SECTION 3

SECTION 3
ANALYSING CONFLICT

3.1 WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY ANALYSING CONFLICT?

Conflict analysis is a learning process to help stakeholders understand a conflict better and decide whether, and how best, to act. In analysing conflict we begin to look at the causes, the context and the people involved. Stakeholders explore key issues to help them determine the most appropriate approach to managing the conflict.

This section will examine the main elements of conflict analysis, which are:

- exploring the history and origins of the conflict;
- identifying the stakeholders who need to be involved in managing the conflict;
- determining the relative power, interests, relationships and motivations of the stakeholders;
- probing issues related to cultural diversity, gender and policy.

3.1.1 Key outcomes of conflict analysis

An analysis of conflict stakeholders should seek to:

- clarify the range of issues that need to be addressed;
- identify the impacts of conflict;
- identify and prioritize the causes of conflict;
- determine the stakeholders and their interests, needs and views on the conflict;
- consider particular contributing factors (i.e. policy, culture, gender);
- identify what information about the conflict already exists and what further information is needed;
- build rapport and understanding among stakeholders, where possible;

FIGURE 3.1 **KEY QUESTIONS TO ASSIST DECISIONS ABOUT ACTING IN A CONFLICT**

- enhance the problem solving and analytical skills of local stakeholders in addressing current and future conflicts;
- increase the understanding of linkages between the broader social, political and economic context and forest use conflicts.

Key questions that stakeholders need to ask about the conflict are suggested in Figure 3.1.

In conflict situations emotions can easily overwhelm logic and reason. A primary objective of conflict analysis is to help stakeholders reconsider their perspectives, which are often laden with emotions, misunderstandings, assumptions, suspicions and mistrust. It is important to distinguish these opinions from matters of fact. This transformation of perspective is vital to finding places for collaboration in conflict management. It is an integral step in moving away from rigid and inflexible positions towards exploring possible shared interests. Two important outcomes of analysis are determining what causes are open to negotiation and identifying common needs or goals that can be met through collaboration.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 9

CONFLICT ANALYSIS TOOLS

As these materials discuss the various elements of conflict, they will introduce a set of participatory activities (Section 9) for strengthening necessary skills in conflict analysis. Many of these training activities are participatory tools that are common to community-based forest management and have been adapted specifically for use in conflict management. Those involved in conflict can use these tools to examine their situation. The tools include web diagrams, time lines, various mapping techniques and matrices. The training activities presented here are not exhaustive. Trainers in conflict management are encouraged to build continually on the activities provided. Additional training activities are available in other manuals, and trainers are advised to review and use these as needed (for example, see other participatory tools in Davis Case, 1990; Pretty *et al.,* 1995). Building a tool kit of activities and materials for training in conflict management can help address a range of situations and learner's needs.

3.1.2 Who carries out conflict analysis and when?

The process of working towards negotiation can often be difficult to initiate. Whether the groups come together early, in an effort to head off a dispute, or meet only after the dispute has intensified, the problem of getting started is the same. Someone has to make the first move and, unfortunately, there are real concerns and pressures that block that first move. Initiating action can be perceived as a sign of weakness or as implying that the group initiating collaboration fears the outcome. If one group of stakeholders believes that it will get what it wants by using a different approach, such as using pressuring tactics, threats or force, there is not much incentive to convene with others. At the same time, if one stakeholder group is weak or likely to lose through other means, it may have difficulties convincing opposing stakeholders to consider negotiations (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987).

Analysing conflict requires several important first steps in a conflict management process. These include:

- establishing the entry point;
- preliminary analysis of conflict and identification of stakeholders;
- broader engagement of other involved stakeholders;
- stakeholders' analysis of conflicts;
- assessment of options.

Analysis of a conflict's causes and stakeholders is a useful first step to establishing an entry point and a preliminary plan of action to engage

other groups in resolving that conflict. An initial conflict analysis can indicate approaches or incentives for engaging other stakeholders and gaining their agreement to participate in negotiation. It must be remembered, however, that the initial analysis of conflict is only preliminary and must be fully developed with the other groups directly involved in the conflict.

On agreeing to explore conflict management options, stakeholder groups begin a participatory analysis of the conflict. This includes the same elements as the preliminary analysis, for example, determining the contributing causes, identifying stakeholders and analysing their interests, etc. What makes this step different from the initial analysis is that it is undertaken by a broader number of involved stakeholders. Ideally, each group of stakeholders will undertake its own analysis, and then use the findings of this analysis in negotiations with other groups. Participatory analysis will, in turn, identify more stakeholders, different perspectives and more of the underlying issues and interests of key groups.

The actual number of different analyses undertaken and the timing of managing conflict are dynamic, largely determined by the complexity and intensity of conflict and the location and number of stakeholders involved. In addition, at any point in the initial analysis of conflict, or in working with other stakeholders, it might be decided to do nothing further towards negotiations until other circumstances have changed.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 10

SUPPORTING THE PROCESS

During training, ask participants to remember the guidelines that support a participatory process from Section 2.4, and consider how they are applied to a process of conflict analysis. In situations where power is concentrated with elite groups, the causes of conflict, stakeholder identification and boundaries will be distorted at the outset if the process is not participatory and transparent (Ramirez, 1999).

3.2 EXPLORING CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Analysis of the causes of conflict begins with identifying and describing the conflict, its boundaries and interrelationships. These elements may include:

- the origins, levels and issues of the conflict;
- the history and chronology of the events;
- geographical and temporal relationships;
- interrelationships with other conflicts;
- prioritization of areas for action.

The individual elements of conflict to be explored depend on the context.

Task 1: Exploring the origins of the conflict. Conflict arises from a sequence of events. It is important to consider a conflict's history and what caused it before making any conclusions about what is happening at present. A crucial starting point in the analysis of conflict is for the groups and individuals involved to define clearly what they think the current conflict is about and the history behind it.

A further aim in exploring the origins of a conflict is to break down an often large, seemingly unbounded and complex problem into smaller elements of conflict causes. These elements can then be examined in more detail and prioritized for action. The origins of the conflict may include a range of discrete events, problems with relationships, policy decisions, tenure and access rights, unclear management processes, clashes in values, and so on.

The task of sorting out the origins of a forest conflict can be time-consuming and challenging. There are likely to be many causes involved, and many views about the importance of each cause. In addition, the causes of forest conflicts may be deeply embedded in other parts of social, economic, cultural and political life. Nevertheless, exploring the origins is a crucial step in working towards an understanding of how to address the conflict appropriately.

Task 2: Verifying perceptions, facts and information needs. A participatory process of exploring a conflict and its causes allows people to make explicit their knowledge of events, their assumptions and their suspicions regarding that conflict. It is unusual that all stakeholders agree on a single history of a conflict. Instead, they may have numerous interpretations of the origins and immediate causes of the conflict. Even within a single group there can be different recollections of facts, or of the sequence and significance of events.

This again reinforces the need to obtain and understand the range of local viewpoints about a conflict. The aim is to work through the different perspectives with all stakeholders, and eventually to identify which "facts" are agreed on, which need to be investigated further and where more information is needed before decisions on actions can be made.

Acknowledging and gaining an understanding of the perceptions of the different stakeholder groups is important for knowing where to begin a process of consensual negotiation. In normal life, and in conflict situations in particular, perceptions rather than objective facts often drive people's decision-making. In a conflict situation it is critical not to begin by challenging a party's perceptions. Rather, it is better to start by appreciating that these perceptions are very real in that they are the cause of real, often physical, effects. Moreover, conflicts tend to carry strong emotions. It is therefore unlikely that argument will change the initial perception, especially if it has been strengthened and validated by a wider group. (Warner, 2001)

TRAINER'S NOTE # 11

USEFUL ACTIVITIES FOR IDENTIFYING CONFLICT CAUSES

Training activities #8 to #11 are useful tools in establishing conflicting groups' different perspectives on the causes of conflict. These tools can serve many important functions, including building rural people's analytical skills in anticipating and managing conflict. Comparing the results of these activities and the often very different views they represent may help to create a dialogue among the groups and individuals involved in the conflict. From these activities, training participants can develop summary lists or tables of agreed facts and agreed information needs. Groups should also record their decisions on how the necessary information will be obtained.

Task 3: Identifying linkages. Mapping the causes of conflict and their sequence can improve understanding of the key linkages among what may appear on the surface to be isolated events. What first seems to be a local dispute may be fuelled by underlying inequalities or decisions made further afield, without the knowledge of remote communities. Government policies on indigenous peoples, longstanding disparities between customary and government tenure systems, national development goals or plans and globalization may appear irrelevant to day-to-day forest management at a remote location. But frequently, these factors are shown to have a significant impact on local disputes. Particularly for rural people, being aware of the linkages between the broader policy setting and their own livelihoods can be extremely enlightening and vital to their empowerment. Figure 3.2 provides an example of how a community group might analyse the root causes of a conflict.

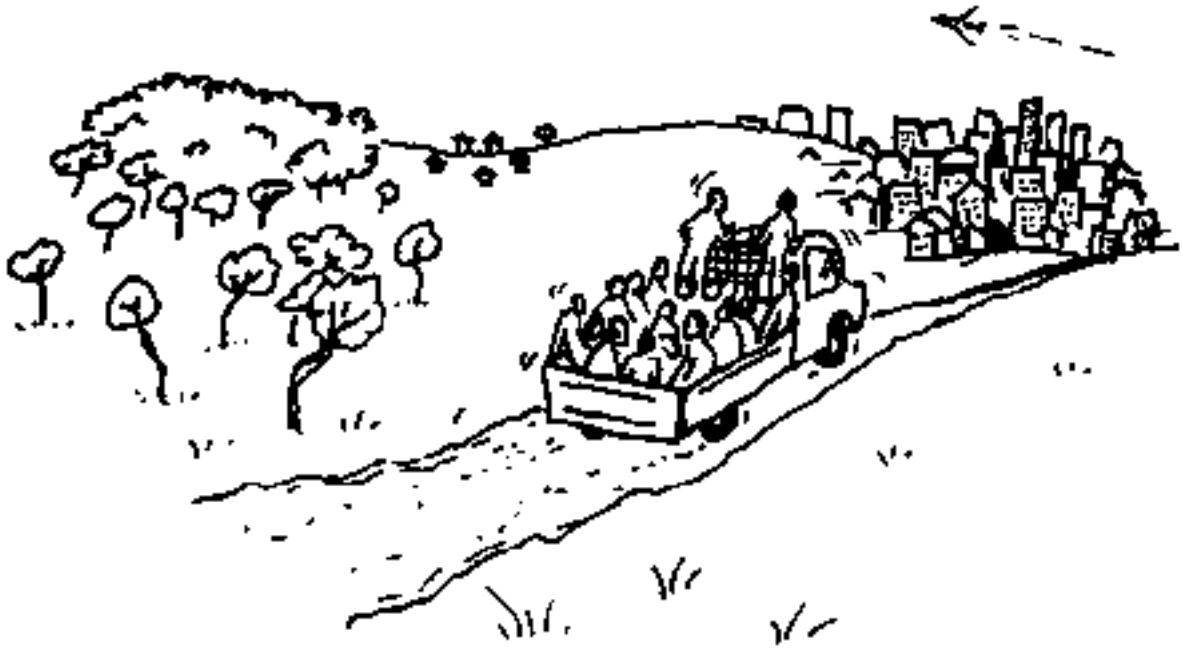
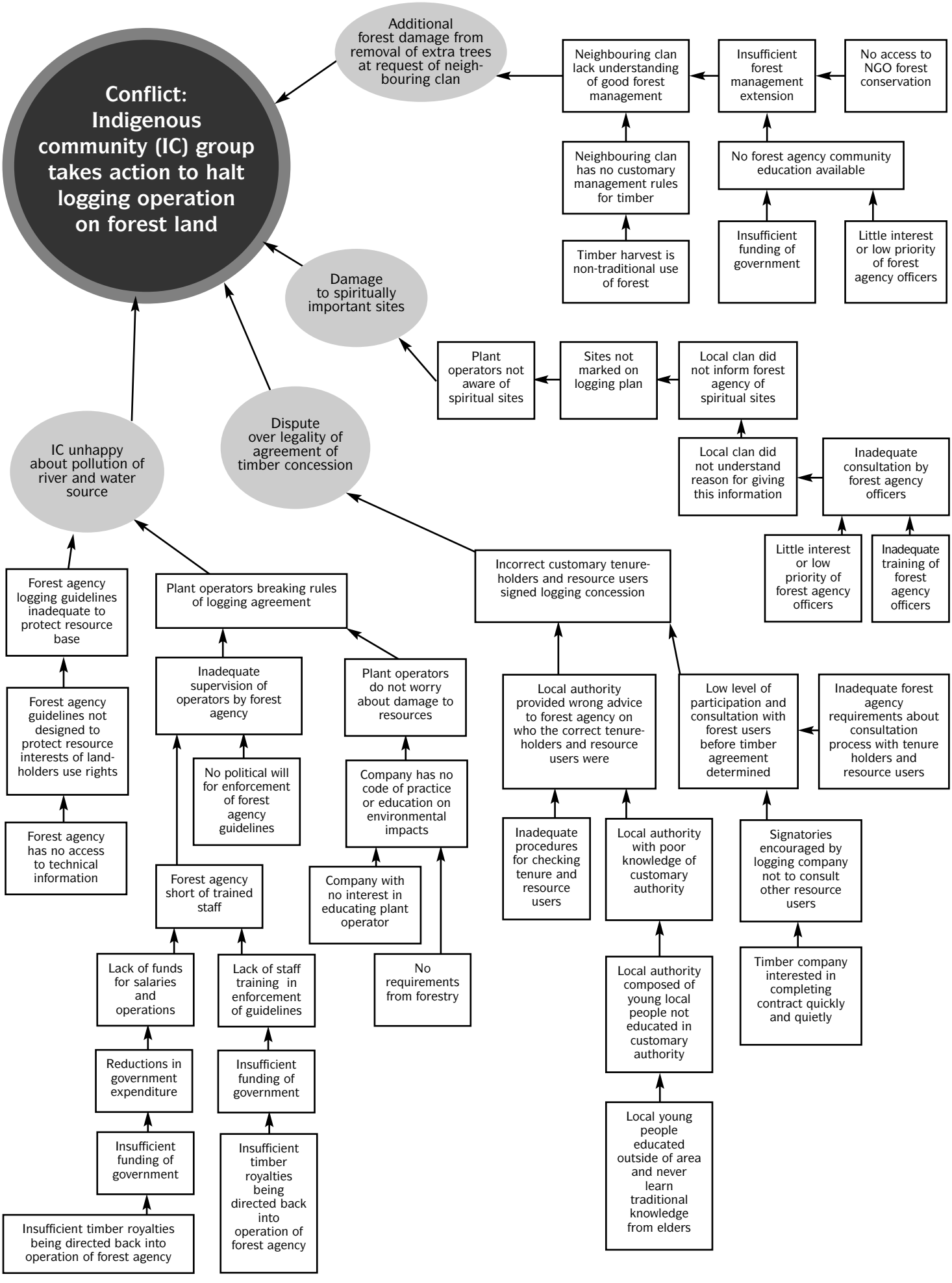


