50 Conflict Resolution Case Studies and Model Answers

Scenarios analysis and practical responses

A learning companion for peacebuilding cultural diplomacy and global development



PRACTICAL LEARNING HANDBOOK

50 Conflict Resolution Case Studies and Model Answers

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A learning companion for peacebuilding cultural diplomacy and global development

Workplace • Family • Community • Culture • Development

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How to use this handbook

This handbook develops practical judgement through 50 fictional conflict scenarios. Each case includes discussion questions and one defensible model answer. Learners should identify the issues, explain their chosen approach and propose an agreement that can be implemented and reviewed. Each case includes an AI generated illustration of its situation or an appropriate response. Images are fictional teaching illustrations, not evidence of real events.

Work through the case before the answer

Read the scenario, identify what is known and what is assumed, and answer the questions before studying the model response. Compare the proposed approach with your own. Another answer can be strong if it is safe, fair, realistic and supported by the scenario.

Suggested classroom method

Individual reflection Allow 5 minutes to identify the parties, interests, missing information and immediate risks.

Small group discussion Allow 10 minutes to compare options and select a proportionate response. Identify who has authority to act.

Role play Allow 8 to 12 minutes for a prepared conversation. Participation is voluntary; learners can observe or analyse instead.

Debrief Allow 5 to 10 minutes to compare reasoning with the model answer and improve the proposed follow up.

Fictional scenarios and professional boundaries

All people, organisations and situations in the cases are fictional teaching examples. Suggested dialogue is original wording for practice, not a quotation from a real incident. The handbook does not establish facts about any real group or provide legal, clinical or operational security advice. Use qualified local expertise and applicable procedures where the case calls for them.

Do not ask learners to disclose personal trauma or reenact threats, abuse or armed confrontation. Cases involving coercion, safeguarding, discrimination allegations or armed violence are exercises in recognising limits, using appropriate reporting routes and obtaining competent support.

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A practical framework for analysing conflict

Use this sequence as a flexible reasoning aid. An urgent safety issue or formal reporting requirement can change the order or rule out a joint conversation. The framework is a teaching synthesis, not a certification or an official protocol.

1 Check safety and suitability Ask whether people can participate freely and whether threats, coercion or retaliation make direct contact unsafe. Do not confuse equal speaking time with equal power. Identify the responsible safeguarding, complaint or emergency route when needed.

2 Establish the facts and gaps Separate direct observations, documents and reported experiences from assumptions about motives. Identify what must be verified, by whom and with whose consent. Preserve relevant evidence without unnecessary disclosure.

3 Identify interests and influence Positions are stated demands; interests are the needs or concerns behind them. Map affected people, decision authority, resources and those who are missing. Respect privacy and differences within groups.

4 Choose the process Direct negotiation may suit a manageable shared problem. Voluntary mediation uses an impartial facilitator to help parties reach their own agreement. Investigation examines allegations; arbitration or adjudication involves an authorised decision maker. A mediator cannot declare rights simply by facilitating a meeting.

5 Develop and assess options Generate practical choices and test them against shared criteria such as feasibility, fairness, access and existing obligations. Avoid splitting the difference when it would preserve harm or disregard a necessary standard.

6 Record commitments and review Name who will do what, by when, with what support and evidence of completion. Record unresolved issues and the route for review. Check whether those signing have authority and whether affected people understand the outcome.

Before inviting a joint meeting, explain its purpose, voluntary nature, confidentiality arrangements and limits. Never promise absolute confidentiality or require forgiveness as evidence of success.

Case directory

Case number Title Page

Workplace and organisational disputes

01 The missing project credit · 6
02 Sales promises that operations cannot deliver · 7
03 The unpopular shift roster · 8
04 The public correction · 9
05 Remote messages that sound hostile · 10
06 Equipment booked by two departments · 11
07 The small joke that became a complaint · 12
08 The disputed performance rating · 13
09 The colleague who receives every opportunity · 14
10 Volunteers and paid staff at odds · 15

Family and everyday relationships

11 The household budget disagreement · 16
12 Siblings sharing care for a parent · 17
13 Inheritance expectations and missing records · 18
14 Parents disagree over discipline · 19
15 The overdue loan between friends · 20
16 Neighbours and late night noise · 21
17 Roommates and an unexpected guest · 22
18 The family business and the founder’s child · 23
19 A private photograph shared online · 24
20 When a family meeting is unsafe · 25

Community and education

21 Two communities and one borehole · 26
22 Farmers and a livestock route · 27
23 The market stall allocation · 28
24 A rumour before a community festival · 29
25 A school group project breaks down · 30
26 An accusation during a parent meeting · 31
27 Discrimination in a student chat group · 32
28 Residents disagree over waste collection · 33
29 Youth excluded from a peace committee · 34
30 Two groups booking one public hall · 35

Case directory continued

Case number Title Page

Cultural dialogue and diplomacy

31 A greeting interpreted as rejection · 36
32 Direct feedback across cultures · 37
33 A religious diet overlooked at a reception · 38
34 The meeting held in only one language · 39
35 A sacred symbol used in a campaign · 40
36 A diplomatic gift refused · 41
37 Different expectations about meeting time · 42
38 A historical grievance at a cultural exchange · 43
39 The seating plan that signals favouritism · 44
40 Translation changes the meaning of a promise · 45

Humanitarian development and public decision making

41 Aid lists that exclude host families · 46
42 A contractor misses a community deadline · 47
43 A donor changes the project midway · 48
44 A protest over a development project · 49
45 Women excluded from relief decisions · 50
46 Two NGOs compete for the same community · 51
47 Rumours of stolen community funds · 52
48 Water releases across a border · 53
49 A local ceasefire is breached · 54
50 A peace agreement that no one implements · 55

The missing project credit



Scenario

Amina prepares most of a client presentation. During the meeting, her team leader, Daniel, describes the work as his own. Afterwards he says he was representing the whole team, not taking personal credit. Amina stops sharing drafts and colleagues begin taking sides. The next presentation is due in five days.

Discussion questions

What needs lie beneath each position? How can the contribution be corrected without turning the next client meeting into a public confrontation?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns recognition, trust and control of communication. Daniel may want a coherent team message, while Amina needs accurate acknowledgement. Withholding drafts protects her visibility but increases delivery risk.

1. Meet separately to establish who produced which work and what was actually said. Check drafts and meeting notes without assuming intent.

2. If both agree, facilitate a short conversation about impact. Ask Daniel to acknowledge the specific omission and invite Amina to describe what would repair it.

3. Agree accurate attribution in the internal record and the next client update. Name a presenter and contributor for each future section.

4. Keep work moving through a shared draft folder with version history. Escalate repeated misattribution through the appropriate management process.

Suggested wording "I want the team to succeed, and I need my contribution recorded accurately. Can we agree how authorship and presenting roles will be acknowledged?"

Follow up The project manager checks the next two presentations for agreed attribution and asks both parties whether draft sharing has resumed.

Sales promises that operations cannot deliver



Scenario

A salesperson promises a customer installation within three days. Operations says the normal lead time is ten days and no stock is available. Sales accuses operations of obstructing revenue; operations stops responding to urgent requests. The customer has scheduled staff training around the promised date.

Discussion questions

Which issue needs action first? What approval rule would prevent another unsupported promise?

Model answer

Analysis The immediate issue is an unreliable customer commitment. The underlying conflict combines incompatible incentives, missing capacity information and unclear authority to approve exceptions.

1. Ask operations for a verified stock position and the earliest safe, realistic delivery date. Do not repeat an unverified promise.

2. Have the account owner contact the customer promptly, acknowledge the scheduling impact and offer feasible alternatives such as phased delivery or rescheduling.

3. Bring sales and operations together to map how the promise was made. Separate the service failure from personal accusations.

4. Introduce a shared capacity tracker and require operational approval for exceptional lead times. Include delivery reliability in both teams' performance reviews.

Suggested wording "The customer needs an honest answer today. Let us confirm what can be delivered, repair that commitment, and then change the approval process."

Follow up Review exceptional orders after one month, including promised dates, actual delivery dates and the number of unapproved commitments.

CASE 03 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

The unpopular shift roster



Scenario

A supervisor repeatedly assigns weekend shifts to junior workers, saying senior staff have earned priority. Junior workers argue that they also have family commitments. One employee swaps shifts informally and leaves a service gap. Others threaten to refuse the next weekend assignment.

Discussion questions

How can immediate service cover be restored fairly? Which factors should a transparent roster consider?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute mixes perceived unfairness with a practical coverage problem. Seniority alone may not address availability, competence, workload or agreed workplace arrangements.

1. Confirm essential cover and staff availability privately. Resolve the immediate gap through authorised swaps or volunteers rather than public pressure.

2. Review existing scheduling arrangements and actual shift distribution. Ask staff to identify constraints without requiring unnecessary personal disclosure.

3. Agree published rotation criteria, notice periods and a clear swap approval process. Explain how exceptional needs will be assessed.

