



## **“Mediation as a method of peer education, conflict prevention and peace education”**

Report of the study session held by  
IFM-SEI  
in co-operation with the  
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Budapest / Strasbourg

**13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005**



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.



## **“Mediation as a method of peer education, conflict prevention and peace education”**



Report of the study session held by IFM-SEI  
in co-operation with the  
European Youth Centre Budapest  
of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg  
**13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

**IFM-SEI**  
Rue de Commerce, 2 – 2<sup>étage</sup>  
1000 Brussels - Belgium  
tel:32 02 215 79 27, fax: 32 02 245 79 27  
E-mail: [contact@ifm-sei.org](mailto:contact@ifm-sei.org)  
website:[www.ifm-sei.org](http://www.ifm-sei.org)

## Contents

## Page Number

• <b>Executive Summary</b> .....	4
• <b>Introduction</b> .....	5
• <b>Aims of the Study Session and target group</b> .....	5
• <b>Programme flow and objectives</b> .....	5/6
• <b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March</b> .....	7
➤ Welcome evening	
• <b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March</b> .....	7
➤ Introductory session	
➤ Expectations	
➤ Team building	
➤ What is conflict?	
➤ International Evening	
• <b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March</b> .....	11
➤ What is mediation?	
➤ Human sculptures	
➤ Communication skills	
• <b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March – Basic Skills</b> .....	15
➤ Phase One: Introduction to mediation fundamentals	
➤ Rules of Mediation	
➤ Phase Two: Explaining your point of view	
➤ Feedback Rules	
➤ Reflective listening	
➤ Phase Three: Conflict enlightenment	
➤ ICL and mediation	
• <b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March – Basic Skills</b> .....	21
➤ Role plays	
➤ Phase Four: Finding a solution	
➤ Free afternoon	
➤ Dinner in town	
• <b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March – Basic Skills</b> .....	23
➤ Phase Five: Writing an agreement	
➤ Applying stages four and five to a real situation	
➤ Mediation in a local setting	
➤ Planning the mediation centre for Global Village 2006	
• <b>Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March</b> .....	27
➤ Role plays – the mediation process	
➤ International conflict	
➤ Evaluation	
➤ Farewell party	
• <b>Results and follow up of the Study Session</b> .....	30



## **Executive Summary**

This is the final report of the “Mediation as a Method of Peer Evaluation, Conflict Prevention and Peace Education” Study Session, conducted by IFM-SEI at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, March 13th-20th, 2005. It begins with an explanation of IFM-SEI’s interest in educational youth activities and what its aims and objectives were with this one in particular. This is followed with a brief outline of the program flow and then a detailed analysis of each of the days of implementation. It closes with a review of the evaluation of the study session as well as details about what outputs it achieved and what its expected outcomes will be.

Both the organisers and participants felt that this was an enormously successful Study Session. That success was possible only because of the commitment and devotion of the Preparatory Team and because of the energy, enthusiasm and maturity of the participants. I would like to thank everybody involved for giving everything that they could to this Study Session, and I would also like to thank the Council of Europe for its continued support of initiatives such as this that I know are critical investments in Europe’s youth and its future.

*Tamsin Pearce*

Tamsin Pearce  
Course Director

## **Introduction**

IFM-SEI is committed to the principle of peace and believes firmly in the effectiveness of peer education as a tool to achieve this. We have been working on methods of conflict resolution and more specifically mediation, over a number of years, and have witnessed quite a level of success with our target group of children and young people. Following an IFM-SEI study session in 2000 on mediation, a pilot peer education project was initiated by participants. Several members of the group decided to run a mediation tent at the IFM camp in summer 2000, attended by close to 1000 young people from all over the world. The tent offered participants at the camp the opportunity to receive support and help with any conflicts they were facing. The pilot project was a great success and resulted in a follow-up project working to multiply the mediation skills already learned by the participants of the study session. Over the course of three weekend training sessions during the early part of 2001, approximately 30 peer educators and mediators were trained to staff the expanded peer education and mediation centre (MEST-UP) at a camp of 4000 young people in Nottinghamshire. The Woodcraft Folk (IFM's UK-based member organisation) has continued to train new peer mediators and runs mediation centres at all larger camps, with great success.

In addition to this, IFM's 'Middle East Youth For Peace' (MEYFP) project promotes mediation as a method of peace education and conflict prevention. Gathering together young people from our 5 member organisations in Israel and Palestine (one of which is the largest youth organisation in Israel), we have been working with people affected by conflict in their daily lives.

In order to spread the practice of mediation more widely within the movement, IFM-SEI took the decision to run a second mediation seminar, bringing together those participants able to multiply the skills at local and national level. The team was composed of Tamsin Pearce, IFM Vice President with responsibility for training, Adam Raven, a member of the Woodcraft Folk involved in both the Study Session in 2000 and subsequently in training teams of mediators, Marthe Lund, the Secretary General of Framfylkingen Norway and Mike Leach, a trainer from Canada who came into contact with IFM via the Council of Europe Training for Facilitators course.

### **Aims of the study session:**

- To reach a common understanding of conflict, mediation and its application in youth organisations and wider society
- To equip participants with basic mediation skills for use in peer group settings
- To explore the use of mediation in a wider context including international conflicts
- To initiate national and international mediation projects and form an international mediation team for Global Village 2006

### **Target group:**

- Those active in an IFM-SEI member or partner organisation
- Aged 18-30
- Able to communicate effectively in English
- Motivated to implement the outcomes of the seminar
- Able to participate in the whole activity

### **Programme flow and objectives**

1. Introduction

- To get to know each other, the team, house, IFM, CoE, programme, seminar
- To volunteer for report writing and social group

## 2. What is conflict?

- To reach a common understanding of conflict
- To explore different types of conflict

## 3. What is mediation?

- To introduce the concept of mediation
- To reach a common understanding of the term mediation

## 4. What is the need for mediation in IFM organisations?

- To explore and share ideas/experiences about the national situations
- To start a thought process about how mediation can be used in IFM

## 5. Communication skills

- To explore the importance of communication in mediation particularly listening skills, body language and questioning skills
- To practice communication skills and experience the effects of good and bad communication

## 6. Rules of mediation

- To raise awareness of the rules of mediation and the need to apply them

## 7. Basic skills

- To introduce the five phases of mediation
- To practice the basic stages of mediation
- To equip participants with the tools for using mediation in controlled situations

## 8. Applications of mediation in smaller settings

- To introduce ways of using mediation in reality
- To bring mediation to a closer level

## 9. International conflict

- To make the connection between what we're doing and real situations participants will know about
- To explore the uses and effects of mediation in reality