FIGURE 3.2 **AN EXAMPLE OF A ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS**

Opposite is a simplified root cause analysis of a conflict, which was prepared by a rural community group that was taking action to halt forest logging by an overseas timber company. On the surface, the focus of the conflict was between the two groups. The diagram draws attention to a number of other stakeholders and subgroups that were involved in the conflict or whose support was needed in finding solutions to the conflict. It identifies a number of places for possible action in managing the conflict and in improving the collaborative management process. For the local community, the diagram also links broader political and policy decisions to impacts in their area.

The causes of conflict listed here reflect the biases of the local group. In discussion of the diagram, the group conceded that all the listed causes might not be factual. However, the diagram provided a framework for investigating the various causes further, for collecting information and for determining which were and which were not true factors contributing to the current conflict. The diagram helped the group to decide at what scale it needed to act in order to manage the conflict in the short term. It also indicated what actions the group needed to take in order to anticipate and address possible conflicts in the future.


Conflict: Indigenous community (IC) group takes action to halt logging operation on forest land
Additional forest damage from removal of extra trees at request of neighbouring clan
Neighbouring clan lack understanding of good forest management
Insufficient forest management extension
No access to NGO forest conservation
Neighbouring clan has no customary management rules for timber
No forest agency community education available
Timber harvest is non-traditional use of forest
Insufficient funding of government
Little interest or low priority of forest agency officers
Damage to spiritually important sites
Plant operators not aware of spiritual sites
Sites not marked on logging plan
Local clan did not inform forest agency of spiritual sites
IC unhappy about pollution of river and water source
Dispute over legality of agreement of timber concession
Local clan did not understand reason for giving this information
Inadequate consultation by forest agency officers
Little interest or low priority of forest agency officers
Inadequate training of forest agency officers
Forest agency logging guidelines inadequate to protect resource base
Plant operators breaking rules of logging agreement
Incorrect customary tenure-holders and resource users signed logging concession
Forest agency guidelines not designed to protect resource interests of land-holders use rights
Inadequate supervision of operators by forest agency
Plant operators do not worry about damage to resources
Local authority provided wrong advice to forest agency on who the correct tenure-holders and resource users were
Low level of participation and consultation with forest users before timber agreement determined
Inadequate forest agency requirements about consultation process with tenure holders and resource users
Forest agency has no access to technical information
No political will for enforcement of forest agency guidelines
Company has no code of practice or education on environmental impacts
Inadequate procedures for checking tenure and resource users
Local authority with poor knowledge of customary authority
Signatories encouraged by logging company not to consult other resource users
Forest agency short of trained staff
Company with no interest in educating plant operator
Local authority composed of young local people not educated in customary authority
Timber company interested in completing contract quickly and quietly
Lack of funds for salaries and operations
Lack of staff training in enforcement of guidelines
No requirements from forestry
Reductions in government expenditure
Insufficient funding of government
Local young people educated outside of area and never learn traditional knowledge from elders
Insufficient funding of government
Insufficient timber royalties being directed back into operation of forest agency
Insufficient timber royalties being directed back into operation of forest agency

Task 4: Determining priorities. The purpose of examining the causes of conflict is to provide a focus for taking action. Where conflict has multiple contributing causes, it is unlikely that all of those causes can be tackled or addressed simultaneously. This situation requires that priorities be established.

There are no set rules for establishing priorities. However, an important aspect of conflict analysis is to identify the most significant causes of conflict. One way to do this is to break down larger causes into their corresponding issues and rank these issues in terms of significance. It is also useful to distinguish which issues are:

- *immediate*, requiring urgent action;
- *underlying*, presenting significant obstacles for lasting peace, and perhaps needing to be addressed over a longer time period.

Ultimately, the groups involved in the conflict will have to construct their own criteria for determining priorities for action. They may decide to focus on the issues that most immediately affect the conflict now, or they may decide to tolerate a certain level of what appears to be localized conflict in order to focus on the underlying issues of that dispute. Again, determining linkages and identifying some of the roots of the conflict are valuable.

In determining priority areas for action, it is also essential to consider the relative ease of addressing the issue and the capacity and skills of the groups involved. To determine these factors, it is helpful to examine the individual issues in more detail.

Inevitably, the successful management of a conflict may require both short- and long-term strategies. For example, stakeholder groups may agree to a set of short-term actions to address an urgent issue, with the immediate aim of preventing further escalation and offsetting potential outbreaks of violence. The local conflict may continue to reappear, however, if fundamental structures or processes are not addressed. Complete resolution, or prevention of recurring conflict, may be part of a wider strategy that includes building alliances with other stakeholder groups to change and improve policies, laws and institutions in support of community-based forest management.

Short-term strategy: separate the combatants

Long-term strategy: make them negotiate towards an agreement

TRAINER'S NOTE # 12

BE OPEN TO DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS

In training, it is helpful to remind participants that analysis of a conflict can identify causes and possible outcomes that were not expected or foreseen at the outset. For example, after examining the conflict, stakeholders may find that:

- the set of issues that has attracted most attention may not be the issues that they want to focus their efforts on because the real issues may involve a different set of stakeholders and actions;
- some of the conflict issues may be totally outside the control or influence of local groups, who may not be able to act at the appropriate time;
- after the analysis, groups may decide that the conflict is not a wise use of their time or resources and that they have other priorities.

The ability to reach unpredictable conclusions is the strength and value of using participatory tools to draw on the knowledge and experience of many individuals.

Examining the issues contributing to the conflict in more detail

Prioritizing requires a more detailed examination of the specific issues that give rise to conflict. Issues usually fall into one of five general categories (see Table 3.1):

- problems with information;
- conflicting interests;
- difficult relationships;
- structural issues;
- conflicting values.

Thinking about the types of issues involved in a conflict provides insights into what might be required to manage that conflict. Such thinking can also indicate how difficult it is going to be to address the issue. In reality, the categories of issues can overlap, and the user should be cautioned not to become anxious if there is not a "clear fit". What is important is using the categories as tools for thinking more systematically about each of the contributing causes of conflict.

TABLE 3.1
TYPES OF ISSUE THAT CONTRIBUTE TO A CONFLICT

Type of issue	Elements	Points to remember in managing such conflicts
Conflicting interests	◆ Conflicts over differing needs and desires, sharing of benefits and resource use ◆ Include perceived and actual competition of interests ◆ Conflicts can emerge from a perceived or actual lack of shared interests	✔ *Identify common or shared interests* ✔ *Underlying needs can often be satisfied in more ways than are at first obvious* ✔ *Clarify whether interests are real or perceived*
Information issues	◆ Conflicts caused by lack of information or differences in interpretation of information ◆ Can be linked to differing methods of assessing, evaluating or interpreting information ◆ Poor communication (listening or expression) or miscommunication among disputing parties	✔ *Reach agreement on information needs* ✔ *Reach agreement on how information can be obtained and verified* ✔ *Reach agreement on criteria for evaluating or interpreting information* ✔ *A third party may improve communication* ✔ *Encourage transparent decision-making*
Difficult relationships	◆ Differences in personality and emotions, as well as misperceptions, stereotypes and prejudices ◆ Incompatible behaviours (routines, methods, styles), differing expectations, attitudes and approaches to problem solving ◆ History of conflict and bad feelings among the parties	✔ *Identify the specific difficulties, encourage conflicting parties to avoid generalizations in stating their difficulties with one another* ✔ *Aim to build positive perceptions and solutions* ✔ *Emphasize fair ground rules to be followed by all parties* ✔ *Work to realign or build relationships, fostering care and willingness on the part of the participants*

Table 3.1 continued

Type of issue	Elements	Points to remember in managing such conflicts
Structural issues	◆ Differing ideas regarding appropriate management processes, rules, roles and power; can apply to meeting committees or organizations ◆ Perceived or actual inequality or unfairness concerning power, control, ownership or structures that influence access to or distribution of resources ◆ Factors that hinder cooperation, such as decision-making structures and responsibilities, time constraints, geography or physical settings	✔ *Help disenfranchised groups to understand their own and other parties' perceptions of the conflict* ✔ *Gain agreement on shared review of specific grievances – e.g. too much bureaucracy, poor representation* ✔ *Aim to transform conflict into a force for social change so solutions are sustainable in the long term*
Conflicting values	◆ Differences among cultural, social or personal beliefs or different world views and traditions ◆ Can include different goals, expectations or assumptions that reflect personal history and upbringing	✔ *Frequently the most difficult to change* ✔ *Some differing human values may be non-negotiable* ✔ *Focus on interests or shared goals and avoid focusing on resolving differing values* ✔ *Require a long-term strategy that builds respect and supports the sharing and understanding of values among stakeholders*

Adapted from: Moore, 1996; Warner, 2001.

An example of conflict analysis using the five categories (see Table 3.2). One local village heard that the district forest office and the CFUG had decided to restrict access to an area of forest in order to protect an endangered bird species. The district forest officers had convinced the CFUG that the restriction of access was necessary to protect one of the few remaining nesting habitats for the bird and to stop poaching by hunters. Male hunters in the village disagreed that the bird was in any danger, as they still saw many in the forest. Women villagers were angry because the proposed closure affected an area that was important for the collection of housing materials and traditional medicinal plants. All the villagers feared that they would no longer be able to collect local bird feathers for use in traditional ceremonies. Both the women and the hunters in the village saw the conflict as centring on gaining continued access; the forest office saw it as a conflict of unsustainable resource use within the region.

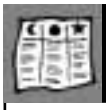


TABLE 3.2 **EXAMPLE OF AN ISSUES ANALYSIS TABLE**

Type of issue	Description of the issue	Analysis of issue
Conflicting interests	Women need to collect forest materials and medicine plants The CFUG wants to stop the poaching of wildlife	◆ *Perceived difference* in interests related to use of the forest (wildlife versus supporting local livelihoods) ◆ *Perceived threat* of the CFUG and the forest office restricting access to needed resources
Information issues	Villagers have no access to information on the proposed restriction Hunters question how the bird is endangered	◆ Lack of information provided by the CFUG to the village on the proposed restriction ◆ Validity of information needs to be confirmed

Table 3.2 continued

Type of issue	Description of the issue	Analysis of issues
Difficult relationships	Previous bad relationship between the CFUG chairperson and the village	◆ Suspicions that the CFUG chairperson from another village is supporting forest office interests over this village's interests (as retaliation for a past dispute)
Structural issues	Consultation with villagers on forest use	◆ The forest office and CFUG did not consult the women or hunters before making the proposal
Conflicting values	The significance of local bird feathers in traditional ceremonies	◆ Forest officers' lack of appreciation for the ceremonial importance of bird feathers in determining relationships within villages
Proposed actions that emerged from the conflict analysis: ◆ check with forest officers and the CFUG to see if the proposal is true. ◆ forest officers to provide and explain information on the birds and the significance of the area; ◆ women to negotiate primary the area of interest: securing access to necessary forest materials and medicinal plants; ◆ need to educate forest officers on the value of traditional bird feathers; ◆ other long-term actions: change consultation process and make chairperson more accountable to entire constituency of the CFUG; village representative to meet with chairperson.		