4. Give employees a route to question the roster and ensure managers consider requests consistently. Do not punish everyone for one unauthorised swap.

Suggested wording "We need safe cover this weekend and a roster people can understand. Let us review the distribution and agree criteria before issuing the next schedule."

Follow up Check the next four rosters for weekend distribution, last minute changes and whether staff concerns receive a recorded response.

The public correction



Scenario

During a staff meeting, a manager calls a junior employee careless over a reporting error. The employee becomes silent and later refuses to speak in meetings. The manager says accuracy is essential and believes an apology would weaken authority. A deadline makes the report correction urgent.

Discussion questions

How should the error and the public humiliation be handled separately? What would a useful apology acknowledge?

Model answer

Analysis Accuracy and respectful treatment are compatible. The report needs correction, while the personal label and public delivery have damaged psychological safety and willingness to contribute.

1. Correct and verify the report through the normal quality process. Identify the specific error rather than describing the employee's character.

2. Ask the manager to meet privately with the employee, acknowledge the public remark and listen to its effect without demanding immediate forgiveness.

3. Agree a proportionate correction of the meeting record or public acknowledgement, considering the employee's preference about visibility.

4. Set a feedback standard: urgent factual clarification can occur in meetings; personal performance discussions occur privately. Investigate a recurring pattern through management procedures.

Suggested wording "The figure needed correcting, but calling you careless in front of colleagues was inappropriate. I am sorry for that. How can I help repair the impact?"

Follow up At two weeks, check report accuracy and whether the employee feels able to raise questions without being pressured to perform confidence.

Remote messages that sound hostile



Scenario

A remote colleague writes, “Send the final file now.” The recipient reads this as disrespectful and replies to the whole team with a complaint. The sender says they were working on a phone during a network outage and thought the deadline was understood. Both now avoid direct contact.

Discussion questions

Which facts are missing from the message? What communication agreement would reduce repeat misunderstandings?

Model answer

Analysis Text removed tone and context, while the public reply enlarged the conflict. Both need clarity, dignity and a reliable way to signal urgency.

1. Move the discussion from the group thread to a short private call if both are comfortable. Confirm the deadline, technical constraints and intended request.

2. Ask each person to distinguish the message wording from assumptions about motive. Acknowledge the abrupt wording and the impact of the public response.

3. Agree that urgent requests state a deadline and reason, and that ambiguous messages receive a clarification before escalation.

4. Post only a brief neutral clarification to the team if necessary. Avoid circulating private apologies or requiring constant availability outside agreed hours.

Suggested wording “I read the message as an order. Were you asking for the file before the client call? Next time, including the deadline would help me respond.”

Follow up Review communication after two weeks using examples of clarified requests, rather than monitoring employees’ private conversations.

CASE 06 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

Equipment booked by two departments



Scenario

The training unit and the inspection unit both arrive to use the organisation's only projector. Each has an email confirming the same time, sent by different administrators. The trainers have visiting participants; the inspectors have a regulatory briefing. Staff argue over whose work matters more.

Discussion questions

What objective criteria should guide the immediate decision? Who should own the booking system?

Model answer

Analysis This is a process failure rather than evidence that either department is selfish. The decision should consider time sensitivity, alternatives and the consequences of delay.

1. Pause the argument and verify both bookings. Ask what each session actually requires and whether another screen, venue or remote option is available.

2. Compare the consequences of postponement using agreed operational priorities. Do not assume rank or the word regulatory automatically decides the issue.

3. Choose the least disruptive feasible arrangement, explain it to both groups and support the department that must adapt.

4. Create one booking register with a named owner, confirmation rules and an escalation route for clashes. Record the duplicate approval as a system issue.

Suggested wording "Both teams booked in good faith. Let us compare what cannot be moved and find the option that causes the least disruption today."

Follow up The facilities lead audits bookings for four weeks and confirms that all administrators use the same register.

CASE 07 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

The small joke that became a complaint



Scenario

A supervisor repeatedly jokes about an employee's accent despite requests to stop. The employee files a complaint and says they fear losing preferred duties. The supervisor proposes mediation so they can "both apologise" and keep the matter off the formal record.

Discussion questions

Why might ordinary mediation be unsuitable at this stage? How should the employee's immediate concerns be addressed?

Model answer

Analysis This is an allegation of repeated mistreatment involving unequal authority and possible retaliation. It should not be reduced to a mutual misunderstanding or made conditional on an apology from the complainant.

1. Receive the complaint privately, record the reported conduct accurately and explain the appropriate complaint route and confidentiality limits.

2. Arrange impartial handling under organisational procedures. Preserve relevant messages and identify witnesses without coaching their accounts.

3. Assess practical protection from retaliation, including how duties are assigned. Avoid changes that disadvantage the complainant as a supposed solution.

4. Consider voluntary relationship repair only if appropriate after necessary fact finding. A settlement must not replace a required investigation or silence future reporting.

Suggested wording "You do not have to agree to a joint meeting to have this concern taken seriously. We will explain the process and discuss how to reduce retaliation risk."

Follow up A designated person checks treatment and duty allocation during and after the complaint process, while maintaining access to review channels.

CASE 08 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

The disputed performance rating



Scenario

A staff member receives a low rating for poor responsiveness. Their manager cites missed messages, but the employee says priorities changed repeatedly and replies outside working hours were expected. The rating affects a development opportunity. Neither side has agreed examples of acceptable response times.

Discussion questions

What evidence should be reviewed? How can performance expectations become measurable without demanding permanent availability?

Model answer

Analysis The disagreement concerns both evidence and an unclear standard. A rating cannot be repaired simply by asking the employee to be more positive.

1. Review the stated role requirements, working arrangements, dated requests and completed outputs. Distinguish delayed replies from missed deliverables.

2. Give the employee a genuine opportunity to explain context and correct factual inaccuracies. Use an independent reviewer if the internal process provides one.

3. Clarify priority setting, response windows and how urgent work is assigned. Revise the rating through the proper process if the evidence supports revision.

4. Agree a short improvement period with realistic measures and available support. Keep the development decision transparent rather than trading a better rating for silence.

Suggested wording “Let us identify the requests behind the rating and the standard you were expected to meet. Then we can decide what is supported and what needs changing.”

Follow up Review agreed outputs and response windows after six weeks; record any priority changes that affected delivery.

CASE 09 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

The colleague who receives every opportunity



Scenario

Two qualified staff members want to lead a new project. The manager chooses a close friend without explaining the criteria. The unsuccessful employee alleges favouritism and refuses to assist. The selected employee feels attacked even though they did not make the decision.

Discussion questions

Who should account for the selection? How can cooperation resume without asking the unsuccessful employee to abandon a legitimate concern?

Model answer

Analysis The selection process has created a credibility problem. Criticism belongs with the decision and its evidence, not with assumptions about the selected colleague's character.

1. Ask the manager to state the project requirements and selection reasons. Review conflict of interest arrangements and whether an independent review is needed.

2. Invite the unsuccessful employee to identify specific concerns and relevant qualifications. Provide a clear route for challenging the decision.

3. If the process was flawed, correct it through a fair reassessment rather than an informal compromise that appoints an unworkable joint lead.

4. Clarify interim roles so the project can proceed. Discuss respectful cooperation separately from the selection review and prohibit personal attacks.

Suggested wording "You can challenge the selection process without blaming your colleague. We will review the criteria and explain the decision while confirming the work needed now."

Follow up Publish criteria for the next opportunity and check whether reviewed decisions and development feedback are communicated consistently.

CASE 10 WORKPLACE AND ORGANISATIONAL DISPUTES

Volunteers and paid staff at odds



Scenario

Volunteers at a community organisation say paid staff give them unpleasant tasks while taking public credit. Staff say volunteers ignore reporting procedures and leave work unfinished. A fundraising event is two weeks away, and several volunteers are considering withdrawing.

Discussion questions

Which expectations were never agreed? How can recognition and accountability apply to both groups?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute involves role ambiguity, recognition and different assumptions about commitment. Volunteer status does not remove accountability, while pay does not justify dismissive treatment.

1. Hold separate listening sessions and identify concrete examples of unfinished work, poor treatment and missing acknowledgement.

2. Bring willing representatives together to map event tasks, available time and decision authority. Match responsibilities to real capacity.

3. Agree task descriptions, reporting arrangements, support and recognition. Name an event coordinator and a respectful way to raise problems.

4. Offer people the option to reduce or decline tasks they cannot complete. Avoid forcing unpaid work through guilt or assigning staff responsibilities without support.

Suggested wording "We need clear commitments and fair acknowledgement. Which tasks can each person realistically own, and what information will the coordinator need?"

Follow up Check commitments weekly until the event, then hold a short joint review of task completion, support and recognition.

CASE 11 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

The household budget disagreement



Scenario

A couple agrees to save for school fees. One partner then sends a large sum to a relative without discussing it. They say refusing would have caused family shame. The other partner calls the decision a betrayal and demands control of all future spending. Both say they want financial stability.

