

Early Warning and Early Response system



Training of Trainers
Manual



Supported By



Early Warning and Early Response system

Training of Trainers Manual



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Published by

International Movement Against

all Form of Discrimination & Racism

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PROLOGUE

After the independent of Sri Lanka, Minorities of Sri Lanka has progressed significantly in the consolidation of its democratic institutions. Contemporary to this democratization process, many political, social and economic actors have emerged in the public arena with new demands, testing the effectiveness of political systems to process new claims.

The International Movement Against all Forms of Discrimination Racism (IMARD) and the Center for Youth and Social Development (CEYSD) consider that the promotion and strengthening of different local and national institutions' capacities is of strategic importance for the prevention, management and peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts in the context of compliance with both organizations' legal instruments and mandates, and respecting each country's priorities.

In 2019, the two organizations, together with the European Union (EU), developed and published "Early Warning and Early Response - A Handbook for Practitioners". The purpose of the Manual was to create a methodological tool to facilitate the work of institutions and practitioners in the design, facilitation and evaluation of dialogue processes in diverse contexts and circumstances, and it has been a valuable reference tool for the practice of democratic dialogue in Sri Lanka. This work continued in 2017 based on an update of the concepts of this instrument and the development of a Practical Guide for governments, social partners and practitioners, expanding the toolbox available for dialogue professionals and practitioners.

Aware of the importance of continuing to generate prevention mechanisms and maintaining a constructive approach to conflicts in the country, the IMARD and the CEYSD identified the usefulness of developing a Practical Guide for the Design of Early Warning and Response System to tackle Social Conflicts.

Early warning and response systems (EWER) are just one of the many existing tools to prevent and resolve potential social conflicts and should be part of a comprehensive prevention strategy with other approaches, such as conciliation, mediation or dialogue, as well as the inter-institutional coordination of actors

responsible for the adoption and promotion of a culture of peace among public officials and citizens.

Each system can and should be designed and developed based on the needs and realities of each context. As will be seen, the Guide does not provide exact formulas or closed models, rather it highlights important aspects to be considered in the design, development and operation of systems of this kind, with the understanding that they may be useful tools for anticipating the emergence of disputes or conflicts and their corresponding treatment and approach in a peaceful, constructive and sustainable manner.

We hope this material will contribute by adding quality to the discussion on capacity building and development in order to analyze, monitor, prevent and manage conflicts from the central, regional, and municipal governments as well as the civil society and academies.

Dr Nimalka Fernando

Director

IMADR Asia Committee

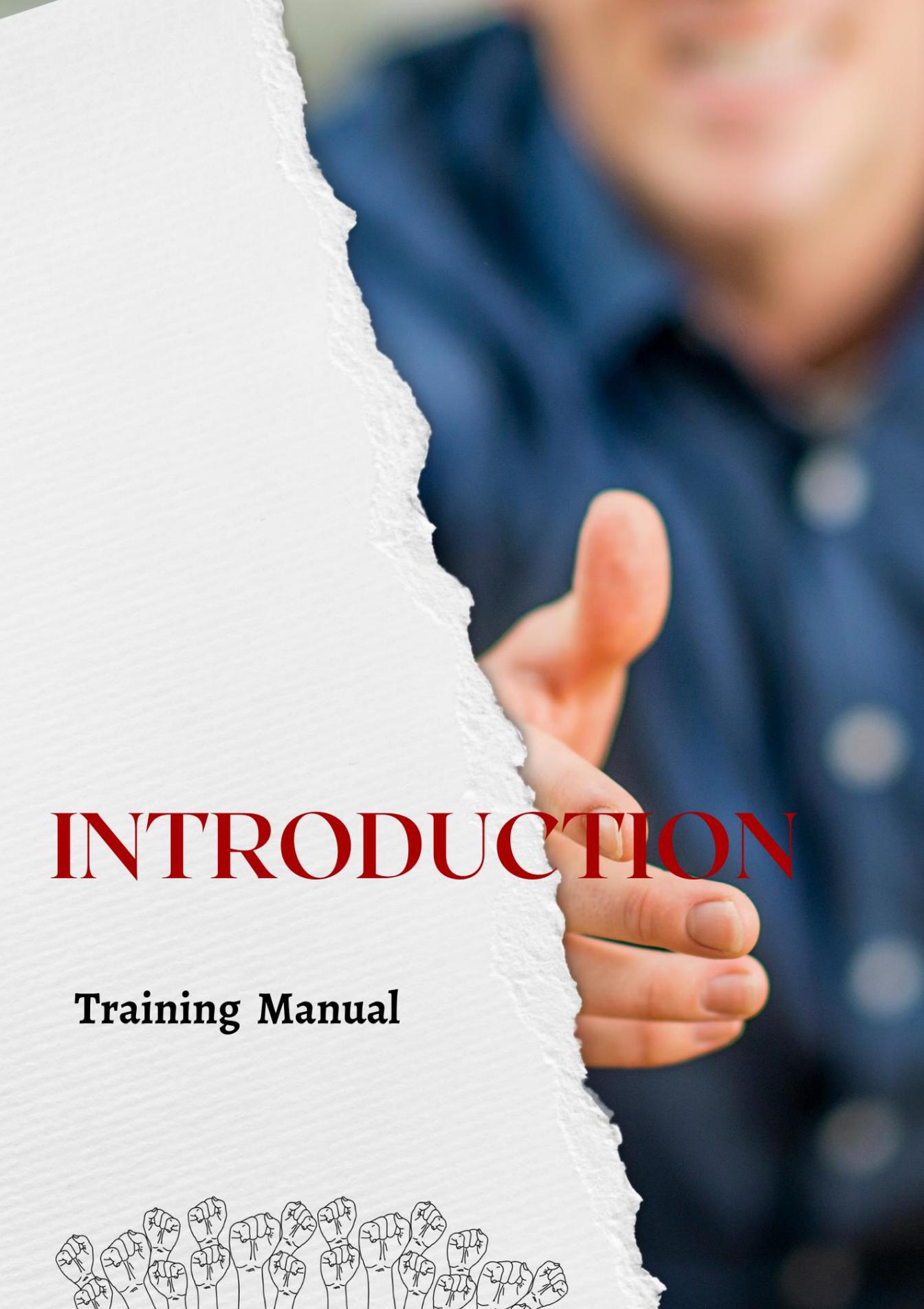
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A person in a blue shirt is holding a piece of white paper with a torn edge. The person's hand is visible, holding the paper from the right side. The background is blurred, showing the person's face and shirt.

INTRODUCTION

Training Manual



Introduction

Early Warning and Response Systems (EWER) are an important tool within the spectrum of actions for conflict prevention, management and resolution. While most of these conflict prevention systems have been implemented in Africa, in recent years increased interest in the development and design of such mechanisms, both at the level of the state as well as in the civil society, has been seen in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in order to mitigate the effects of social conflicts in the countries in the region.

There are several theoretical and methodological models, which have been developed based on the purpose for which these systems are created - tackling armed conflict, addressing political crises, social conflict prevention, etc. - and the dynamics and specific reality of each case. In this regard, system designers must decide which model is most appropriate for each context. The important thing is to establish the scope and limitations of each model.

The EWER are custom made and their specific configuration depends on, among other things, the characteristics of each country, the mandate, the specific objectives assigned to it, and the human and financial resources available.

The main purpose of this *“Practical Guide for Early Warning and Response Systems Design for Social Conflicts”* is to contribute to strengthening a preventive approach in addressing social conflict in the region, providing some basic aspects to keep in mind in the design and development of an EWER from a perspective of conflict prevention and management with a socially and culturally sensitive approach, strengthening democratic governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

This Guide is intended for national and subnational public officials responsible for the development, design and implementation of an Early Warning and Response System. It is hoped that the Guide will serve as a support and reference tool to guide the process of designing these systems. It does not claim to be a unique or universal recipe, nor does it advocate a particular EWER model that applies to all political and social contexts.

This document has been prepared on the basis of lessons learned from experiences and practice in the design and implementation of EWER in the region.

Agenda

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Start 09.00	Start 09.00	Start 09.00	Start 09.00	Start 09.00
Welcome and Introductions Logistic planning Speed networking	Brainstorming What is EWER?	Brainstorming Stages Of EWERS implementation	Brainstorming Evaluation	Brainstorming Community Mapping and social action project planning
Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Peace and Reconciliation	What is EWER?	Information collection	Group Activity (Gallery walks)	Facilitation skills
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Conflict and violence Past experience regarding violence	Basic stage of EWER	Information analyzing	Basic list of products	Research methodology
Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Current situation of sir Lanka	Communication planning	Decision Making	Mapping	END
Finish 16.30	Finish 16.30	Finish 16.30	Finish 17.15	Finish 16.30



PREPARING YOUR WORKSHOP



Preparing your workshop

Principles

The IMADR and its partners, facilitators and participants shall demonstrate a commitment to the following principles:

- Openness, honesty and transparency
- A rejection of discrimination and violence, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- A sense of responsibility for sustainable development
- A commitment to equal access to participation in the programme
- Respect for diversity
- A commitment to disagree agreeably
- A refusal to enter any partnership that compromises the principles or vision of the programme.

Participation and inclusion

Participation and the inclusion of all is a core value of this Training of Trainers workshop, and something that should be supported within the workshop as well as a value and skill that participants learn. It can be supported in a number of ways, including by:

- Considering any potential participation issues in advance, for example about gender, language or participants from a minority group
- Discussing and agreeing the principle on the first day, and how everyone will support each other to fully participate. Also, thinking about the barriers together and how you will overcome them
- Thinking about how the environment, room layout, materials, activities and the language you use may or may not support participation
- Observing everyone's levels of participation and thinking about how you can engage and support those who are not participating fully. It might help to ask one or two volunteers to monitor participation. Do not address anyone in public who you think is not participating; wait to

talk to them in private

- Being strong about upholding the agreed principles. This will give strength to participants who might be feeling unable to participate
- Fully and encourage others to share their concerns too. If there are dominant participants, discuss the issue with them in private
- considering any potential participation issues
- in advance, for example around gender, language or participants from a minority group, or whether participants have any specific access needs, especially for people with disabilities, that can be taken into account in advance.

Use specific methods in group conversations, for example:

- A ‘talking stick’ – where a participant must be holding a particular object in order to speak
- Give everyone a chance to speak in turn
- Ration the chances to speak. For example, give everyone three matchsticks and every time someone speaks take one of them away
- Break into small groups more often
- Relativeness ranking – if the group feel comfortable with the idea, then you can ask them after each day to rank everyone by how much they spoke.

Facilitators should model the behaviors and approaches in their workshops that they would like participants to learn.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is a key requirement of participation in the programme that the progress and development of partners and participants is monitored and

Evaluated during participation. This is implemented by partner organizations and their individual facilitators. This module gather evidence of impact, as well as feedback about how to improve the programme.

There are two key monitoring and evaluation tools:

- All partners are expected to complete a partner narrative report. This provides feedback to the IMADR on social activities and the overall impact of delivering the EWER process. You are asked to provide quantitative information about numbers of participants involved as well as qualitative information on engagement of the local community and impact.
- All participants are expected to complete an evaluation form (after workshops).

These documents are provided to partners by the IMADR as part of the Partner Toolkit and are available in the resources section.

Facilitation techniques

Use these techniques to deliver brilliant workshop activities.

Brainstorming

This allows participants to share lots of ideas quickly without fear. It is a useful tool for creative thinking and dialogue.

Steps:

1. Select a topic for brainstorming and ask the group to share their ideas.
2. Write the participants' ideas on a large sheet of paper. To encourage participation, tell the group that, at this stage, we are not making value judgments on whether we agree or disagree with the ideas.
3. Once the group has provided a wide range of ideas you can work with them to cluster, discuss and focus on key points of interest.

Think, pair, share

This encourages all the participants to reflect thoughtfully before sharing in a pair or group. It can give confidence and encourage greater participation.

Steps:

1. Participants reflect on a question on their own, writing their thoughts.

2. Participants then share their thoughts in pairs before finally sharing in larger groups. You can then take feedback of key points from each group.
3. Another approach to step two is to ask participants to share the key points made by their partner. This encourages active listening.

Debriefing

Debriefs are used to reflect on and reinforce the learning that has emerged from an activity.

They are also important for identifying how the participants are feeling and what needs to happen next. It's usually a good idea to prepare and debrief in advance. Choose questions related to the activity that will best allow the group to share their learning and experiences.

Example debrief questions include:

- How did you feel during that activity?
- Why?
- What did you learn during that activity?
- Are there different perspectives?
- How can we learn from this activity to help us during this workshop and as an activist?

Gallery walks

During a gallery walk, participants move around the room exploring text and images. It allows participants to share and reflect on lots of ideas in quick succession. It provides an opportunity to stand up, move around the room and engage visually as well as verbally.

Steps:

1. Text or images designed during an activity are placed around the room. Make sure there is enough space between the texts and images to allow small groups to visit them.

2. Participants are invited to move around the room. Tell them what you would like them to reflect on and if you want them to take a particular route. Participants can take gallery walks either on their own, in pairs or in small groups. After the gallery walk you can debrief the whole group.

Prioritizing

This is used to move from discussing a wide range of ideas to focusing on just a few.

There are many approaches to prioritizing and

It is important to be transparent about the process in advance.

- Evaluating according to criteria: participants agree criteria for decision making, and then identify which of the options best reflect these criteria.
- Open conversation: invite the group to share perspectives about the various options, weighing up the merits of each before deciding where to focus.
- A voting process: the options are written on a flipchart and participants are invited to write their initials by the options they prefer. They are given two votes, and the issues with the most votes are chosen. For a confidential process, invite participants to write their preferences

On a slip of paper and deposit them in a box. Count the results.

World café

Participants set the agenda for discussion and connect conversations. World cafés can be used to generate ideas and discussion about a wide range of topics. An example is included in this toolkit:

You can also use it to encourage participants to find answers to their own questions, including finding out more information about the EWER programme.

The room is set up like a café with groups of people sitting at different tables. Each table has a different question placed in the center. Participants discuss the question and after a significant period of time they are asked to change tables. Finally, the outcomes are shared. Find questions that matter to those participating.