TRAINER'S NOTE # 13

FURTHER ANALYSIS OF ISSUES

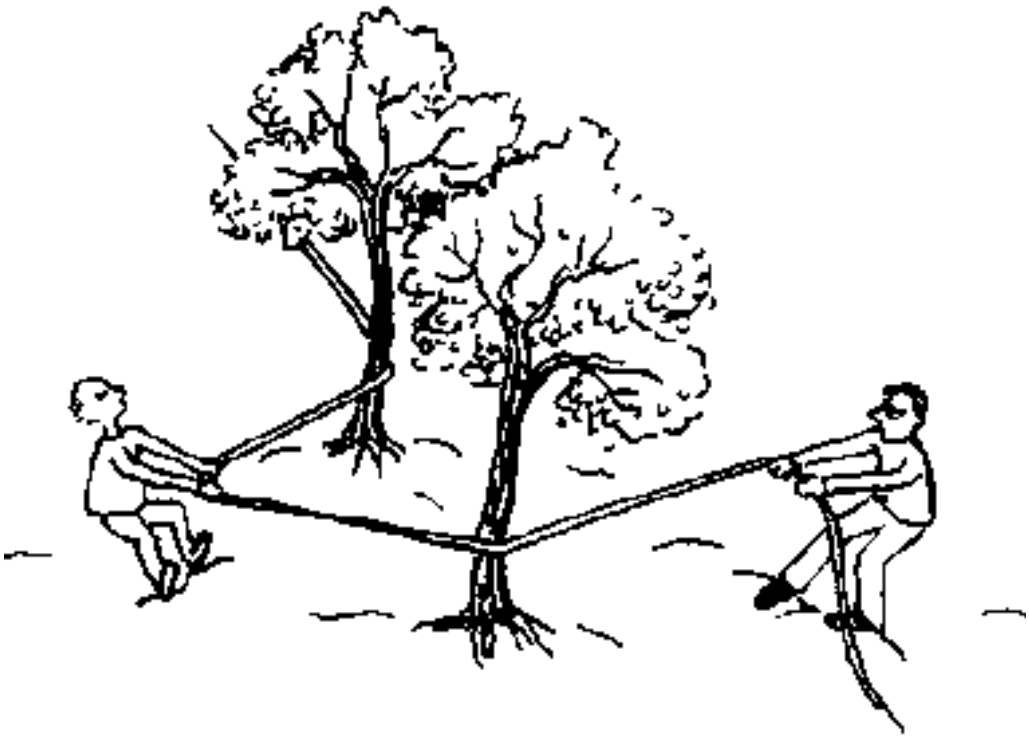
Training activity #12 assists stakeholders in a more detailed analysis of issues, prioritizing their importance and determining the ease or difficulty of addressing them.

Thinking about gaps and differences

Considering whether an issue arises from a "gap" or a "difference" is useful when selecting the most effective way to deal with that issue.

A *gap* is an absence or lack of information, common interest, relationship, structure or values. A *difference* is the presence of contending, differing or competing views regarding information, interests, structures, relationship or values:

- If an issue emerges because of a gap, it can be resolved by filling the gap.
- If an issue is about differences, discussions will focus on finding ways to accommodate those differences.



It is important to remember that the dynamics of an issue can change depending on the way the issue is addressed. For example, an issue can arise from a gap but, even when the gap has been filled, a difference among the groups concerned may emerge (see Box 3.1).

BOX 3.1 GAPS AND DIFFERENCES: A CASE FROM NEPAL

The case study from Dhungeshori, Nepal (Section 8.5) outlines a boundary dispute between farmers and a CFUG. A primary cause of the dispute was inadequate information on the location of the boundary between State forests and private lands (a gap). In the process of demarcating the boundary, the local CFUG ignored technical concerns about the accuracy of the boundary and used its authority to push for boundary setting by forest office staff. The CGUG paid inadequate attention to gaining agreement from the farmers on how the boundary would be determined. This resulted in an escalation of the dispute over "differences" on the boundary location and, later, an increased effort by all stakeholders to bring forward negotiations to resolve the conflict.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 14

WHAT TOOLS TO USE AND HOW MUCH INFORMATION TO COLLECT

Frequently asked question in training are: What participatory tools should be used? and How much information should be collected? Once again, there are no easy answers to this, no recipes and no set steps (see Box 3.2). When deciding what type of information to collect or which tools to use, however, it is helpful for stakeholders to distinguish what they *need* to know in order to manage the conflict from what it would "be nice to know". The reality of working on a live conflict is that the people involved often have very limited time, resources and patience. We recommend confining the conflict analysis to activities that will pinpoint key answers and provide more immediate assistance with direction setting and action. This requires making the most of points of agreement on facts, probing further when there are questions of fact, and listing specific questions related to finding achievable solutions.

BOX 3.2 USING AND LINKING PARTICIPATORY CONFLICT ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

A community forest management group was concerned about an ongoing forest boundary dispute among three neighbouring villages. The forest management group worked with the three villages and facilitated their use of participatory activities to analyse the conflict.

Initially, the activities selected for use were *Root cause analysis* and *Conflict time line (Training activities #8 and #9).* The results of these activities showed that the head of one village had died a few years earlier and the new head was not able to negotiate as effectively with the other village heads. Difficulties in communication among the village heads over a series of issues followed, and resulted in two years of increased encroachment disputes.

Examining conflict issues *(Training activity #12)* helped the groups to agree that their primary problem began with changes in relationships, and that these changes led to clashes among the communities' interests. They also agreed that they first needed to improve relationships among the village heads so that they could then discuss and try to manage the differing interests.

While the groups were considering how stakeholders were affected by the conflict in the area *(Training activity #13)*, they discovered that a new school was being proposed for the whole area and they all wanted to achieve this goal. They recognized that, if their resource dispute continued, the school might not be built because it required the collaboration of all the villages. The need to work together on the school provided incentives to all groups to resolve their differences.

3.3 IDENTIFYING AND ANALYSING STAKEHOLDERS

As a conflict becomes more clearly defined, the range of stakeholders in that conflict becomes increasingly apparent. At the same time, the relationships of those stakeholders to the issues and to one another also become clearer. In a process directed at managing conflict, an analysis of stakeholders will determine:

- who the stakeholders are;
- to what extent each group of stakeholders is affected by the conflict;
- who is most affected, and should therefore be directly involved in managing the conflict;
- the relative power and influence of different groups on the issues;
- stakeholders' interests and expectations;
- the possible different stakeholder responses to the conflict;
- relationships among stakeholder groups;
- likely difficulties that stakeholders will have in working together;
- the potential contributions of each group towards managing the conflict;
- to what extent individuals' and groups' interests overlap with those of other individuals and groups.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 15

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

As discussed in Section 2.2, identifying and analysing stakeholders is not a one-off activity, but one that has to be repeated at various phases of a conflict management intervention. As a conflict or its resolution evolves, different groups and subgroups come into play, and the properties of these different groups will change (for example, their level of dependency, influence, interests, roles and alliances). Training should reinforce this point. Identifying and analysing stakeholders should be repeated at various stages of a conflict management process.

Identifying stakeholders can be done through a range of participatory tools, including drawing up simple lists, Venn diagrams, sketch maps, conflict time lines and role plays, and analysing other activities that outline the causes of the conflict. Specific training activities on stakeholder identification include *Training activities #13 and #14.*

3.3.1 Who are the stakeholders?

Gaining recognition and agreement on which stakeholders are involved and the legitimacy of their involvement is essential to collaboration. Different stakeholders often hold varying views on who has a legitimate stake and whom it is most important to consider in managing a conflict. The challenge in collaborative approaches to conflict management is building communication and trust among groups. This requires increasing mutual recognition and respect for the interests, needs, motivations and roles of all stakeholders. Participatory activities supporting stakeholder identification and analysis are essential to this.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 16

QUESTIONS OF LEGITIMACY

An important question of debate that often arises in training is: Who are the legitimate stakeholders? You may want to remind those who are having difficulty with this notion that establishing the legitimacy of a stakeholder does not mean that all the other stakeholders necessarily have to agree with the interests of that stakeholder. Similarly, the legitimacy of a stakeholder does not infer greater priority to the interests of that stakeholder over the others. All that is being asked is that each group acknowledge that the other groups have an interest in, or are affected by, the outcomes of the conflict.

Whose interests are given priority will be determined within the dynamics of the conflict management process. Collaborative approaches to managing conflict attempt to make this decision process as equitable as possible. However, the identification and analysis of stakeholders merely identifies factors about the different groups that must be considered in processes of negotiation. The structure and dynamics of negotiations and the intent of the groups involved will strongly influence how equitable the final outcome will be.

3.3.2 Stakeholders and power

Central to stakeholder analysis is distinguishing the relative power that different groups have to influence the direction or resolution of a conflict. As discussed in Section 2.3, conflict is frequently about power or relationships among groups with unequal power. In these training materials we define the term "power" as "the capacity to achieve outcomes". This includes the ability to make or prevent change. Power can be derived from many sources: control of resources, role in decision-making processes, control of information, leadership, wealth, legal status, and so on. It is derived from stakeholders' relationships with other groups and from the structures within which the power operates (Ramirez, 1999).

TRAINER'S NOTE # 17

DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT A STAKEHOLDER

Stakeholders can be identified as those groups that are *affected by* the outcome of a conflict, as well as those who *influence* the outcome. For many new to stakeholder identification, these two ways of looking at stakeholders can be confusing. *Training activity #13* is particularly useful for clarifying this relationship, treating both aspects separately and then comparing them.

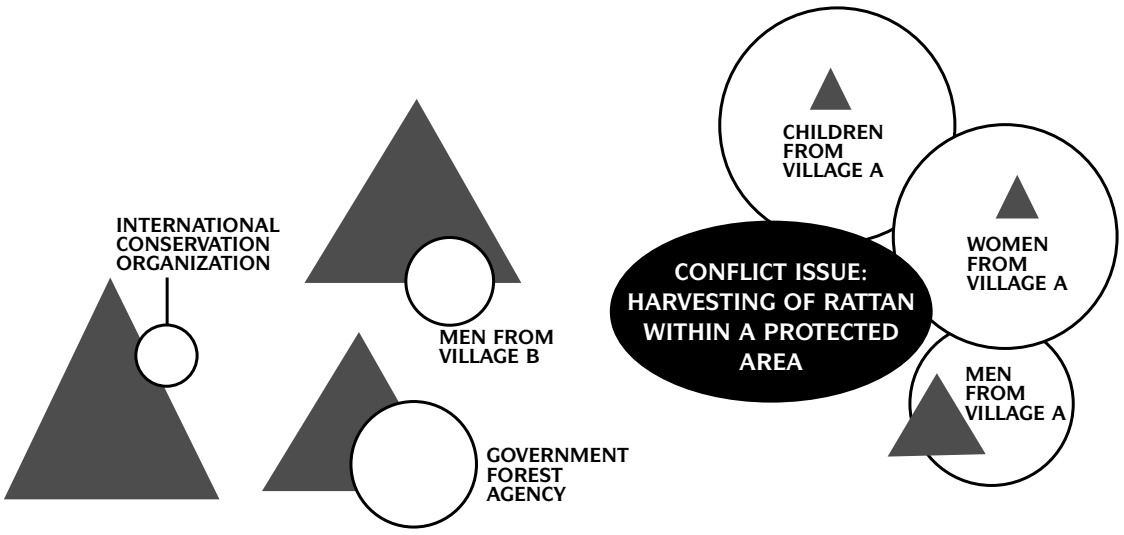
Figure 3.3 provides an example of how different groups of stakeholders can have stakes of different sizes. The size of a stake depends on whether it is being measured in terms of how affected stakeholders are by the outcome of a conflict, or in terms of stakeholders' power to influence that outcome. In Figure 3.3 the conflict involved the forest users of a village (village A), the staff of a government forest agency and members of a conservation NGO. It centred on a proposed decision to prohibit the harvesting of rattan in a forest reserve. The two organizations believed that the harvesting of rattan by village A was degrading the biodiversity of the forest reserve. Figure 3.3 illustrates how the members of village A viewed the stakeholders to this conflict. It presents how they defined the different stakeholders, their views on how affected those stakeholders were by the outcome of the management decision, and their own relative power to influence that decision.