Discussion questions

Which interests overlap? What arrangement supports shared decisions without giving one partner total control?

Model answer

Analysis The immediate problem is an unplanned transfer; the deeper concerns are trust, family loyalty and predictable household spending. Transferring all control to one partner would create a new imbalance.

1. Choose a calm time to review the actual budget and the effect on school fees. Avoid accusations about the whole extended family.

2. Ask each partner to explain the pressure they experienced and the agreement they believed applied. Acknowledge the undisclosed decision and its impact.

3. Agree affordable support for relatives, a threshold for joint approval and a small personal spending allowance for each partner.

4. Create a plan to restore the school fee balance, with shared access to relevant household information. Revisit the arrangement if it restricts either person unfairly.

Suggested wording "Supporting your family matters, and paying the fees matters to us both. What limit and approval process would protect both commitments?"

Follow up Hold a brief monthly budget review and check whether both partners can raise requests without punishment or secrecy.

CASE 12 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

Siblings sharing care for a parent



Scenario

Three adult siblings care for an older parent. The sibling living nearby handles appointments and daily errands. Another sends money and says this is an equal contribution. The third rarely responds. The nearby sibling threatens to stop helping without notice because they feel taken for granted.

Discussion questions

How should visible and invisible care work be recognised? Whose preferences must be included in the plan?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict concerns unequal workload, limited capacity and different ideas of contribution. The parent's choices and access to reliable care should remain central.

1. Ask the parent what support they want and who may receive information about it. Identify any immediate care gaps before redistributing tasks.

2. List appointments, transport, paperwork, companionship, expenses and emergency cover. Estimate time as well as money.

3. Invite each sibling to state realistic capacity and agree named responsibilities, backup arrangements and a shared method of updating one another.

4. Explore affordable outside support if available and wanted. Do not assume the nearby sibling must remain the default coordinator or promise care that no one can provide.

Suggested wording "Money helps, but appointments and coordination also take time. Let us list the work and agree who can reliably cover each part."

Follow up Review the arrangement after two weeks and monthly thereafter, checking the parent's experience and the coordinator's workload.

CASE 13 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

Inheritance expectations and missing records



Scenario

After a parent dies, two siblings each say they were promised the same family house. Neither has a written record of the conversation. One has already moved in and changed the locks. Relatives demand an immediate family vote, while the siblings accuse each other of greed.

Discussion questions

What can a family discussion resolve, and what requires qualified advice? How can irreversible actions be avoided?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute combines grief, housing insecurity and uncertain entitlements. A family vote or mediator cannot establish ownership merely because most relatives favour one sibling.

1. Encourage a pause on further changes, sales or disposal of belongings while the position is clarified. Address immediate housing needs without declaring ownership.

2. Gather available documents and direct accounts without pressuring witnesses. Encourage appropriate independent succession or property advice for the relevant jurisdiction.

3. If safe and voluntary, facilitate discussion of interim access, costs and care of the property. Explain that this does not determine legal rights.

4. Document only what the parties genuinely agree and seek qualified review before any binding property settlement. Allow grief support and time for informed decisions.

Suggested wording "We can discuss temporary access and expenses today. We should not decide ownership by pressure or assume that an informal promise settles the position."

Follow up Name a contact for document gathering and set a review date once the parties have obtained appropriate advice.

CASE 14 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

Parents disagree over discipline



Scenario

One parent removes a child's tablet for a week after homework is missed. The other returns it that evening, saying the punishment was excessive. They argue in front of the child and each asks the child to confirm that the other is unfair. Homework remains incomplete.

Discussion questions

How can the child be removed from the adult dispute? What does a consistent and proportionate response require?

Model answer

Analysis The immediate behaviour issue has become a struggle over parental authority. Recruiting the child as a judge creates divided loyalties and does not solve the homework problem.

1. Stop the argument in front of the child and explain that the adults will resolve their disagreement. Do not require the child to choose a side.

2. Discuss privately what happened, why homework was missed and whether the rule and consequence were understood beforehand.

3. Agree a nonviolent, age appropriate response linked to the task, with help for any learning or scheduling difficulty. Explain the revised plan together.

4. Set a routine for homework and device access and agree that disagreements about discipline will be discussed privately. Seek appropriate support if conflict remains persistent.

Suggested wording "We disagreed about the consequence, and that is for us to sort out. We will explain one clear plan and help you complete the homework."

Follow up After one week, review homework completion, the child's understanding and whether parents are avoiding arguments that place the child in the middle.

CASE 15 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

The overdue loan between friends



Scenario

A friend borrows money and promises repayment in one month. Three months later, only a small amount has been returned. The lender posts an angry message in a shared social group. The borrower says they lost income but were ashamed to explain. Both want to remain friends.

Discussion questions

How can the financial problem and the public embarrassment be addressed? What makes a repayment plan credible?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict involves an unmet commitment, uncertainty and damaged dignity. Sympathy does not automatically cancel the debt, while public pressure may make honest discussion harder.

1. Move the discussion to a private setting. Establish the amount lent, payments made and what each person understood about timing.

2. Ask the borrower to explain current capacity without promising money they do not have. Ask the lender what immediate repayment they genuinely need.

3. If both agree, write a realistic instalment plan, payment method and a requirement to communicate before a missed payment. Consider independent advice if agreement is not possible.

4. Address the group message separately with a proportionate clarification, respecting both parties' privacy. Set boundaries about future lending.

Suggested wording "I need a reliable plan rather than another uncertain date. What amount can you actually pay each month, and when will you tell me if that changes?"

Follow up Check the first agreed payment and review the plan at the first difficulty instead of allowing silent arrears to build.

CASE 16 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

Neighbours and late night noise



Scenario

A family hosts frequent late evening gatherings in a shared compound. A neighbour working early shifts repeatedly complains. The hosts say the neighbour objects to their culture and is trying to control their visitors. The neighbour responds by banging on the wall and shouting during a gathering.

Discussion questions

What can be measured without judging cultural identity? What agreement can protect social life and rest?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns noise, timing and use of shared space. Identity claims and retaliatory noise have made a practical problem feel like personal rejection.

1. Choose a calm time away from the gathering to discuss specific dates, times and effects. Check compound arrangements and applicable venue expectations.

2. Ask the hosts what social occasions require and the neighbour what sleeping hours need protection. Avoid debating whether one culture is too loud.

3. Agree finishing times, speaker placement, advance notice for occasional events and a direct contact method for concerns. Consider a different venue for larger gatherings.

4. Stop retaliatory banging and public insults. If the agreement fails, use the compound's fair complaint process rather than personal confrontation.

Suggested wording "I am not asking you to stop seeing friends. I need the sound reduced after the agreed hour so I can sleep before work."

Follow up Review the next three gatherings and record whether agreed hours and contact arrangements worked.

CASE 17 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

Roommates and an unexpected guest



Scenario

Two adults share a rented flat and divide costs equally. One invites a relative to stay for a few nights, but the visit continues for a month. The other roommate says utilities and privacy have become a problem. The host says family must come first and refuses to discuss an end date.

Discussion questions

Which shared decisions were bypassed? How can the relative be treated respectfully while addressing the arrangement?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns consent to a changed living arrangement, costs and privacy. The relative should not become the target of hostility over the host's decision.

1. Hold a private roommate discussion and review the existing occupancy and guest arrangements. Identify extra costs and specific privacy concerns.

2. Ask about the relative's situation and feasible alternatives without assuming the other roommate must provide indefinite accommodation.

3. Agree a realistic departure or review date, interim contribution if appropriate, and quiet hours and shared space boundaries. Check rental obligations before changing occupancy.

4. Create a future guest policy covering notice, consent, duration and costs. If agreement is impossible, seek an appropriate housing support or dispute route rather than threats or lock changes.

Suggested wording "I respect your wish to help your relative. A month changes our shared arrangement, so we need a date and boundaries we can both accept."

Follow up Check the agreed date and contributions; review guest rules before another extended visit occurs.

CASE 18 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

The family business and the founder's child



Scenario

A founder appoints their adult child as operations manager. Experienced relatives already working in the business object, saying the appointee bypasses agreed purchasing limits. The founder calls their objections disloyal. Suppliers are receiving contradictory instructions, and a key employee plans to leave.

Discussion questions

How can family relationships be separated from operational authority? Which decisions require a clear approval structure?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict combines succession, competence and governance. A family discussion alone will not resolve contradictory authority or the absence of purchasing controls.

1. Confirm who may authorise orders and communicate one temporary instruction to suppliers. Review disputed purchases against actual approval rules.

2. Use an independent facilitator or adviser if the founder's authority prevents candid discussion. Hear staff concerns without demanding loyalty declarations.

3. Agree a role description, approval limits, reporting line and support plan for the new manager. Apply purchasing rules regardless of family status.

4. Create a route for operational concerns outside family gatherings and plan a fair review of performance and succession arrangements.