Make sure that each question you identify has at least five people who are interested in discussing it. Identify someone who is prepared to act as ‘table host’ for each of the questions. The role of the table host is to capture the key discussion points. The

table host does not change tables. They give each new group a summary of previous conversations on the subject before inviting them to continue the conversation.

Open space

Open space is an approach to dialogue that encourages the group to define its own agenda, timings, roles, venue and responsibilities. After an initial session in plenary the group breaks into several groups. They can address any issue, complete a discussion and start a new one.

Individuals are allowed to circulate at will between groups.

Crafting good questions

One of the key ingredients for meaningful conversations is the quality of the question. How we frame an issue will affect the way we respond and speak to others about it.

Steps:

1. Choose a question that invites open sharing and reflection and does not favour a particular perspective.
2. Keep the question simple.
3. Choose questions that are relevant and inspiring.
4. Avoid questions that invite 'yes' or 'no' answers.

Example: the question 'Why do young people never participate in society?' suggests that young people do not participate. A better approach could be to form questions that are not based on assumptions, for example 'Can you think of examples where young people regularly participate?' or 'Do you think there are areas where young people participate less?' or 'What opportunities and challenges are there for young people to participate?' Also, the phrase 'participate in society' is unclear. Look for alternative words or explore what you mean by the term 'participate

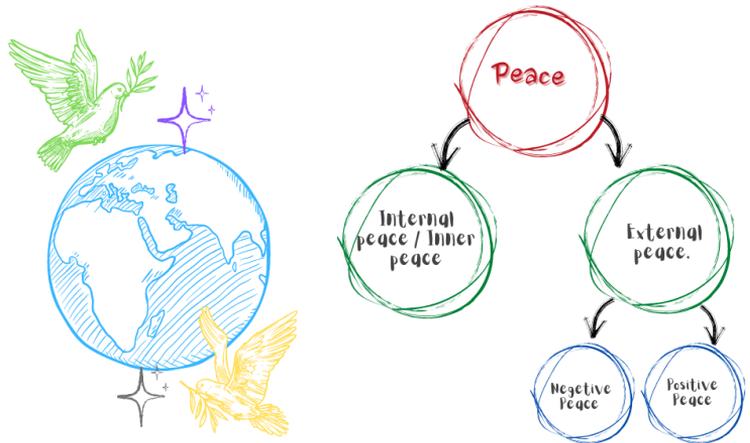
BASIC CONCEPT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT



Basic concept of peace and conflict

Peace

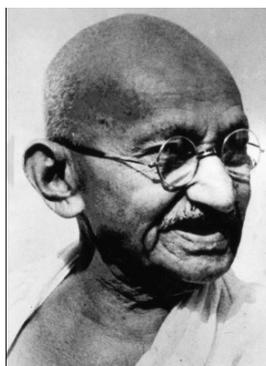
It is well known that human beings pay much interest in peace from the ancient time until now. Because the word —peace, apart from being a pleasant word, also refers to the peaceful society and the beautiful world. It can be stated that peace is the greatest and highest goal or hope that everyone wishes to achieve personally and expects to be created in society and in the world. People have been



trying by all means to gain peace. Therefore history of human beings, in one aspect, is the history of searching for peace. Peace has been talked, thought, taught and studied in many ways and many aspects.

Internal peace

Is called by another word inner peace is peace of mind or soul. It is a state of calm, serenity and tranquility of mind that arise due to having no sufferings or mental disturbances such as worry, anxiety,



Outward peace is useless without inner peace

— Mahatma Gandhi —



greed, desire, hatred, ill-will ,delusion and/or other defilements. Internal peace is peace within oneself; it is derived from practicing or training of mind of an individual. Sometimes, a man can create and maintain his inner peace in the noisy

surrounding or in the un-peaceful society. Internal peace is stressed in the field of religion, especially religions in the East. In the view of religions, this type of peace can be reached by means of prayer, meditation, wisdom and other ways. Internal peace is essential; it is generally regarded as true peace and as a real foundation of peace in society or peace in the world.

Why Is It Important to Find Inner Peace in Our Life?

Finding your peace of mind results in fewer worries, anxieties, stressors, and fears. Inner peace is linked to achieving self-actualization. Below are the benefits of finding that state of balance in your life:

- Better everyday function in handling your day-to-day affairs
- Increased energy levels and improved emotional management
- Less drama, fewer worries, less stress, and positive thoughts
- A kind and compassionate treatment of other people
- Not being easily affected by society's negative comments
- The ability to learn how to deal with difficult emotions
- The ability to have a clear judgment when dealing with stressful challenges
- Better sleep quality

Peace is also likewise. Internal peace is the core, the essence and the firm foundation of external peace. The former guarantees and sustains the latter. If each individual is at peace, society combined with each peaceful individual, has peace too. On the contrary, external peace in the sense of peaceful society or good society has an important role in supporting an individual to get inner peace. That is, if there are no wars, conflicts, violence, harming, killing and so on in the society, people in such society will have peace within themselves. It is because there is nothing to disturb their minds. They have a good society or a good environment to develop themselves in order to obtain inner peace. Hence, Gandhi said —Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.

External peace is peace that occurs in society, nations and the world; it is a normal state of society, countries and the world and it is a state of peaceful and happy co-existence of people as well as nature. External peace, in order to see it clearly, can be described in its negative and positive sense as follows;

Negative peace

Means an absence of war, conflict, hostility, agitation, disturbance, disagreement or quarrel, struggle, violence, terrorism, civil strife or civil commotion, social disorder, etc., and an absence of mental disturbance such as anxiety, worry, restlessness etc.

Positive peace

Means a state of tranquility, calm, repose, quietness, harmony, friendship, amity, concord, peaceful or friendly relation, public order, pacification, spiritual content, reconciliation, serenity, security, social justice and bliss.



Conflict

A **conflict** is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. Conflict will always be found in society; as the basis of conflict may vary to be personal, racial, class, caste, political and international. Conflict may also be emotional, intellectual, and theoretical, in which case academic recognition may, or may not be, a significant motive. Intellectual conflict is a subclass of cultural conflict, a conflict that tends to grow over time due to different cultural values and beliefs.

Conflict is the disagreement or difference of opinions between or among individuals that can be potentially harmful to any organization. In the workplace setting, it often involves personal agendas, insights, or goals versus the agendas, insights, or goals of the group or team.



Violence

Violence is a complex concept. Violence is often understood as the use or threat of force that can result in injury, harm, deprivation or even death. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation".¹ This definition emphasizes intentionality, and broadens the concept to include acts resulting from power relationships.

An expanded understanding of violence includes not only direct "behavioral" violence, but also structural violence, which is often unconscious. Structural violence results from unjust and inequitable social and economic structures and manifesting itself in for example, poverty and deprivation of all kinds.

Forms of violence can be categorized in many ways. One such classification includes:

- direct violence, e.g. physical or behavioral violence such as war, bullying, domestic violence, exclusion or torture
- structural violence, e.g. poverty and deprivation of basic resources and access to rights; oppressive systems that enslave, intimidate, and abuse dissenters as well as the poor, powerless and marginalized

cultural violence, e.g. the devaluing and destruction of particular human identities and ways of life, the violence of sexism, ethnocentrism, racism and colonial ideologies, and other forms of moral exclusion that rationalize aggression,



WHAT DOSE EWERS MEAN?



What dose EWERS mean?

What is a EWERS?

An Early Warning and Early Response System (EWERS) is a tool whose primary objective is to prevent the escalation of violence that could jeopardize the integrity of individuals and democratic governance. The EWERS are mechanisms for preventing and addressing conflicts that focus on the systematic collection, processing and analysis of information (quantitative or qualitative) about conflict situations for the purpose of warning decision-makers so that they can take measures or implement actions that will avoid the emergence or escalation of conflict. These systems aim to:

- Identify the causes of a conflict
- Anticipate their outbreak, and
- Mitigate their impact

The systems are varied, but at least two general types can be identified:

- a. Early Warning Systems (EWS) are limited to informing and warning about the occurrence of events that pose risks to people and to the democratic stability of a particular country or region. Their final objective is to prevent violent outcomes, not only anticipate them.
- b. In addition to the above, Early Warning and Early Response Systems (EWERS) make recommendations about how to proceed in these cases.

The EWERS apply a series of monitoring and analytical instruments to identify conflict types, phases, trends and dynamics, making it possible to diagnose and predict situations, as well as providing guidance on actions and best approaches.

A EWERS should be considered as a subsystem within a broader system of preventing and tackling conflicts and their various manifestations. This system should be designed based on thematic, local or national objectives. For a country, the system should be part of a national conflict prevention policy covering strategic issues of interest and assessing the country's particular situation regarding the risks and threats posed by the context. If this holistic vision is lacking, the EWERS may contribute to promoting it with experiences and ideas.

WHAT DOES EWRS MEAN?	
Early	<i>a warning issued with enough time for prevention measures to be implemented, escalation avoided, and mitigation measures activated.</i>
Warning	<i>a signal issued by the system to anticipate crisis situations for the purpose of preventing their outbreak and mitigating their impact.</i>
Response	<i>a reaction generated by the entity that receives the warning, based on recommendations suggested by the System.</i>
System	<i>a set of interconnected steps/processes with specific and complementary functions, pointing to a common purpose.</i>

Three key distinctions

First THE EWERS AS A PROCESS AND AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

As a process

The operation of a EWERS is based on a series of processes linked to systematic information collection (quantitative and qualitative), the application of analytical tools to process that information, and the issuing of warnings and recommendations for action aimed at decision makers.

As a strategic tool

A EWERS can be considered as a subsystem within a broader prevention and conflict attention system and its various manifestations. In an ideal case scenario, the system is part of a national conflict prevention policy which also includes intervention mechanisms (dialogue, mediation, conciliation, etc.), institutional management and coordination to ensure orderly and sustainable responses from the State, and training and awareness raising for key stakeholders. The EWERS makes it possible to assess the risk profile of the

country and it can offer guidelines to establish a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention.

- A **EWRS** is a subsystem whose function is to manage information about conflicts, issue warnings, and promote early response.
- The **intervention** subsystem is a set of mechanisms established to design or facilitate opportunities for dialogue and negotiation aimed at finding peaceful solutions to social conflicts.
- The **management** subsystem includes the group of institutions responsible, either because of legal jurisdiction or political necessity, for addressing conflicts and demands that may finish through arrangements or commitments.
- The **education and training** subsystem is the educational body that prepares and trains actors to prevent and manage conflicts.



Second EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS) OR EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE SYSTEMS (EWER)

Agreements signed between the parties to a conflict to determine compliance levels and anticipate the resurgence of social tensions. Warnings do not include recommendations regarding what to do and how to act, so the task of the EWS concludes with the distribution of reports and the sending of warnings to a predefined list of recipients.

The basic premise of an Early Warning System is that the evolution of conflicts can be monitored through follow-up and analysis of key pre-defined indications.

Early Warning and Early Response Systems (EWER), besides producing analyses and issuing warnings, also offer recommendations on how and when to proceed, and contribute to identifying the entities responsible for executing responses.

Third FOUR GENERATIONS OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

EWS/EWER can be distinguished from each other depending on how information (sources and tools) is collected and who collects and analyzes it. Four different generations can be identified.

First generation

The first early warning systems were implemented by actors located outside the conflict zones in order to conduct analysis and to issue warnings about a variety of issues, from armed conflicts to humanitarian crises. These systems based their analysis on secondary sources and pioneered the use of **quantitative analytical** tools for preventing violent escalation. Most of these systems had no mechanisms for getting information to the communities affected or to decision makers, nor did they link warnings to early responses.

Second generation

These systems incorporated **qualitative** information in the analysis of specific conflicts. Furthermore, event monitoring and reporting were carried out by teams located within the countries and regions in conflict, this having the advantage of allowing for a better understanding of the context. Finally, recommendations resulting from the analysis were presented to key decisionmakers as part of the system design. However, as in the first generation, the final analysis and issuing of warnings were directed to persons located outside the area of conflict and usually did not involve local actors in early response.

Third generation

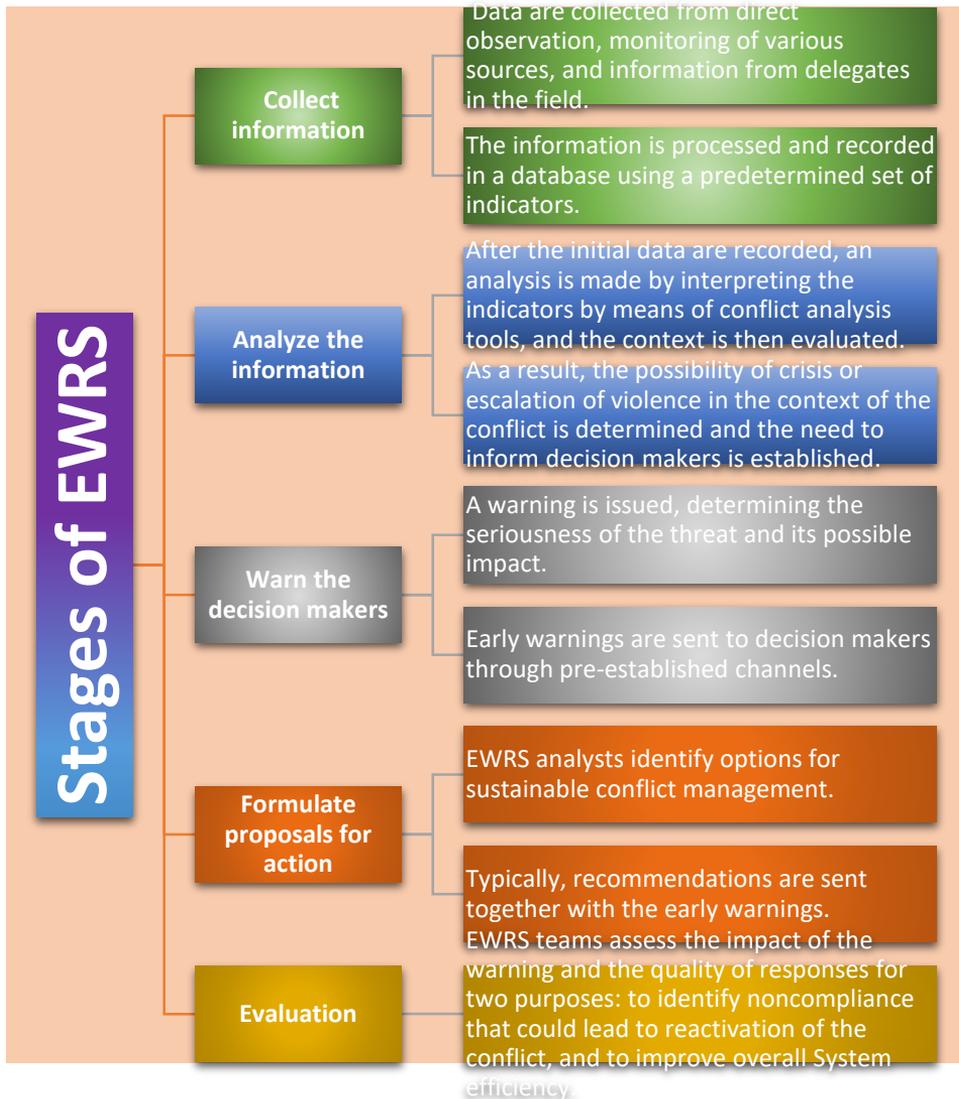
The third generation of systems were **mixed methods** (quantitative and qualitative tools) and assigned specific roles to people living in the areas of conflict. So conflict monitoring and analysis were carried out by persons in the field, usually in the place of conflict. In some cases, these “people-centered” systems provided mechanisms for involving leaders of the communities affected in early response activities.