The women of village A, who traditionally harvested, processed and sold the rattan, were seen as being the group that was most affected by the proposed decision, yet they had the smallest input into decision-making processes. Both the chief and the other men of village A felt disadvantaged by a prohibition on rattan because they predicted a reduction in overall family income. They were seen to be more powerful than women because they had participated in some of the consultation meetings held by the forest agency. They had significant fears about the affect on the village children, as the money generated from sales of rattan craft was a main source of income to pay annual school fees.

On the other side, the men from a neighbouring village (village B) did not collect or use rattan, but were seen to be more influential than any person in village A was. People of village A accused the men of village B of pro-

viding incorrect information about rattan harvesting to the forest agency and conservation NGO in order to gain greater support for an alternative income-generating project. The conservation NGO, which was providing technical advice on management of the reserve, and on which the government forest agency relied for financial support, was seen to be the most influential in determining the decision. The people in village A did not understand the NGO's concerns about biodiversity, nor how an organization that is composed of people living far away would be greatly affected by the rattan issue.

FIGURE 3.3 **DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS: AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS AND STAKEHOLDER POWER**



As explained in *Training activity #13*, the size of a stakeholder's circle and its proximity to the issue indicate the extent to which that stakeholder group is considered to be affected by the outcome of the conflict. The size of a stakeholder's triangle indicates the relative power that the stakeholder group is perceived to have on the final management decision. The proximity of stakeholders to one another indicates the relationships and alliances among the groups. In the case of marginal groups, reviewing their sources of influence may indicate new ways of strengthening a limited but already existing power base.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 18

AIDS TO LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Participatory tools that show the relative power of different stakeholders are often instrumental in raising the consciousness of rural communities about the wider context in which they live. In addition, identifying and analysing the sources of power can be crucial to developing strategies for local empowerment in conflict situations in which there are significant power differences among stakeholders (see *Training activity #15*).

The increased lobbying by consumers in developed nations regarding the practices of various extractive resource industries, such as the timber, mining and oil industries, provides a useful example of levelling of the playing field. In the past, there were many instances of corporations involved in unsustainable practices aggressively influencing national development decisions in their own favour. Such persuasion resulted in remote and often indigenous forest-dependent communities having little direct leverage on decisions that may have undermined their environment and livelihoods.

The sources of power for many of these corporations were their public image as contributors to national development and the wealth that they obtained from the sale of forest products. Many community organizations have found that the edges of power for such companies are the consumers of forest products. This is particularly true when the product sold is closely linked to the company's name. Another edge of power is the credibility of a company's image as a good corporate citizen. When corporations are not willing to listen to local interests, it has proved useful for the communities concerned to form alliances with other larger national or international organizations. Such groups can inform consumers and the wider public of a company's unfair dealings. Increasingly, this has caused large corporations to recognize the need to negotiate their interests with other, previously less powerful, stakeholders.

3.3.3 Prioritizing stakeholder involvement

A main objective of stakeholder analysis is to determine which groups need to be involved directly in actions to manage the conflict. The initial process of stakeholder analysis often results in a long list of stakeholders that are to some degree affected or influenced by the outcome of a conflict. For practical reasons, this list may need to be streamlined to include essential players only. On the other hand, wider involvement provides a richer information base and a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and perceptions of problems and impacts.

There are no easy answers! There are always challenges in deciding the appropriate balance and selection of stakeholders. A main area of discussion and likely argument is how to define whom the key, or primary, stakeholders are. To assist this decision, stakeholder groups must define and agree on criteria for identifying primary and secondary stakeholders. To a large degree, such criteria are dependent on the goals and desired outcomes of the conflict management process. Assuming that the goal of managing conflict in community forestry is to work towards fair and equitable resolution:

- *primary stakeholders* are those who are most affected by, and dependent on, the resource or the solution to a conflict;
- *secondary stakeholders* are those who are more indirectly or less affected by the outcome of a conflict.

Distinguishing between the two often requires consideration of the alternative options available to each stakeholder group if its interests in the outcome are not met. If collaboration and an effective management process are desired, then groups with a great deal of power and authority to affect or block the outcome must be included as primary stakeholders. Without their involvement, such stakeholders may be unlikely to accept solutions or support implementation.

Secondary stakeholders may play key roles in managing conflict:

- in *information gathering and analysis,* by providing a technical support role, providing access to or advice on information or participating in canvassing views on possible solutions or the acceptability of various outcomes;
- in *advocacy,* by working alongside a weaker party in an advocacy role to build a transparent process or turn the wider political arena towards greater equity;
- as *intermediaries,* by acting as facilitators or mediators among other conflicting groups;
- in *monitoring and enforcement,* when agreements have been concluded, by helping to seek enforcement of those agreements if they are breached.

A range of tools is available for involving secondary stakeholders in a way that is appropriate and effective, but less intensive than involving them directly in formal negotiation fora. Examples include focus group meetings, advisory or working groups, charettes, surveys or interviews, and community meetings. These tools are defined and described in Box 5.4.

3.3.4 How do different stakeholders respond to conflict?

In order to reach a better understanding of the stakeholders involved and their willingness to collaborate, it is worthwhile considering their possible responses to conflict. The ways in which people (even those from the same community or organization) respond to conflicts vary considerably but, although the specific strategies may vary, people generally rely on the same basic modes to handle conflicts. They can decide to:

- take separate action;
- come together to make a joint decision;
- defer to a decision that is controlled by a third party, such as a court or an administrative officer.

Ways of handling conflict may be formal or informal, violent or peaceful, equitable or inequitable.

The action selected is based on the individual's or group's overall approach to conflict. For example, do individuals or groups (see Table 3.3):

- use force and coercion to obtain their interests over others?
- withdraw or avoid the conflict?
- accommodate the interest of others over their own interests?
- compromise and make sacrifices to arrive at a mutually agreeable outcome?
- collaborate and seek a solution of mutual gain?

TABLE 3.3 **CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO CONFLICT**

Response	Some characteristics
Force	◆ One group attempts to impose its interests over others. ◆ Can involve multiple forms of coercion, including violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, use of supernatural powers, peer pressure, economic and policy sanctions and pressure through mass media. ◆ May surface as frustration, anger or other emotions peak or as basic rights are at stake. ◆ May be part of a larger strategy by the less powerful to level the playing field or gain greater authority. ◆ Results in a win-lose situation. ◆ Pitfalls: being closed off from information, conflict escalation, and retaliation by losers.
Withdrawal	◆ Avoids or neglects the interests of both groups. ◆ Can involve postponement of decisions, retreat or use of delaying tactics. ◆ May be used as part of a larger strategy while gathering more support or information; when the issue is trivial or of passing importance; when confrontation has a high potential for damage; or when others can resolve the conflict more effectively. ◆ Results in a lose-lose situation, if used in isolation. ◆ Pitfalls: own ideas and concerns do not get attention.

Table 3.3 continued

Response	Some characteristics
Accommodation	◆ Promotes the other group's interests over one's own. ◆ Attempts to preserve the status quo at the expense of one's own interest in maintaining relationships. ◆ The dominant group may to some extent accommodate the subordinate group's interest, but it may be a form of co-optation rather than partnership. ◆ May be part of a cultural preference to maintain relationships; may be used as part of a goodwill gesture or when an issue is more important to others, when one is wrong, when one is outmatched and losing to a competitor, or to allow for a legitimate exception to rules. ◆ Results in a lose-win situation, particularly in cross-cultural situations. ◆ Pitfalls: own ideas and concerns do not get attention, possible loss of respect, influence and recognition.
Compromise	◆ Both groups make a sacrifice to achieve a mutually workable solution. ◆ Both must give something up in order to gain something else. ◆ Results in a sort of "win-win-yet-lose-lose" situation. ◆ May be used when interests are only moderately important, to achieve temporary settlement, or to avoid mutually destructive power struggles. ◆ Pitfalls: loses sight of values or objectives and detracts from the merits of issues.
Consensus/collaboration	◆ Aims to satisfy the needs and concerns of all involved stakeholder groups. ◆ Can involve processes of negotiation, facilitation and mediation. ◆ People focus on goals and work towards an outcome using objective criteria. ◆ Takes time and major effort so that all groups are actively and equally involved in the process. ◆ Results in a win-win situation. ◆ Used when it is important that all groups are committed to the resolution. ◆ Pitfalls: takes time and energy; trust and openness can be taken advantage of.

For forestry, and particularly in community-based forest management, consensus building and collaboration with government agencies may not always appear possible in the short term. In many places in the world, a certain level of compromise with the government has been necessary in order to obtain forest management agreements that are favourable to local communities and are implemented on the ground. In such settings, collaboration may not be a feasible alternative at the outset, and compromise may be a more attractive and immediate reality. As in all of the strategies, it is important to be mindful of the pitfalls.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 19

RECOGNIZING DIFFERENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

Unlike other strategies, collaboration seeks to achieve some degree of mutual gain for all of the stakeholders who are directly involved. This is commonly referred to as a win-win situation, which is essential if relationships among stakeholders are to be maintained in the long term for effective forest management. Again, the response selected is greatly affected by the relationships of power among the stakeholders, the resources available to them and cultural preferences for handling conflict.

Training activities #16, #26 and #27 help stakeholders to investigate the ways in which they have addressed conflict in the past, and the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.

3.3.5 Defining stakeholder interests

For opposing stakeholders to switch from rival to collaborative mode, they need to understand:

- how they interrelate or are interdependent; and
- that they have more to gain from collaborating than from competing.

To help this shift in thinking, stakeholders will need to see collaboration as a form of opportunity. Finding such opportunities requires the creation of an environment in which it is safe to talk about the differences among

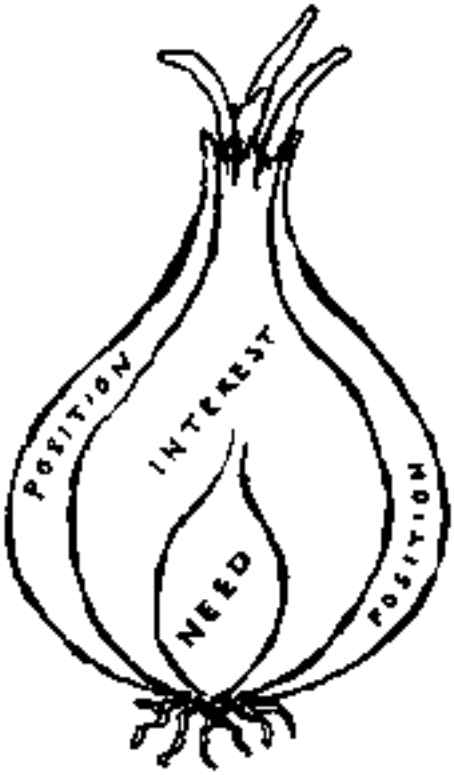
groups. A process that encourages collaboration will try to unfreeze these differences, loosen them up and create insights that actually transform increasingly diverging forces into driving ones. This is done by determining the true interests and underlying motivations of the different stakeholders and working to satisfy those interests.

In practice, stakeholders need to identify and distinguish their positions, interests and needs. They also need to consider the likely interests and needs of the other groups. In such an analysis, helping stakeholders to recognize the difference between positions and interests is crucial:

- *Positions* are what people in a conflict say they want.
- *Interests* refer to what people really need or fear and what motivates them.

Interests are the silent movers behind positions and are often felt as very vocal demands (Fisher and Ury, 1991). Some specialists in conflict management have found it useful to use the analogy of an onion and its layers to describe the relationship of positions, interests and needs (Fisher *et al.*, 2000). The outer layer of the onion can be thought of as the public positions of the various opposing groups – what they say and do. The second layer is their interests – what they want to achieve from a particular situation. Finally, in the core are the most underlying motivations – the needs that must be satisfied.

In trying to manage conflict through a collaborative process, it is essential to shift the focus of the conflicting groups from their positions to their interests. This is not always easy. At least in its initial stages, a conflict is usually defined by the positions or demands of stakeholders. Some of the advantages of interests over positions are summarized in Table 3.4.



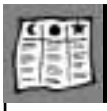


TABLE 3.4 **COMPARING POSITIONS AND INTERESTS**

Disadvantages of holding to a position	Advantages of focusing on interest
◆ Is concrete. ◆ Lacks flexibility. ◆ Has a single outcome. ◆ Is minimally negotiable. ◆ Demands results in the short term. ◆ Is closed to new options.	◆ Is a broad concept that covers a range of underlying motivations. ◆ Has several possible outcomes. ◆ Encourages maximum discussion. ◆ Suggests long-term approaches to meeting needs. ◆ Is flexible: understanding the interests behind certain positions assists in identifying alternative options or solutions.