Suggested wording "We can support your child's development and still require the same purchasing controls. The question is which role can approve which commitment."

Follow up Review supplier instructions, purchasing exceptions and staff turnover concerns after one month with the agreed independent reviewer.

CASE 19 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

A private photograph shared online



Scenario

A student posts a photograph of a friend at a private celebration. The friend asks for its removal because they did not want the event public. The poster refuses, saying everyone looked happy and removal would be embarrassing. Others begin reposting it while arguing about who is being unreasonable.

Discussion questions

What action can reduce harm immediately? How should consent work for future posts?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns privacy and control over personal visibility. Enjoying an event does not establish agreement to publication or redistribution of photographs.

1. Ask the poster to remove the image from their account and request that known reposters remove it. Do not widen circulation by sharing the disputed picture again.

2. Listen privately to the friend's concerns without requiring a personal explanation as the price of removal. Acknowledge the loss of control.

3. Agree that future pictures need permission before public posting, including separate consent for tagging or identifying locations.

4. Use platform reporting tools if appropriate and discuss a short public correction only with the affected person's agreement. Recognise that deletion may not remove every copy.

Suggested wording "You did not agree to having this posted. I will remove my copy and ask the others to stop sharing it. Next time I will ask first."

Follow up Check removal requests within a day and confirm the friendship group understands the consent arrangement for future events.

CASE 20 FAMILY AND EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

When a family meeting is unsafe



Scenario

A woman tells a community facilitator that her partner monitors her phone, controls access to money and has threatened her if she speaks about leaving. A relative asks the facilitator to summon both partners for reconciliation. The woman says a joint meeting may make things worse.

Discussion questions

Why is joint mediation inappropriate here? What should guide communication and referrals?

Model answer

Analysis The account raises safety and coercion concerns rather than an ordinary disagreement between equally free participants. A joint meeting or disclosure to the partner could increase danger.

1. Speak only through a channel the woman identifies as safe. Listen without blame, do not confront the partner, and do not organise a joint reconciliation meeting.

2. Explain the facilitator's role and confidentiality limits before collecting details. Ask what immediate support she wants and whether there is urgent danger.

3. Offer connection to a qualified local specialist who can discuss safety planning and available support. In immediate danger, support access to appropriate emergency assistance when safe.

4. Do not pressure her to leave, stay, report or forgive. Avoid records or messages that could expose her; follow applicable safeguarding responsibilities with specialist guidance.

Suggested wording "You do not have to attend a joint meeting. Let us discuss what contact is safe and what support you would like, without sharing this with your partner."

Follow up Arrange follow up only in the way she has agreed is safe; do not leave revealing messages or assume silence means consent.

CASE 21 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Two communities and one borehole



Scenario

Two neighbouring settlements use one borehole. Residents nearest the pump begin locking it overnight and charging others, saying they pay for repairs. The second settlement calls the arrangement exclusionary. A queue argument becomes a fight, and women collecting water say leaders have not consulted them.

Discussion questions

Who needs representation in the process? How can immediate access and long term maintenance be addressed separately?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict concerns a scarce essential resource, maintenance costs and decision power. Proximity does not settle entitlement, while free access without a repair plan may be unsustainable.

1. Address immediate safety and agree temporary collection arrangements through appropriate local partners. Do not hold a crowded meeting at the disputed pump during active tension.

2. Verify capacity, repair costs and existing arrangements. Include collectors, women, people with disabilities and both settlements, rather than only prominent leaders.

3. Explore transparent operating hours, affordable maintenance contributions and exemptions for people unable to pay, subject to applicable arrangements and qualified advice.

4. Create a representative management group, publish accounts and establish a complaint route. Plan for supply failures without turning access into a reward for political loyalty.

Suggested wording “We need safe access now and a repair system people trust. Those who collect the water must help design the arrangement.”

Follow up Monitor waiting time, breakdowns, contributions and exclusion complaints weekly during an initial one month trial.

CASE 22 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Farmers and a livestock route



Scenario

Crop farmers report that cattle have damaged newly planted fields. Livestock keepers say a customary passage has been blocked by cultivation. Rumours spread that one ethnic group plans to expel the other. Young men gather at the fields, and both sides demand compensation before discussing access.

Discussion questions

Which actions could reduce the risk of confrontation? How can damage claims be separated from future access?

Model answer

Analysis The case combines livelihood loss, disputed land use and identity based mobilisation. Neither an ethnic label nor a historical claim alone verifies rights or the amount of damage.

1. Seek help from trusted local peace and safety actors to reduce immediate confrontation. Avoid sending an untrained facilitator between hostile groups.

2. Use a jointly accepted assessment team to record reported damage and map the disputed passage, with appropriate land and agricultural expertise.

3. Address compensation through a fair evidence based process while separately exploring temporary movement arrangements that avoid further crop damage.

4. Include affected women, land users and mobile herders. Agree communication contacts, incident reporting and a route for unresolved land questions to competent authorities.

Suggested wording “The damaged crops and the passage dispute both need attention. Let us verify each issue without treating a whole community as responsible.”

Follow up Track verified incidents and compliance with temporary routes, then review arrangements before the next planting and movement season.

CASE 23 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

The market stall allocation



Scenario

A market committee allocates renovated stalls to relatives and established traders before publishing criteria. New traders and women selling from temporary spaces protest. Committee members argue that longstanding contributions should count. A rumour claims that protesters will lose permission to trade altogether.

Discussion questions

What should be disclosed about the allocation? How can a review avoid simply rewarding the loudest group?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns procedural fairness, livelihood access and fear of retaliation. Contribution history may be relevant only if openly justified alongside other agreed criteria.

1. Publish the proposed allocation, available stalls and the criteria actually used, protecting unnecessary personal information. Clarify that complaints will not automatically cancel trading access.

2. Review conflicts of interest and arrange an independent or broadly trusted assessment of disputed decisions.

3. Consult different trader groups on transparent eligibility, priority factors and accessible application arrangements. Use the same published process for all applicants.

4. Correct decisions through an explained review and provide a clear appeal route. Avoid private bargains that reproduce favouritism under a different committee.

Suggested wording “The allocation needs reasons people can examine. We will review it against published criteria, including how conflicts of interest were handled.”

Follow up Check application access, the final allocation and appeal outcomes, including whether temporary and less powerful traders could participate.

CASE 24 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

A rumour before a community festival



Scenario

An anonymous voice note says a religious group plans to disrupt another community's festival. No evidence is provided, but a residents' group forwards it widely. Festival volunteers want to cancel, while several youths announce they will "defend the event." Local religious leaders deny any plan.

Discussion questions

What should be verified before making a public statement? How can the response avoid amplifying the rumour?

Model answer

Analysis The main risks are mobilisation around unverified information and public repetition of an inflammatory claim. A denial alone may not restore confidence without credible practical reassurance.

1. Assess any immediate threat through trusted local safety contacts. Discourage self appointed armed or confrontational responses.

2. Verify the claim with relevant organisers and credible independent contacts. Preserve the original message for appropriate review without reposting it publicly.

3. Issue a brief factual update through trusted channels, distinguishing confirmed information from what remains unknown and explaining event safety arrangements.

4. Connect organisers across communities and agree a reporting contact for concerns. Review the event based on assessed conditions, not pressure to demonstrate bravery.

Suggested wording "We have not verified the claim. Please stop forwarding the recording and send any direct information to the agreed contact while organisers assess the event."

Follow up Monitor new reports and whether corrected information reaches the same groups that received the rumour; reassess safety before the festival opens.

CASE 25 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

A school group project breaks down



Scenario

Five students receive a shared assignment. Two complete most of the work; one submits copied material; two say they were never given tasks. The deadline is tomorrow. A high performing student asks the teacher to remove everyone else's names, while the others accuse that student of controlling the group.

Discussion questions

How can contribution and academic integrity be assessed separately? What immediate plan protects learning and fairness?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict combines unclear task allocation, unequal contribution and a separate concern about copied material. One student's account should not determine everyone's mark without review.

1. Ask for task messages, drafts and each student's account. Address copied material through the school's academic integrity process rather than quietly distributing responsibility.

2. Help the group identify what can be completed honestly by the deadline and whether an authorised extension is justified.

3. Allocate remaining work clearly, with each student explaining their contribution. Apply marking criteria and individual review options consistently.

4. Discuss group decision making and record roles earlier for future assignments. Do not reward a takeover merely because it produces a polished final product.

Suggested wording "We will assess the work and each person's contribution fairly. First we must replace copied content and agree what can honestly be completed."

Follow up Use a short individual reflection and draft history when reviewing contributions; check role allocation at the next group assignment.

CASE 26 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

An accusation during a parent meeting



Scenario

A parent says a teacher humiliates their child in class. The teacher says the child disrupts lessons and the parent excuses poor behaviour. They begin shouting during a public parent meeting. The child is present, visibly upset, and other parents start recording on their phones.

Discussion questions

What should happen immediately? How can the concern be examined without prejudging either account?

