



COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Community-level conflict analysis and action planning

Covid-19 is affecting countries all over the world. It is placing huge demands on governments and on public services such as health care. It is also understandably raising levels of anxiety and fear, fear of both the virus and also the impact of the actions being taken to counter it. Inevitably, this is raising tensions, causing old grievances to resurface and highlighting inequality. It is also providing opportunity, which many are taking, to demonstrate compassion and concern for each other, to reach out to those with whom we may disagree or be in conflict.

The aim of this analysis and planning tool is to help you think through what impact Covid-19 might have on your community and what you might be able to do to reduce any negative impact. Its purpose is to help you identify the sources of both tension and peace, to identify those most affected, to dream of a different and better future, and to take steps towards that future.

Before you start, however, spend some time in prayer, asking God for wisdom and understanding.

Conflict analysis steps:

1. Include all voices
2. Address sources of tension
3. Identify who is affected
4. Build on sources of peace
5. Dream dreams
6. Take action

Include all voices

In any community, there are those who have the most influence, the ones whose voice is always heard: we might call these people the 'mainstream'. There are also those whose voices are rarely heard and who have little influence in the decisions that affect them: we might call these people the 'margin'. When completing a conflict analysis, it is important to include input from all sections of the community, especially those who might be on the 'margin'. Ensure that you consult with both men and women, old and young, educated and less well educated, the wealthy and those living in poverty.

Address sources of tension

The first step is to identify and analyse the issues and behaviours that cause tension. Try to go beyond simply listing them to understand what lies beneath these behaviours. Put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself what the situation looks like from their perspective. Are there things to do with the context or the existing structures that contribute to these tensions? What can you do to minimise the impact of these things?

- 1. What issues cause tension within your community or with others in your surrounding area?**
 - a. List the issues and the people or groups involved in them.
 - b. What type of behaviours cause tension?
 - i. What motivates people to behave in this way?
 - ii. What enables them to behave in this way?
- 2. Do these tensions vary with the time of day or location?**
 - a. If so, what can you learn from this?
- 3. What are the underlying needs that people are trying to satisfy by behaving in this way?**
- 4. How have these issues and behaviours been changed by Covid-19?**
 - a. Have any become more significant?
 - i. If so, why is this?
 - b. Have any become less significant?
 - i. If so, why is this?

ii. How might you capitalise on this opportunity?

5. Has the response to Covid-19 caused tension between community members and those government agencies and representatives responsible for containing the virus?

- a. If so, how might you act as a bridge between these government agencies and the community, to help give voice to any concerns and to address any misunderstandings?

6. What can you, with others, do to reduce these sources of tension?

- a. What would address the negative behaviours and attitudes?
- b. How could you find better, more peaceful means of satisfying people's basic needs?

7. What role is information playing in increasing or reducing tensions?

- a. How can you increase access to trusted sources of information that calm the situation?
- b. How can you reduce the impact of negative, unhelpful or misleading information? (You can refer to [Tearfund's Addressing rumours and misinformation guidance here.](#))

Identify who is affected

Think about the different groups in your community. You may want to use the mainstream and margin Bible study and exercises to do this. Focus on those who will be most affected by the virus and the response to it; think in particular about those who are often invisible and whose voices are rarely heard. Try to ensure that all are included and treated with respect and dignity.

1. Which groups have the least power and influence within your community?

- a. How can you ensure that the voices of these people are heard and can influence community decision-making?

2. Who is most affected by the virus and the actions taken to overcome it?

- a. Think in terms of those most affected healthwise: who is most vulnerable?
- i. How can you protect and reassure them?
- b. Who is most affected economically?

- i. How can you support them and ensure they can meet their basic needs?
- c. Who is most affected socially, perhaps through isolation, loneliness or stigmatisation?
 - i. How can you encourage and help these individuals?

Build on sources of peace

Recognising and countering sources of tension is important but all too often we focus on the negative. There will also be positives within the community, people and practices that are sources of peace and reconciliation, things that bring people together and unite them.

1. What or who brings a sense of peace and calm to the community?

- a. What type of behaviours calm the situation?
 - i. What motivates people to behave in this way?
 - ii. What enables them to behave in this way?

2. How have these behaviours been changed by Covid-19?

- a. Have any become more significant?
 - i. If so, why is this?
 - ii. How might you make the most of this opportunity?
- b. Have any become less significant?
 - i. If so, why is this?

3. What can you, with others, do to maximise these sources of peace?

- a. What would encourage the positive behaviours and attitudes?

Dream dreams

Sometimes we can be so trapped in the fears and worries of the immediate situation that it becomes difficult to see beyond these to the future. Crises such as Covid-19 can often offer opportunities for change and so it is important to pause, to look ahead and think about what a different, better future might look like. If you pause to dream dreams, you can recognise and seize any opportunities that arise and intentionally move towards that better future. Try to be creative as you do this: art or

drama can help draw out ideas. Make sure that you collect dreams from everyone in your society: women, men, the elderly and the young, those in positions of power and influence (the mainstream), and those with little power or influence (the margin).

1. **What would a good outcome look like? Draw a picture of this outcome.**
2. **What would need to happen to realise this ideal outcome?**
 - a. Write these down as a series of stepping stones and lay them out on the ground to form a path leading to the picture that you have drawn of your dream outcome.
3. **What would a bad outcome look like? Draw a picture of this outcome.**
4. **What would need to happen to realise this bad outcome?**
 - a. Write these down as an alternative series of stepping stones and lay them out next to your first as an alternative path leading to this second drawing.

Take action

Analysis is only useful if it leads to action. Having completed the first steps, you will have ideas about what you and others can do. You may not have all the answers but make a start and continue to learn and deepen your understanding as you go.

1. **What signs would tell you that you are on the wrong path?**
2. **What signs would tell you that you are on the right path?**
3. **What actions can you take now to begin making steps along the right path?**

What actions can you identify that would get you back on the right path if you find yourself on the wrong one?

Closing prayer

May the strength of God pilot us. May the power of God preserve us. May the wisdom of God instruct us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us. May the shield of God defend us. May the host of God guard us against snares of evil and the temptations of the world. May Christ be with us, Christ before us, Christ in us, Christ over us. May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and for evermore. Amen.

Prayer for the faithful, St Patrick

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