Adapted from: PEC, 1999.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 20

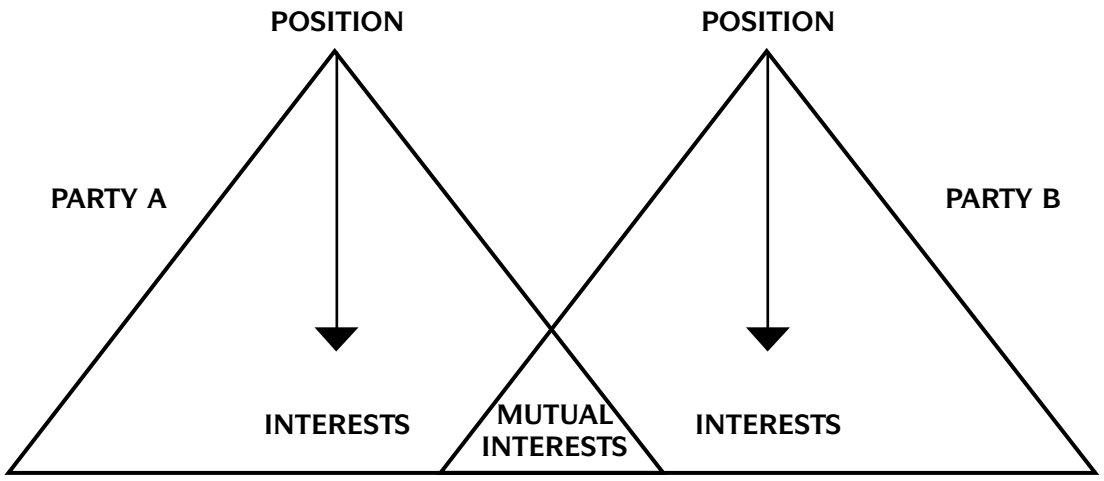
GETTING TO INTERESTS: ASKING "WHY?" AND "WHY NOT?"

Positions are likely to be concrete and explicit, whereas interests are frequently "unexpressed, intangible and inconsistent" (Fisher and Ury, 1991). Distinguishing the difference between the two and finding the underlying motivations or interests of groups is often difficult.

Training activity #17 offers practice in examining interests over positions. A further, simple, but often helpful guide is to examine each position that is put forward and ask "Why?". Keep asking "Why?" until the list of interests comprehensively covers both needs and fears. Conversely, ask the question "Why not?" – what reasons does one group have for not meeting the demands or interests of the other.

Focusing on inflexible, immediate and often entrenched positions reduces creativity and narrows the exploration of possible solutions to conflict. As Figure 3.4 suggests, interests are frequently multiple, and some are likely to be compatible and shared by the groups. Once their interests have been articulated and differentiated from their positions, conflicting stakeholders have a foundation for entering into *principled* or *interest-based* negotiations (see Section 4.2.3 on differences in negotiation styles). The aim of these negotiations is to find interests that are held in common and from which all can derive shared benefit.

FIGURE 3.4 **IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION: MOVING FROM POSITIONS TO INTERESTS**



Source: Grzybowski and Morris, 1998

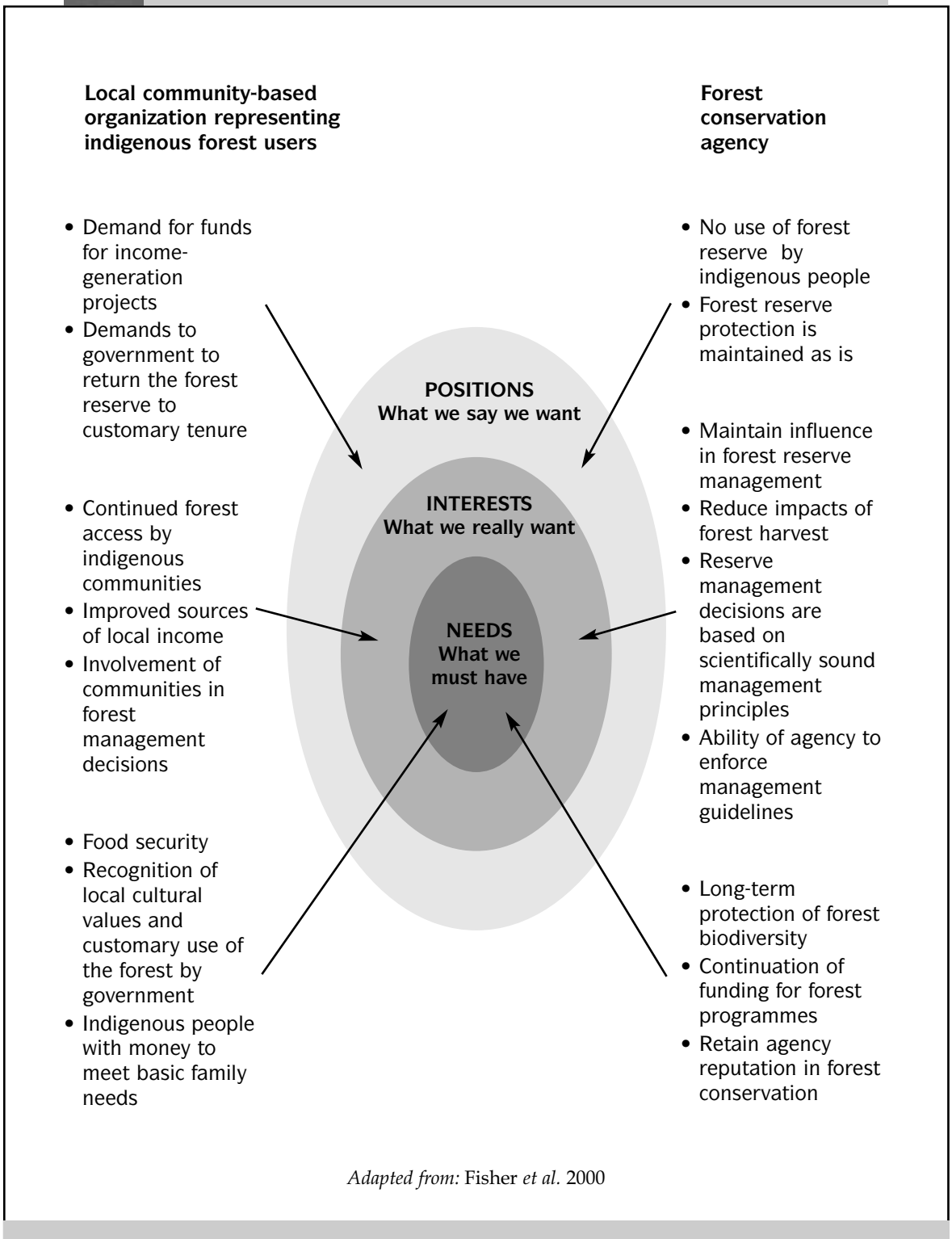
The basic problem in reconciliation is not conflicting positions, but in the conflict between needs, desires, fears and concerns. Understanding the differences between positions and interests can lay the groundwork for more effective negotiations. (Fisher and Ury, 1991).

TRAINER'S NOTE # 21

SHIFTING FROM POSITIONS TO INTERESTS TO CREATE NEW OUTCOMES

An example of applying the notion of the onion layers of positions, interests and needs in a community forest dispute is provided in Figure 3.5. At the centre of this example are two groups, a community-based organization and a government conservation agency, which have come to an impasse over the future use and management of a forest reserve. The organization, which represents the needs and interests of indigenous forest users, was lobbying the government to reverse the tenure of the area and put it back under customary control. The public position of the conservation agency was to maintain the reserve and stop all use of it. These positions allowed little room or scope for negotiations. Negotiations based on the interests of the groups, however, allowed new options to arise. Using this or another similar example (see Box 3.3), work with training participants to try and come up with what might be mutually satisfying outcomes based on the interests and needs listed.

FIGURE 3.5 **APPLYING THE ONION TO A CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY**



Adapted from: Fisher *et al.* 2000

BOX 3.3 **AN EXAMPLE OF HOW IDENTIFYING A COMMON INTEREST MAY LEAD TO RESOLUTION AGREEMENTS**

Two officers in the Department of Forestry had an ongoing conflict about their respective responsibilities in managing lowland and upland areas of a particular forest catchment. Both individuals insisted that they should have the responsibility to oversee the lower valley region. Work in the lower valley was generally less tiring and closer to the officers' residences, and resulted in greater public recognition.

A third party was asked to provide assistance and began by requesting both officers to identify what the known needs were for the whole region before going into their own specific demands. As the regional issues were discussed, both officers realized that, in focusing on what they individually wanted, they had failed to address broader shared management needs for the region. Their final agreement was to monitor both the valley and the upland regions jointly. Once they could both agree on the overall issue, they began to discuss how to integrate their mutual responsibilities with their specific interests and needs.

3.3.6 Stakeholder relationships

Stakeholders have a number of different relationships that need to be considered in understanding forest conflicts. These include:

- relationships to the resource base – rights, responsibilities and returns or benefits gained from the forest resource;
- relationships with each other – individually, in partnerships, or as part of larger alliances.

Stakeholder power and capacity are heavily influenced by both sets of relationships. Rights of access and control, and the benefits gained from the forest, often define stakeholders' roles and power in relation to management. Similarly, alliances with other groups, networks and collective

action can be an important bargaining tool, and a means of striking new and necessary institutional arrangements (Ramirez, 1999).

It may be very important to consider how these relationships have changed over time and what is desired for the future. For example, an examination of the past and present use rights of local forest users may show the erosion of control over forest-based livelihoods. Similarly, outlining the preferred rights, responsibilities and benefits for forest management can help articulate the desired outcomes from the conflict.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 22

CHARTING THE 4Rs

A valuable activity for analysing stakeholder power and interests is to chart the *rights*, *responsibilities* and *returns* for all involved stakeholders in relation to the use of the forest. *Relationships* among stakeholders can also be charted or mapped in order to assess the degree to which they are positive or problematic. Positive interactions can indicate opportunities to build support and alliances for use in conflict management. Difficult relationships may indicate links to the current conflict. *Training activity #18* provides a method for doing this.

Figures 3.6 and 3.7 show the outcome of an analysis of stakeholder relationships (both with the forest resource and among themselves) in a conflict that developed among local indigenous communities, the government and commercial interests over a proposed timber concession.

FIGURE 3.6 **ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS AND FOREST RESOURCES**

Stakeholder	Rights	Rank	Responsibilities	Rank	Returns	
National forest agency	Supervision Management	4	Administer timber concession Ensure annual national cut is achieved Implement biodiversity strategy to meet international commitments[2]	3	+ Royalties and logging income + New road into area – Weakened biodiversity protection in forest site	4
National Department of International Affairs[1]	No rights exclusive to forest area (but powerful government office)	1	National security Immigration control	3	+ Improved access to the border	4
Timber company	7-year exclusive lease on 50 000 ha of forest	5	Road construction[3]	3	+ Expected timber sales and profit	5
Village A	Unrecognized customary forest use rights	1	Continued role in day-to-day management (fire management, controlling forest entry by migrants)[4]	5	– No further access to needed forest products	1
Village B	Unrecognized customary forest use rights	1	Continued role in day-to-day management (fire management, controlling forest entry by migrants)	5	– No further access to needed forest products	1
Village C	Unrecognized customary forest use rights	1	None	0	+ Increased revenue from sale of produce	3
Migrants	None	0	None	0	– No further access to needed forest products	1
National research institute	Research permit	3	Inform government of biodiversity inventory Assist forest agency with biodiversity management	3	– Inventory stopped, leaving gaps in national forest database – Weakened biodiversity protection	0

Figure 3.6 continued

Stakeholder	Rights	Rank	Responsibilities	Rank	Returns	Rank
Conservation NGO	Research permit	3	Inform government of biodiversity inventory Assist forest agency with biodiversity management	3	– Inventory stopped, leaving gaps in national forest database – Weakened biodiversity protection	0
Development NGO	None exclusive to forest site (but empowered under government health programme)	3	Improvement of local livelihoods	4	– Increased pressures on local livelihood support	1

Notes:

1 Many of the villagers initially saw all the interests of the government as being represented by the national forest agency. In preparing the matrix they realized that they needed to engage the Office of International Affairs as well as the national forest agency. These two government departments had quite distinct interests, authority and strategies.

2 Despite the national forest agency having a number of formal (legal) responsibilities to manage the forest sustainably, it was given a lower ranking (for responsibility) because of its inability to carry out duties. The effectiveness of the forest agency in all responsibilities hinged on the support of various partnerships (for example with communities, the research institute, the timber company).