Model answer

Analysis The immediate need is to end public escalation and protect the child's privacy. The teaching and behaviour concerns require careful fact finding, not a public contest between adults.

1. Pause the exchange, stop public recording where the school can appropriately intervene and move to a private process. Offer the child support from an appropriate trusted adult.

2. Record the reported incidents with dates and examples. Hear the teacher and parent separately, and obtain the child's views through a suitable school process.

3. Review relevant classroom information and safeguarding concerns with authorised staff. Avoid asking the child to confront the teacher publicly.

4. Agree communication, classroom support and any required corrective action. Explain the school's review route and prohibit retaliation against the child.

Suggested wording "This concern deserves a private, careful response. We will stop the public argument, support the child and arrange a meeting with the appropriate staff."

Follow up Check the child's experience and agreed classroom arrangements after one week, with further review if concerns continue.

CASE 27 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Discrimination in a student chat group



Scenario

Students repeatedly post insulting memes about a classmate's ethnic background. The classmate leaves the group and misses assignment updates. Several students say it was only humour and suggest a public apology circle. The classmate says they do not want to face the group.

Discussion questions

What access and protection need restoring first? When could a restorative conversation be considered?

Model answer

Analysis The conduct creates exclusion and a potential bullying concern. The affected student should not have to perform forgiveness or attend a group encounter to regain access to learning.

1. Ensure the student receives assignment information through a safe alternative and can report concerns privately. Address ongoing posts through school procedures.

2. Preserve relevant evidence with limited access and assess any safeguarding or disciplinary requirements through authorised staff.

3. Ask the student what support and participation they want. Take action on harmful conduct without making it dependent on a joint meeting.

4. Consider a facilitated restorative process only if suitable, voluntary and adequately prepared. Set explicit group rules, moderation and consequences for repeated abuse.

Suggested wording "You do not need to meet the group to receive support. We will restore access to class information and address the posts through the proper process."

Follow up Review group access, further incidents and the student's wellbeing privately, without asking them to monitor their own mistreatment.

CASE 28 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Residents disagree over waste collection



Scenario

A residents' association increases waste collection fees after repeated contractor price rises. Some households refuse to pay because collection is unreliable. Others pay but blame nonpayers for overflowing bins. The treasurer will not release invoices, saying members should trust elected officers.

Discussion questions

What information is necessary for a fair decision? How can service quality and payment concerns be handled together?

Model answer

Analysis Trust has weakened because service standards, costs and accountability are unclear. Treating all nonpayment as dishonesty hides affordability and performance concerns.

1. Verify the contract, invoices, collection records and current shortfall. Share an understandable financial summary and explain any legitimate privacy limits.

2. Collect household concerns, including affordability and missed pickups, through an accessible route. Separate disputed service from deliberate noncompliance.

3. Agree measurable contractor standards, a fair fee review and a process for missed collections. Explore instalments or assistance through the association's authorised arrangements.

4. Require transparent authorisation of payments and periodic reporting. Avoid selective collection or public shaming that creates health problems or targets vulnerable households.

Suggested wording "Members need to see what the fee pays for and how missed collections are addressed. Let us review cost and service performance together."

Follow up Compare scheduled and completed collections for a month and publish a clear account of receipts, costs and outstanding concerns.

CASE 29 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Youth excluded from a peace committee



Scenario

A community peace committee contains only senior male leaders. Young people say the committee makes decisions about them without consultation. Leaders say youths lack patience and women are already represented through husbands. A youth group plans a separate protest during the next dialogue event.

Discussion questions

Why is attendance alone not enough for inclusion? What would meaningful participation change?

Model answer

Analysis The issue is unequal influence and legitimacy, not simply a shortage of meeting invitations. Representation through someone else cannot be assumed to convey a person's interests or views.

1. Consult women and diverse young people separately about priorities, barriers and safe ways to participate. Avoid choosing only the most visible youth spokesperson.

2. Discuss with existing leaders how exclusion affects implementation and trust. Agree that participants may speak for themselves rather than through family status.

3. Redesign membership, agenda setting, speaking time and feedback routes. Provide practical support such as accessible timing, transport or childcare where feasible.

4. Give new representatives real decision influence and explain how dissent will be recorded. Engage the planned protest through dialogue without making participation conditional on silence.

Suggested wording "A seat matters only if it affects the agenda and decisions. Let us agree who is missing, how they choose representatives and what authority those representatives will have."

Follow up After two meetings, review whose proposals reached decisions, who spoke and whether representatives report back to their constituencies.

CASE 30 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

Two groups booking one public hall



Scenario

A residents' cultural association and a religious youth group book the same public hall for Saturday. Each holds a receipt issued by a different officer. Both have paid for transport, and online comments frame the clash as deliberate discrimination. The hall manager wants to cancel both events.

Discussion questions

How can the booking facts be established? Which remedy reduces loss without treating identity as the deciding factor?

Model answer

Analysis A duplicated booking has acquired an identity dimension. Cancelling both may appear neutral while unnecessarily multiplying losses and distrust.

1. Verify receipts, timing, approval authority and when the clash was discovered. Acknowledge both groups' good faith unless evidence shows otherwise.

2. Assess attendance, timing flexibility and alternative venues or sessions. Compare practical losses using transparent criteria agreed with both organisers.

3. Offer the best feasible arrangement and address documented costs through the hall's authorised remedy process. Explain why the chosen option was selected.

4. Issue a neutral factual clarification without accusing either community. Replace parallel booking channels with one register and named approval authority.

Suggested wording "Both groups have valid looking confirmations. We will examine the booking failure and options transparently, without using religion or cultural identity to decide priority."

Follow up Confirm the replacement arrangements directly with organisers and audit the next month's bookings for duplicate confirmations.

CASE 31 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

A greeting interpreted as rejection



Scenario

At an international workshop, a host offers a handshake. A participant politely declines physical contact and greets verbally. The host assumes the participant dislikes their community and later leaves them out of informal discussions. The participant notices the exclusion but does not know its cause.

Discussion questions

Which assumption drove the escalation? How can the relationship be repaired without demanding physical contact?

Model answer

Analysis A personal greeting preference has been interpreted as a judgement about identity. The exclusion is a separate action that requires correction, not a natural consequence of a declined handshake.

1. Speak privately with each person to establish what occurred and how it was understood. Do not assume the preference comes from religion or culture.

2. If both agree, clarify the misunderstanding and affirm that verbal greetings are an equally acceptable way to participate.

3. Ask the host to restore access to informal project discussions and acknowledge the mistaken inference. Do not require the participant to justify bodily boundaries.

4. Introduce all workshop greetings as optional and offer a consistent non contact welcome to everyone.

Suggested wording “I was pleased to meet you and prefer to greet without contact. My greeting was not a rejection of you or the community.”

Follow up Check that the participant receives the same invitations and information as others during the remaining workshop sessions.

CASE 32 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

Direct feedback across cultures



Scenario

A visiting adviser writes that a partner's draft is "weak and unusable." The local project lead feels publicly insulted because the entire steering group was copied. The adviser says directness saves time. The project lead stops sending drafts until they are perfect, delaying delivery.

Discussion questions

How can useful feedback be preserved while changing its delivery? What assumption about culture should be avoided?

Model answer

Analysis The problem is the wording, audience and effect of the feedback. Labelling one party direct and the other sensitive risks turning individual choices into fixed national traits.

1. Identify the actual technical issues in the draft and the intended audience for review. Separate these from character judgements.

2. Ask the adviser to acknowledge the unhelpful public wording and offer specific, actionable comments privately or through an agreed review process.

3. Agree when drafts are shared, how uncertainties are marked and which concerns require the steering group. Protect early feedback rather than demanding perfection.

4. Confirm the revised delivery plan and provide support for the technical gaps. Neither public humiliation nor hidden drafts is a sustainable quality system.

Suggested wording "We need candid comments on the work. Please identify the sections and changes needed without labels that dismiss the whole team."

Follow up Review the next two draft cycles for timely sharing, specific comments and correction of the identified technical problems.

CASE 33 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

A religious diet overlooked at a reception



Scenario

A delegation reception offers only dishes containing meat and alcohol based sauces. Several guests cannot eat the meal. The organiser says they should have warned the kitchen and suggests they remove the meat. Guests feel their participation has been treated as an inconvenience.

Discussion questions

What immediate response respects guests' choices? How should responsibility for future planning be shared?

Model answer

Analysis The failure concerns inclusive event planning and an inadequate response. Removing visible meat may not meet a guest's needs, and the organiser should not decide what is acceptable for them.

1. Apologise privately and ask affected guests what suitable options they would accept. Obtain reliable ingredient information rather than guessing.

2. Arrange an appropriate alternative with the venue, explaining any limitations honestly. Do not pressure guests to eat or disclose their beliefs publicly.

3. Review whether dietary requests were invited and passed accurately to catering. Distinguish the planning gap from blame directed at individual guests.