## 10. Mediation follow-up in IFM

- To initiate and begin planning follow-up projects at local national and international levels

## 11. Evaluation

- To give feedback to improve mediation training and study sessions generally in IFM

## **IFM-SEI European Seminar: Mediation as a method of peer group education, conflict prevention and peace education**

### **Sunday 13th March**

- Arrival of participants
- Welcome evening

### **Participants' reflections**

*"Welcome Party- we met for the first time. People were tired after their journey, but still up for a party and a few games. We got to know each other and played a few name games, it was a really good evening, but unfortunately not everyone arrived for the start. One of the games was a 'Treasure Hunt' around the youth centre to get to know the building which is going to be our home for the next week. After this we had a few drinks and got to know each other a bit better".*

### **Monday 14th March**

- Introduction to the team, programme and group
- 'Carousel'
- Introduction to the seminar, IFM, CoE
- Expectations balloon
- Team building – 'helium stick', Eggsercise, 'Through the labyrinth'
- What is Conflict?
- Reflection groups
- International Evening

### **Participants' reflections**

#### **Session 1**

*We started the morning with introductions from the team (Tamsin, Adam, Marthe, Mike and Yael), of the seminar, of IFM and to the Council of Europe.*

*We also played a game (Carousel) to get to know a bit more about each other and our backgrounds.*

*After this introduction to the week, participants displayed their fears, expectations and their contributions to the week, through the hot air balloon game.*

*This exercise showed that the participants had high expectations for the seminar, and were eager to learn more. It was also important for us to be aware of everyone's worries, so that we can take care of each other as a group.*

#### **Session 2**

*This session focused on team building and the importance of communication.*

*Before we started exercises on team building we received some technical information about Travel Reimbursement from our European Youth Centre advisor, Yael.*

*We did three team building exercises, the helium stick, the maze and a construction exercise. These exercises really showed us the importance of communication and co-operation and it was also fun! The exercises will be useful to use in our own organisations.*

#### **Session 3**

*We started the session with an energiser, because everyone was a bit tired after lunch. In this session we had an external lecturer, Ditta. The topic was conflict. Our first exercise was to map out our own individual interpretations of conflict, and what we associate with that on a 'DNA diagram'. This showed that conflict was a very broad topic, and that conflict could be both negative and positive. After this we divided into groups, and were given questions to explore around conflict: What are the reasons for conflict?, how does conflict develop? and what are its causes? We found that all these issues were connected and some of the key words that came out of this session were: lack of communication, difference in opinion, fear, balance of power, lack of knowledge and misunderstanding. We then had a brief lecture on the concept and terminology of conflict before the coffee break.*

#### **Session 4**

*This session changed the focus towards our own organisations and the type of conflicts we will meet there. We were asked to contribute with examples of conflict situations we meet in our organisations, such as: bedtime, alcohol, responsibility, smoking, homosexuality and intolerance. This showed that whilst we have many common experiences, some conflicts were more visible in some organisations than others because of the cultural differences. We then analysed some of these problems in small groups using two types of models: the Iceberg Model and the Conflict Triangle. At the end of the session, Ditta had a short review of the day, pointing out that mediation is just one way of dealing with conflict, and that it is important to take conflicts on an individual case basis.*

#### **Reflection Groups**

*The whole day ended with us going into our reflection groups, to recap and discuss what we had learnt during the day. It also offered a place for bringing up positive and negative experiences about both the sessions, and other experiences we have had during our time at the EYC.*

#### **Methods:**

##### **Presentation of IFM-SEI**

We started off the seminar by doing a presentation of the organisation in charge of the study session, the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI). All but one participant came from a member organisation of IFM-SEI and more than half had been to an IFM-SEI event or study session earlier. Since most of the participants had some knowledge of the organisation, the presentation focused on the basic structure of IFM-SEI and on some of the regional structures.

##### **Carousel**

“Carousel” was selected as the exercise to open the Study Session, both to help the participants get to know one another, but also to demonstrate that learning about and from one another would be an integral part of the learning process.

##### **Expectations balloon**

It was important for the team to hear the expectations the participants had come to the session with. We chose a visual method and tried to focus not only on what the group wanted to get from the session but also what they could contribute. This was to emphasise their responsibility for ensuring the success of the programme. On hearing the expectations, the team concluded that the programme we had prepared would fit the needs of the group well. The group had high but achievable aims and were all enthusiastic about working together.

## **Team building**

The “Helium Stick Game” is a relatively simple exercise that explores both team building and team decision-making by presenting small groups with a seemingly simple task that proves to be impossible without careful group work. As expected, each group experienced the same dismay when each of their sticks rose, seemingly of its own volition, instead of descending as was the task. This unintended effect is due to the aggregate overcompensation that each member of a group makes when trying to obey the rule of always touching the stick. Each group then came up with strategies for working together to prevent the stick from rising and, slowly, to bring it to the ground. In the debriefing that followed the exercise, the participants reflected that trust seemed to be a major issue in the exercise, and were surprised by how easy and common it was for people to look for blame in other group when things did not go as planned. Another mentioned that it was interesting to notice everybody’s first instinct was to work individually, and that people only started to work as a group and to come up with group strategies when it was obvious that working as individuals ended in failure.

The second team-building exercise was ‘Through the Labyrinth’. The group managed this task well although it took them some time to realise that they had to move at the speed of the slowest person and that everyone, not just the first person needed to know the route so communication was essential.

The final exercise was ‘Eggercise’ in small groups. Most of the groups completed this task successfully and reflected on the different design methods they came up with. The groups either chose a ‘soft nest’ approach to cushion the egg’s fall or a tube for it to roll down. The method for choosing a design varied though and comments were made suggesting that the time pressure made listening to everyone’s ideas impossible. However, the group saw that those who took the time to plan and listen were most successful.

The second half of the session focused on organisational conflicts. Ditta Dolejsiova facilitated a brainstorming session on the types of conflicts the participants might face in their organisations or groups at home. This was followed by a group exercise analysing the problems using 2 models of conflict management.

## **Team reflection:**

The aim of the morning session was to facilitate an introduction and team-building process. There was a considerable amount of information to give the group but we tried to break up the session with inter-active activities like ‘Carousel’ The group responded well to the session and to each other, quickly forming a rapport with each other and the team.

At this stage of the seminar to have been so successful in creating a genuine bond between all the participants and the team was one of the main elements that helped towards the rest of the seminar running smoothly. During this session we were able to give the participants a good idea of how the rest of the seminar would run and what style to expect.

