

TOOL SEVEN

THE “YOUTH ONION”⁸



Objective:

To analyse the dynamics of a conflict situation in the community. To sketch a more detailed picture of the young people and ensure that their positions, interests and needs, as well as those of other stakeholders are better known. The tool helps to avoid stigmatisation and marginalisation of young people.



Aspects of Data Collection:

The positions, interests and needs of stakeholders in a defined conflict in the community, or a defined other social context, among them young people, are noted.



Material needed:

Big brown paper or several sheets of flipchart paper, markers with different colours, pins, glue and/or tape.



Preparation:

Draw a big ‘onion’ with three skins (the outer skin with a diameter of about 1 m). Prepare questions which help you to clarify the differences between positions, needs and interests. You can write one question for each ‘onion skin’ on a flipchart, which might be a helpful support during the discussion (see questions under procedure).

This tool follows the identification of a conflict situation in the community. The involved parties have already been identified.



Procedure:

Introduce the tool explaining that there are some important principles to bear in mind throughout the following work:

1. All of us act on the basis of our own needs. We try to satisfy them. That is okay.
2. Every party in a conflict has valid interests and needs. These cannot be questioned.

8. Adapted from GTZ, Leonhardt, M., 2001 and Rosenberg, M., 1999

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3. When we want to find solutions, we need to look for options which meet the most interests and needs of all parties.
4. There is always more than one solution, even if we think there is just one.
5. It is important to differentiate between our goal and our strategies to get there. Often we think the strategy is the goal.

Make sure these principles are applied throughout the discussion and analysis.

The analysis is guided by the following three main questions:

1. Positions: What is it that the parties say they want (what they allow everyone to see and hear)?
2. Interests: What do the parties really want? What motivates them (do they wish to achieve)?
3. Needs: What is it that the parties must have (described less in terms of material needs, but rather as a status or condition – see the example in the figure below)? What they must have?

Decide with the participants with which group to start.

You analyse the positions, interests and needs of the parties one by one. In the example below you start to identify the positions, interests and needs of the youth group in the neighbourhood. When you have described all three layers sufficiently, you start to identify the positions, interests and needs of the neighbourhood committee. In the end ask the members of the respective party or group whether the description is complete and correct. When the members of the group concerned agree the description is complete and correct, you can start to describe the other group/s.

In the example (opposite) the conflict is over the use of an area of free land, where a neighbourhood committee wants to establish a market, but the youth want a football field.

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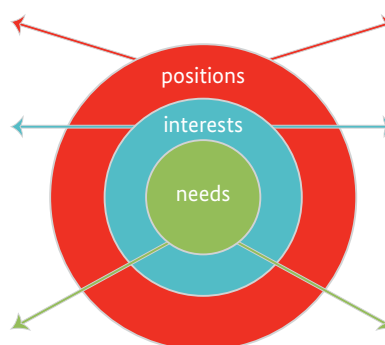
THE “YOUTH ONION”⁸**Youth group in the neighbourhood**

Economic development is important, but youths are generally excluded from it;

Adults can not represent the youth, because the reality of their lives is entirely different

More participation rights for young people; more options for young people to get involved in the neighbourhood; job prospects; attractive leisure activities

Sense of belonging; respect, future prospects, recognition of their own identity; self-esteem

The Youth Onion**Neighbourhood committee:**

Economic development in the neighbourhood is essential; young people are primarily responsible for the high crime rates in the neighbourhood

Increased family incomes; economic development in the neighbourhood; an image of a prosperous, well-maintained city in the neighbourhood; a safe environment

'A good life' without having to worry about the satisfaction of basic needs; security

Figure 11: Youth Onion

**Observations:**

There should be a profound understanding of the positions, interests and needs of all parties. It is therefore important to carry out the analysis with the youth onion for all parties involved.

The application of this tool requires that the facilitator be very sensitive. The facilitator also needs good facilitation skills to ensure a respectful atmosphere. You should be familiar with the basic concepts and approaches related to non-violent communication.

**End Product:**

These objectives set should be met by the end of the activity, including the following:

- The dynamics of a conflict situation in the community or neighbourhood would have been analysed. A more detailed picture of the young people is developed. Their positions, interests and needs, as well as those of other stakeholders are better known



In addition:

- The involved parties, including young people, are understood better and the ground is prepared for a positive, constructive attitude towards each other.
- Completely new perspectives have been opened, which increase the opportunities for violence-prevention measures.