4. Add private dietary and allergy questions to registration, confirm suitable options and train staff to answer ingredient questions accurately.

Suggested wording "We should have checked more carefully. Please tell us what would work for you, and we will confirm the ingredients before offering an alternative."

Follow up Contact the affected guests discreetly after the event and verify the catering confirmation process before the next reception.

CASE 34 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

The meeting held in only one language



Scenario

A regional partnership runs a consultation in its most widely spoken language. A minority language group receives no interpretation and remains quiet. Organisers report unanimous support because no objections were voiced. Later, residents reject the proposed project and accuse organisers of manufacturing consent.

Discussion questions

Why is silence insufficient evidence of consent? What would make the consultation meaningful?

Model answer

Analysis Participation was formally open but not linguistically accessible. An inaccurate claim of unanimity has turned an access barrier into a legitimacy problem.

1. Correct the consultation record to explain the language limitation and withdraw the unsupported claim of unanimous agreement.

2. Ask affected residents which languages and formats are needed, including oral explanation where written materials are insufficient.

3. Arrange competent impartial interpretation and translated or otherwise accessible summaries. Allow questions and separate discussion before asking for a position.

4. Repeat relevant consultation steps and record support, concerns and unresolved issues accurately. Explain how comments can change the decision rather than using attendance as endorsement.

Suggested wording "Our meeting did not give everyone an equal opportunity to understand and respond. We will correct the record and consult again in accessible languages."

Follow up Check comprehension through participants explaining options in their own words, and publish how the renewed consultation affected the proposal.

CASE 35 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

A sacred symbol used in a campaign



Scenario

A development organisation places a community's sacred design on promotional shirts without asking. Staff describe it as celebrating local culture. Community members object and request removal. A donor wants distribution to continue because the shirts are already printed and appear in campaign photographs.

Discussion questions

Who should advise on the use of the design? Why does the cost of printing not settle the concern?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict concerns permission, cultural authority and the use of meaningful symbols. Good intentions and sunk costs do not establish consent or appropriate representation.

1. Pause further distribution and promotional use while the concern is assessed. Ask who the community recognises as appropriate advisers, including relevant custodians.

2. Listen to the specific meaning and objection without requiring public disclosure of restricted knowledge. Review how the design was selected.

3. Agree a proportionate remedy, which may include replacement, removal from future material and an acknowledgement shaped with affected people. Review permissions before reusing images.

4. Create a documented cultural review process for future designs. Explain the decision to the donor without casting community objections as hostility to development.

Suggested wording "We used the design without checking permission. We have paused distribution and would like guidance on an appropriate remedy and future approval process."

Follow up Confirm withdrawn materials and revised permissions, and ask the agreed advisers whether the remedy has addressed the concern.

CASE 36 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

A diplomatic gift refused



Scenario

A visiting delegation gives an expensive watch to a public official after a meeting. The official declines because of institutional gift restrictions. The visitors interpret the refusal as an insult and threaten to cancel the partnership announcement. Staff urge the official to accept privately to avoid embarrassment.

Discussion questions

How can respect be expressed without bypassing policy? What alternative gesture might be suitable?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict arises from different expectations about gifts and an institutional boundary. Concealing acceptance would worsen the integrity problem instead of resolving the misunderstanding.

1. Thank the delegation for the intention and explain the applicable institutional restriction calmly, without implying the visitors meant to compromise anyone.

2. Consult the authorised protocol or ethics contact about permitted handling, documentation or return. Do not invent an exception or accept privately.

3. Offer a modest alternative if allowed, such as exchanging publications or a formal message of appreciation.

4. Separate the partnership discussion from the gift issue and agree gift guidance before future visits. Preserve everyone's dignity without making the announcement conditional on acceptance.

Suggested wording "We value the gesture and your visit. Our institution's rules prevent acceptance of a gift of this kind; may we exchange a publication or message of appreciation instead?"

Follow up Confirm the gift's documented disposition and circulate approved protocol guidance to both organising teams before another visit.

CASE 37 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

Different expectations about meeting time



Scenario

An international team schedules a consultation for 10 a.m. The external adviser begins at 10, but several community representatives arrive at 10:40 after transport delays and a local welcoming obligation. The adviser calls them unprofessional; they say key decisions were made without legitimate representation.

Discussion questions

What needs repair in the current meeting? How can planning account for barriers without making timing meaningless?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict combines real scheduling constraints with disrespectful attribution. Neither stereotypes about punctuality nor unlimited delay solves the representation problem.

1. Check why representatives were delayed and whether essential decisions occurred before their arrival. Distinguish an explanation from a blanket assumption about culture.

2. Pause any provisional decision that required their participation and provide an accessible summary of what was discussed. Acknowledge the public label.

3. Agree a realistic start, arrival support and advance contact arrangements. Clarify which decisions require specified representation and what happens if participants are late.

4. Build local welcome requirements into the agenda rather than treating them as unexpected interruptions. Keep end times and practical constraints explicit.

Suggested wording "We need both reliable timing and legitimate participation. Let us revisit the decisions that required your input and plan arrival and welcome arrangements more clearly."

Follow up Review actual arrival barriers and representation at the next meeting, then adjust arrangements using evidence rather than national stereotypes.

CASE 38 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

A historical grievance at a cultural exchange



Scenario

During a cultural exchange, a guest refers to a painful period of another country's history as a "minor disagreement." Participants from affected families object. The moderator asks everyone to move on because the event should be positive. Several participants leave and criticise the event online.

Discussion questions

How can the moderator acknowledge harm without adjudicating the entire historical dispute? What should happen before dialogue resumes?

Model answer

Analysis The dismissive description and the attempt to silence objections have undermined trust. Cultural exchange does not require people to suppress the significance of historical suffering.

1. Pause the session and acknowledge that the language caused harm. Avoid demanding that departing participants return or accept an immediate apology.

2. Consult affected participants privately about whether and how they wish to continue. Clarify the event's scope and limits.

3. Invite the speaker to correct the minimising language and distinguish their statement from a neutral factual description. Do not stage a debate over participants' family experiences.

4. If further dialogue is appropriate, use a prepared facilitator and reliable historical material. Agree respectful boundaries and allow disagreement without compelled reconciliation.

Suggested wording "Calling this a minor disagreement dismissed experiences that matter deeply. We need to acknowledge that before deciding whether this session can continue constructively."

Follow up Provide a factual event update agreed where possible with affected participants and review moderator preparation before the next exchange.

CASE 39 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

The seating plan that signals favouritism



Scenario

A conference places one delegation beside the host and another behind a pillar. The organiser says the arrangement was based on table size. The disadvantaged delegation sees a deliberate political message and refuses the opening session. The programme begins in twenty minutes.

Discussion questions

What can be clarified and repaired immediately? How can the organiser avoid creating a new slight while changing the plan?

Model answer

Analysis The seating arrangement affects visibility, access and perceived status regardless of intent. An urgent practical remedy is preferable to arguing that the delegation should not feel offended.

1. Ask the delegation privately about its specific concern and check visibility, accessibility and existing protocol commitments.

2. Explain the practical error briefly and acknowledge its effect without defensively debating motives. Consult the protocol lead about a consistent remedy.

3. Reconfigure seating using transparent criteria, such as equivalent delegation positions and accessible sightlines. Check the impact on others before announcing the change.

4. Inform affected guests discreetly and keep the opening on a realistic timetable. Review venue layout and protocol approval before future events.

Suggested wording "The arrangement did not give your delegation equivalent visibility. We are correcting the layout using the same criteria for all delegations."

Follow up Check sightlines and delegate feedback after the first session, and confirm revised seating remains consistent for later events.

CASE 40 CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

Translation changes the meaning of a promise



Scenario

At a partnership meeting, one side says it will “consider funding” a training centre. The translated summary states it “will fund” the centre. Community representatives announce construction plans. When the funder clarifies its position, residents accuse the local partner of deception.

Discussion questions

Which record should be checked before assigning blame? How can expectations be corrected without pretending no harm occurred?

Model answer

Analysis A conditional statement became a commitment during interpretation or recording. The issue is both factual accuracy and the reliance created by the inaccurate public announcement.

1. Compare original notes, any authorised recording and both language versions with a competent independent interpreter. Confirm what was said and what remains uncertain.

2. Ask the parties to agree a corrected statement distinguishing exploration, approval conditions and any actual commitment.

3. Communicate the correction through the same channels as the original announcement. Acknowledge the impact and pause unsupported construction expenditure.

4. Introduce bilingual review of decision records, read back important commitments and require confirmation before public announcements. Avoid blaming the interpreter without examining the whole approval process.

Suggested wording “The funding discussion was conditional, and the translated record overstated it. We will correct the statement and explain what must happen before any commitment exists.”

Follow up Check that public materials have been corrected and that the next meeting’s commitments are confirmed in both languages before release.