In the afternoon we dived straight into the subject of conflict. An external trainer was invited for this session, facilitating exercises and discussion on the definition of conflict and the kinds of conflicts the participants might face in reality as mediators. Although it was quite a long session involving a lot of sitting and talking, the group worked constructively and in feedback sessions they reported that they got a lot from the afternoon’s programme. At this early stage however, we did begin to notice that the group had quite a range of English skills and we needed to be very aware of this, especially as there were three native English speakers in the team. We discussed how to ensure full participation from everyone by varying the methods we used to suit all the learning needs of the whole group.

This session was the first opportunity for the participants to start thinking about conflicts and for them to explore any pre-conceptions they may have had but also as an opportunity to share experiences, and start to understand the complexity and variety within conflicts.

The day was fundamentally an introduction day with a focus on team building to create an environment which would be thought-provoking for all involved, to start the ball rolling for an interactive study session, which as a team we all feel was achieved.

## Tuesday 15th March

- Energiser
- What is mediation? World café
- De-briefing (Human sculptures)
- Posters of organisations
- Communication skills: Card Game
- Communication skills: presentation
- Communication skills: station game
- Reflection groups

### Participants' reflections

*The morning began with a short introduction to mediation by Adam, including details of what mediation is and the methods and skills that would be used throughout the seminar. Participants were asked to make personal definitions of what they believed mediation to be, which led on to the main event of the morning (taken by Tamsin):*

#### **World Café:**

*Participants were divided between 5 tables and were asked to discuss the question, "what is mediation?" They were instructed to answer this question through discussion and by making notes and drawings on a piece of flip chart paper. After about 10minutes, they were instructed to select one person to be the 'host' at their table. The rest of the group then moved to different tables, and the host remained at the table to explain the pictures and notes to the next people to arrive at the table. This was repeated with the following questions:*

*"What are the limitations of mediation as a process and of mediators?"*

*"What is the role of the mediator?"*

*"What is the need for mediation in IFM?"*

*After this process of 'cross fertilisation', the groups returned to their original tables and the host went through their sheet. Finally, the questions were discussed as a larger group.*

*After the world café, participants split into four groups to try and answer the questions using a form of human sculpture. These sculptures were then shown to the group, and the group suggested and implemented changes to make them answer the question as clearly as possible.*

*An energiser (running around the tables in the plenary room) was done, and then Mike took the group for an activity based around a card game: participants were split into 5 groups and given a pack of cards with instructions of how to play a game. They had 15 minutes to learn to play the games, and then the groups were mixed up. The new groups had to play the game against each other in silence. What they were not told was that each group had been given slightly different rules, which led to much difficulty in playing the game. This activity was designed to show how easily communication problems can occur, and the effects of a breakdown of contact.*

*After a coffee break, Yael gave a presentation on communication. This led to four exercises about communication skills.*

*Station 1: One participant told the rest about their journey to the seminar. The rest were given different papers telling them a style to tell the story in (for example, telling it as though*

*it's the funniest/saddest story they have ever heard). Their body language and use of voice was then analysed by the rest of the group.*

*Station 2: The groups were split into pairs. One member of the pair was told that they were a group leader and had to try to get as much information as possible out of the other. The other was told that they were Polish child with limited English. They had wet the bed and were being teased about it, and they had to wait 5 seconds before they answered any questions the group leader asked. This was to demonstrate that people are often uncomfortable with silence, but as a mediator it can be important to stay quiet and let someone tell their story.*

*Station 3: One person was given a simple drawing of a square, a triangle and a circle. They had to describe it to the rest of the group who had to try to replicate it. After they had described it the group were given the opportunity to ask questions that could be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. The group were then able to ask any questions. This was to demonstrate how people often have different interpretations of the same information.*

*Station 4: The group were put into pairs. One member of each pair had to try to show an emotion, and the other had to try and guess what it was and then imitate it. Body language was discussed in more general terms. This was to show the importance of body language.*

## **Methods**

A concrete objective for the second day of the study session was to give participants the space to explore the definitions of mediation and its uses drawing on their own previous experience. We felt it was important for the group to come to a common understanding about the term mediation, its role and limitations before we proceeded with learning the skills necessary for mediation. We chose the World café method in order that everyone would participate fully in the small groups but also that the participants were able to hear the ideas of almost all the others.

The Preparatory Team made the decision to follow-up on the learning derived from the "World Café." Although the "Café" is a good method to stimulate discussion on a small scale, it was felt that it would be important for the process if the small discussions it spawned be used as a basis for a larger plenary discussion. It was also important that the plenary discussion be interactive and attention-grabbing, so the Team selected "human statues" as the best way to do this.

Although the participants were open and prepared to analyse the statues of their colleagues, the idea of stepping in to make changes to the statues was an unfamiliar approach for many and there was a bit of hesitation among the participants to step in and impose their beliefs or feelings. However, after a few participants took the initiative to make some changes, the more hesitant ones soon began to get increasingly involved.

In the end, it appeared that this was an appropriate method to use because it was clear that even after the "Mediation Café" that there were still a number of disagreements and contrary impressions, and debriefing the statues both brought them out and helped the participants to either find compromises or reach agreements.

### **Poster of organisations:**

There were more than 12 different organisations and nationalities at this study session. We wanted to take the opportunity to let the participants learn a bit more about the different organisations and cultures. Instead of having a briefing in the plenary room we asked the participants to make posters of their organisations. These posters were put up in the corridor so that people could look at them during the seminar. At the end of Tuesday the walls of the second floor were plastered with colourful and imaginative posters of organisations from all

over Europe.

### **Communication skills**

While planning, the team felt that it was essential to devote a significant amount of time to communication skills during the week. The rationale for this was that good communication is vital to the mediation process and poor communication can seriously hamper developments. We chose to include an afternoon block on communication skills to raise awareness of methods of communication and also to give the group the opportunity to practice some basic skills.

### **Communication skills: 5 Tricks**

In an effort to emphasise the importance of communication in situations of conflict, the Prep Team chose an exercise called “5 Tricks” that simulates a competitive card playing competition to draw out the learning.

Several different responses were identified during the debriefing. Some participants responded by forcefully demanding that players from other groups play according to their rules. Others responded by simply giving up and withdrawing from play, while others worked to try to understand what the rules were that their opponents were playing with and accommodated in order to play properly. In one case, an attempt was made to reach a common understanding of a single set of rules. These responses were used as examples of common instinctual responses that situations of miscommunication, inter-cultural misunderstanding, confusion and stress bring out in all people. When asked what the connection or relevance of this learning was for mediation, the participants agreed that it indicates the importance of the role of the mediator/facilitator to bring clarity to the mediation process, to make sure that the parties involved are aware of the “rules” and of what the needs and expectations of the other side are.