Fourth generation

These systems represent the latest developments in the discipline of conflict prevention and incorporate information analysis generated through new information and communication technologies. As with the third generation systems, these systems are based on information obtained directly in places of conflict, but do not necessarily use field monitors. Fourth generation systems draw on collaborative mechanisms for obtaining information via mobile data (crowdsourcing) or automated analysis of large volumes of data generated by open sources on the internet.

Basic Stages of a EWER

A EWER consists of five basic stages which, in practice, are closely related and provide feedback for each other:



Approaches for addressing conflict

One of the first questions to ask those who are interested in creating a EWER is: What are you trying to achieve? In other words, the purpose or ultimate goals underlying motivation. This purpose would determine the type of approach for addressing conflict: the particular

way in which the country or national, regional or local government wishes to address conflicts. The development of specific

Objectives depends on this as well as the demarcation of research boundaries, organizational and operational structure design, and the instruments and methods that will be used. In other words, the accuracy of the approach is the cornerstone of the construction process.

These approaches are:

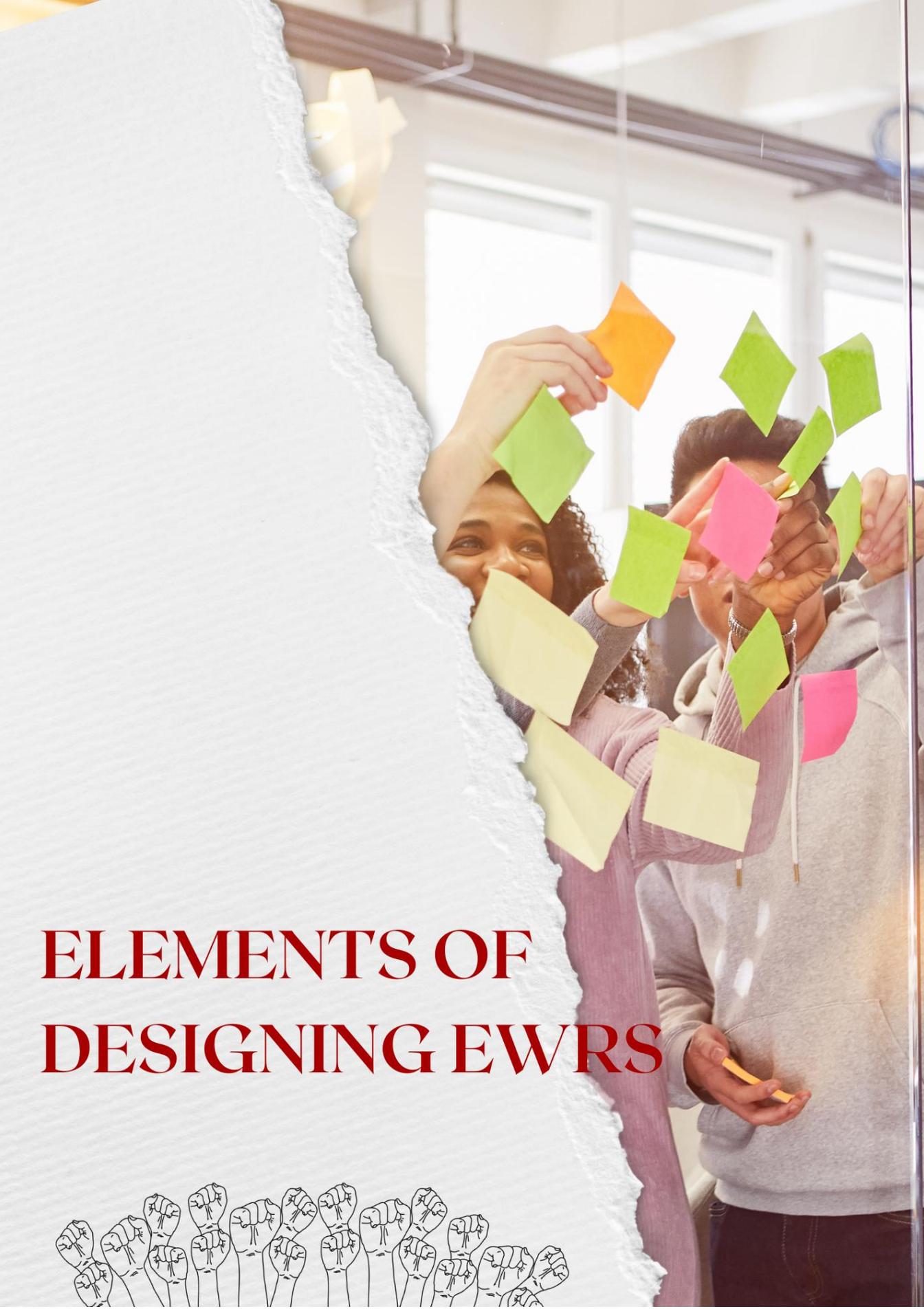
Conflict prevention: aims to prevent violence. Efforts focus on the early stages of its manifestation.

Conflict management: actions are taken when the conflict has already been manifested, with or without violence. The aim is to limit and avoid the escalation of aggressive actions by promoting behavior change.

Conflict resolution: this tackles the causes and seeks to build agreements, identifying common interests.

Conflict transformation: this addresses a broad range of social and political roots, seeking to transform negative energy into positive social and political changes. Agreements are of interest but relations are significant too.

WHAT DOES AN EWER DO?	WHAT DOES AN EWER NOT DO?
<p>It generates permanent, timely and accurate information about the state of a conflict, its dynamics and prioritization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It issues timely warnings to prevent escalation of tension. » It recommends strategies for addressing the conflict. » It can monitor compliance with political decisions and agreements reached by the parties. » It can provide useful information for programs, projects and public policy that address the immediate and structural causes of conflict. 	<p>It is not a military or police spying system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It does not carry out surveillance or follow individuals or public figures. » It does not carry out mediation, conciliation, negotiation, or arbitration. » It does not manage conflicts in the field; that is the prerogative of the responsible institutions.



ELEMENTS OF DESIGNING EWRS



Elements of designing EWERS

Designers should develop two series of questions at the preliminary stage, before starting to construct the System. The first set of questions is linked to factors that contribute to the sustainability of the EWS/EWER and the second set addresses specific design issues.

Guiding questions for establishing the sustainability of an EWERS

What political support does the System have?

In general, the type of support may be unilateral (emanating from a single high-level public authority and embodied in an executive decree or decision) or based on consensus (product of the will of several high-level public authorities and embodied in an agreement). A EWS/EWERS that has the support of the highest authorities of the government/institution or organization that will implement it may have more leeway for action and institutional and political legitimacy, thereby obtaining better results.

Political support may be fundamental for:

- Access to key sources of information
- Cooperation with other public entities
- Facilitating adequate interinstitutional coordination (horizontal and vertical)
- Guaranteeing access to the highest decision-making levels

The EWERS must have strong political support, sufficiently stable to be efficient and sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes in the context.

Where is the System located institutionally?

The place assigned to the EWS/EWER within the institutional architecture is a political and strategic decision. It reflects the weight that will be assigned to the System and sends a message to the other institutions about how they should treat it and relate to

it. In other words, the place given to the System in the state apparatus is an initial message about its significance and recognition.

The institutional anchoring of the EWS/EWER is a fundamental decision for the timely and effective operation of the System. These systems can be implemented by entities outside the institutional structure of the State or may be placed at the core of the state apparatus. The former can result in better levels of access for collecting information from the field, but it may also limit the capacity to transmit warnings to decision makers and adequately follow up on commitments undertaken by different public administration agencies.

The EWER which are placed near the upper echelons of decision-making benefit from better access and capacity for influence, but may be perceived as alien to and distant from the communities, generating a feeling of distrust and consequently hampering access to field data. Obviously, there are several possible configurations between these two extremes.

Appropriate institutional anchoring of a EWS/EWERS:

- Facilitates access to sources of State and civil society information.
- Facilitates interinstitutional cooperation and coordination at different levels (local, regional and national).
- Ensures direct access to the highest political decision-making levels.

The place occupied by the EWS/EWERS in the state apparatus will be indicative of its political weight, institutional significance, and possibilities of becoming established in the field.

What financial resources does the System have available?

The success of a EWS/EWER depends not only on obtaining an adequate budget, but also, and especially, on the possibility of continuous and constant financial resources that are available when needed. Administrative delays may affect the continuity of the work stages and the effectiveness of actions.

The EWS/EWERS must have stable, sustained and timely funding.

Are there any other relevant experiences?

The team responsible for designing a EWS/EWERS should make a thorough inventory of previous experiences of formal conflict prevention mechanisms.

Should the country, region or municipality have already implemented earlywarning and response mechanisms, it is essential to reflect on lessons learned, evaluations of the system by the team and by relevant external actors, and resources (legal, procedural, human and technological) that could be reused.

The EWS/EWRS should learn from past experiences, incorporating the elements/procedures/tools that have proven to be successful and seeking to overcome past mistakes.

Guiding questions for designing a EWS/EWERS

A series of guiding questions that designers should answer before embarking on the construction of the System is provided below.

Purpose	What do you want to do?
Justification	Why do you want to do it?
Objectives	What for?
Recipients/ Users	Who for?
Conflict	For which type of conflicts is it necessary to construct a EWS/EWER?
Methodology	How? Which combination of tools for data collection, analytical methods and IT components will be available in the System?
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which team? • What degree of centralization/decentralization? • Which State institutions will it be necessary to cooperate with? • With which field entities will it be necessary to establish an information and work network?
Coverage	What will the geographical–territorial scope of the System be?
Products	What products will be developed and how often will they be delivered?
Security	What safeguards will be implemented to preserve the confidentiality of information and the integrity of personnel, equipment and facilities?
Results	What results are sought and how will the System’s impact be measured?

An initial diagnosis of the conflict in the country is essential. This analysis will establish a baseline and prioritize areas of focus for the initial phases of implementation of the System. The scale and coverage of the System can gradually be extended in accordance with users' needs and financial and human resources available. The fact that it will be gradual will allow learning to take place as implementation progresses, adjusting the operation of the System based on specific needs and lessons learned as a result of the experience.

Define the object of study conflict typology

EXAMPLE: CONFLICT TYPOLOGY

Service demands

- 1.1. Health
- 1.2. Education
- 1.3. Electrification
- 1.4. Transport
- 1.5. Housing

Strategic natural resources

- 1.1. Water
- 1.2. Forests
- 1.3. Mineral resources
- 1.4. Petroleum
- 1.5. Gas
- 1.6. Protected areas

Agrarian

- 1.1. Land tenure
- 1.2. Land use
- 1.3. Occupation of contentious areas
- 1.4. Displacements
- 1.5. Land occupation

Socio-cultural identities and conflicts

- 1.1. Religious identities
- 1.2. Ethnic identities
- 1.3. Sexual identities

Organizational structure

The basic organizational model of a EWS/EWERS should include at least two components:

- An internal one linked to the different teams (with their members, functions and roles), having the responsibility for implementing and managing the System on a daily basis.
- An external one linked to the creation of the structure, networks and inter-institutional processes, both horizontally and vertically, to facilitate and speed up the operation of the System during its different stages.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The internal organization of a EWS/EWERS should be decided once the magnitude of the work has been determined. Rather than adopting pre-established models, the structure of the EWS/EWER should be adapted to previously identified objectives and needs.

The internal structure of the EWER should comply with certain basic requirements:

- High level of functional, operational and financial autonomy.
- Some level of decentralization and presence in the territory.
- Teams with differentiated and clearly defined functions.
- A formalized organizational chart with clear hierarchies of authority and responsibilities.
- Mechanisms to ensure horizontal and vertical information flows.
- Guarantee of an independent physical space and infrastructure.
- Permanent mechanisms to evaluate System performance and product quality.

Based on these criteria, a EWS/EWERS should provide at least the following structure and functions:

- » A coordinating team or director.
- » A central team of analysts to process the information received and develop the products that the EWS/EWER will provide for end-users.

» A group of delegates in the field to collect and send information, build social and institutional relations, and promote coordination tasks locally.