CASE 41 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

Aid lists that exclude host families



Scenario

An organisation distributes emergency supplies to displaced households. Nearby host families, also struggling, receive nothing and accuse newcomers of taking resources. Some threaten to block the distribution truck. Staff say the donor funds only displaced households and that the list cannot be questioned.

Discussion questions

How can immediate access remain safe? What can be changed when funding eligibility is limited?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict combines urgent need, perceived unfairness and rigid programme communication. Host community concerns do not justify blocking aid, but ignoring their needs can deepen tension.

1. Assess distribution safety with appropriate local partners and avoid forcing staff or recipients through a confrontation. Maintain impartial assistance planning.

2. Explain eligibility and funding limits clearly, while providing a safe channel to correct list errors without public disclosure of sensitive household details.

3. Assess host community needs and refer or advocate for additional support. Explore changes permitted by the donor rather than promising an unauthorised expansion.

4. Include representatives from both groups in communication and monitoring without giving leaders unchecked power over individual eligibility. Separate need from political loyalty or identity.

Suggested wording "The current grant has limits, but your needs deserve assessment. We will explain the criteria, review errors and seek support without allowing threats to decide who receives aid."

Follow up Monitor access incidents, corrected eligibility errors and progress on referrals or funding discussions for host community support.

CASE 42 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

A contractor misses a community deadline



Scenario

A contractor promises to complete a community clinic before the rainy season. Work stops after an unpaid invoice, but the project manager says the invoice lacks evidence. Residents accuse both sides of diverting money. The unfinished site has open trenches near a footpath.

Discussion questions

What requires action before the payment dispute? How should responsibility be determined?

Model answer

Analysis The immediate risk is the unsafe site. The contract, payment evidence and delivery delay are linked but must be examined rather than resolved through public allegations.

1. Secure or isolate hazards through the responsible site and project authorities, and tell residents how to avoid unsafe access.

2. Review the contract, completed work, invoice requirements, payment history and reasons for stoppage with qualified project personnel.

3. Hold a structured negotiation on verified work, missing evidence, authorised payment and a realistic completion or remobilisation plan. Use the contractual dispute route if needed.

4. Share an accurate public progress summary and a complaint contact without publishing unsupported accusations. Name responsibility for site safety throughout the dispute.

Suggested wording "The trenches need securing regardless of who owes what. Then we will verify the invoice and work completed before agreeing payment and a revised schedule."

Follow up Inspect safety measures promptly and track verified milestones, invoice actions and community updates each week until the site is complete or safely closed.

A donor changes the project midway



Scenario

A donor asks an NGO to replace a planned adult literacy programme with digital skills workshops. The community helped design the literacy programme and has already recruited learners. NGO staff fear losing the grant if they object. Volunteers announce that the NGO has sold out the community.

Discussion questions

Which commitments and constraints must be made visible? What would genuine consultation allow people to influence?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute concerns changed expectations, donor influence and community ownership. Pretending the change is already agreed would make consultation performative.

1. Clarify whether the donor's request is mandatory, negotiable or a proposal. Review existing commitments and what costs or outcomes the grant permits.

2. Explain the proposed change honestly to learners and volunteers, including which decisions remain open. Gather evidence about literacy needs and digital access barriers.

3. Negotiate options with the donor, such as a staged programme or complementary modules, using evidence rather than claiming community consent prematurely.

4. Document the final decision, rationale and transition support. If the original service cannot proceed, communicate limitations and alternatives rather than promising delivery without resources.

Suggested wording "This proposal changes what learners expected. Before agreeing, we need to explain the impact and discuss whether the programme can still meet the needs identified."

Follow up Check learner participation and whether excluded learners receive realistic alternatives; report the consequences of the redesign to the donor and community.

CASE 44 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

A protest over a development project



Scenario

A company begins preparatory work for a road project after meeting selected local leaders. Residents whose homes may be affected say they were not consulted. A peaceful protest blocks access to the site. The company wants police to clear the road, while protesters demand permanent cancellation.

Discussion questions

What information and authority must be clarified? How can dialogue occur without treating protest as consent or misconduct?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict concerns project legitimacy, potential displacement and exclusion from decisions. The facilitator cannot determine property rights or authorise forced access through a meeting.

1. Assess immediate safety and seek de escalation through competent actors. Encourage a pause on actions that could cause irreversible harm while concerns are examined.

2. Verify project approvals, consultation records, affected households and available impact information with qualified personnel. Do not assume selected leaders spoke for everyone.

3. Offer accessible independent dialogue on concerns, alternatives and the formal decision or review routes. Ensure affected people can obtain appropriate advice and participate without intimidation.

4. Record unresolved objections and agreed interim steps accurately. Any discussion of access or compensation requires informed voluntary participation and the proper authorised process.

Suggested wording “People affected by the project need understandable information and a genuine route to challenge it. A meeting today will not be treated as approval to proceed.”

Follow up Monitor compliance with interim steps and whether affected households receive information and meaningful access to the authorised review process.

CASE 45 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

Women excluded from relief decisions



Scenario

A village committee chooses relief items through meetings attended mainly by men. Women later report that distributions lack essential personal items and take place when they are collecting water. Committee leaders say household heads have already approved the plan. Staff propose asking one woman to endorse it.

Discussion questions

Why would one endorsement be insufficient? How can programme decisions change in response to consultation?

Model answer

Analysis The problem is a decision process that overlooks different needs and practical barriers. Adding one symbolic representative will not automatically create safe or meaningful influence.

1. Consult diverse women and girls through appropriate safe channels, alongside other underserved groups. Avoid requiring disclosure of sensitive needs in public.

2. Review item selection, distribution timing, access and who controls collection. Explain what can be changed and what constraints require negotiation.

3. Revise the programme based on the findings, with suitable privacy, access and complaint arrangements. Include affected groups in ongoing decisions rather than only final approval.

4. Communicate changes without exposing individuals who raised concerns. Track how recommendations influenced actual items and delivery.

Suggested wording “Approval by household heads did not capture everyone’s needs. We will consult directly and explain which changes result from what people tell us.”

Follow up Review collection access and the usefulness of distributed items through confidential feedback, checking whether earlier barriers have actually reduced.

CASE 46 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

Two NGOs compete for the same community



Scenario

Two NGOs offer similar training in the same settlement on the same days. Each accuses the other of stealing participants. Community members receive contradictory messages about attendance allowances. Neither organisation has shared its timetable or eligibility criteria, and both claim exclusive community support.

Discussion questions

What information can be coordinated without sharing personal data? Who should decide which service a resident attends?

Model answer

Analysis The conflict is driven by organisational incentives and poor coordination. Community members are participants with choices, not resources that an organisation owns.

1. Compare public programme objectives, schedules and allowance information. Correct inconsistent messages without exchanging participant lists unnecessarily.

2. Consult residents about needs, preferred timing and duplication. Do not require leaders to pledge exclusive support to one organisation.

3. Agree complementary schedules, referral arrangements and clear communication of benefits and eligibility. Review donor requirements before making changes.

4. Create a coordination contact and escalate unresolved mandate questions through the relevant coordination mechanism. Maintain independent complaint routes for participants.

Suggested wording “Residents should not have to navigate our competition. Let us clarify the offers, reduce unnecessary overlap and allow people to choose the services that meet their needs.”

Follow up Check timetable overlap, contradictory messages and participant feedback after the next programme cycle, using aggregated data where possible.

CASE 47 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

Rumours of stolen community funds



Scenario

A community treasurer delays publishing the accounts for a water project. A screenshot of an unexplained transfer circulates, and residents accuse the committee of theft. The treasurer says it was a legitimate advance but refuses to produce supporting records because the accusation is insulting.

Discussion questions

How can evidence be protected and examined fairly? What should be said publicly before the review is complete?

Model answer

Analysis An unexplained transaction and delayed reporting justify scrutiny but do not establish theft. Defensive secrecy and public accusations both obstruct a credible review.

1. Preserve financial records and arrange an authorised independent review with clear scope. Manage access and any conflict of interest without treating suspicion as proof.

2. Ask for bank records, approvals, receipts and explanations through the review process. Provide a route for evidence without intimidation or trial by social media.

3. Publish a factual statement describing the concern, review arrangements and reporting timetable. Avoid either declaring guilt or dismissing the concern before findings exist.

4. Act on substantiated findings through the appropriate governance and reporting channels. Strengthen approvals and regular reporting regardless of the outcome.

Suggested wording "The transaction needs an explanation supported by records. An independent review will establish the facts; until then we should neither declare theft nor block scrutiny."

Follow up Track delivery of the review, publication of appropriate findings and completion of corrective actions, including any necessary referrals.

Water releases across a border



Scenario

Two neighbouring countries share a river. Upstream authorities release less water during a dry period. Downstream farmers report losses and politicians accuse the upstream country of deliberately causing hunger. Each side publishes different rainfall and reservoir figures. There is an existing technical cooperation forum.

Discussion questions

Which technical questions should be addressed before bargaining over blame? Who needs a voice beyond national officials?