### **Communication skills – Drawing**

By the end of the debriefing discussions, the participants in each of the groups reached an agreement that the more actively involved the listener is in the communication process, then the more an idea or concept will be transmitted and understood accurately and the more comfortable and confident both sides will feel about the process as a whole. In mediation situations, it is vital for the mediator/facilitators to understand this and to pay close attention to how communication flows during mediation and to ensure that all parties involved clearly understand what is happening and what is being said.

### **Body Language**

When reflecting on body language, the group commented that as a mediator it was essential to get your body language right. Body language could earn or lose you trust very quickly so it would be really important to be open and visibly neutral in the conflict. It was also reflected that mediators could read a lot from the body language of the conflict parties but that it would be important not to assume too much or make decisions based only on body language.

### **To tell bad stories:**

In this exercise the aim was to make the participants aware of how the presentation of a conflict is coloured by the personal view of the person who is telling his/her side of the story. In this exercise the participants had to look behind the words to get a feel for how the person is really feeling about the conflict

This exercise worked really well and the participants were active and creative. It made it clear that information changes depending on how you present it. One point that was also made was that whoever has the privilege to tell the story has the power to alter the information just using voice- and body language.

### **Listening exercise**

The strategy of most of the 'questioners' was to keep asking questions if they got no immediate response. Some reflected that they were running out of open questions to ask the child and were trying other methods. When the 'trick' was revealed there were a lot of comments about feeling uncomfortable with silence and that it felt much longer than 5 seconds. The group all agreed that this was a really important lesson to learn.

### **Team reflection**

Tuesday was a full day but also a fruitful one. A lot of ground was covered with the group in preparation for the basic skills block that started on Wednesday. Although the morning involved a lot of talking again, most of the less confident participants gave feedback that working in smaller groups was far preferable for them and that the session clarified many things. The human statues exercise ensured that the whole group had a shared understanding of the issues and allowed everyone to be actively involved. The team felt that the afternoon session on communication skills was a little too rushed and that more time spent at each of the stations would have been preferable. However, the aim was clear and the learning points reached despite this.

As with Monday, this day aimed to provide the participants with the skills that do not necessarily constitute the actual practices of mediation, but are a fundamental part of understanding the concept, and being able to use the tools that this seminar will introduce them to.

At this point in the seminar the participants had been given enough information and been involved in enough exercises to prepare them for the concept of mediation and to be introduced to the methods that this seminar will focus on. Over the next few sessions whilst being introduced to the stages of mediation, participants will be able to utilise the skills that the first two days' excersises have given them.

## Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March

- Energiser
- Phase one: Introduction to mediation and fundamentals
- Personal space exercise
- Rules of mediation
- Role-play 'Ping-pong'
- Phase 2: Explaining your point of view
- Feedback rules
- Reflective listening
- Conflict Enlightenment input
- Circle training: Intervention
- Intercultural Learning – 'Derdians'
- Reflection groups

### Participants' reflections

*We started our morning session at 9.30 with an energiser. This was a good exercise to get the blood running through our bodies and it was a hard but funny task. Then we went back up to the plenary room, and continued our morning session with Adam presenting the day's agenda and giving an introductory input on mediation skills.*

*The team explained the basic rules and methods of mediation to participants. We learned 3 phases today: initiation, explaining your point of view and conflict enlightenment. The other 2 we will learn tomorrow.*

*Then we had a "personal space game" led by Tamsin. It was quite funny and we have learned that different people have different needs of personal space. It is very important when communicating that people get as much space as they need to feel comfortable.*

*Then we split into 6 groups and played a role play game. We had to pick two people to be students who could not agree on who was more entitled to use the table tennis table. In the first part of the role play we had to pick a director who had to decide which of the boys, if any of them, had more rights over the table, or to find a compromise. In the second part the director was replaced by a mediator and this time the mediator's job was to help the boys come to a compromise and find a suitable solution for both of them. It was really interesting to learn how the decisions may differ when they are made by one person as we saw in the first part and when using negotiation to help the boys to compromise.*

*After coffee break we had an energiser led by the Latvian girls outside the EYC. Then we went back in and Mike made a short introduction about explaining your point of view. It was very exciting because of Mike's ability to make it as interactive as possible, and also his artistic skills. We learned a few techniques we will be able to use when we will be in an actual mediating role to make the parties feel confident and safe. Skills such as mirroring and reformulating their words. We found it very useful in the following activities.*

*Martha now took over and explained us the main rules of giving feedback. Many of us found this part of the day quite confusing, because it was not pointed out very clearly that it was concerning the involved parties and not the mediator.*

*We came back to the plenary room to play a reflective listening game. We were divided into couples and one had to tell a story to the other. Then the second one had to retell it by using questions of confirmation. After that people had to switch roles. It was a creative and funny way to try some of the techniques Mike showed us earlier.*

*After the lunch break Mike introduced us to the third phase: conflict enlightenment. He gave us a short introduction and then we had a game downstairs, where we were split up in 5 groups. We had 5 different conflict groups with possible solutions. We had to think of examples of conflicts and afterwards figure out how to solve them. In the beginning this was quite hard but after a while and a practice it became easier. Then we compared our*

*situations and solutions with other groups. Then we had a follow up and coffee break afterwards.*

*After the coffee break we were divided into 2 groups. One group had to act like the inhabitants of the country of Derdia. The other group had to act like engineers who had to go to Derdia to help them with building a bridge. The Derdians had special customs of communicating but they were not allowed to tell the engineers about them. The engineers had to figure them out by themselves, otherwise they would not be able to get in contact with the Derdians. It was very important for the Derdians to act exactly according to the rules: for example men weren't allowed to contact other men without first being introduced to each other by a woman. This game was great fun, but still made you think about the difficulties that you might have when communicating with people from different cultures, and how important it is to know their customs.*

*The whole day was great and we feel that we have learned a lot of new things that could help us in our future mediations.*

## **Methods**

Wednesday marked the beginning of the section on basic mediation skills. We introduced the group to a five-phase model for mediating small-scale conflicts and proceeded to practice the skills with them. We started the session with an introduction to approaching conflicts positively and understanding the place of mediation in transforming conflicts. We then moved on to phase one: Initiation.

### **First Phase: Initiation**

During the initiation you build up the fundamental elements of the whole process. Any mistake made during this first phase can have negative effects on the whole process. It is therefore important to ensure the following:

- **A good atmosphere**

This includes the room, the way you are positioned and the behaviour of the mediator. The location for the mediation should be comfortable. The mediator should try to create a co-operative atmosphere reducing as much as possible any fears that people may have.

- **Basic rules**

The mediator explains the rules: active listening, no interruptions, and no insults. It is important to ask everybody if they accept the rules. Outline the steps or phases of mediation.