» The temporary activation of thematic groups can also be considered whenever there is a need for specialized analysis. These may be experts or

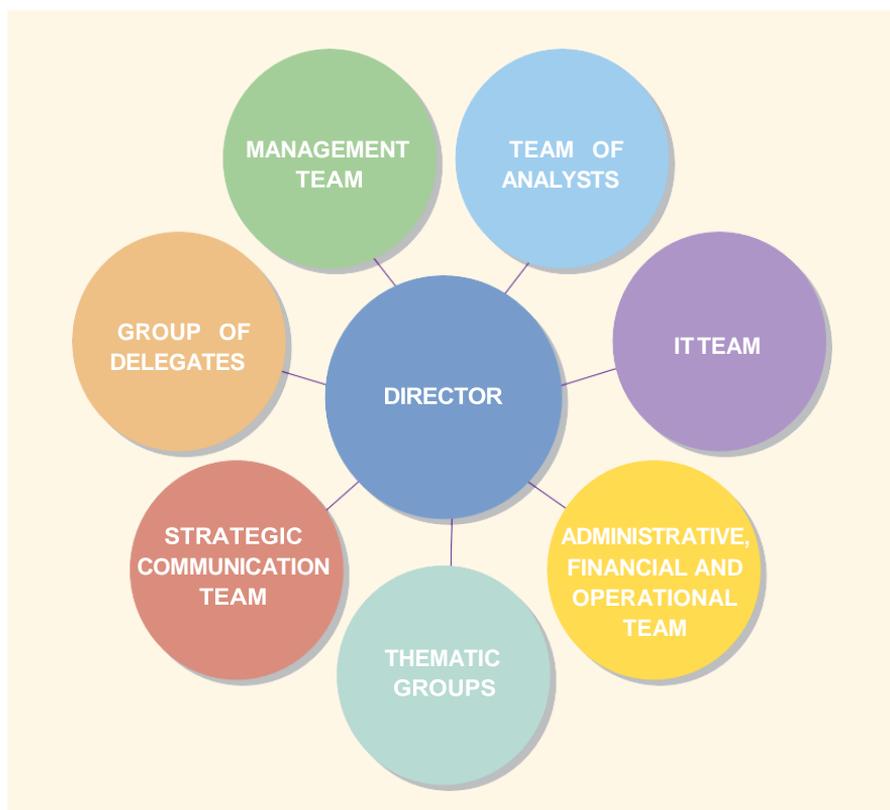
Consultants who will analyze specific situations or problems.

» An IT and information management team to design, maintain and refine the tasks of data collection, analysis and transmission.

» An administrative, financial and operational support team.

» A strategic communication team.

A EWERS should have a permanent, multidisciplinary, culturally sensitive, well-coordinated and flexible team.



EXTERNAL COORDINATION

Institutions, organizations and actors should be identified for the EWS/EWER to collaborate and coordinate with in the implementation of different functions and tasks.

Once identified, the content and form of collaboration and coordination should be defined. Designers must decide, among other issues, whether horizontal and vertical cooperation will be established by formal agreement; whether tasks, roles, responsibilities and timelines will be defined and specified beforehand; whether ad hoc or permanent bodies will be created, or both.

One of the keys to success of the EWS/EWER has to do with the ability to design

The vertical and horizontal coordination of the EWRS is a *sine qua non* condition for information collection, the reliability of warnings, and the effectiveness of early responses.

fluid coordination mechanisms with institutions, entities and actors that address conflict in the field.

Cultural sensitivity

EWS/EWER designers should incorporate a perspective that is sensitive to cultural and gender differences. Some guidelines on how to implement this perspective in EWS/EWER design are presented below.

- Identify and incorporate specific indicators on gender and differentiated ethnic identities in the data collection stage to feed into the context analysis stage.
- At the information collection stage, when working with primary sources through interviews, focus groups and Delphi groups, ensure achievement of balanced gender and ethnic participation, incorporating local language interpreters if necessary.

This information can be crucial during the conflict analysis stage. It should deepen and contrast the perceptions, demands and narratives of the various groups regarding the causes of conflict, motivation of the actors, and the different impacts of overt expressions of the conflict. This approach will make it possible to achieve balanced interpretations.

- Specific analysis of gender and ethnic identity dimensions. This analysis can help to:
 - » Reveal prevailing political, social and economic inequalities.

- » Highlight the different impacts that the conflicts might have on different groups.
- » Understand the objectives, roles, and functions assigned to group members in the conflict.
- » Distinguish how each group perceives and experiences threats, as well as their vulnerabilities and the conflict itself.

This understanding will provide the EWS/EWER team with increased sensitivity to propose courses of action, taking into account these differences and incorporating them into their recommendations.

- Build work teams with a balanced internal composition in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Systematization of EWS/EWER operation

Once the regulatory and institutional framework, internal organization, external coordination, and the functions of each team/work unit have been defined for the operation of the EWS/EWER, manuals and protocols should be designed for the staff.

The main objective of these is to standardize the operation, processes and practices of the EWS/EWER.

The manuals should present clear and orderly information on the objectives, attributions, organization and procedures of the EWS/EWER teams/units, and explain the form and type of interrelation with state agencies and in the field.

Protocols can be understood as a set of rules, steps and standards that guide a specific activity, task, action or situation.

Since information is the main capital and raw material of EWS/EWER work, one of the most important protocols to be developed by the team is on the protection and management of such information. The information management protocol should be governed by the highest quality standards that will contribute to safeguarding its integrity, reliability, authenticity and availability.

Some suggested guidelines for information management are:

- Limit access to confidential information. This is usually done by establishing access levels and personnel profiles.
- Define encryption techniques or password use to manage information.
- Establish security processes for communication (data encryption).
- Determine the way that printed documents and other tangible materials will be managed.

The series of ISO/IEC 27000 standards contain best practices regarding Information Security Management Systems (ISMS), which could serve as a reference for EWS/EWER IT operators for developing their own protocol.

Once developed, the protocols should be disseminated to all EWS/EWER personnel in order to ensure understanding and effective implementation. It is possible that, after implementation and daily experience with EWS/EWER application, it will be necessary to include other activities, tasks or situations in the protocol.

Communication plan for the construction and consolidation of the EWS/EWER institutional niche

The construction of an institutional niche is a challenge for any initiative being developed for conflict prevention in the public domain. The EWS/EWER also face this challenge. The key issue is to create demand for EWS/EWER products and convince people and relevant institutions of their need and usefulness for the public.

In order to understand the importance of having a communication plan, it is necessary to remember some of the conditions under which a EWS/EWERS will start to operate. The initiative will be:

- New
- With little knowledge available
- It will probably operate within the jurisdiction and spheres of action of Ministries, Secretariats and State institutions

Given these conditions, those responsible for the EWS/EWER should seek and consolidate an institutional space with the necessary political and social support that will achieve sustainability over time. This is why communication is a

fundamental, crosscutting, permanent and strategic activity for the operation, legitimacy and sustainability of the System.

The system will maintain a continuous communication strategy based on at least two central themes:

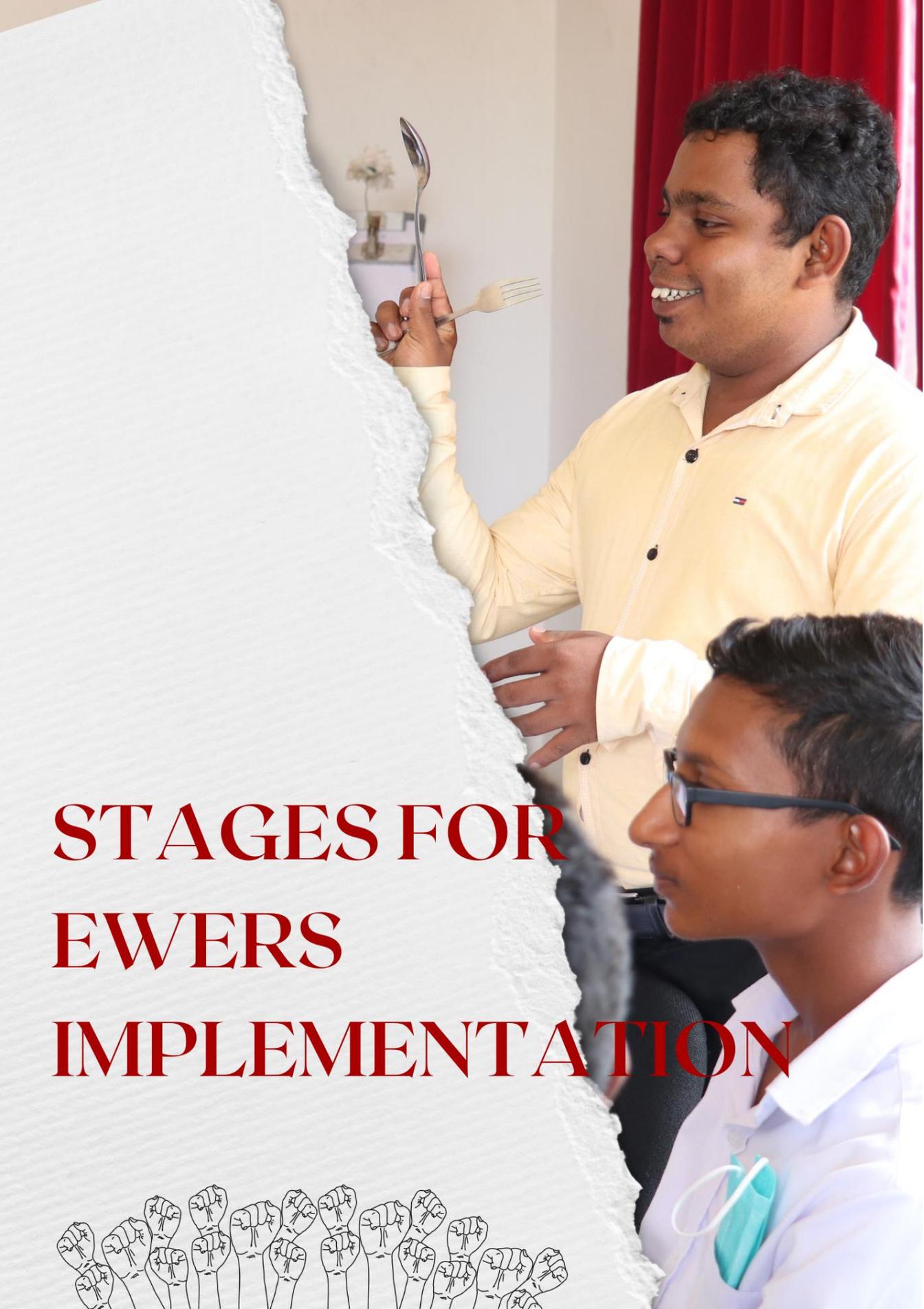
First Theme: internal communication, to contribute to the operation of the EWS/EWER.

This first central theme is for EWS/EWER staff and implementing partners, including delegates in the field and institutional collaborators of the System. The aim is to ensure good coordination, information flow, and the generation of high quality and timely products, and the transformation of warnings into early responses.

Second Theme: external communication to ensure sustainability.

This second central theme is to disseminate and promote the existence of the System; to communicate clearly what its scope and its limitations are so as not to create false expectations; to demonstrate its achievements and results; to maintain the commitment of key internal and external political and institutional support; to establish collaboration with similar domestic and international Systems, among other objectives.

Both themes are closely related and complement each other.



STAGES FOR LEADERS IMPLEMENTATION



Stages for EWERS implementation

FIRST STAGE

INFORMATION COLLECTION AND REGISTRATION (OF THE CONFLICT AND OF THE CONTEXT)

The first stage of a EWS/EWERS has to do with collecting and recording the information. There are two key questions to guide this first step:

What type of information is it necessary to obtain and record?

Where can one get the information?

The answer to the first question is based on the distinction between information about conflicts and information about the context.

The answer to the second question is related to the distinction between different sources of information and the need for expeditious instruments for information registration and systematization.

INFORMATION ABOUT CONFLICTS

The collection of information about conflicts starts in the field and is based on a series of pre-established indicators or dimensions in order to determine:

- Name of the place where the events are registered
- Date
- Actors involved and the possibility that more actors will become involved
- Causes of the conflict and the interests at stake
- The potential for escalation and the possibility of violence
- The potential impact of escalation for this point it is possible to differentiate between different areas of impact: human lives, security, stability, governance, etc.

EWS/EWERS designers should determine how this information will be collected by field delegates (written or digital) and how it will be introduced into the System (by sending the form or by entering the information directly into a database). This is one of those times in the design of a EWS/EWERS that those responsible may consider incorporating an IT component.

In high level conflict situations it is impossible to analyze all conflicts registered by field delegates with the same level of depth. Therefore, EWS/EWER designer

Must define a set of criteria in order to prioritize conflicts registered. This implies not only identifying the criteria that will be used, but also explaining the assumptions behind each in terms of the reasoning that sustains them, and then implementing them, i.e. converting them into measurable quantities.

The score assigned to each criterion can be assessed uniformly (i.e. all receive equal weight) or based on a weighting parameter in which some criteria are given greater weight. A proper assessment (whether uniform or weighted) is essential to ensure proper targeting of resources and to increase the effectiveness of the System.

The criteria for discriminating among conflicts that will be followed up and analyzed will vary from case to case, although some basic elements can be identified, as in the following example:

	CRITERIA	WEIGHTING	SCORE
1.	Collective conflict: aims to identify the number of persons or families involved. The assumption behind this criterion is that the more families or persons involved, the higher the priority that should be given to the conflict.		
2.	Conflict whose dynamics anticipate threats to the lives and safety of the persons involved or their property.		
3.	Conflict that affects or threatens to affect the rights of third parties.		
4.	Conflict that has a special impact on public opinion. Conflict with high media visibility.		
5.	Conflict that would entail serious political and economic repercussions in that town, department, region or country.		

6.	Conflict led by actors capable of articulating and mobilizing local social organizations. Conflict involving organized social groups.		
7.	Conflict involving actors with significant support and alliances at local, municipal, provincial, national or international level.		
8.	Conflict that, despite being perceived as urgent by those affected, has not been addressed by the institutions.		
9.	Recurring conflict.		
10.	Conflict that involves several institutions in its resolution, management or attention.		

The closer the conflict score to 100, the more of a priority it becomes. Priority ranges are as follows:

0-10: The conflict is registered but no immediate follow-up activities are established. 10-

40: The conflict is registered as low priority (C)

40-60: The conflict is registered as medium priority (B)

60 and above: The conflict is registered as maximum priority (A)

Source: Developed by the author based on the criteria defined by the Early Warning System of Guatemala. 2006.¹

Uniform or weighted assessments will highlight conflicts to which the EWS/EWER team should pay more attention and in which it should invest more resources. This prioritization process is another step that could benefit from an IT component capable of automatically calculating the final result based on scores and the weighting formula.

