BUILDING BRIDGES

between citizens and local governments
to work more effectively together

THROUGH

MANAGING CONFLICT AND DIFFERENCES

PART I
CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

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FOREWORD

This series of training manuals coincides with the launch of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) Global Campaign on Urban Governance. The theme of "inclusiveness", reflecting the Campaign's vision and strategy, is deeply embedded in the themes and learning strategies covered by these manuals. While they have been planned and written to serve the developmental needs of non-governmental and community-based organizations, their leadership and staff, the context for learning implementation is consistently conveyed within the spirit and reality of widespread collaboration.

There is growing evidence and increased recognition of several themes that define and frame the urban governance agenda for the new century and millennium. The first, inclusiveness, implies that local governments and communities that want to be on the leading edge of social and economic change must recognize the importance of including everyone, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race or religion, in the process of forging decisions that affect their collective quality of life.

The second recognition involves shared leadership that cuts across the spectrum of institutional and community fabric. Ideally, these shared leadership forums will be based on mutual trust, open dialogue among all stakeholders, and a wide range of strategies for turning good ideas and common visions into concrete actions.

As described in the Prologue, this series of learning implementation tools has been a collaborative effort by Partners Romania Foundation for Local Development, UNCHS (Habitat) and the Open Society Institute. Major funding for the project was provided by the Open Society Institute's Local Government Initiative Programme with other financial support from UNCHS (Habitat) and the Government of the Netherlands. Partners Romania managed the project under its Regional Programme for Capacity Building in Governance and Local Leadership for Central and Eastern Europe. These responsibilities included field testing the Participatory Planning and Managing Conflict and Differences manuals in a training of trainers programme involving 18 participants from 13 Central and Eastern European countries and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The initiatives for launching this series of training manuals came from two different regions of the world. The Steering Committee for the Regional Capacity Building Programme for Central and Eastern Europe identified conflict management and participatory planning as two of their region's training needs during their deliberations in 1997. In addition, a diverse group of NGO, CBO and local government leaders from across Sub-Saharan Africa met in 1998 and identified these topics, as well as others covered in this series, as important training needs.

Finally, I want to thank Fred Fisher the principal author of the series and the superb team of writing collaborators he pulled together to craft these materials. These include: Ana Vasilache, director of Partners Romania, who managed the process from Romania; Kinga Goncz and Dusan Ondrusek, directors of Partners Hungary and Slovakia respectively; David Tees, who has contributed to many UNCHS publications over the years; the trainers who participated in the field tests of the materials; and, the team of UNCHS staff professionals, headed by Tomasz Sudra, who brought their considerable experience and expertise to fine tune the final products.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
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PROLOGUE

There's a story lurking behind the development of these materials. It's worth taking a few moments to share with you. As indicated in the Foreword, this particular project had its initial roots in two major regions of the world, Central and Eastern Europe and Sub-Sahara Africa. But, efforts to develop and disseminate user friendly training materials started many years ago with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) commitment to provide training materials for local government officials in developing countries.

The UNCHS Elected Leadership Series of training manuals, developed within the Local Leadership and Management Training Programme, was particularly popular. It includes 13 manuals designed to help local government elected officials increase their knowledge and skills in key leadership roles and responsibilities. The series, available in more than fifteen languages, is used worldwide, not only by local government elected officials but leaders in non-governmental and community-based organizations. It was the adaptation of this series by the social sector that prompted UNCHS (Habitat) to initiate this series.

Several factors contributed to the success of these learning materials. First, they were user friendly. Trainers could be trained to use the materials in less than two weeks with the second week devoted to their conducting workshops for elected officials representing either the host country or countries represented by the trainers. Second, UNCHS encouraged the adaptation of the materials to reflect cultural, linguistic and other differences represented by the user community. User groups were encouraged to make changes in the text, the training designs and the suggested delivery modes to meet the particular needs of constituents. Potential users of training materials are rarely given such explicit freedom to adapt and alter learning resources to meet the needs of their constituents. Third, the practical skill development orientation of the materials attracted the attention of other audiences. The leaders of the social sector, representing non-governmental (NGO) and community based (CBO) organizations, also found them useful in meeting some of their own staff development needs.

In response to the social sector's use of the Elected Leadership materials and their frequent requests for training assistance, Habitat's Local Leadership and Management Training Programme convened a select group of NGO/CBO leaders from 15 countries in Sub-Sahara Africa (23-28 November 1998) to advise Habitat on their training needs. They were joined by a number of local government managers from Kenya since one re-occurring theme in NGO/CBO leadership and managerial effectiveness deals specifically with their relationships with local governments. The participants to this work session, convened in Nakuru, Kenya, reached consensus on what they believed to be the management development needs of their organizations. These were subsequently translated into detailed curriculum development outlines for consideration under future funding opportunities.