- **Role of the mediator**

1. The mediator does not solve the conflict; it is the task of the conflicting parties.
2. The mediator is only responsible for the process of the mediation, not for the issues
3. The mediator should always observe confidentiality.
4. The mediator is neutral and does not judge.

- **Situation as it is.**

The mediator explains what they know about the conflict and what contact with the individuals they have had. It is important that everybody is on the same level.

- **"Where do we begin? Mark the transition to phase 2 of the mediation.**

With the first statement the mediator rules the conversation. The involved parties have the opportunity to find their place in this constellation. At the beginning the mediator will be a very dominant person in the discussions, but they have to be aware of when the parties want to become more involved in the situation and step back to be aware if the involved persons want to get involved in the conversation.

Having introduced the concept of mediation and the first phase, we chose to break up the session with an active role play exercise. The morning was a demanding one in terms of concentration and receiving lots of new information and the team decided to break up the session to keep the concentration and learning level as high as possible.

We moved the group into a new space to introduce them to the rules of mediation and left them on the wall throughout the week as a constant reminder of their importance.

### **Rules of giving feedback:**

A short input/lecture on the importance of feedback and the rules concerning this was given in order to raise participants' awareness of the importance of feedback and how to use it in a mediation process.

Feedback is communication. In everything we do, whether it is making a speech or singing a song we expect feedback. We also give feedback every day. Feedback can be constructive or destructive, praise or criticism. But either way feedback will trigger a response. If we do not give feedback on how we feel about a situation, it can easily turn in to a conflict. Therefore feedback is what drives mediation forward.

#### **1. Be direct.**

If you need to give feedback, be direct and to the point. If the other party is able (emotionally) to receive the feedback do it as quickly as possible.

#### **2. Speak for yourself.**

When giving feedback the focus should be on your self and not the other party. How does this make you feel? What are your emotions concerning this? It is important not to judge the other party, but rather tell them how their words or actions have affected you. This might feel less threatening to the other party and now they can include your view in their behaviour in the future.

#### **3. Give positive feedback.**

It is very important to also give positive feedback. This contributes to a constructive development of a possible conflict. It encourages the other party to be even more constructive. This feedback should also be focused on your self and the way you feel.

#### **4. The feedback receiver decides the circumstances.**

If feedback is going to be constructive the receiver has to be able to take it in. If you are not emotionally able to receive constructive feedback - decline and give the reason for it. Active listening is important when you get feedback, because it is in your interest to get clear and precise information. Therefore the one receiving the feedback is in control of when the feedback should be delivered.

### **Reflective listening:**

The aim of this exercise is to learn the importance of listening and processing the information you get as a mediator in a conflict. When you are a mediator

You may get large amounts of information and it is important that you manage to process this information correctly. The way you interpret something may not be right or the things you think important to focus on may not be important to the parties in the conflict.

This exercise showed the importance of listening and processing the information without forming your own opinion and making sure that the mediator is "speaking the same language" as the parties. It also showed a good technique for getting the correct information and establishing a common understanding of events.

Feedback on this role-play was that the participants were surprised at how different the solutions were when they were arrived at through different means. Several people noted that the process was much quicker when the director solved the problem but that neither party seemed contented afterwards. The other main comment was that the mediation was almost impossible at this stage because they hadn't learnt all the stages of mediation. There was some frustration at this and eagerness to proceed to the rest of the skills

### **Explain Your Point of View**

The Preparatory Team felt that the most appropriate method for teaching about the Second Phase of Mediation, "Explain Your Point of View," would be an interactive lecture done by one of the team. The lecture first introduced the second stage and the reasons why it is crucial to the overall process. It then worked on outlining a number of tools and methods that mediators can use during the phase. To demonstrate the tools, the lecturer acted out the roles of parties involved in different conflicts who were explaining their point of view, and then asked participants at random to provide examples of the various tools, to which the lecturer responded in character. The examples were debriefed one-by-one and used to see why and how a mediator might use them and also to see what benefits each brings to the process.

During the Second, "Explain Your Point of View" Phase, both parties have the opportunity to explain their point of view, and it is the obligation of the mediator to ensure that both sides are allowed to do so fully and freely. While one person speaks, the other person has to listen carefully and if necessary to write down some notes. The other person gets the possibility to describe his/her point of view with no interruption.

Usually the mediator asks the person who asked for the mediation to go first. On top of ensuring that both sides are given as much space as they need to explain their points of view, the mediator also needs to clarify each statement to ensure that all parties understand fully the other perspective. Reaching common decisions in resolving conflicts is simply not possible when parties involved are not aware of the views, needs, feelings and emotions of the other.

The mediator can use the following tools and methods to ensure that the viewpoints fully explained in a way that is clear and understandable:

- **Open Questions**

These are questions that cannot be answered with yes or no and that are structured to motivate the speaker to explain their perspective in their own words.

- **Mirror**

To repeat what has been said, using your own words. It does not always have to be literal. The mediator can also describe the feelings that she or he sees the speaker struggling with and ask for clarification.

- **Resume**

The mediator may wish to summarize what has been said so far from time to time to help all parties involved find a workable framework to structure what can often be impassioned, unstructured monologues. It is also a useful tool to bring discussion on one topic to close and move onto another.

- **Re-formulate**

While mirroring and summarizing, the mediator may wish to re-formulate judgmental statements and accusations that one party may direct towards the other into neutral,

problem-focused statements. Accusations are powerful emotionally and if left standing without being analyzed to find their problem-source can be very damaging to the overall process.

- **Clarify**

Clarifying generally makes use of most of the tools above, but one with an overall goal to find out precisely what the speaker is really trying to say in the case of obvious or possible confusion.

Once the parties explain their position, the mediator then works with them to identify a list of the topics or issues within the conflict that need to be resolved. The mediator then points out common points and differences as a further way to clarify what both sides see as being at stake in the process.

Up to this point, it is common for the mediator to have taken a major role in the mediation process, establishing the rules and beginning the communication process. At this point, his or her involvement should be less intrusive, and he or she should instead work to facilitate the discussion only and try to engage the parties in a direct conversation.

Once both parties have explained their respective points of view and agreed on which important points are at stake in the conflict, it is then time to begin the next phase.

### **Phase 3 Conflict Enlightenment**

The Prep Team felt that it would be appropriate to introduce the third stage of the mediation process with another brief lecture, which would provide the raw material that the subsequent “conflict café” exercise would then make use of to achieve a deeper understanding of the concepts. The overall aims of the phase were presented to the participants, along with brief explanations and examples of each of the different types of conflict (Fact Conflicts, Interests Conflicts, Relationship Conflicts, Values Conflicts, and Structural Conflicts), as well as the different kinds of interventions that are appropriate to each (see Appendix4). Attention was drawn to the fact that in several cases the interventions are quite different, thus underlining the importance of the proper identification of conflict types, and the potential consequences of a misidentification.