After the phase of selecting prioritized social conflicts, an instrument should be designed to record in a standardized manner some of the fundamental characteristics of the conflicts. This information forms the basis for the analysts' work, as in the example below:

1 Ortiz, Carmen y Andrés Álvarez. 2009. Sistemas de Alerta Temprana para la Prevención de Conflictos: la experiencia del SATP en Guatemala. <http://www.uvg.edu.gt/facultades/ccss/antropologia/doc/articulo7.pdf>

REGISTRATION FORM FOR SOCIAL CONFLICTS

Name of the event (it should be short and synthetically represent the core of the conflict)

type and subtype (according to EWS/EWER internal classification)

Date and registration number
Geographical location

Brief **background of the event** (including conflict timeline if this is the first time registered)

Description of actors
Description of events

Conflict status (phases: early, escalation, crisis, des-escalation)

Description of demands of the parties
Measures and actions

Announced (threats if any)

Previous resolution attempts (dialogue, mediation, conciliation, etc.)

Entity or institutions responsible for management according to local perceptions

Sources of information used

Description of actors: Actors must be classified. There are at least three basic criteria for developing this classification:

FIRST CRITERION

- **Direct or primary:** those directly interested or affected.
- **Indirect or secondary:** those who are affected or interested indirectly or in a secondary manner.
- **Neutral:** those who are not affected or interested but who show interest/concern about the situation.

SECOND CRITERION

- **State:** belong to the State apparatus or structure.
- **Non-state:** are outside the State structure, have their origins in the society, and operate within the society or in a State–society intersection.

THIRD CRITERION

- **Institutionalized:** the actor is an institution or person who represents an institution.
- **Informal:** the actor is or represents a group of people that is not institutionalized but has a certain level of organization, a common identity and minimum rules of operation.

Conflict status: Four phases can be distinguished: early, escalation, crisis, de-escalation

1

2 Rubin, Pruitt y Hee. 1986. Social Conflict Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement, NY, Mc Graw-Hill.

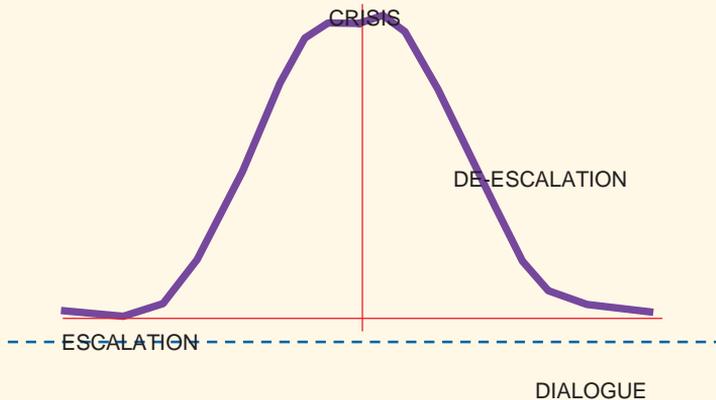
3 Kriegsberg, L. 1999. Conflict transformation en Kurst y Turpin (comps). Encyclopedica

EARLY PHASE The conflict has been publicly expressed in declarations, gestures or actions. It shows no signs of violence, but nor has it disappeared or decreased in intensity.

ESCALATION PHASE This refers to the evolution of a conflict that is increasing in intensity² and strength³.T

FASE DE CRISIS His occurs when the system can no longer contain the hostility; the means of expressing the contradiction become particularly aggressive and may include the use of violence.

FASE DE DESESCALADA After the explosion, tensions relax and exhaustion is perceived in the parties. The conflict is retracted and there are opportunities for finding negotiated solutions and establishing spaces for peaceful resolution.



of Violence,Peace and Conflict, Vol I. San Diego Academic Press.

4 Rubin. et al. Op cit.

This record may be accompanied by attachments such as photographs, certificates, agreements, press articles, and any documents that may contribute to further analysis of the case.

It is important to provide mechanisms for expeditious communication between analysts and field delegates in order to request further information, confirm data, and contrast hypotheses.

Once this first registration has been completed, the recommended time frame/monitoring frequency should be determined for each conflict in order to maintain up-to-date control of its evolution. This decision can be entered on a conflict “file card”. This file card should be updated as the conflict evolves.

It therefore follows that registration of the fundamental characteristics of prioritized

The registration and systematization of fundamental characteristics of prioritized conflicts is another step that can be expedited with the introduction of a centralized IT component.

conflicts is an ongoing task, so either information about already registered conflicts will be updated or new conflicts entered.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTEXT

Conflicts arise and develop in particular socio-political, economic, institutional and cultural contexts, with different histories, traditions, worldviews and realities that influence and explain their dynamics. It is therefore important to have contextual information to provide a framework and facilitate understanding.

Relevant quantitative and qualitative indicators should be selected. These indicators will point to the conditions that frame particular conflicts and can contribute to understanding their structural causes and anticipating their evolution.

An example of comprehensive pillars for developing a set of contextual indicators is presented below:

Demographic data: gender, age, socio-economic structure, geographical distribution of the population, ethnicity.

Educational data: level of schooling, illiteracy, school dropout rate, school completion rate, etc.

Security data: murder rate, impunity, confidence in the security forces, participation of the Armed Forces in public security, local dispute resolution mechanisms, etc.

Social data: poverty/extreme poverty, Gini coefficient, malnutrition, access to public services, etc.

Economic data: inflation, unemployment and underemployment, informal economy, cost of basic food basket, type of economic development model, etc.

Data from the energy sector: composition of the energy matrix, electricity prices, gas prices, fuel prices, etc.

Other formulations and disaggregation's are possible in accordance with the needs of each country, region and community.

These data can be entered using an IT component.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Having provided general guidelines on the type of information that needs to be collected and registered during the first stage of a EWS/EWERS, the second key question given at the beginning of this section is addressed below: Where can one get the information?

Information can be obtained from several sources. One source refers to the origin of the information. These can be classified according to four criteria:

*FIRST
CRITERION*

**ORIGINAL INFORMATION OR
THIRD-PARTY INTERPRETATIONS**

Primary sources: these provide new and original knowledge from direct participants in the conflict, the authorities in the area, close observers, documents from related institutions, local networks.

Secondary sources: these are developed using primary sources, but they are complemented and extracts are analyzed. One example is the media.

Tertiary sources: these are reference guides that collect and condense secondary sources related to a theme or issue in a single place, including bibliographies, reading lists, etc.

*SECOND
CRITERION*

ACCESS

Open: with public access, for example, laws, budgets, media declarations, published research.

Reserved: these are confidential, not for public use or having limited distribution to predefined recipients.

*THIRD
CRITERION*
N

TYPE OF INFORMATION

Personal: direct contact with people is necessary for obtaining this information, for example, face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

Indirect or Impersonal: these do not require contact with individuals, for example, the information obtained from electronic surveys or from data processing.

*FOURTH
CRITERION*

FORM OF INFORMATION

- Bibliographical information.
- Audiovisual information.
- Through electronic media, such as data obtained from webpages and social networks.

CLASSIFICATION OF SOURCES	
Classification	Disaggregation
Level	Primary - Secondary-Tertiary
Access	Open - Closed
Type of information	Personal - Impersonal
Form of presentation	Bibliographic-Graphic-Audiovisual-Electronic

SOCIAL NETWORKS ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE INTERNET

Within a EWS/EWERS, social networking sites can serve several functions:

Provide information from the field in real time about emerging and manifest conflicts, establish geographical location and documentation through images or in situ testimonies. This information can feed into the analytical process and increase the possibilities of timely and appropriate responses.

Promote dialogue and as a means of expression, promoting an exchange of ideas and opinions; encouraging the formation of groups with similar objectives; spreading conciliatory messages through spots, videos, photographs; and serving as a platform for discussion of certain issues.

Monitor conflicts in real time, such as fulfilment of commitments reached for resolution with the direct participation of communities affected. Networks can be a complementary channel of information for evaluating the impact of the measures adopted.

Raise awareness of a large number of users about the dimensions of the conflict to facilitate a constructive way out.

Organize and mobilize groups of people, warning, convening, and scheduling meetings.

Offer alternative visions to those promoted by actors directly involved in the conflict, contrasting information and offering new data.

Oversight and denouncing of human rights violations.

Despite their positive contributions, it is important to remember that social networks can also have negative impacts on the conflict when messages are sent for the purpose of misinforming, activating triggers in sensitive situations, spreading rumors, or sowing panic. That is why information from these sources should be checked to corroborate its veracity.

TOOLS FOR SYSTEMATIC INFORMATION COLLECTION

The designers can incorporate a series of complementary methods or tools into this first stage to make it possible to obtain the necessary information

Systematically. A combination of various research tools will contribute to obtaining high quality, reliable and balanced information.

Focus groups: qualitative data collection technique based on collective and semi structured interviews with homogeneous groups of people.

Delphi Group: qualitative data collection technique based on the application of successive questionnaires with a group of experts.

Surveys: quantitative data collection technique performed after using the questionnaire with a representative sample to determine opinions or perceptions related to various aspects of the situation.

Monitoring of mainstream and alternative media (print, radio, television and social networks): there are different computer applications available that facilitate following up on events in the media. These tools are capable of identifying relevant topics, content, issuers, tones, keywords, and they can even determine positive or negative opinions related to certain topics.

QUALITY CRITERIA: RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

A EWS/EWERS is built on the basis of reliable, accurate and consistent information. Hence the importance of ensuring that it adheres to certain quality criteria.

- The information should be current and timely: time lags can be misleading, resulting in mistaken conclusions and misguided recommendations.
- The information should be balanced: a pluralistic and inclusive approach should be ensured so that the opinions of all stakeholders can be considered.
- The information should be rigorous, verifiable and thorough.
- The information should add value to the work of the system.

A particularly sensitive challenge for the EWS/EWER team is to judge the quality of information and establish the reliability of its sources. It is therefore important to have at least two basic quality controls:

Consistency between sources

Check the degree of similarity of information provided by different sources, whether these are documentary or personal, open or reserved, primary or secondary. Comparison between sources allows for a better balance between

Matches, inconsistencies or disagreements. To determine the reasons for the latter may require additional research.

Consistency of interpretations

Check the level of interpretive consistency between the different versions or observations of the same phenomenon. Analysts have the responsibility to make sure that their interpretations are correct. To do this, it is a good idea to contrast findings with those of other colleagues and determine coincidence, disagreements and possible bias. Another method is to submit the analysis to the judgment of members of the population subject to observation or sources consulted during the process to discover their reactions and opinions

SECOND STAGE INFORMATION ANALYSIS (OF THE CONFLICT AND OF THE CONTEXT)

CATEGORIES/DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Once the conflicts have been registered and prioritized, a thorough analysis of the highest priority conflicts should be made based on a series of categories/dimensions and using a set of analytical tools.

CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

In the discipline of conflict prevention it is common to distinguish between three types of causes of conflicts:

1. Structural causes refer to profound variables that evolve very slowly and whose control is not in the hands of the actors involved in the conflict (for example, secular political exclusion, demographic transformations, socio-

economic inequalities, environmental degradation, changes in the economic cycle, etc.).

2. Proximate causes refer to circumstantial variables that result in the

Emergence of a conflict at a given time.

3. Trigger events (for example, a real action, a political assassination, election fraud, human rights violations, etc.) are specific factors that unleash the confrontation, making it visible.

In addition to identifying the multiple causes of a conflict, it is important to establish the linkages between them. The identification and analysis of chains of causality (cause-effect relations between different variables) can also provide relevant information about conflict dynamics

CONFLICT EVOLUTION

Conflicts can move from a state of apparent inactivity (latent conflict) to manifestations of open hostility or violence (manifest conflict). This escalation may cause a crisis and then there might be a de-escalation, in which the easing of tensions can lead to a “plateau” phase or a situation of latency. However, if the conflict is not addressed properly, there may be further escalations and crises.

There are no universal prescriptions to determine the phase of a specific conflict when it moves from one phase to another. However, there are some basic definitions that can guide EWS/EWER team members in analyzing the status and evolution of the conflict. This requires using the generic definitions of the four phases of conflict presented on page 34 (early phase, escalation phase, crisis phase and de-escalation phase) and based on this to adjust the number of phases, if necessary, and provide them with specific content and meaning in accordance with the conflict that is being analyzed.

In other words, for any given conflict the conditions, indicators and situations that characterize each of the phases established should be defined. The idea is to move from generic definitions of phases to specific definitions, attributable to a particular conflict.

The formulation of definitions of particular phases in a specific conflict will make it possible then to identify some indicators of movement from one phase to another. Some elements that may contribute to the construction of such phase indicators are provided below:

The status of **communication**: Escalations in conflicts can be anticipated when the parties have broken relations, no longer communicate, or do so through third parties. Or, when verbal exchanges are characterized by hostility and mutual distrust.

Accumulation of **causes**: In the early stages of a conflict it is generally easier to clearly identify the issues that led to the incompatibility of interests between the parties, whereas the conflict tends to worsen when more demands and interests are added to initially existing ones.

An increase in the number of **actors** involved: In the early stages, people or groups directly affected by the situation are clearly identifiable. However, the conflict becomes more complicated in later stages and crises, when a greater number of actors is involved and affected.

Collective **actions by the parties**: These can be peaceful, aimed at expressing demands, establishing positions, and seeking opportunities for conciliation, negotiation or dialogue, or de facto actions. Violent expressions usually occur during the escalation and crisis phases of social conflicts. In more serious situations violence may trigger escalation, resulting in further violence.

The type of State **response**: Overreaction by forces responsible for maintaining public order may be counterproductive if it generates more tension. However, the absence of authority can also encourage violence. Significantly, each phase of the conflict requires a different type of State response. For example, in the initial phases the development agenda should prevail (measures that aim to hear demands, management, public policy development, and alternative resolution methods). During escalation and having reached a critical point, the appropriateness of applying security agenda actions (police intervention) should be evaluated.

Importantly, the latter should be proportional to the situation, deploying specialized units with human rights training. Comparative experience demonstrates that, so as not to be counterproductive, the use of force should be an exceptional and temporary resource in the management of social conflicts.