Model answer

Analysis The dispute combines scarcity, contested data and political pressure. A teaching exercise cannot prescribe allocations without technical evidence and the applicable agreements.

1. Use existing authorised channels to clarify communication and any urgent downstream impacts. Avoid promising a release that the facilitator has no power to secure.

2. Convene a jointly accepted technical assessment of rainfall, storage, planned releases and demand, documenting uncertainty and methods.

3. Bring findings to authorised negotiators and include affected livelihood, environmental and community perspectives through suitable consultation. Explore feasible temporary measures without prejudging rights.

4. Agree data sharing, notice of releases, monitoring and a route for unresolved questions under the relevant framework. Communicate uncertainties rather than announcing victory over the other side.

Suggested wording “The losses and supply constraints need a common evidence base. Let us verify the figures and identify temporary options through the established forum.”

Follow up Review shared data and agreed measures at scheduled intervals, including downstream effects and whether notice commitments are met.

A local ceasefire is breached



Scenario

Two armed groups agree to a local pause to allow civilian movement. Gunfire is reported near a crossing, and each blames the other. Families waiting to travel receive conflicting assurances that the route is safe. A volunteer wants to visit the crossing alone and determine who fired first.

Discussion questions

Why should the volunteer not investigate alone? What information is necessary before communicating about civilian movement?

Model answer

Analysis The case concerns immediate civilian safety and an unverified breach in an armed setting. General dialogue skills do not qualify a volunteer to investigate hostilities or guarantee safe passage.

1. Do not send the volunteer into the area. Refer reports through the designated monitoring, humanitarian and safety channels with relevant operational competence.

2. Ask authorised parties to clarify the incident and current conditions through established contacts. Distinguish verified observations from allegations.

3. Communicate only confirmed guidance through competent actors; do not label the crossing safe merely because either armed group says so. Support people to receive updated information without pressure to travel.

4. Use the agreed incident review mechanism to establish facts and negotiate corrective steps. Prioritise civilian protection over securing a symbolic public reconciliation.

Suggested wording "We cannot verify the route or promise safe passage. The report needs the designated monitoring and humanitarian channels before any travel guidance is issued."

Follow up The responsible operational actors reassess conditions and review the alleged breach; facilitators track agreed communication actions without conducting field verification themselves.

CASE 50 HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

A peace agreement that no one implements



Scenario

After months of tension, community representatives sign an agreement on shared market access. The document promises fairness and cooperation but names no responsible people, timetable or review process. Two weeks later the same access barriers remain, and each group says the other broke the deal.

Discussion questions

Why did signing fail to change behaviour? How can implementation improve without rewriting genuine disagreements as agreement?

Model answer

Analysis The text expresses intentions but lacks operational commitments. Disappointment reflects both implementation gaps and possible differences in what representatives thought they had accepted.

1. Review the signed text with the parties and ask each to explain what they understood. Identify agreed points, disputed meanings and actions that require outside authority or resources.

2. Turn confirmed commitments into specific actions with named owners, realistic dates and clear evidence of completion. Do not invent agreement on unresolved issues.

3. Create an accessible monitoring group with suitable representation and a complaint and escalation process. Confirm whether representatives have authority and community support to carry out the actions.

4. Communicate the revised implementation record to affected traders and schedule an early review. Acknowledge incomplete compliance without immediately abandoning the whole arrangement.

Suggested wording “The agreement needs actions people can observe. For each confirmed commitment, who will do what, by when, and how will we check it?”

Follow up Review a short implementation record weekly for the first month, recording completed actions, barriers, responsible people and unresolved questions.

Conflict analysis worksheet

Use this worksheet for any case. Complete the analysis before choosing a process or drafting an agreement.

Case number and title

Record the case and the decision you are being asked to make.

Response _____

Parties and affected people

Who is directly involved, who is affected, who is missing and who can authorise a decision?

Response _____

Facts and uncertainties

What do we know, what has only been reported, and what still needs verification?

Response _____

Positions and interests

What does each party demand? What concerns, needs or constraints might explain those demands?

Response _____

Safety and power

Can each person participate freely? Are there threats, coercion, access barriers or retaliation concerns?

Response _____

Process and responsibility

Which route is appropriate and why? What is the facilitator qualified and authorised to do?

Response _____

Options and criteria

List at least three feasible options. State the criteria you will use to compare them.

Response _____

First conversation

Write two opening sentences that acknowledge the issue without prejudging disputed facts.

Response _____

Outcome and follow up

What would change, who would act, how would progress be checked, and what happens if agreement fails?

Response _____

Agreement and review template

This template records practical commitments for a suitable voluntary process. It is not a substitute for necessary legal review, formal reporting or an authorised decision. Do not present an agreement as binding unless that status has been properly established.

1 Participants and authority

Names or agreed identifiers; roles; who has authority to commit resources or approve actions.

Record _____

2 Purpose and scope

The issues being discussed and the matters outside the participants' authority or competence.

Record _____

3 Confirmed facts and unresolved questions

Briefly record agreed facts, disputed points and any verification still required.

Record _____

4 Participation and information arrangements

Record voluntary participation, accessibility support, how records will be used and any confidentiality limits.

Record _____

5 Specific commitments

For each action, record the responsible person, deadline, required support and observable evidence of completion.

Record _____

6 Communication

Who informs affected people, through which channel, using what agreed wording and privacy safeguards?

Record _____

7 Review and concerns

Name the reviewer, first review date, complaint route and process for missed commitments or new concerns.

Record _____

8 Confirmation

Read the record back in accessible language. Confirm understanding, corrections, authority and any need for independent advice.

Record _____

Facilitator notes and marking guide

Assess the quality of reasoning and the suitability of the response. Learners do not need to reproduce the model wording. Credit well supported alternatives and recognition of missing information.

Facts and diagnosis 4 marks

Distinguishes evidence from assumptions, identifies the central issue and recognises competing interests.

Safety and power 4 marks

Recognises relevant risks, coercion, access barriers and limits. Selects appropriate protection or referral when necessary.

Process choice 4 marks

Explains why negotiation, mediation, investigation, formal review or another authorised process fits the case.

Practical response 4 marks

Offers specific feasible actions, respectful communication and clear responsibility without inventing facts or authority.

Implementation and review 4 marks

Includes realistic commitments, review dates, evidence of progress and a route for unresolved concerns.

Total available 20 marks. A response recommending coercive reconciliation, concealing serious allegations or sending an unqualified person into danger requires correction before a role play continues, regardless of its total score.

Debrief prompts

- Which assumption changed after you heard another perspective?
- Whose voice or authority did your first plan overlook?
- Which action would reduce harm even if no agreement is reached?
- What would make the proposed agreement fail in practice?
- What would you do differently if one participant could not speak freely?

Learning transfer

Ask learners to rewrite one weak agreement as observable commitments and one accusatory statement as a factual concern. Review the result against the case rather than rewarding polished language alone.

Sources and further learning

The cases, questions, model answers and dialogue are original fictional teaching material. The following references inform general process principles and professional boundaries. They do not endorse the cases or establish which laws apply in any particular location. Reference pages were checked during preparation on 21 October 2026.

United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation

United Nations, 2012. A foundation for preparedness, consent, impartiality and inclusive mediation. Most relevant to the framework and diplomatic or peace process cases.

https://peacemaker.un.org/en/documents/united-nations-guidance-effective-mediation

Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies

United Nations. Supports attention to who participates and how participation affects decisions. Relevant to cases on excluded groups and peace committees.

https://peacemaker.un.org/en/documents/guidance-gender-and-inclusive-mediation-strategies

Mediation at work

Acas. Explains voluntary workplace mediation and its role in helping people resolve relationship problems. Workplace procedures and legal requirements depend on the setting.

https://www.acas.org.uk/mediation

Approaching a bullying or discrimination complaint

Acas. Explains why an informal route is not appropriate for every concern. Relevant to the distinction between relationship repair and necessary complaint handling.

https://www.acas.org.uk/handling-a-bullying-discrimination-complaint

Mediation conciliation and arbitration

GOV.UK. Distinguishes processes and identifies the need for formal investigation in relevant workplace matters. This is United Kingdom guidance rather than a statement of worldwide law.

https://www.gov.uk/solve-workplace-dispute/mediation-conciliation-and-arbitration

Ten ways to prevent violence against women and girls

UN Women Transparency Portal. Includes survivor centred responses and connection to specialist support. Relevant to recognising the limits of ordinary family mediation in the coercion case.

https://open.unwomen.org/en/story/ten-ways-prevent-violence-against-women-and-girls

About the Author



Korede Olafimihan

Korede Olafimihan is the author of 50 Conflict Resolution Case Studies and Model Answers. His experience includes work with several non-governmental organisations, which informs his interest in practical approaches to community engagement and cooperation.

Through fictional scenarios, discussion questions and model responses, this handbook helps readers explore conflict in workplaces, families, communities and international settings. His emphasis is on listening carefully, examining evidence and turning constructive dialogue into practical action.