After the conflict parties have explained their point of view and have agreed on what the problem is and what the issues at stake are, the task of the third phase is to “enlighten” the process to understand what kind of conflict is at hand and to come to an understanding of why the conflict emerged when and how it did.

The aim of this phase is to further clarify the emotions, the interests and other important backgrounds to the conflict. This “enlightenment” helps the parties become conscious of themselves, the conflict, and their role within the conflict.

The mediator tries to “enlighten” the conflict by asking questions about the conflict’s background and to shed light on certain behaviour or practices of the involved persons that may have played roles in producing it. Ultimately, this process needs to help the mediator and the participants to identify exactly what kind of conflict they are dealing with, to help them then identify the best possible intervention to resolve it.

This part of the process does not need to be verbal. If a verbal discussion does not seem to be properly engaging either side, or if the mediation process has stopped or is endlessly repeating itself, or if the participants seem disinclined to speak to one another at first, then the mediator can ask them to draw pictures, or make collages, for example, to express their

positions and feelings. This method works well if the conflict in question centers on a specific object or incident.

During this phase it is necessary to develop direct lines of communication between the conflict parties. If there is an understanding of the motivations and needs of the opposing sides, the process then has the basis upon which it will then be able to begin working to find solutions to the conflict.

To reaffirm the theory of conflict enlightenment, an exercise to identify different types of conflicts was undertaken.

### **Derdians (from the Council of Europe T-Kit on ICL)**

The team decided that it was important to introduce the concept of intercultural learning to the participants and to explore the impact of culture in a mediation setting. One of the main aims for follow-up of the study session was to create an international team of peer-mediators to run a mediation centre at IFM's Global Village event in 2006 and it was therefore essential that the group developed an awareness of cultural sensitivity. The Derdians exercise comes from the Council of Europe T-kit on ICL and full instructions and guidelines for facilitators can be found at [www.training-youth.net/publications](http://www.training-youth.net/publications)

### **Team reflection:**

Wednesday was a very intense day for the participants with a lot of information to take on board as well as needing to remember and to incorporate the skills that had been learnt on the previous days into the new methods being introduced to them. At the end of the day the team accepted that perhaps we could have done more to set these methods in reality, by practicing them in a role-play context, taking this on board we made the appropriate changes to the following programme.

In addition, our concerns were confirmed after the group reflection space where we learned that Wednesday had been more confusing for the participants. When we discussed this further with them we established that phase 3 of the mediation process and the exercise we did with the group had left them with unanswered questions and a need for further clarification.

Giving this some thought in the team meeting we decided that altering the programme for Thursday morning would best meet the needs of the group, ensuring that they had a good understanding of all the phases of mediation. To this end, we planned a part forum theatre exercise to illustrate the need to understand that different types of conflicts need different types of approaches and ultimately, solutions. The evaluation of the rest of the day was very positive however, and the team felt happy with the development of the content.

## Thursday 17th March

- Energiser
- Role-plays - 'tent-mate' and 'football' conflicts
- Phase four: finding a solution
- Free Afternoon!
- Dinner in Strasbourg

Following the reflections from Wednesday, the team made the decision to start the day by clarifying the third phase of mediation – conflict enlightenment. We chose to approach this using as inter-active a method as possible to help the group visualise the process in terms of a real situation and also to engage actively with that process. We created two role-plays centred around conflicts that were slightly ambiguous in their root cause. In each of the situations, at first glance the conflict appeared to be of one type but through conflict enlightenment (obtaining more information about the situation, the people, their relationships etc) it became apparent that it was in fact another type (for example the conflict might appear to be an interest conflict at first glance but through analysis it becomes clear that it is a relationship conflict). As these require very different solutions, it was important to establish the type of conflict as accurately as possible. (For full details of the scenarios and the different types of conflicts see appendices 4 and 5) We then used part forum theatre with the group to give them the opportunity to explore the process of enlightenment in more detail.

### Methods:

The group reflected that this exercise had both clarified the third stage of mediation and also given them an insight into the challenge of mediating a conflict and the responsibility it brings. Although this was clearly quite daunting to some people, they were all eager to discover more and practice the skills.

### Phase 4: Solution finding

The second part of the morning addressed the fourth stage of the mediation process: finding solutions. A short input on the important things to consider in phase 4 was followed by a series of short exercises demonstrating the different methods for finding solutions. With these exercises we wanted to point out the importance of exploring multiple ideas for solutions in a conflict. Also we wanted to show that the different parties often have different solutions to the same problem.

The evaluation showed the importance of the parties "owning" the solution. It is important that it is the parties themselves that come up with the solutions and not the mediator. Also it showed that there is not only one solution to a conflict and it is important for the parties to hear each others' solutions before making a commitment.

The afternoon was the free afternoon for sight-seeing and shopping including the dinner in Strasbourg.

### Team reflection

Although changing the programme at the last minute involved some extra work and stress, we felt that the result was very positive. The group gained a much better grasp of the third phase of mediation which is vital to the success of the process. The method was on the whole well-received, the group seemed to engage very well with an example they could identify with so easily. However, it was also clear that only the confident members of the group volunteered to try being a mediator. On reflection we felt that had we done the

exercise in smaller groups more people might have volunteered and gained the experience but that that had to be balanced against the benefit of the whole group working together and giving solutions as well as the team being all together and able to demonstrate a ,bad' mediation technique. We concluded that we would use role play again later in the programme to give everyone a ,real-life' experience of mediation. The solution finding phase of the process was easily comprehended by the whole group and the methods explored in depth.

Although this late change in the programme was time consuming for the team members, it actually had a very positive affect on the already good relationship between the team and the participants as it confirmed to them that there is flexibility within the programme if they feel that alterations are needs, bringing about a sense of ownership of to the seminar for all involved.