Perceptions: these are subjective interpretations and attitudes that the people who are affected have about reality, events that occur that are related to the conflict, and the nature of the “other”. Factors associated with emotions weigh heavily in the context of social conflicts and should be incorporated in the analysis.

What do the parties say about what is happening? What opinions do they have of the other? What does their narrative of the conflict express? What threats do they sense? In an environment dominated by negative perceptions, mistrust,

considered priority. The development of these analyses requires continuous interaction between field delegates and analysts. As a minimum, this analysis should:

1. Distinguish between the positions, interests and needs of each actor.
2. Determine the level of internal organization and cohesion of the actors.
3. Determine the existence of formal or informal leaders.
4. Identify resources available and the repertoire of actions that can be activated.
5. Identify the functions and roles of each actor.
6. Establish hierarchies and networks of relations between actors.

The analysis of actors can benefit from the incorporation of an IT component, making it possible to enter the distinct characteristics of actors and generate a map to visualize the type and intensity of their relations.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The actions of actors are usually preceded by their discourse. It is essential to analyze what the different actors involved in political and social processes say and the implications of what they say, in order to clarify their positions, interests and needs, and understand the dynamics, intensity and possible evolution of a conflict. A tool is necessary to systematically analyze and standardize the discourse of primary and secondary actors in a conflict.

There are several theoretical currents of discourse analysis. Therefore, designers of a EWS/EWERS can choose from any one or a combination of elements selected from several or all currents.

With regard to content analysis (one of the theoretical currents of discourse analysis), IT applications are available in the market that could be incorporated as part of the toolkit for conflict analysis.

PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

The EWS/EWER should incorporate a prospective analysis technique to anticipate potential evolution of conflicts identified as priorities. There are several

techniques available. The EWS/EWER designers should choose the one that best fits the data collected and processed, the quality of the information, and the time frame.

Since anticipation is a creative activity based on quantitative and qualitative information, it should be performed by the team with each member contributing their experience and area of expertise to the development of possible future conflict scenarios.

The scenario construction technique is an unconventional tool. In the context of a EWS/EWERS, this methodology involves building on the information

Obtained regarding the causes, main actors, conflict dynamics and central characteristics of the context. Analysts carry out an exercise in imagination, following a series of methodological steps to project three to four scenarios.

The result of the prospective analysis will be essential to raise awareness among decision makers of the need to take some type of early action, as well as informing about available courses of action, each accompanied by a cost/benefit analysis. Non-action is also an option that should be considered, along with its impact.

The scenario technique also includes identifying indicators to determine in advance when a conflict is evolving into any possible scenario. This information, in turn, will enable the EWS/EWER to react at an early stage, recommending a specific course of action adjusted to a possible future reality.

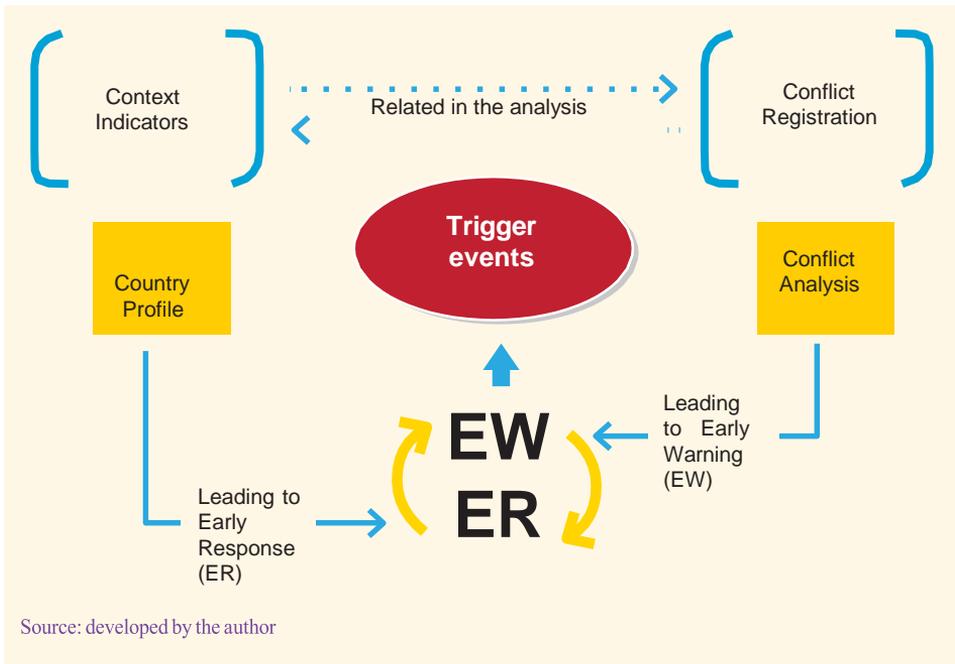
ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT

Once the data for completing context indicators have been collected (see First Stage in Section III), a systematic analysis must be conducted to understand what they indicate about the reality of the context of prioritized conflicts. This analysis may simply be limited to providing a general framework to understand the root causes of the conflict and some factors that influence it indirectly. In some cases, when data collected are rigorous, valid, reliable and representative, it is possible to apply time series analysis methods to identify, for example, trends, cycles and patterns, or make regression analyses to estimate the magnitude of the causal relation between certain key variables for conflict development and project the possible future behavior of these variables.

The analysis of context will make it possible to build a profile of the municipality, province, region or country where the conflict is taking place. These profiles can be viewed as the backdrop against which social conflicts take place.

COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN THE TWO TYPES OF ANALYSIS IN A EWS/EWERS

The following diagram explains the systemic relation between indicators/ analysis of the context and indicators/analysis of a particular conflict. The analysis of the relation between indicators of contexts and the characteristics of specific conflicts enable the appropriate design of early warnings and responses.



THIRD STAGE

WARNING / TRANSMISSION OF ANALYSIS TO DECISION-MAKERS

If designers are building an Early Warning System, this would be the third and penultimate stage of the process. The challenge is to convert early warning into political will for action, and to this end, it is essential to change the prevailing culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. This section is structured around three key questions: When alert warning? How? And alerting who?

Changing the culture of reaction to a culture of prevention

WHEN?

To issue a warning is based on three criteria:

Phase indicators

Phase transit indicators

Scenario indicators

HOW?

To issue a warning is related to at least three elements:

Warning format

Warning content

Warning dispatch, referring to users as well as channels/means of distribution

The basic format and content of a warning should be designed taking into account the following dimensions:

1. Title, date and time of issue
* Direct, clear, concise.
2. Description of event / conflict
* Description of facts, participants and general situation.
3. Relevant information about the context
*Information about the context in which the conflict is taking place, enabling full understanding of the importance of the warning.
4. Possible future evolution of the situation
* Based on a scenario construction exercise.
5. Window of opportunity for action:
*Expressed in number of hours, days or weeks considered to be “reasonable” for taking action in order to avoid undesirable consequences. After that period, the risk of violent outcomes would increase and conditions deteriorate for implementing alternative methods of peaceful resolution.
6. Name(s) of person(s) drafting the warning

WHO?

Regarding the dispatch of warnings, it is important to identify who should be informed [users] and what channels or means will be used.

Regarding users, designers can choose from at least two alternatives:

- An established list of recipients
- An established group and, in addition, ad hoc recipients who will be added depending on the specific situation

In cases where it is deemed necessary to have an impact on public opinion, warnings can be designed for open distribution. Aspects such as the legal obligations of institutions regarding public information should be taken into account, as well as the common good, health, safety and political or social sensitivities at local, regional or national levels.

In any case, this decision and the regulation should be reflected in the System's protocols.

For sending warnings, a combination of distribution channels and means can be used. One advantage of proceeding in this way is that it guarantees reception of warnings. Furthermore, warnings sent by email and text message can incorporate confirmation mechanisms

List of points to consider when sending warnings: Check

- ✓ format
- ✓ Check content
- ✓ Get final approval from EWS personnel assigned to that function
- ✓ Control list of recipients (established and additional users) Check use
- ✓ of all pre-established distribution channels/means Confirm and record
- ✓ reception

FOURTH RESPONSE /EXECUTION OF STAGE CONCRETE ACTIONS

As indicated at the beginning of this guide, there are at least two types of Systems:

- EWS that are intended to warn the authorities about specific conflict situations, concluding the work cycle with delivery of the warning document.
- EWER that also offer proposals for action, i.e. early response options.

If implementers take the decision to build an Early Warning and Response System (EWER), recommendations for action will be one of the basic stages of operation of the System. In such cases, Early Response (ER) would be the fourth stage of the process.

Early Response (ER) can be considered to be a logical consequence of Early Warning (EW) since EW needs an ER to be effective. In this regard, the warning process already implies a response process.

To increase the efficiency of the System at this stage, the legal and administrative mechanisms should be established beforehand as well as institutional, operational and financial capacities in the national or sub-national governments so that they are able to intervene in the resolution of a conflict.

Early Response (ER) tends to be more acceptable to decision makers when:

- ✓ Options for operational response are clearly established.
- ✓ Several possible courses of action are suggested, adapted to the specific situation.
- ✓ A cost/benefit analysis is included or an analysis of probable impact of each suggested action.
- ✓ Realistic courses of action are proposed that are adapted to institutional, political and financial skills.

Ideally, Early Response (ER) should also determine an appropriate combination of short, medium and long term measures. This entails a sustained commitment

over time capable of addressing even the structural causes of the conflict, rather than simply being limited to recommending mitigation measures or adhoc responses.

ER should also be based on the principle of Do Not Harm. This principle is based on the premise that the actions of organizations, institutions and actors may have unforeseen, negative or positive impacts in the contexts in which they are immersed. Therefore, when proposing courses of action, it is necessary to reflect on their potential negative impacts on the specific context, in terms of possible actions, behaviors, incentives and damages.

Who is responsible for developing the ER?

The EWER team of analysts is responsible for designing response proposals. Their proposals should be submitted to the appraisal of field delegates or observers because they will understand the nature, dynamics and impacts of the conflict. When deemed appropriate, it may also be helpful to consult with local officials and even some community members on the feasibility of responses.

If the EWER team is small or the issue is very specific, an additional expert or group of experts will probably be required to help the team design the response. They can be recruited from the public institutions that will be responsible for implementing the response.

How and when is the ER sent?

The Early Response is sent as part of the Early Warning. A seventh dimension of recommendations for action should be added to the basic structure and content suggested for an EW [See page 49]. These recommendations will be presented, in the first instance, within the suggested time frame as a window of opportunity. Recommendations can also be indicated for the short, medium and long term.

Who should an ER be sent to?

As with the EW, communication of recommendations for immediate action can be restricted to decision makers or distribution can be extended to increase its impact.

Who is responsible for carrying out the ER?

Depending on the institutional mandate and anchoring of the EWER, as well as other factors, implementation of the ER may be the responsibility of the System itself, with the creation of a specific unit to coordinate implementation of proposed actions, or it may be the responsibility of another State agency.

Even if the EWER is not responsible for implementing and coordinating actions, it should be capable of suggesting who within the State structure could take charge of carrying out the proposed ER

The step from EW to ER is not automatic. This should be defined during System design.

From EW to ER

Sending an Early Warning that includes alternatives for action does not imply automatic implementation. There is a number of factors that may have an adverse effect on the warning being transformed into an effective early response:

<p>Preferences and interests: some regions or themes are higher priority or more significant for decision makers.</p>
<p>Impact: number of people affected and level of impact.</p>
<p>Economic resources: some approaches may be expensive and there may not be sufficient budget available.</p>
<p>Political–institutional dynamics: there are restrictions associated with political cycles (e.g. election calendars, budgeting procedures, etc.), relations between the different levels of government, and relations between different State institutions, which may affect the transformation of a warning into action.</p> <p>Cognitive structures or mental maps: variations may emerge in the perception and judgment of decision makers and among those responsible for implementing responses.</p>
<p>Bureaucracy: factors such as indefinite mandates, inertia and administrative delays may limit or adversely affect the effective transformation of an EW into an ER</p>

FIFTH STAGE EVALUATION

Evaluation of the System can focus on the outcome of the process or on specific stages.

To evaluate the outcome of the process or complete cycle it will be necessary to focus on the early warning and response. This means, in practice, that this stage should be carried out after the warning has been issued or once the series of suggested recommendations has been implemented, as appropriate.

To evaluate the whole process a series of experiences should be accumulated that mark recurrences or patterns of action and specific results in order to make corrections and modifications as considered necessary.

In the case of an Early Warning System (EWS), evaluation of the result of the process should focus on the impact of the warning and its monitoring. Evaluation can be made through interviews or questionnaires with decision makers.

EW monitoring will assess the following aspects:

- Transmission process
- Opportunity and usefulness
- Quality of the content
- Value attributed to the warning by decision makers and other strategic users
- Usefulness of the warning for deciding whether to take action or not in a specific situation

For an Early Warning and Response System (EWER), in addition to following up on the warning, the impact of the suggested recommendations for action should be measured. In this case, what matters is to know whether the recommendations made in the EW/ER were considered by decision makers and whether they had an impact on the conflict.

This assessment can be structured based on the following dimensions:

Communication dimension: based on the message. If the message modified perceptions, attitudes or understanding of the situation in any way.
Institutional dimension: based on the product. If the product was considered by recipients as relevant to their institutional, organizational or personal competence.
Political dimension: if incentives for action are generated. If the EW/ER increased interest in addressing conflict.
Strategic dimension: if incentives for decision-making are generated. If the EW/ER created a space for discussing recommendations proposed by the System.
Operational dimension: based on actions proposed. If in effect the EW/ER was transformed into at least one concrete action as a response to the situation.

Evaluation by stages offers the opportunity to review and revalidate the steps, processes, instruments and products generated at each stage. For example, it may be possible to

determine that the conflict typology is not sufficiently explicit by observing that there are cases that cannot be placed in the predefined classification. Analysts will have to review and adapt the instrument as often as deemed necessary.

From the standpoint of strategic planning the EWS/EWER should, in principle, establish a plan time frames, resources, and the technical support necessary for the evaluation stage.

In theory, self-reflective systems tend to stabilize as they become regular and the teams or units improve their expertise, learn to use analytical tools, acquire practice in product development, and engage in external feedback processes. With regard to the above, dialogue between operators and analysts is essential to strengthen the system itself, its cycles, and the quality of human resources.