3 In discussion of the matrix, it was pointed out that the company had a low level of responsibility in terms of ensuring that the harvest was sustainable or that it provided for future local needs. It was also feared that constructing the road would open the area up to more settlers from other areas, and would not control the migrants as intended.

4 The forest agency acknowledged that it would continue to need the assistance of local people in forest area management.

5 In discussion of the matrix, the local villages opposing the logging decided to enlist the support of the research institute and conservation NGO, as these two groups had some formal rights to the area and their interests were potentially threatened.

Ranking of stakeholders according to respective 3Rs weight

Rank	Greatest rights	Most responsibilities	Most benefits
1	Forest agency	Villages A and B	Timber company
2	Timber company	Forest agency	Forest agency
3	Research institute/ conservation NGO	Research institute/ conservation NGO	Village C

FIGURE 3.7
ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

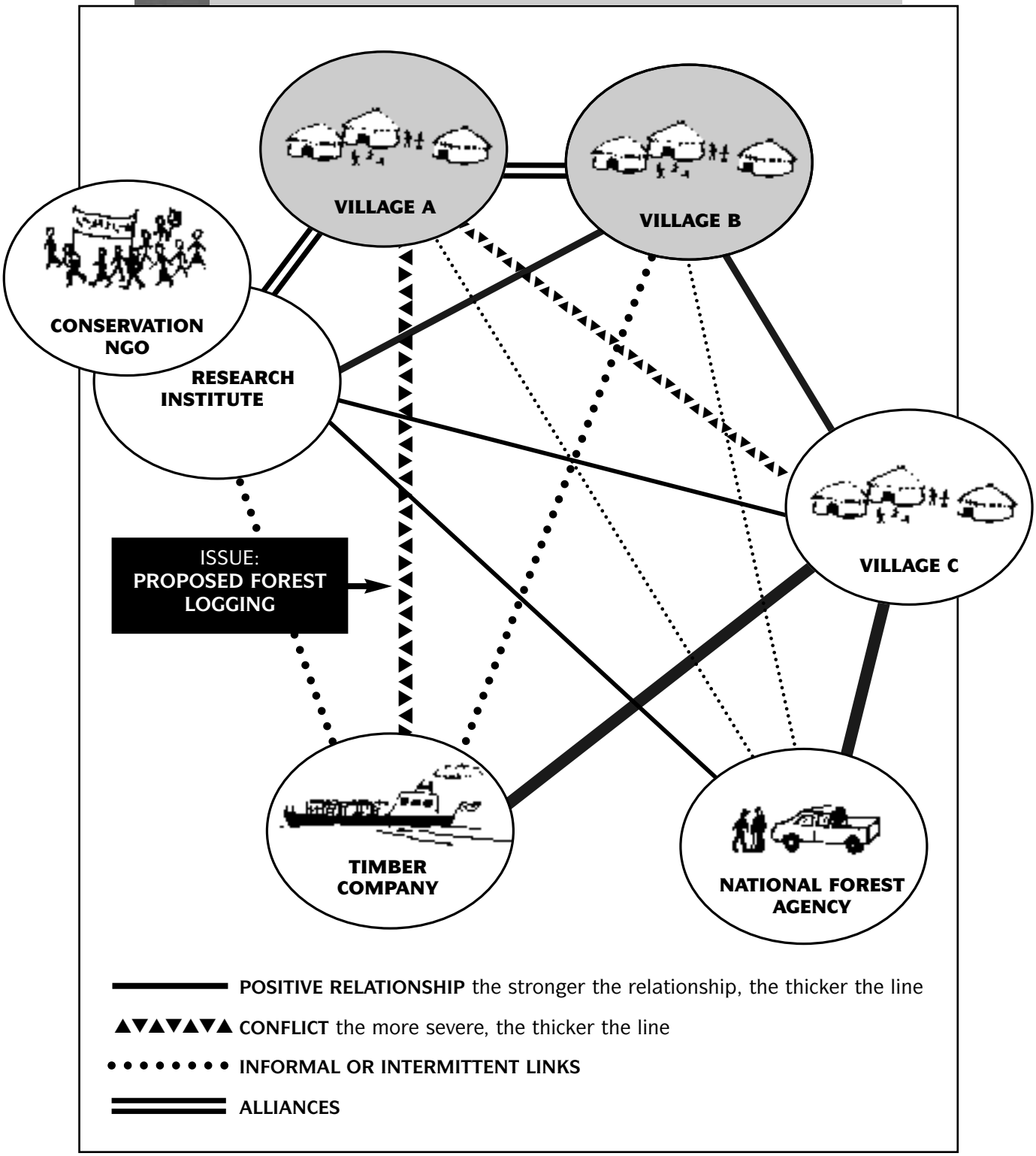


Figure 3.7 continued

ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIPS SHOWN ON THE MAP

Issue: **Timber company to harvest a forest area that is the primary use area of villages A and B.**

VILLAGE A

- Alliance with research institute, conservation NGO and village B.
- Major conflict with logging company's interest to harvest forest area.
- Minor conflict with village C about supporting company's proposal.
- Past relationships with forest agency have been good.

VILLAGE B

- Alliance with research institute, conservation NGO and village A.
- Strong kinship ties with village C.
- Very little interaction with forest agency or logging company.

VILLAGE C

- Logging company says it will purchase produce from village C in exchange for support of logging proposal.

RESEARCH INSTITUTE/CONSERVATION NGO

- Good relationship with forest agency through shared work on forest biodiversity strategy.
- Partners with all villages in undertaking forest inventory work.
- Some contact with timber company, but interaction so far has been poor.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS (TO STRENGTHEN THE INFLUENCE OF VILLAGES A AND B)

1. Use the alliance to lobby the forest agency and external stakeholders.
2. Village B acts as intermediary between village A and village C in order to renew and strengthen ties.
3. Research institute to present concerns of villages A and B to forest agency.
4. Research institute to explain concerns of logging impacts to village C.

3.4 OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS

In community-based forest management, conflict situations often emerge or are greatly influenced by issues of cultural diversity, gender or policy.

3.4.1 Considering culture

Cultural differences or lack of understanding about another group's culture are often a cause of conflict. Conflicts across cultures quickly reveal the norms, values, rules and expectations that have been shaped by their members. A key challenge in community-based forest management, which frequently draws together a broad spectrum of cultural groups, is increasing understanding of the different cultural influences that stimulate conflicts.

Culture is the set of norms, beliefs, institutions and behaviours that people acquire as members of a particular society or population. We usually do not think about our own culture because it is so much a part of our everyday life that we take it for granted. However, we often become aware of culture when we interact with those who possess different values and practices than our own.

Although cultural norms are widely shared, it is important to bear in mind that individual variation always exists. Not all groups or individuals within a particular society or population will hold or behave according to a single set of values. Moreover, significant social divisions may exist within the culture based on gender, age, relative material wealth, occupation, or some other variable.

People often feel that their cultural norms and practices are the best and correct ones. It is also commonplace for people to feel that the members of other cultures possess inferior norms and practices. Judging another culture solely in terms of one's own culture is known as ethnocentrism. We have learned through long experience that ethnocentrism can be very harmful in both community-based natural resource management and in conflict management. Instead, one should avoid superficial judgements and exercise tolerance as much as possible. (Ember and Ember, 1999)

The failure to account fully for cultural differences in the way that forests and resources are valued can significantly contribute to stakeholder difficulties in building management agreements.

For example, indigenous communities often place non-economic values on forests which are tied to traditional belief systems involving religious rituals, sacred sites and historic hunting and collection areas. Government officers or commercial interests may not appreciate the significance of these linkages to ancestral lands. Their views on forests or trees may be shaped by quite different cultural influences, and may stress economic values and goals. In the process of negotiating forest agreements, such concerns may be ignored or undervalued, threatening traditional knowledge systems and patterns of use, or destabilizing negotiated outcomes among the stakeholders.

BOX 3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Features to consider when identifying or describing culture:

- ethics;
- beliefs about conflicts;
- control, order;
- competition versus cooperation;
- hierarchy of needs and interests;
- time and place;
- process versus task;
- individual versus group or community;
- values attached to possessions;
- status;
- gender and sexuality issues;
- spiritual beliefs and practices;
- spirituals, music, art;
- expression – individual and group;
- spontaneity;
- verbal and body language;
- written versus oral language;
- communication style;
- emotional, mental, physical and spiritual expression and emphasis;
- gender roles;
- views of children and elders;
- definitions of family and family values.

Similarly, culture plays a central role in influencing the ways in which different groups engage in and respond to conflict. Conflicts in community forestry link multiple stakeholders who often know very little about one another. This lack of cultural knowledge can pose a challenge. Not only can there be significant value differences, but spoken language, communication style and assumptions about conflict and resolution may also differ greatly. Analysing conflict sensitively and keeping in mind the role of culture in influencing the behaviour of all stakeholders will improve competency in preparation for collaboration.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 23

TAKING CULTURE INTO ACCOUNT IN MANAGING CONFLICT

Exploring cultural differences plays an important part in analysing conflict. *Training activities 19 and #20* provide opportunities for participants to learn about the various elements of culture and how they influence people's perspectives of conflict and managing conflict.

3.4.2 Considering gender

Effective community-based forest management cannot be realized without the equitable collaboration of men and women. The need to consider gender, and issues that arise from the different roles, responsibilities and relationships of women and men, is therefore crucial. Gender roles within a society affect major issues of equity, wealth, power and well-being. Different roles for women and men affect who:

- has access to and uses a specific forest resource;
- has and controls traditional or other local knowledge;
- receives benefits from forest resources, management decisions, income-generation projects and training programmes;
- has authority and participates in decision-making;
- needs to be supported in order to improve sustainable livelihoods for the whole of the community.

All of these are vital elements to consider in designing and implementing successful community forestry initiatives.

What is meant by gender?

Sex identifies the biological and physical differences between women and men. It refers to whether people are born female or male.

Gender is socially constructed; it is formed around the social and cultural perceptions of male and female traits and roles. Gender identifies the social relations between men and women. It refers to the expectations that people have of someone, simply because they are male or female (Williams, 1994). Gender as a term does not refer to women only – it refers to both men and women.

Gender analysis is the systematic examination of the roles, relationships and processes between women and men. Gender roles show how labour is divided between men and women depending on the tasks they are involved in (see Box 3.5). Both men and women play multiple roles, and these often differ from one society to another, or within a society.

BOX 3.5 **EXAMINING GENDER ROLES**

Gender roles are socially constructed and influence or allocate activities, responsibilities and decision-making authority to groups of people. Social factors that underlie and sometimes reinforce gender differences include customary or religious practices, ethnic or cultural attitudes, class or caste, the formal legal system and institutional arrangements (European Commission, 1998).

The *reproductive role* includes a range of activities related to child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks required to guarantee the well-being and maintenance of the labour force (not just children but other members of the household as well).

The *productive role* refers to work done for pay in cash or in kind. This role includes market production with an exchange value, and

subsistence and home production with actual use value or potential exchange value. In relation to forest use this can include timber and non-timber forest product collection and processing, cultivation, hunting or handicrafts.

The *community managing role* refers to activities done at the community level, as an extension of the reproductive role. This is voluntary, unpaid work aimed at maintaining the well-being of the whole community. For example, work involved in the maintenance of communal water sources, on forestry plots and on school committees.

The *community politics role* refers to activities undertaken at the community level, often within the framework of policy-making or politics. This work is often paid – either directly or through status and power.

Source: Moser, 1993; Von Kotze and Holloway, 1996.

Conflict and gender

Conflicts within community forestry often arise from imbalances in gender roles, relationships or processes. Rural women are usually at a greater disadvantage than men, as they commonly:

- have lower social, economic and legal status;
- have fewer opportunities for gaining access to technical education and training, credit, markets and funding;
- lack input into planning and decision-making processes;
- lack tenure rights to land, trees, water and other forest products;
- receive proportionately fewer returns from forest resources.

These imbalances place real constraints on women's participation in, and ability to benefit from, community-based forest management.

In general, around the world, women are poorer than men. Their poverty arises from the roles they are assigned and the limits placed by societies in their access to and control of resources. Women are disproportionately employed in unpaid, underpaid and non-formal sectors of economies. Inheritance laws and traditions, marriage arrangements, banking systems and social patterns that reinforce dependence on fathers, husbands and sons all contribute to their unfavourable access to resources and their lack of power to change things. The health dangers that result from multiple births can contribute to interrupted work and low productivity. Traditional expectations and home-based responsibilities that limit women's mobility also limit their opportunities for political involvement, education, access to information, markets and a myriad of other resources….

Understanding these linkages makes it clear that women are vulnerable not because it is in their physical nature to be weak but because of the arrangements of societies that result in their poverty, political marginalization, and dependence on men. (Anderson, 1994, in Williams, 1994)

Conflicts can result from management actions and forest uses that maintain discriminatory roles, often increasing women's work and responsibilities without a corresponding increase in authority, rights, income or opportunities to influence decision-making.