## Friday 18th March

- Energiser
- Phase 5: Writing an agreement
- Applying phases 4 and 5 to a real situation
- Mediation in a local setting (Norwegian Mediation Service)
- Planning the mediation centre for Global Village 2006

### Participants' reflections

*The day started with energiser from Vic. We played a game, which was really exhausting because we were still sleepy!*

*We continued with exploring the 5<sup>th</sup> phase of Mediation. Adam introduced us to the rules of writing an agreement, which seemed to be at first very easy but after a while we put them into practice and we found them pretty hard to fulfill.*

*We repeated the role-play which we did yesterday. But before that we did a brainstorm, to remind us of the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of Mediation. We put on the flipchart all the possible solutions to the situation we were working with the day before.*

*We replaced the actors and chose one of the solutions we offered, to find out how it would work in practice. We got the chance to put ourselves in the position from Thursday morning. Also we were able to stop the performance if we thought we could do anything differently or better. We could step into the performance, replace one of the actors or give some advice.*

*What did we learn by doing this exercise?*

- 1) *It is very important that the mediator doesn't give any solutions by themselves but leads parties to their own solution by asking open questions. Parties have to come up with the solution by themselves.*
- 2) *The mediator should stay patient and calm. Mediation sessions could take a long time and if the mediator is not patient or too eager to speed up the process, it may lead to another conflict.*
- 3) *Sitting in silence is OK!*
- 4) *It is very important to think through all the possible solutions and also the consequences of them.*
- 5) *We needed practice and it was good to put ourselves into this situation and experience.*

### COFFEE-BREAK

*The second part of the morning session was done by Kristi, who works for the Norwegian Mediation Service. She introduced us her work and gave us a lot of facts about conflict situations in Norway, which need mediation service.*

*What did we learn from her?*

- 1) *Mediation is a process to make people feel safe.*
- 2) *Feelings do not have an age*
- 3) *How important it is to set up the environment and create the right atmosphere for a mediation session.*
- 4) *We noticed that we had more positive words for describing conflict.*
- 5) *Different strategies of solving conflicts.*

### Afternoon

*After Lunch we resumed the session with Kirsti. She began the session by giving us a few tips for mediation. She went into how the mediator should sit during the process, and she*

*taught us a very useful technique with using eye contact and moving the head, this would make the participants talk to one another and not through the mediator. She also made us aware that the mediator will avoid using the word WHY as it is construed as a critique of the person's actions. She taught us some useful questions that can be used instead during the conflict to help it move on if it begins to stalemate.*

- *What will happen if the contact goes on?*
- *Do you want this to happen?*
- *What do you want to do about it?*

*She also pointed out that the Mediator should avoid using the word WE and opt to use YOU, she told us that this shows that the control is in the hands of the participants to manage and solve their own conflict and not the mediator's. Everybody said that this was a very useful session and that they had enjoyed it immensely, comments were made about how well Kirsti communicated and how enjoyable the session had been. It was said that the advice we were given will be very useful for mediation.*

*We then moved on to do role plays, we were given a situation that would be difficult to mediate, we were split into groups of 4 with 1 person being an observer. The aim of the exercise was to role play a full mediation and to produce a conflict agreement that could be presented to the police as a legal contract and solution. The role plays seemed to be quite successful and it was commented upon that people had enjoyed the chance to have a go at mediation. When we reported back our agreements Kirsti gave us comments about agreements, again people said that this was very useful and that they will use the advice given.*

*Overall the feeling after Kirsti's session was a good one, people felt like they understood the role of the mediator and that they had picked up some very useful tips. Some people questioned their ability to mediate but this was done in a positive light and they feel that with practice they could become successful mediators. Kirsti gave us great encouragement at the end of the session that had shown us that we can all do it if we practice.*

*In the next session we had to plan what the mediation tent at Global Village should look like, we had to think about what the tent would look like, the size of the team and general ways in which we would train and work. It was agreed that this was a good task, but people felt concerned that maybe too much time was spent on the finer technicalities of the project. People commented that thinking about the setup of the tent had helped them to think about how to create a comfortable mediation space. However when asked most of the group said that they would not go to global village as a mediator, this was put down to the fact that they weren't confident in their ability as mediator's. It was discussed that although it is important to think about the practical side of the project people would like to spend more time developing their skills in mediation first.*

## **Methods**

The group was introduced to the fifth phase in the mediation process on Friday morning; writing an agreement. As the participants discovered, although the theory was straightforward, putting the fifth phase into action was more complicated.

### **Friday – Phase 4 and 5 – Role-play**

Drawing on the successful experiment of using the Forum Theatre technique on Wednesday to clarify and internalise the mediation process, the Prep Team decided that it would be a suitable technique to use with the participants to review Phases 4 and 5. Once again the participants were invited down to the room where the Wednesday forum theatre took place and were re-introduced to the scenario of the two bickering tent-mates that had been

explored then. Volunteers were given the familiar roles to play and everybody was given an open invitation to stop the simulation whenever they felt compelled to offer an opinion or a suggestion.

Two elements made this Forum Theatre exercise different from the former. The first was that whereas the Wednesday session focused on stages 1-3, and ended with the analysis of the conflict, this session used Stage 3 as a starting point to then work through stages 4 and 5. The second difference was that the participants were told that the Prep Team members would not be actors in this simulation, and that instead they would take on the roles of the mediator and the fighting tent mates.

After some initial hesitation, volunteers were found among the participants, and slowly the simulation progressed with ongoing analysis and ever increasing participation in the acting and analysis. One of the major struggles that the participants were encountering came in the role of the mediator as a facilitator and of the importance of allowing the two parties involved in a mediation to come up with their own solutions. Through the role-play, the participants realised both how important this is, but also how frustrating it can be, particularly when a solution seems obvious to the mediator but not to the parties. Some participants who took on the role of the mediator mentioned afterwards that all of the mediation theory had seemed so straightforward and clear up to the moment when they sat in the mediator's chair, when they suddenly realised that the whole process was much more complex and difficult than they had previously imagined. Once faced with two people with a problem and no obvious, clear-cut solution, some felt panic, and others felt that they had to work to remain structured and focused.

The participants were then introduced to a template of a written agreement and were asked to divide into pairs to write a hypothetical agreement based on the final outcome of the Forum Theatre simulation, with each taking the role of one of the two protagonists. Four examples were read out and compared, pointing out the critical elements that were or were not included. The observation was made that despite the fact that everybody watched the same simulation and took part in the discussion that it spawned, that there were still slightly differing impressions about what the main issues at stake were for the two protagonists. If anything, this last point highlighted the ambiguities and problems of perspective that can make mediation such a difficult and delicate process for the unprepared.

### **Mediation in a local setting: Experience from the Norwegian Mediation Service**

The team invited an external lecturer, Kjersti Lilloe Olsen, for the next part of the study session, concluding that hearing about mediation in a real setting would help concretise the stages of mediation for the group and give them a wider perspective on the uses of mediation. Kjersti's first session centred on her sharing her experience of mediation and conflict. She described her role as a mediator and told gripping real-life stories. The group responded very well to her as she related the theory they had learned over the week to a reality they could easily relate to.

One of Kjersti's main messages to the group was 'practice, practice, practice', so for the second half of her session she worked with the group on a more practical level, giving them an example of a real mediation situation and giving them the opportunity to role-play it.