PRODUCTS



Products

The purpose of the EWS/EWER is to be prepared in order to respond rapidly to contingencies. Therefore, some products do not have a timeline established but respond to the evolution of the situation and the demands of decision makers. By their very nature, EWS/EWER should be designed to achieve sufficient flexibility in issuing warnings and producing analytical reports and proposals for early response.

However, most EWS/EWER also provide for periodic reporting and analysis whose added value lies in providing longitudinal, comparative and comprehensive analyses of the dynamics of conflict, the state of general conflict, geographical distribution throughout the territory, and possible evolution scenarios.

A list of some products that could be entrusted to the EWS/EWER is provided below.

Basic list of products

Traffic light system for conflicts

The traffic light system is a powerful visual tool to guide decision makers in prioritization before addressing conflicts:

Nº	Name	Location	Type of Conflict	State	Cycle/ Phase	Priority
						Low
						Medium
						High
						High

Statistical registration

Statistics are generally useful for analyzing the system of conflicts in a specific area, country or region. They make it possible to display progression, make regional comparisons, compare by demographic segment, or cross-reference the information available with other databases. Monthly, bi-annual or annual statistical reports can be presented which show the evolution of the conflict and how it is being addressed by State institutions.

Historical registration/conflict narrative

This type of record contains the history of the conflict. It explains the background, causes, actors, relevant facts, dynamics, etc., allowing decisionmakers to have an up-to-date overview of cases presented.

Thematic reports

Based on an analysis of the system of conflicts, there may be cross-cutting themes or issues that emerge which, because of their political, economic, social and strategic weight and implications, require particular monitoring. Some of these themes include: migration, displacement as a result of flooding, earthquakes, food crises, unemployment, and others. It may be necessary to consult an expert or group of experts to prepare these reports.

Warnings

Warnings are the core product of the system. Warnings should inform decisionmakers about events on the ground, detailing who did what, who was affected, where, when and why.

They should be designed in an executive manner for quick reading and indicate the central factors of the conflict which represent the context of each event. Their immediate objective should be to mobilize resources (institutional, human, financial and others) to respond to the ongoing situation, event or process.

The essential features of a warning report are:

- Objectivity
- Brevity
- Clarity
- Precision
- Logical organization and coherence.

It is important to place key words at the beginning and provide some indicator of priority. The warning should also include recommendations for immediate action to prevent

escalation of conflicts or episodes of overt violence that may be about to occur, indicating the window of opportunity for such action and a brief assessment of possible best/worst case scenarios (based on the scenariotechnique adopted by the EWS/EWER team).

Scenarios

Scenarios propose narratives or views of possible future developments of particular situations or conflicts. A scenario report should also include political, institutional, economic, social and strategic implications, some of which may actually occur. As a product, they may accompany the warning to raise awareness among decision makers about the need to take some course of action.

Maps

These enable geographical location of conflict characteristics (types, phases, actors, etc.), contextual characteristics, and institutional density.

Maps do not replace the interpretive exercise of specialists but are an effective complement to visualize and assess information, as well as for cross-referencing data.

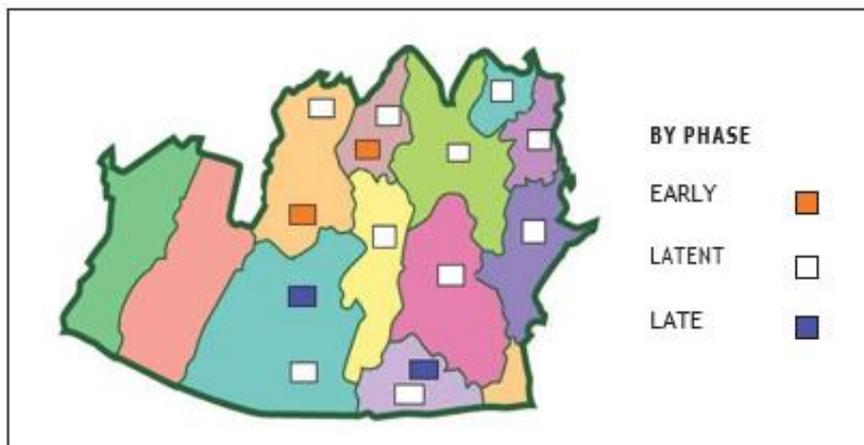
Some examples of types of maps that could be produced by the EWS/EWR team based on the geo-referencing tool are presented below:

IT tools exist that are designed to visually display geographically referenced information and data.

CONFLICT MAPS

Geographical location: the position of conflicts in the territory can be seen. Most modern EWS/EWR use geo-referencing systems based on IT platforms.

Phases and trends: geographical location should facilitate visualization of conflicts by status [latent or manifest] and phase [early, late, crisis or de-escalation]. In this way, the traffic light system can be used on the map to facilitate conflict attention and prioritization



Types of conflicts: to facilitate the location of different kinds of conflicts (for example, conflicts related to labor issues, land, water and sanitation, mining, hydroelectricity plants, etc.).

Actors: permitting geographical registration of the areas of influence of primary actors in the conflict.

CONTEXT MAPS

These maps display information about a set of particular characteristics in a specific country, region or location. They are usually developed from official sources or information collected in specific studies. They may include:

- Population density and basic demographic data
- Health (infant mortality, maternal mortality, chronic malnutrition, famine, health centers, hospitals)
- Education (schooling, illiteracy, schools, job-training centers)
- Poverty and extreme poverty
- Unemployment
- Insecurity
- Violence
- Relevant historical data (populations most affected by civil war, for example)
- Percentage of ethnic groups
- Main economic activity
- Infrastructure

- Participation in elections
- Natural resources

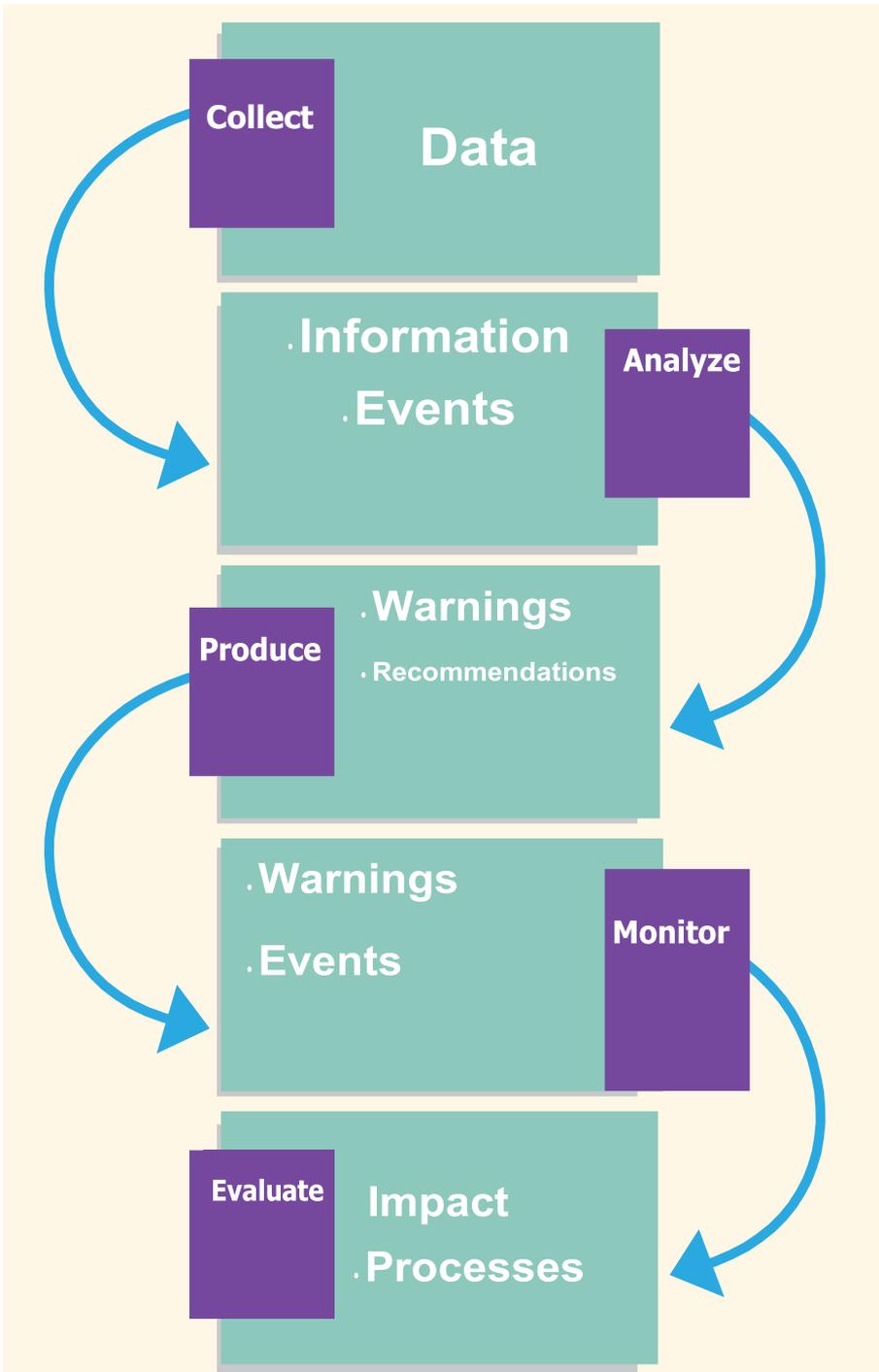
INSTITUTIONAL DENSITY MAPS

Since the State is primarily responsible for managing social conflicts, it is essential to have accurate information about public institutions in places of interest (including physical addresses, phone numbers and names of the responsible authorities).

These maps facilitate identification of “porous and gray” areas with little State presence, a key variable when making recommendations. They may include:

- Public institutions (ministries, secretariats, police stations, hospitals, schools)
- Courts and mediation centers
- Churches
- Fire stations
- Offices of civil society organizations
- The media (local radio stations, television channels, newspapers)
- Universities
- Office of civil defense committees for disaster relief in case of natural events
- National and international human rights organizations

Product Summary		
Product	Aim	Time frame
Traffic light system	To provide a visual prioritization for addressing conflicts.	When necessary
Statistics	To provide updates about the quantity, progression and evolution of conflicts.	Monthly, bi-annually and annually
Narrative records	To provide an overview of the history, background and current status of conflicts.	When necessary
Thematic analysis or analysis of trends	To provide consistent information about the evolution of particular issues or cases.	Bi-annually or at the request of the authorities
Warnings	To report events and warn about possible violent escalation.	When necessary Criterion of opportunity Objective/subjective criterion
Scenarios	To help to imagine possible, feasible and credible developments.	When necessary
Maps	To provide visual aids to improve understanding of the dimensions of the system or of specific situations and their variations.	Should accompany statistical reports Depend on needs





ICEBREAKERS



Icebreakers

Why icebreakers?

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping to the participant integrate and connect with one another in a group environment. Also enhance your training by helping to stimulate cooperation and participation. They can provide positive momentum for small group study and discussion by:

- Helping a new group get to know one another.
- Helping new members to integrate into a group.
- Helping young people feel comfortable together.
- Encouraging cooperation.
- Encouraging listening to others.
- Encouraging working together.
- Encouraging young people to break out of their cliques.
- Developing social skills.
- Building a rapport with leaders.
- Creating a good atmosphere for learning and participation.

ICEBREAKERS AND YOU

A 10 SECOND CHECK LIST!

- Be enthusiastic, whatever happens, be enthusiastic!
- Choose volunteers carefully and don't cause embarrassment.

- If something is not working move quickly on to the next activity.
- Timing is important. Don't flog them to death. Use only 2 or 3 icebreakers as a 20-30 minutes introduction to your programme.
- Choose icebreakers appropriate for your age group. No group is the same and your understanding of what will and will not work with your group is a core youth work skill.

Choose the proper icebreakers to relate your sessions.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ICEBREAKERS

Fact or fiction?

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper **THREE** things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

Interview

Divide the young people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview each other. Each interviewer has to find 3 interesting facts about their partner. Bring everyone back to together and ask everyone to present the 3 facts about their partner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one, keep it moving along.

My name is?

Go around the group and ask each young person to state his/her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with the same letter of his name e.g. generous Grahame, dynamic Dave. Write them down and refer to them by this for the rest of the evening.

Conversations

Each person is given a sheet of paper with a series of instructions to follow. This is a good mixing game and conversation starter as each person must speak to everyone else. For example;

- Count the number of brown eyed boys in the room.
- Find out who has made the longest journey.
- Who has the most unusual hobby?
- Find the weirdest thing anyone has eaten.
- Who has had the most embarrassing experience?
- Who knows what 'Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia' is a fear of? Nearest guess wins. If that's too easy you can try Arachibutyrophobia, Alektorophobia, Ephebiphobia or Anglophobia. (Answers on last page!)

The question web

You need to have a spool of string or wool for this game. Ask the young people to stand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to one of the young people to catch. They then choose a question from 1-20 to answer. A list of 20 sample questions is given below. Adapt for your group.

Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventually this creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! At the end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was gone it would look different.

In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.

1. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

3. If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?
4. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
5. If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?
6. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
7. Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?
8. Name a gift you will never forget?
9. Name one thing you really like about yourself.
10. What's your favourite thing to do in the summer?
11. Who's your favourite cartoon character, and why?
12. Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named after someone special?
13. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
14. If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a dead insect in your salad, what would you do?
15. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
16. If you had this week over again what would you do differently?
17. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
18. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
19. If you could ask Christ to change one problem in the world today, what would you like him to change?

20. What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend? Why?

Desert Island

Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book (which is not the Bible) and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for the young people to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

If

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

This is a simple icebreaker to get young people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you Rs.10,000,000.00 what would you spend it on?
3. If you could watch your favourite movie now, what would it be?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?
9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
10. If you could watch your favourite TV show now, what would it be?

11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
14. If you sat down next to Jesus on a bus, what would you talk about?
15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?
16. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
17. If you could eat your favourite food now, what would it be?
18. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
19. If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?
20. If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?

