of assumptions- and that tend to provoke very strong reactions. This is discussed in greater detail in the Online Curriculum.
- Paraphrasing a participant's comment to make the patterns more clear both to the speaker and to the other members of the group: "So I am hearing you say that people in the predominantly Muslim



societies need help from the United States in order for their governments to function effectively.”

- Asking a question that brings the alternative frame into the room.
- Asking people from the community whose frame is not being included in the conversation how the issue is generally being talked about in their community and in their newspapers.
- Observing that the issue is being discussed entirely as an issue of freedom of speech (or respect). Observe that this has also often been considered an issue of respect, and ask why they don't think this has been addressed in their conversation.

Finally, to broaden out good discussion and identify opportunities to take it deeper **or suggest additional lines of thought:**

- Observe that the topic is approached only on political/personal level. You can ask the group why they think that is the case, and how could they open the discussion to include the other perspective.
- Note that sometimes participants discuss topics in a very academic level just because that's what they are used to in academic setting, and that is the kind of a language that is valued in academia. If happening, remind the group that this is different to academic classroom and they should always try to find a personal connection to the topics discussed and feel free to express them in the group.

🕒 Conclusion (20 minutes)

Discussion Points

- **(10 minutes)** Recap of module
- **(10 minutes)** Facilitator round robin / participant thank you / final questions and closing

Recap of module

Having looked at:

- Reifying culture
- Cultural differences
- Defining conflict
- Cultural resolution techniques
- Power dynamics

What stood out for trainees amongst all of the discussion and work to stand on the same foundation for purpose of then looking at power dynamics and culture? **Are there trends in Eastern answers vs. Western, and if so, use this as yet another opportunity to point out potential differentiators that when named, can actually bring us closer together through the dialogue process.**

Have participants seen, and if so, describe a situation where dialogue utterly failed? What were the causes of failure? Was another tactic appropriate in that situation if handled differently or was it simply not an effective tactic? Think of a Western event and apply the sulha process to it...talk through what the process and outcome might have looked like.

Trainee round robin for closing thoughts

Participant thank you

Final questions and closing

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