More than a year prior to the Nakuru workshop, the Steering Committee of the Regional Programme for Capacity Building in Governance and Local Leadership for East and Central European Countries identified participatory planning and conflict management as two of their top priority training needs. While the constituents in this particular programme are primarily local governments, the training needs they identified coincided with some of the training needs identified by the NGO/CBO institutions participating in the capacity building strategy workshop in Sub-Sahara Africa.

Since UNCHS works with all these institutions, it made sense to combine the two efforts. Consequently, two of the manuals in this series are funded in large part by the Open Society Institute's Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative with assistance from the Government of the Netherlands working through UNCHS.

Making democracy work at the local level

The manner in which the development of these learning materials has unfolded highlights several trends that are taking place worldwide. First, the possibilities for actually achieving local self-governing status around the world have never been better. The top- down, authoritarian governments in a large part of the world quickly collapsed after several decades of mismanagement and deceit. With their demise came opportunities for citizens to re-establish local self-governments to control the destiny of the physical place they called home. The Partners Romania initiative to build local government capacity through training is recognition of these shifts in the political landscape of these regions. It also recognizes the importance of linking local governments and community based institutions (NGOs/CBOs) in efforts to secure local self-governance processes and democratic values.

In other parts of the world, where local governments often exist on paper but central governments essentially control the process by denying access to resources, citizens have become restive, even angry. Increasingly, citizens are demanding a greater and more potent voice and influence in the way their communities function. Central governments have been loosening their grip on the governing process in recognition of their failures to deliver promises and under increasing pressure to restore power and resources to local governments and their networks of community based

institutions. Non-governmental and community based organizations have been effective advocates in efforts to restore the local self- governing process in many regions of the world. This project is recognition of the symbiotic relationship that often exists between local government institutions and the collective NGO/CBO networks at the community level.

The intended audience
It should be clear by now that the intended audience for these learning materials is diverse. Obviously, it includes the initial target NGO/CBO institutions and those individuals serving in leadership and management roles. Much of what is included in this series of manuals can also meet the training needs of local government elected and appointed officials and their professional and technical personnel.

There is an important intermediary audience that we want to focus on for a moment. It is the network of training providers who serve local governments and community organizations. These include designated local government training institutes, NGO umbrella support institutions, local NGOs or CBOs who see their roles as providing capacity building experiences for others, private sector training organizations, and, of course, individual trainers and consultants.

Our message to this collective audience of potential users is to be creative in the use of the materials and the identification of learning opportunities to serve the primary constituents outlined above. While training materials, such as these, are seen as the basic building blocks for designing and delivering skill workshops, their potential is much greater. For example, the Participatory Planning and Conflict Management manuals are designed to facilitate planned change efforts in the community. Other manuals in the series can become effective tools for helping NGO and CBO leaders implement organization development programmes. And, the creative trainer/consultant will see the series as a comprehensive set of tools she can use in many different ways to structure interventions at various levels of the community to meet client needs.

Finally, the series has been borne out of concern from grassroots organizations and leaders that their ability to serve the community is directly tied to their continuing commitment to learn. Equally important is the recognition that NGOs, CBOs and local governments have a responsibility to help others learn as well. The management literature is full of references to learning organizations. We urge all of you who partake of the information and ideas put forth in this series to think about the opportunities and responsibilities you have to create learning communities. Start by creating opportunities to use these training materials with management teams, neighborhood action groups, fledgling non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens who want to become more effective in serving their community.

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

The intent of this training manual is to look at options that can help individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and local governments resolve their differences before they become intractable and destructive. It can be used to:

- train local government officials, civic organization leaders and staff, and interested citizens in the fundamentals of negotiation, mediation and facilitated decision-making processes

- increase the knowledge and skills of those who are already working in these roles and believe they can benefit from additional training

- conduct orientation sessions for officials and citizens who want to know more about opportunities to manage conflict in their organizations and communities, and

- help train trainers to train others in the knowledge and skills associated with conflict management practices.

Opportunities to use these learning materials are limited only by the imagination of those who decide to put them to use. Conflict is endemic in just about every society and circumstance. While the culture in which it resides may require a unique or different approach to resolving conflict and, consequently, a modification of the ideas and tools put forth in this manual, we nevertheless urge you to think about how you can use these ideas and tools to your advantage.