Name that person

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favourite food is spinach, my grandmother is called Doris and my favourite colour is vermillion.

Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)

Would you rather..?

Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about your young people! Place a line of tape down the centre of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape.

When asked 'Would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I've included 20 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin.

Would you rather..?

- Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- Eat broccoli or carrots?
- Watch TV or listen to music?
- Own a lizard or a snake?
- Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday?
- Be an apple or a banana?
- Be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
- Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
- Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
- Have permanent diarrhea or permanent constipation?
- Be handsome/beautiful and dumb or be ugly and really smart?
- Always be cold or always be hot?
- Not hear or not see?
- Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?
- Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?
- See the future or change the past?
- Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?
- Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

Masks

You will need crayons or paints, markers, scissors and white card for this activity. Give each young person a piece of white card. Ask them to draw and cut out a life- sized shape of a face. They can also cut out eyes and a mouth if they wish. Each young person is then asked to decorate their card face. One side represents what they think people see/know/believe about them i.e. on the outside. The other side represents what they feel about themselves i.e. things going on the inside, what people do not necessarily know or see.

This is best used in an established group where the young people are comfortable and at ease with each other. 'Masks' is also a good discussion starter on self-image and self- worth.

Flags

Flags is a get-to-know-you activity, helping young people express what's important to them or more about themselves. Provide large sheets of paper, crayons, markers and paints. Ask each person to draw a flag which contains some symbols or pictures describing who they are, what's important to them or what they enjoy.

Each flag is divided into 4 or 6 segments. Each segment can contain a picture i.e. favourite emotion, favourite food, a hobby, a skill, where you were born, your family, your faith. Give everyone 20 minutes to draw their flags. Ask some of the group to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew.



People Bingo

Great for new groups. Make a 5 by 4 grid on a piece of card and duplicate for everyone in your group. Supply pens or pencils. Each box contains one of the statements below. Encourage the group to mix, talk to everyone to try and complete their card. If one of the items listed on the bingo card relates to the person they are talking with, have them sign their name in that box.

End the activity after 10 minutes and review some of the interesting facts the group has discovered about each other. You can add your own statements appropriate for your group.

- Has brown eyes
- Has made the longest journey
- Has eaten the weirdest food
- Plays Tennis
- Is wearing blue
- Speaks a foreign language
- Knows what a muntjak is (it's a small deer)
- Plays a musical instrument
- Has 2 or more pets
- Has been to the most foreign countries
- Hates broccoli
- Has 2 or more siblings
- Name begins with an 'S'
- Loves Chinese food
- Loves to ski

- Knows what a quark is (A quark is a tiny theoretical particle that makes up protons and neutrons in the atomic nucleus. So there!)
- Loves soccer
- Likes to get up early
- Someone who's favourite TV show is CSI
- Someone over 6ft tall



GROUP BUILDERS

Around the world

The leader begins by saying the name of any country, city, river, ocean or mountain that can be found in an atlas. The young person next to him must then say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has a definite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated.

For example - First person: London, Second Person: Niagara Falls, Third Person: Switzerland

Supermarket

The first player says: "I went to the supermarket to buy an Apple (or any other object you can buy in a supermarket that begins with an A). The next player repeats the sentence, including the "A" word and adds a "B" word.

Each successive player recites the sentence with all the alphabet items, adding one of his own. For example; 'I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple, Banana, CD, dog food, envelopes, frozen fish'. It's not too hard to reach the end of the alphabet, usually with a little help! Watch out for 'Q' and 'X'

Tall stories

The leader starts a story with a sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. The next person then has to add to the story with his own sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. Continue the story until everyone has contributed. The story becomes crazier as each young person adds their sentence. Tape it and play it back. For example; 'Yesterday I went to the zoo and was passing the elephant enclosure when SUDDENLY ' '

Once upon a time

Ask each young person to think of either the name of a person, a place or a thing. Invite them to share this with the rest of the group. Select one of your group to begin a story. However, within 10 seconds they must mention the person, place or thing they have thought of. After 10 seconds (use a stopwatch or kitchen timer) the story is continued by the next person who must also mention their person, place or thing within the 10 seconds.

Continue until everyone has made a contribution. The stories can get really weird, but that's part of the fun! Tape the story for playback at the next parents meeting!

Word link

This is a word association game. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they wish i.e. red. The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which links to the first i.e. tomato. The next person repeats the

previous word and add another word link i.e. soup, and so on. To keep this moving, only allow five seconds for each word link.

Object stories

Collect together a number of objects and place in a canvas bag. The objects can include everyday items i.e. a pencil, key-ring, mobile phone, but also include some more unusual ones i.e. a fossil, holiday photograph, wig!

Pass the bag around the group and invite each young person to dip their hand into the bag (without looking) and pull out one of the objects.

The leader begins a story which includes his object. After 20 seconds, the next person takes up the story and adds another 20 seconds, incorporating the object they are holding. And so on, until everyone has made a contribution to your epic literary tale

Add words

Simple, completely ridiculous and a lot of fun. The first person says a word, for example 'The'. The second person says the first word and ADDS a second word of their choice, and so on. At the end you might have a complete sentence!

For example, 'The aardvark spiraled into the puddle of custard clutching his skateboard while whistling his favourite Bjork melody.' The fun thing is putting twists in the sentence so that the others have a hard time coming up with a word that fits. ADD WORDS can be played a few times without being boring.

Vocabulary

You begin by thinking of a word and then give the first letter. The next player thinks of a word beginning with this letter and gives the second letter. The third player thinks of a word that begins with the first two letters and adds a third. The object of the game is to avoid completing a word. When a player has completed three words or failed to add a letter they can rest their brain for the remainder of the game! You might need a dictionary handy to adjudicate on some words.

One minute please!

The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute.

Use a pack of cards to randomly select i.e. person who draws the lowest number. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up! Subjects might include, my earliest memories, my favourite computer game, why beans are good for you, 10 things you can do with potatoes, Alligator wrestling, pre-millennialism (no, not really!)

Newspaper puzzle

Divide into teams of five or six people and give each group a copy of the SAME newspaper. Ask them to spread the newspaper out in front of each team. Describe a particular advert, article, fact or picture from the paper and the group has to find it, rip it out and bring it to you. The first team to bring it gets a point. Continue calling out items and the winning team is the one with the most points. Watch the paper fly.

Name grid

Divide the young people into groups of four. Each group needs paper and pens. Ask them to draw a grid on which they write their forenames. For example,

S	I	M	O	N	
W	E	N	D	Y	
R	O	B	E	R	T
A	N	N	E		

Give each team three minutes to write down as many words (three letters or more) that they can make only using the letters in their names. Letters must adjoin each other in the grid, but do not have to be in a straight line.

When the time is up each team adds up their score.

3 or 4 letter words = 1 point

5 letter word = 2 points

6 letter word = 3 points

Line up

Ask the youth group to line up. Works best with 8-10 in a line. If you've got a bigger group, split them up and challenge each line to complete the task first. Ask the group to form a new line in order of....

- Height, from smallest to tallest.
- Birthdays, from January through to December.
- Shoe size, from smallest to largest.
- Alphabetical first names (A-Z).
- Alphabetical mothers first names.
- Alphabetical grandmother's first names!
- Anything else you think up.

Balloon hugging

Select three couples to help you with this game. Give each couple three balloons. The couple must blow up and knot all their balloons. Then place two under the girl's armpits and one between the pair as they face each other. The couple then has to burst the three balloons simultaneously by hugging each other. The winning couple is the pair who burst all their balloons in the quickest time. You need to see this to believe it!

Who am I?

Prepare a self-adhesive label or post-it note for each young person in your group. Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity etc. Have a good mix of men and women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in the group. They must then ask questions of the others to find out their identity.

Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example, Am I alive? Am I female? Am I in a band? Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if time is short, stop after the first few correct answers.

Pass the orange

Ask the young people to form a circle. Give the first young person a large orange and explain they need to pass this around the circle. No problem. BUT, it has to be passed around the circle using only chin and neck. If the orange is dropped, it must be returned to the previous player in the circle and the game restarts. A camera is a must for this game!

Liquorice line-up

You will need some very long strands of liquorice (or smaller strands tied together). Invite five or six couples (boy/girl) to take part in the game. Each couple places one end of the liquorice in their mouth. At the signal they begin to chew until they reach the middle. The winning couple is the one which reaches the middle first. Award a bag of liquorice to the winners!

Chocolate chomp

Another old party game, but still lots of fun. Ask everyone to sit in a circle on the floor. In the middle of the circle place a large bar of chocolate on a plate, a knife, a fork and three items of clothing – gloves, scarf and a cap. (Don't forget to remove the wrapper from the chocolate!) Each person in the circle takes a turn at rolling a dice.

On throwing a six they run to the middle of the circle, put on the items of clothing and try to eat as much chocolate as possible. However, they can only cut it with the knife and pick it up with the fork. As soon as someone else throws a six, they run to the middle, put on the gloves, hat and cap, and take over. Continue until all the chocolate is eaten.

Whistle and burp

Invite three couples to take part in this simple game. Ask them to sit together at the front of the group. Give each of the boy's five crackers and give each of the girls a can of coke. On the signal the boys must eat the crackers as fast as possible and then whistle a pre-selected tune to the satisfaction of the rest of the group. They then hand over to their partner (girl) who must drink the coke and then burp audibly. The first couple to finish wins a packet of crackers and a can of coke!

Pass the polo

Invite the group to line up in teams of six. Give each person a toothpick, which they must hold in their mouth. The person at the front of the line has a polo on his toothpick and he must (without using his hands) pass the polo down the line. If anyone drops their sweet, the team must start again from the front of the line with a new polo.

Knots

Divide your group into teams of 6-8. Each team forms a small circle. Ask them to extend their right hand across the circle and hold the left hand of the other team member opposite them. Then extend their left hand across the circle and hold the right hand of another group member. The task is to unravel the spider's web of interlocking arms without letting go of anyone's hands. Give them a three minute time limit to complete the task. Pressure!

Backward clumps

Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to sit on the floor with their partner, backs together, feet out in front and arms linked. Their task is to stand up together. Once everyone has done this, two pairs join together and the group of four try to repeat the task. After they succeed, add another two and try again. Keep adding people until your whole group is trying to stand together. A sight to behold!

Song scramble

Before the youth meeting write out the first lines from several well-known songs, but write down only one line on each piece of card. Make sure that only enough

songs are used to cover the number of people present. The cards are then scattered on the floor. Once the game begins each person grabs a card and tries to find the holders of the other cards which will complete the verse or section of the song. The winning group is the first one to correctly assemble and sing their song. Tape the songs to playback later. Here are a couple of examples which show my age.

Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy? Caught in a landslide. No escape from reality. Open your eyes. Look up to the skies and see.

I'm just a poor boy, I need no sympathy.

Because I'm easy come, easy go, a little high, little low.

I have climbed the highest mountain; I have run through the fields only to be with you. Only to be with you

I have run. I have crawled. I have scaled these city walls these city walls. Only to be with you

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

AND THE SONGS (of course, you already got them!) Bohemian Rhapsody, Queen

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For, U2

Charade relay

A simple party game but great fun. Make a list of 20 popular TV programmes. Divide your group into smaller teams who base themselves around the ground floor of your house! You stand somewhere in the middle. The game begins by each team sending one person to you. Show them the first TV programme on your list. They return to their team and silently act it out in front of the group. As soon as someone guesses it, that person runs to you for the next clue and repeats the process. The winning group is the one which has acted out and guessed 20 programmes.

Movie star scramble

Divide the group into pairs, each with a paper and pen. Ask them to visit the cards you have previously prepared and placed around the room. Their goal is to unscramble the names of 20 famous movies stars i.e. SHRIN FOR ROAD (work it out yourself!) Points are awarded for each correct answer. Alternatively there is ANIMAL SCRAMBLE, TV SCRAMBLE and so on. Anyone for OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET SCRAMBLE.

Body spell

Divide the young people into teams of five. They will need to play this game with bare feet. The groups can play against each other or the clock (five second time limit). Using a felt tip marker write three letters on each team member. Either two hands (palms) and one foot (sole) or one hand and two feet.

1. TDO
2. HYI
3. EHR
4. BFT
5. OCS

As you call out a series of 4, 5, 6 or 7 letter words the group has to spell the word using combinations of hands and feet. Select 20 words from the list below. The finished words must be clearly visible to the leader.

4 Letter words: rest, fist, dice, trot, crib, boot, rich, host. 5 letter words: shoot, first, drift, shirt, roost, shred, hired

6 letter words: forest, theory, bitter, bother, frosty, boiled, strict 7 letter words: thirsty, ostrich, october, boosted, shifted, hoisted. 8 letter word: stitched

Twenty questions

20 questions is an old party game which encourages deductive reasoning and creativity. One player is selected to think of an item. The rest of the group tries to guess the item by asking a question which can only be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." Truthful answers only please, as anything else will ruin the game.

Wink murder

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Choose a number of playing cards to match the number of young people in your group. Be certain your selection contains an ace. Each young person then draws a card. They must not comment or show it to anyone else. The player who chooses the ace is the murderer and he kills his victims by winking at them!

The game begins quietly with players sitting looking at each other. When someone catches the eye of the killer and is winked at, they are killed, and can die in any manner they choose. Some prefer to die quietly with a whimper, some opt for the blood curdling scream technique, while others might fall off their seat and lie prone on the floor. The object is to identify the murderer while trying not to be killed in the process. An incorrect guess results in instant death!

The human chair

Invite everyone to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Each person then turns to the right to face the back of the person in front of them. Ask them to place their hands on the shoulder of the person in front. On the count of three they slowly begin to sit down on the lap of the person behind. As long as everyone is helping the person in front of him or her to sit, then everyone should be supporting the weight of everyone else. Of course, should someone slip, the game becomes 'human dominoes.' It might take a couple of attempts to complete the challenge.

**Your phobias answered*

- Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia - Fear of long words (not a giant hippo in sight!)
- Arachibutyrophobia - Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth. (I think I might have this!)
- Alektorophobia - Fear of chickens. (No McDonalds today then!)
- Ephebiphobia - Fear of teenagers (tough phobia for a youth worker!)
- Anglophobia - Fear of England or English culture. (Be afraid, be very afraid!)

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