## TOOL**EIGHT**

# FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON LINES OF CONFLICT

### Objective:

To identify and analyse conflicts and conflicting parties in the community/neighbourhood.

To allow participants to take a closer look at groups or groupings already hinted at in the Venn actors' diagram.

### Aspects of Data Collection:

Topics and parties related to conflicts in the community/neighbourhood; conflict- reducing and conflict-promoting actors (dividers and connectors) are identified.

### Material needed:

Big brown paper or several sheets of flipchart paper, connected to a big sheet. Several markers with different colours, preferably black, red and blue. Moderation cards in different colours or other paper in different colours, if possible. Have round moderation cards at hand, or cut paper in different colours and sizes, pins, glue and/or tape.

### Preparation:

Define criteria for the selection of participants in the discussion, and invite them for a meeting of 1,5 hours. Prepare guiding questions like those below.

### Procedure:

As an introduction you explain the objectives of the meeting, and the relevance of the objectives to the whole process.

Seek answers to these key questions:

1.  Are there any large-scale conflicts in the neighbourhood/community which affect large sections of the population?

2.  Which ones are relevant to the violence and crime in the neighbourhood/community? Why so?

If there is more than one major conflict, then it is important to talk about each one separately. The conflicts and/or the themes of the conflict are listed, and recorded on a separate flipchart. They are prioritised according to the conflict's degree of relevance to the general situation of violence and crime. The conflict with the highest priority or relevance is discussed first. The following questions guide discussion of each conflict, which will be analysed.

1.  What is the conflict about? What are the themes of the conflict?

2.  How long has the conflict persisted so far?

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3. Who are the conflicting parties? How are these parties composed (gender, age, ethnicity, special youth groups/cliques etc.)?

4. What are the positions and interests of the conflicting parties?

5. Are there any allies or supporters behind the conflicting parties? Who are they? What is their role?

6. Whose actions or attitudes tend to promote the conflict? How and why?

7. Whose actions or attitudes tend to reduce the conflict? How and why?

8. Do any actors have access to both conflicting parties? Whom do the parties view as neutral in the conflict?

The colours of the cards indicate who takes what position in the conflict, or who maintains a neutral position. Red o for the text can signify conflict-promoting or blue can signify conflict-reducing forces respectively. The size of the cards can be used to signify, for example, the group sizes or the extent of their influence. It is important to make clear how you use the cards.
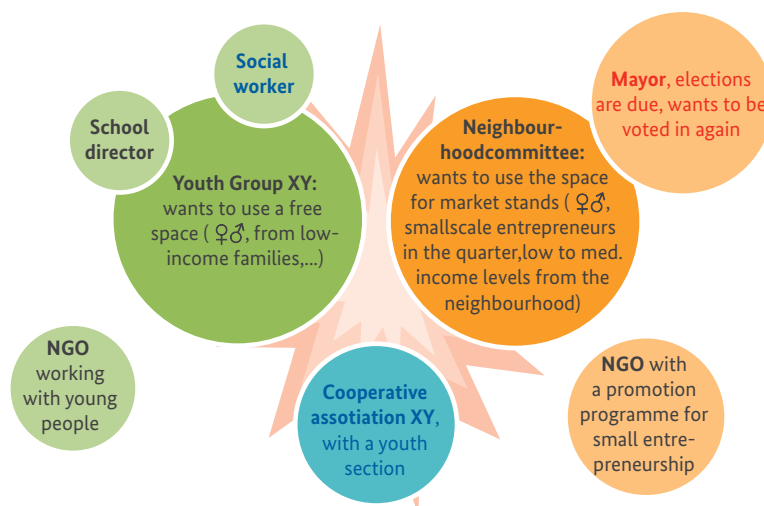
Figure 12: Analysis of lines of conflicts in a community

### Analysis of patterns in the conflict (or lines of conflict) within a community
blue text = conflict-reducing actors (connectors);
red text = conflict-promoting actors (dividers);
green paper = conflicting party 1; light green: supportive of conflict party 1;
orange paper = conflicting party 2; light orange: supportive of conflict party 2;
blue paper = accepted by both sides as neutral.

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### Observations:

Focus group discussions are discussions with a smaller group of people, preferably no more than 12, who share main characteristics. How you select the characteristics depends largely on the topics you want to discuss. A degree of diversity within the group is necessary for fruitful discussions.

**Focus group discussions can be used for a lot of different topics.**

The 'guiding questions' are just that – only a guide. Allow room for discussion and the expression of personal opinions and perceptions. Adapt your questions accordingly. It is important to formulate open questions, that is, questions to which the answer cannot be only a yes or no.

You can use additional flipcharts to record more detailed explanations and illustrations of the positions and interests of the conflicting parties. When assessing the interests it is good to be probe further, with questions such as: What is it all about, really? Whose interests are behind this?

### End Product:

By the end the activity, the objectives set have been met: conflicts and conflicting parties in the community/neighbourhood have been identified and analysed.

1hr 30

In addition, the following has been achieved:

- Existing major conflicts in the community/neighbourhood are analysed, their relevance to the general situation of violence and crime is discussed, and conflict-reducing and promoting actors identified.