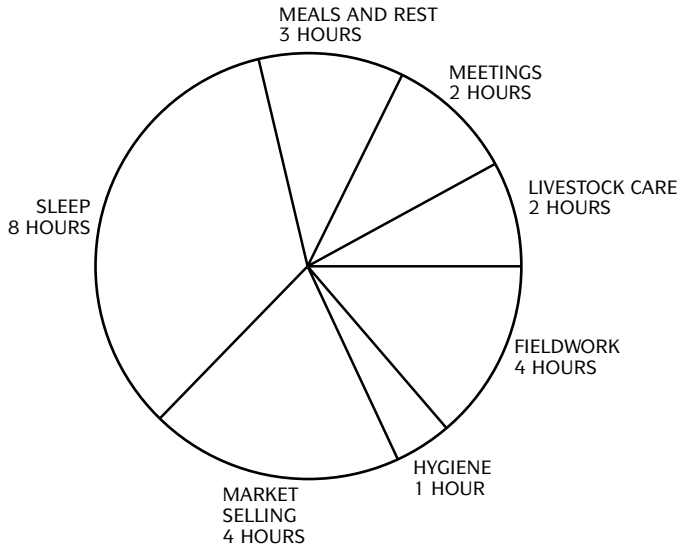
A few examples of how gender differences can affect community-based forest management and give rise to conflict are listed in the following paragraphs.

1. **Adding to a full workload:** On average, within a rural community, the workday of women is commonly two to three hours longer than that of men, and may consist of several additional sets of activities (see Figure 3.8). Many of the roles carried out by women are done simultaneously: for example, women often care for children at the same time as working in gardens, cleaning the house, cooking, etc.

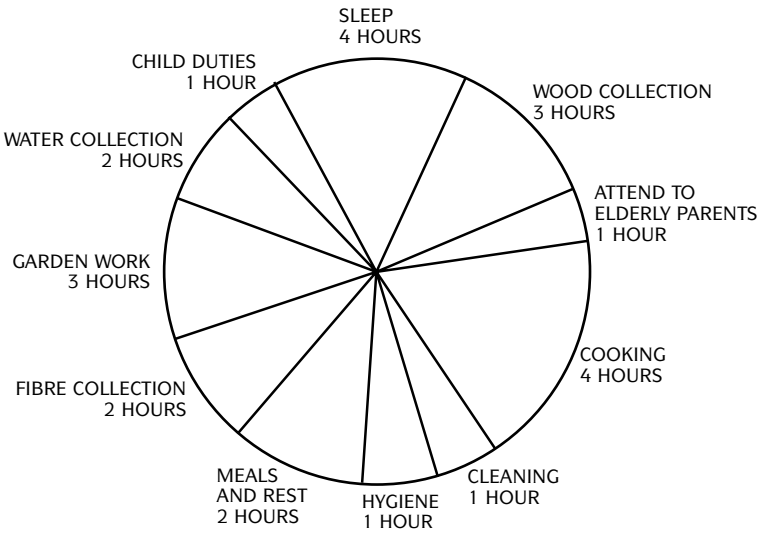
FIGURE 3.8 **WHAT'S IN A DAY?**

Examples of two daily activity charts done by villagers to compare roles and time availability of men and women.

MEN'S DAY



WOMEN'S DAY



The design and implementation of community forest income-generating initiatives and management decisions do not always consider women's activities, time availability or needs. This can result in an increase in women's labour and workload. Women's inability to accommodate additional work can create tensions and conflict within households and at the village level. Similarly, women may not be able to participate in working groups, meetings or specific forest-related events when these have not been planned to fit in with women's daily chores and responsibilities. They may become discouraged and choose not to participate, further decreasing the success of the initiative.

A lack of equality in the traditional roles of women and men has intensified as modern technologies and social changes reach the village level. For example, men may take on jobs in cities, leaving women with dramatically increased household and subsistence responsibilities.

2. **Erosion of women's role in decision-making:** Traditional resource decision-making systems are often informal and allow women to make some input into day-to-day decisions about the use and care of forest products. Similarly, some indigenous resource management systems give women extensive management authority, based on kinship or age, over specific trees or forest products.

   The establishment of more formal systems of collaborative management using public fora dominated by men can ignore or erode women's authority and involvement in decision-making. In some countries, there are legislative requirements for the representation of rural women on community forest management committees or user groups. Too often, however, women lack confidence, are unaccustomed or fearful of interacting with men, or are subject to traditional rules and customs that limit any meaningful participation in such fora. Providing women with an opportunity to participate in representative decision-making processes often requires change in other traditional relationships, or additional education and skill development that are not always available.

3. **Changing roles:** Gender roles and relationships are dynamic and changing. Changes can occur suddenly, in response to war, famine and natural catastrophe, or gradually, over time. Changes can be perceived as opportunities or threats by both women and men, and as a source of conflict (Fisher *et al.*, 2000). Conflicts can also arise from the forceful actions that men and women take to address imbalances in the roles or processes affecting women's lives. Such conflicts can be highly visible, particularly between generations, as educated youth openly challenge traditional roles. Commonly, however, conflict lies latent as women examine responses to it, often using a range of indirect strategies. Although not always visible, women's difficulty in expressing disagreement can steadily erode or undermine the sustainability and effectiveness of community forestry initiatives.

Responding to gender differences

The following are some important guidelines to consider in anticipating, analysing and addressing gender-related conflicts in community-based forest management.

- **Women do not compose a uniform group of stakeholders.** Definition of the different stakeholders in a conflict takes account of the fact that both men's and women's roles, interests and priorities (and therefore relationships to the conflict) are influenced by a range of factors. These might include social position, wealth, education, religion, ethnicity and the type of paid or unpaid work they do. Although men are frequently identified and analysed as stakeholders in relation to their roles and interest in forest use or management (for example, as farmers, forest hunters, carvers, merchants, committee members), women often are not. In stakeholder analysis it is important to identify relevant subgroups of women, based on their roles and interests (for example, fuel collectors, farmers, market sellers, weavers).

- **Men and women both need to be involved in analysing conflict.** Because of their different gender roles and responsibilities, men and women have different experiences and needs. This means that they may have different perspectives on a conflict. Both men and women should be involved in analysing the causes and impacts of conflict, identifying appropriate strategies and workable solutions, and monitoring agreements.

- **Gender analysis assists anticipating conflicts**. Gender analysis undertaken early in the design process of a community forestry initiative can identify circumstances that might lead to conflict. Likely impacts on men's and women's activities, time, decision-making structures, institutions, and so on, can be identified, and actions to prevent or mitigate these impacts can be taken.

- **Addressing conflicts associated with gender issues usually requires a range of actions at multiple levels, often over long time frames.** Gender conflicts are complex. Gender inequalities are not usually confined to one aspect of a woman's life, but affect her at various points within each of the multiple roles she performs. Meaningful participation for women in forest use and management is only achieved when a range of changes are supported, including changes in institutional structures, social and cultural attitudes, education, available time, work tasks and access to credit and funding. These changes may need to take place in the home, within the communities and within interacting agencies, and therefore require multiple strategies.

- **A human rights-based approach can be useful in dealing with forest conflicts.** Notions of gender equality can be founded on a human rights-based approach to development. Men and women may have different roles, but both need to be assured of their basic human rights. As with men, rural women need secure access and rights to forest resources and land. For both, this is a key factor affecting their social and economic status. Being able to influence forest planning and management more effectively and fully therefore provides a basis for affecting crucial decisions regarding food security, well-being and future livelihoods.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 24

BUILDING GENDER AWARENESS IN CONFLICT

Analysis of the gender impacts on conflict builds on the results of a range of participatory tools, such as social maps, gender-specific seasonality charts, daily activity calendars, preference ranking charts, and so on. In training, emphasize that participatory tools are not inherently gender-sensitive. Such tools are only useful when there is good, gender-sensitive facilitation. This requires that the facilitator be able to

help both women and men together to examine their roles and relationships, and how these support or constrain their livelihoods. It is also necessary to consider the choice of methods used, and to recognize that the timing, duration and location of activities do not automatically ensure equal participation.

Training activity #21 aims to increase understanding of why it is important to consider gender in community-based forest management, and provides frameworks that are useful for undertaking gender analysis. *Training activity #22* is useful in identifying gender-based conflicts.

3.4.3 Impacts of policy

Inadequate or contradictory policy and law frequently cause conflicts over forest use and management. Poorly designed or disjointed national forest policy can block decisions and actions at local levels and result in unintended consequences (Poffenberger, 1999; Tyler, 1999; Suryanata *et al.*, 2001). Similarly, incentives to collaborate can be weakened when governments fail to reform key policy areas, such as tenure or use rights. Such failure can reduce resource security for local people, maintain unequal power relationships and undermine trust in government or political processes.

Policy basics

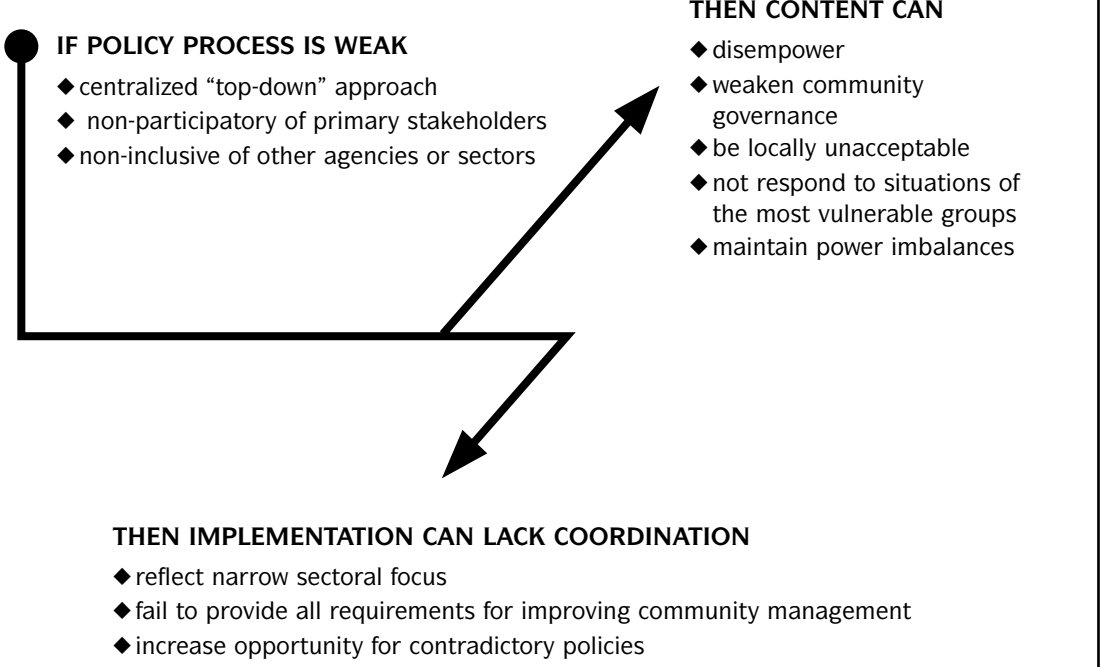
The term "policy" in its broadest sense can refer to programmes, strategies, plans and their implementation resulting from public (State) or collective decision-making (Thomson, 2000). International treaties, conventions and agreements, national and state legislation and local authority regulations are the legal expression of policy.

Policy can be generated at the international, national, provincial, district and local levels. The decisions on legislation, regulation, resource allocation and spending that most affect community-based forest management initiatives are usually made at the national and provincial levels (depending on the degree of decentralization). However, it is important to recognize how policy generated at all locations affects community forestry, and how the policies generated at levels affect one another and are coordinated. International agreements, for example, commonly influence the direction of national policy.

A sound, equitable and consistent policy and legal environment is fundamental to strengthening communities as forest managers and maintaining collaborative partnerships. Providing effective support requires paying attention to the following aspects of policy process, content and coordination (Thomson, 2000):

- *Policy process:* the process in which policy is formulated, implemented and evaluated. Policy that is supportive and friendly to community forestry must be participatory and involve local stakeholders in its formulation, monitoring and review. Who participates, how and at what stage are crucial issues. The strength of this process will greatly influence both the content of the policy and coordination with other agencies for providing needed inputs (see Figure 3.9).
- *Policy content:* the objectives, actions, structures, requirements and mode of delivery. Policy aimed at strengthening communities as forest managers should consider and be adaptive to local conditions. It should be built around accurate information of local stakeholders' needs and goals, constraints, traditional institutions and practices and capacities for implementation.