At the risk of being accused of over-simplifying and trivializing the complexity of learning and applying conflict management methodologies, we want to relate a recent experience by one of the authors. He visited a rural elementary school and learned that ten to twelve year-old girls and boys were trained to work as peer mediators to help resolve conflicts between students. When these student mediators are ready to graduate to another school, they help to train their replacements. While these children are not expected to become instant experts at resolving difficult conflicts on the playground or in the community, there are two important messages in this medium. First, it demonstrates and conveys the potential for resolving differences through dialogue and discussion. More importantly, it helps to establish the norms and values of resolving conflicts at the time and place where they exist, by those who are party to the

conflict. Establishing conflict resolution norms and skills among the young seems like a reasonable investment in the future.

Part I includes a detailed look at a number of recognized approaches to managing conflict and disagreements within local governments and communities. The format of Part I suggests you stop from time to time to reflect on what you have been reading and how you might use the ideas and insights gained to improve the quality of life in your community. It's the literary equivalent of stopping along the road to smell the flowers.

Part II is designed to help you put these concepts, theories and strategies into practice. It includes training designs to help you and others learn how to manage this fascinating area with a bit less stress and much more success. It also includes tools you can use to manage conflicts and disagreements in different settings. For example, the conflict or differences might be between individuals or work units within the organization, between local governments and community-based organizations, or among various groups of citizens. The opportunities for conflict, it seems, are endless. The types of conflict or disagreement you want to help manage will determine the type of tool or tools you need to use. So, we urge you to be selective.

Consider this a voyage of discovery

We like to think of learning as a *voyage of discovery*. Like all voyages this one will take you into new territories. From time to time we will be suggesting you take certain detours to make this *Voyage* more productive and enjoyable based on your individual perspective and needs. Or, you might decide to skip part of the journey because you've been there before. That's perfectly all right with us. After all, we prefer not to have bored passengers on board.

To help to get the most from this voyage of discovery, we will from time to time issue *Travel Advisories*. These are intended to alert you to certain conditions we know about from the experience of field testing the materials and getting advice from many individuals who helped in the final production of this and other manuals in the series. We hope you will enjoy this voyage of discovery.

And last but not least, many thanks to all participants who put their signatures below (see hard copy only) and attended the Training of Trainers Programme in June 2000, to field test the manuals.
Fred Fisher

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

If this is the first time you have encountered a Travel Advisory and aren't sure what it means, we suggest you go back to the previous page where we have attempted to describe this metaphoric bump in your voyage of discovery. Now, for our first travel advisory.

Trying to tackle the business of managing conflicts and disagreements in a short training manual is difficult. First, there are many different schools of thought about conflict management and these schools seem to splinter very quickly into their own sub-school clusters of thinking. We've tried to introduce some of the more important approaches to conflict management.

Second, we have deliberately used the term *managing conflict and differences*, rather than **conflict resolution** because we believe conflicts and disagreements are important features of a dynamic organization, community and society. They represent the zest that helps us overcome the status quo and move on. Resolving conflicts and disagreements before they happen could be counterproductive. Authoritarian governments and organizations tend to keep these tendencies from surfacing. Unfortunately, conflicts and disagreements can also be destructive. However, they can, in most situations, be managed effectively.

Finally, this manual *is not* designed to prepare the reader to mediate a conflict between an airline crew and a gang of hi-jackers at ten thousand meters or emotionally charged ethnic conflicts across national borders. These situations are best left to professional mediators and negotiators.

Given these caveats, this publication has three purposes: (1) To help managers and others, who already find themselves managing conflict situations, to do it better; (2) to help the reader better understand the options available for managing conflicts and differences in various settings; and (3) to help those who decide to get professional help, such as the services of mediators, to be more selective and knowledgeable in their decisions and subsequent monitoring of performance.

We hope our assumptions about this complex topic and subsequent efforts to discuss them in a useful way will reasonably meet your expectations. If not, you may want to rethink this *voyage of discovery* and find yourself another tour guide.

CONFLICT. *It appears to be everywhere. We find it in our personal lives at home, between parent and child and between spouses. We find it at work between employer and employee. It's there between man and woman. We see religion against religion, nation against nation. It's the underlying theme throughout all of human history. With the increasing complexity of life on this planet, the exploding human population, and our possession of awesome weapons, which could trigger our total annihilation, conflict has become the critical issue of our time.*

THOMAS F. CRUMM

Crumm goes on to say: *It's not whether you have conflict in your life. It's what you do with that conflict that makes a difference.*[1] This manual will help those who use it to understand more fully what conflict is and how to resolve it more effectively. It is directed to a very special audience: those who want to build stronger, more viable, more productive