FIGURE 3.9
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF POLICY



- *Policy coordination:* linkages to other policy and legislation, or supporting agencies at different levels of government, internationally or within other sectors. Community forestry initiatives frequently aim to be holistic in attempts to support rural livelihoods. Implementing community forestry programmes requires a range of actions and support from other agencies in extension, education, health, income generation and natural resources.

Problems can arise and weaknesses surface at each of these levels. Examples of problems that are frequently encountered within community forestry and that contribute to conflict are described in Table 3.5. Any one conflict may display one or all of these problems, as they are linked and often overlap. Identifying where the problem is generated and how it affects other levels is crucial.

TABLE 3.5 COMMON PROBLEMS OF POLICY AND LEGISLATION THAT RESULT IN CONFLICT

Problem	Key elements
PROCESS	
1. *Lack of participation of local stakeholders in policy formulation*	◆ Forest policy is formulated in centralized decision-making systems (often in national capitals). ◆ The district or local agencies and communities that are responsible for implementation and enforcement are not involved. ◆ There is limited input of information on local needs, conditions, constraints or development objectives. ◆ The resulting policy and legislation may not be locally effective or acceptable. ◆ Policy may contradict or not address local priorities. ◆ Few opportunities for community-based initiatives to share learning and needs "upwards" with policy-makers, further reduce local stakeholders' influence on the direction or content of policy planning.
2. *Lack of participation in processes of monitoring or review*	◆ There is inadequate feedback into the local problems encountered, and policy issues continue to be repeated in other areas. ◆ Local authorities or communities lack opportunities to become aware of the difficulties or perspectives of the government. ◆ It stifles learning and innovation in policy formulation.
3. *Too much new policy or legislation at one time impeding implementation and quality*	◆ A rapid succession of community forestry initiatives, combined with national democratization or devolution processes, results in a logjam of new legislation and policies. ◆ When this occurs, the instruments are often put out in piecemeal fashion without sufficient development. ◆ Often lacks coordination with other policies or agencies, causing the overlap of authority and the duplication of requirements.
CONTENT	
4. *Forest policy or legislation does not provide for secure tenure or clarify tenure arrangements*	◆ Existing tenure systems may reflect historical inequities due to wealth, political power and ethnic differences, or they are prejudiced to encourage large-scale commercial activity or capital investment. ◆ There is political resistance to changing these arrangements in order to incorporate the interests of indigenous, landless or other marginalized groups. ◆ Actions to introduce new and fair policies are perverted by the political or material interests of national elite groups. ◆ There are insufficient legal models for recognizing communal property regimes. ◆ The government chooses to maintain uncertain community resource tenure owing to pressure from elite groups or other political mandates.

Table 3.5 continued

Problem	Key elements
CONTENT	
5. *Policy or regulations are inflexible and non-adaptive to local contexts*	◆ Government policy is implemented in a rigid manner and not adapted to local economic, cultural or social conditions. ◆ Geographical distance, low literacy or numeracy levels and lack of public information restrict the involvement of and benefits to community members from well-intentioned policy or programme initiatives. ◆ Imposed organizational structures, too many bureaucratic procedures and complex licensing requirements are cumbersome or poorly understood by local people. ◆ Newly introduced management requirements complicate and escalate conflict among villages instead of resolving issues of forest use and control.
6. *Policy introduces new structures that weaken traditional and local authority, institutions and practices*	◆ The introduction of new decision-making structures or institutions weakens community governance. ◆ Traditional or other existing local management systems are disregarded or overridden. ◆ New structures undermine local leadership. ◆ Creates tension and resentment among community members. ◆ Erodes systems that also serve to mediate conflicts within and among communities.
7. *Lack of clarity within policy on changed roles, responsibilities and duties*	◆ Government policy is not clear regarding the changed roles and duties of village, district, provincial and national authorities. ◆ Lack of clarity may be due to a lack of or poor communication between those who make and those who implement policy. ◆ These aspects need to be clarified, but often are not, resulting in confusion and a range of disputes.
8. *Policies introduce new roles for government without adequate support and capacity building*	◆ Forest policies promoting greater stakeholder involvement and participation involve changed roles for government officials. ◆ The historical roles of forest officers include collecting and analysing data on the forest and resource use, planning for and administering State resource tenures, and setting the direction of, and making decisions on, management. ◆ Community-centred approaches require new roles that are facilitative, rather than directive, and a new range of skills and attitudes that understand and support participatory processes. ◆ The significance of this change in roles is often underestimated, but requires a major shift in attitudes and skills. ◆ When this support is not provided, local authorities are frequently overwhelmed by the policies and can block their implementation.

Table 3.5 continued

Problem	Key elements
COORDINATION	
9. *Collaborative management delivered in a limited and piecemeal manner*	◆ Collaborative systems of forest management require major changes in attitudes, structures and capacities at all levels and across agencies. ◆ Policy and programme initiatives that are supportive of community-based forest management are frequently treated with caution by politicians and governments – too frequently they are looked on as field experiments that are expected to perform or fail in the short term. ◆ Political commitment, access to adequate resources and training, and a realistic time frame are required to support this change fully.
10. *Policy effectiveness hindered by narrow institutional goals and inadequate coordination*	◆ The agency's narrow institutional goals often give rise to inadequate policy or programmes ◆ A narrow policy focus neglects critical elements of integration, coordination or the needs of other resource users. ◆ An uncoordinated approach can result in the formulation of policies that contradict each other. ◆ A policy reform may provide for one level of need, but implementation is hindered by the lack of other policy changes or the lack of contribution from other departments or agencies. ◆ Even with more authority and control, local stakeholders remain handicapped without additional technical support or extension programmes from other agencies.

Sources: Poffenberger, 1999 ; Tyler, 1999 ; Suryantata *et al.,* 2001.

Conflicts over tenure

One of the most contentious policy issues in community forestry and collaborative management is security of tenure in forest land and resources. The absence of secure tenure for the communities involved in forest management is a characteristic feature of community-based forest management. This issue is considered to be a primary source of conflict and resource degradation (Fisher, 1995; Bojang, 2000; Poffenberger, 1999; Tyler, 1999).

BOX 3.6 **UNDERSTANDING TENURE**

Tenure is a system of mutually recognized claims to land, water and resources. It is frequently seen to be the same as ownership, but it is not (Fisher, 1995). For example, many forms of customary tenure by indigenous people do not ascribe rights of ownership to land, but view the tribe as "custodian", holding rights of management and control over an ancestral estate. Nomadic groups often seek tenure over land, but only for the purpose of moving through that land during specific seasons of the year.

Rights can be classified as de jure tenure and de facto tenure. The former is endorsed by the State and, in theory, the State supports de jure claims. The latter is that which occurs in practice, but is not sanctioned by the laws of the State (Fisher, 1995).

Central to the tenure issue is the predominance of common property regimes (CPRs), which are widely held throughout the world by indigenous people over their traditional lands. These tenure systems are fundamentally resource management systems characterized by a limited or defined membership that regulates use of and access to forests and land by its members and others (Bruce, 1999; Forni, 2000). CPRs are extremely variable in form and in the rules under which they operate. For many indigenous peoples, the maintenance of CPRs is pivotal to conserving cultural values and achieving greater political and economic autonomy (Bruce, 1999).

Tenure security is fundamental to achieving local participation. Many local stakeholders will not begin to negotiate or collaborate with the government until some actions have been taken towards providing them with security of use and management rights. In many countries, rights of access to and harvest of non-timber forest products are provided, but legal recognition of traditional CPRs, or rights to forested land and trees, are frequently withheld. Reasons for this include (Bruce, 1999; Poffenberger, 1999):

- political unwillingness due to opposing groups within the society, corruption or pressure from influential elite groups;
- national governments that are focused on the privatization of production and the primacy of the individual over collective action often do not understand CPRs, or see them as impeding development;
- government reluctance to hand over State-claimed forest lands to communal interest;
- a lack of legal mechanisms or models to provide a legal base for CPRs and institutions;
- poor integration and conflict of national law with customary law, leaving little opportunity to secure CPRs.

Addressing policy conflicts

Conflicts related to policy can significantly alter the strategies for managing conflict by widening the scale of stakeholder involvement vertically and horizontally, extending time frames and requiring a range of integrated approaches. Strategies are likely to shift direction at various points as groups interact, alliances are built and power bases change.

Addressing policy conflicts often requires involvement in the larger political arena and lobbying for changes in issues of policy process and content. Policy reform requires that communities, as well as forest- and land-related government agencies, assume genuine leadership roles. Policy change to meet the challenges of community forestry requires political willingness to grapple with a range of complex and emotionally sensitive issues of land, wealth and equity. It also requires new innovative models for blending traditional and national systems of governance and, in some cases, legal challenges to existing bodies of law, both within a country and internationally.

Efforts should aim to (Tyler, 1999; Thomson, 2000):

- gain political commitment to support reforms and provide necessary resources for implementation;
- obtain a balance of decision-making power between the grassroots and national levels;
- establish mechanisms for a more inclusive formulation and review process that allows input to extend down to the household level;
- establish mechanisms for improved coordination within or among agencies so that all are informed, involved and supportive;
- construct policy so that it includes mechanisms to adapt to local conditions;
- make policy and structures accountable and responsible to both the government and the public;
- make policy responsive to groups of society that are less capable of lobbying on their own behalf.

TRAINER'S NOTE # 25

IDENTIFYING CONFLICTS RESULTING FROM POLICY

In these training materials we highlight the need for stakeholders to examine the root causes of conflict. We also introduce the "4Rs", which assist stakeholders in analysing rights and responsibilities in relation to forests and forest products. Issues that arise in these activities commonly link to weaknesses or problems of policy and law. *Training activities #23 and #24* allow stakeholders to explore specific policies within their region or area. From these analyses, actions are suggested on how to influence needed long-term changes constructively.

3.5 SECTION SUMMARY

Section 3 has outlined the main steps and activities of conflict analysis. The concepts and tools presented will be useful in understanding how to initiate a process of conflict management, identify its many driving forces and then nominate and select possible actions to manage it. Below is a brief summary of the key points covered in this section. To support the introduction and discussion of concepts in training, refer to the training activities in Section 9.

Conflict analysis is a key step in initiating conflict management. Starting a process of conflict management can be difficult. Several of the opposing parties may wish to end the conflict, but may be reluctant to risk making the first move. Conflict analysis allows stakeholders opportunities to begin the process in a non-threatening way. It can also quickly point to other stakeholders who may further support peace-building actions.

Conflict analysis helps identify issues for action. Conflict analysis is about breaking apart a large and complex problem into pieces that are amenable to analysis and action. As the individual causes are distinguished, the stakeholders' perceptions of events can be explored, and further information needs identified. Ultimately, parties to conflict can better identify which contributing causes are most significant, require immediate action or need to be addressed in the long term.

Identifying underlying causes can guide the selection of appropriate strategies to manage conflict. Underlying most conflicts are issues related to interests, ideology, relationships, information and structural inequalities. Classifying and prioritizing the various causes of conflict can assist in determining appropriate responses. Some types of conflict are more readily addressed than others. As a result of analysis, stakeholders may decide to ignore some conflicts or delay action, redirecting their efforts to other issues.

Conflict analysis identifies and involves the stakeholders. Distinguishing those stakeholders who are affected by a conflict and those who influence the outcome is essential. A further critical task in conflict analysis is helping stakeholders to examine and understand their and others' interests and expectations, relative power and responses to conflict. This also includes an analysis of their interactions, their relationships and ways in which they can work together to manage conflict.

Conflict analysis helps stakeholders shift their focus from individual positions to potentially shared interests. Shifting opposing parties from entrenched and fixed positions to finding common interests is fundamental to collaborative approaches. Guidelines are provided on how to do this, and on how to use common interests to build agreements.

Culture is important in creating and managing conflict. Culture affects how people use, acquire access to and value forest resources. It also influences communication styles and preferences for handling and managing conflicts over forest resources. Cultural differences are common in multi-stakeholder forest resource conflicts. This section highlights the need for those involved in conflict situations to learn how to work with cultural differences and build understanding among groups.

Gender differences can give rise to conflict and must be assessed and addressed. In most societies, the roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women are markedly different. These differences significantly affect the ways in which men and women use and value forests, and the extent to which they are involved in community-based forest management. Inadequate attention to gender differences will result in conflicts within and outside the community. People involved in managing forests should be sensitive to these differences, and anticipate and address gender-based conflicts.

Conflict analysis examines the impacts of policy and legislation. A supportive policy environment and legislation are required in order to enable effective and equitable collaboration among stakeholder groups. If these are lacking or poorly implemented, conflicts within community forestry activities are likely to occur. A range of problems and reasons for inadequate policy support are discussed in this section. Stakeholders involved in conflict are encouraged to analyse wider policy impacts. Introducing new policies and legislative changes is often an outcome of a long-term approach to managing conflicts.

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