Despite the fact that the first session appeared to be very static and non-interactive, the participants remained fully alert throughout. Kjersti is an excellent speaker with a style that had the whole group on the edge of their seats waiting to hear what happened in the situation. The practical tips and feedback she gave were relevant and useful for the group and the feedback from the session was excellent.

In order to continue the theme of putting the skills into practice, the team decided to end the day with an exercise to design a mediation centre. The exercise was based on the real example of the Global Village so the participants could undertake a real planning exercise.

### **Team reflection**

Inviting an external speaker added a different dimension and also dynamic to the session. Kjersti was able to talk from a position of unique experience that none of the team was able to do so we felt we made the right choice. However, not being 100% sure of her session plan in advance caused us some difficulties and led us to do some more last-minute changes to the programme. We had planned to continue with some more role-plays at the end of the day but had to quickly alter our plans when we realised that she had decided to use the same method. Wanting to strike the correct balance between allowing enough space for the practice of techniques and varying our methods to meet different learning styles, we decided to swap in the session on Global Village. Although put together very quickly, this exercise produced some interesting results and good learning points, and continued the theme of the participants thinking about how they can actually use the tools and methods they now have, by giving them the opportunity of thinking about how they might put this into practice on a camp within their organisation, specifically GV06

The input from Kjersti was a real insight for the participants of how mediation can be used in reality, and was again an opportunity for them to put into practice the skills that they have been learning throughout the week.

## Saturday 19th March

- Energiser
- Role-plays and discussion
- International conflicts
- Evaluation
- Farewell party

### Participants' reflections

#### ***Mediation role play***

*As always, we started the day with a funny energiser. Everyone agreed that there is a need not only for the lectures but also for this type of thing as well, so that we can get in the mood. The first thing on Saturday was the role play again about mediation. The main point was that everyone should be in the position of the mediator at least once. Based on the earlier exercises on role play we had to choose another role than before. Everyone who was the mediator the day before should not be mediator again. The idea was that everyone gets practice on mediation and the experiences of being the mediator because as Kjersti already mentioned: "Mediation is about practice, practice, practice". It was very useful to change the roles so that everyone was able to get to know how it is to be mediator or one of the parties. After all we realised that being the mediator is not so easy and everyone needs a lot of practice to reach the qualification to be the mediator.*

*After the role play there was the conversation part of it. The meaning of the conversation was to come up with some common ideas of mediation and the role of mediator which plays a big part in the mediation process. In this conversation many people who were the mediators said that they made different kind of mistakes such as interrupting the parties during the mediation process or suggesting a solution. As these role plays showed us it is not always the mediators fault if the two parties cannot come up with a solution. But noticing and knowing all the mistakes that we made, was a sign of understanding more deeply the processes and stages of mediation, which is the first step to become a real mediator. All these experiences show the effectiveness of practicing mediation with these role plays. No one can become an expert without any practical exercises.*

*It seemed that the role play worked very well and the one today clarified many things because we worked on these situations also before. Repetition did affect the results in the summary (conversation part) and people did really understand what mistakes were made and knew quite well how to correct them.*

#### ***International conflicts***

*After coffee, the topic of the session was international conflicts. The team had prepared a simulation game, where we would simulate negotiations between two countries, Pyget and Lerisa. The negotiator was USA. The participants were divided into three groups to play the three parties in the negotiation. Each group was presented with some information about the conflict, however, they were only presented with the material that their own country had produced. After twenty minutes of preparations, the parties met in a very short pre-meeting to briefly find out what the other parts wanted from the negotiations. It was evident that all the parties wanted peace, but they also had different interpretations of the situation and different goals with the negotiation.*

*The groups had ten minutes to discuss what had happened in the pre-meeting, and prepare for the negotiations. We were all looking for different strategies, but the Americans also had to decide upon some rules for the negotiations and how they wanted the parties to communicate.*

*We had 40 minutes to reach an agreement, but it was not easy for any of the groups. The Americans were chairing the meeting and had a hard time trying to push Pyget and Lerisa towards a solution. The two countries were very far away from each other, and they were also worried about the hidden agenda of USA. All the participants slipped easily into their roles, and the temperature around the negotiation table was high. While the Americans were desperate to get a solution within the 40 minutes, the Pygetians and Lerisians were more concerned about getting an agreement that protected their interests in the best way. If these things were not in order, it would be no agreement. Lerisa's main priority was their security, and the Lerisian negotiators were acting paranoid, both towards Pyget and USA. Pyget on the other hand, was offering different solutions and reacted with anger when Lerisa didn't accept any of the offers.*

*The parties did not get an agreement within the 40 min time limit. The simulation game was stopped, and Mike revealed that the game was based on the Camp David negotiations between Israel and Egypt. He asked us some questions and summed up the situation. The purpose of the game was to show us the difference between international negotiations and mediation, and how hard it is to reach an agreement when the parties have a long and complex history with many conflicts and strong economical interests.*

### **Evaluating**

*The last session of the seminar involved reviewing the seminar as a whole. It was a process of thinking back over how successful we had found it and reminding ourselves of what we had learnt.*

*We split up into our reflection groups to look at these points in a more personal way. Doing this activity in our reflection groups allowed us all to explain our feelings and thoughts about the week without any time pressures.*

*My reflection discussed:*

- *The first morning session; feedback was that the conflict had been quite confusing and hard work to mediate but also that this type of challenging exercise was useful in many ways. In that it stretched the mediator in their solution finding abilities.*
- *The second morning session; it was thought that the international conflict had been both fun and useful, but again also effectively challenging for those heavily involved in resolving the conflict:*

*After this all the participants were given 40 minutes to complete an evaluation questionnaire. This process was useful as it allowed us to see the week as a whole and rate the activities we had found most useful.*

*The last activity followed on from this. We were given a topic, participants could then stand on a chair and make statements about this topic. Other participants who agreed with the statement stood close to the chair and the less they agreed the further away they stood.*

*Topics included:*

- *Accommodation*
- *Mediation*
- *Conflict*
- *Fun and Parties*

### **Team reflection**

Although the Prep Team was a little bit concerned about this exercise's level of complexity and were worried that the English comprehension requirement would be too difficult for some of the participants to handle, in the end, the groups managed well. The pre-selection of each of the groups worked out well so that there were enough people with strong English skills on hand to help out others in each group who had a bit more difficulty understanding the role descriptions and instructions.

Two of the groups understood early on that the scenario was based on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This did not hamper the process too much as they were properly briefed by the Prep Team member assigned to them that they should focus on the information that they were provided with and not to draw retrospective lessons from what they had heard about the conflict previously. The reason for this is that certain details had been changed or simplified from the reality to suit the role play, and the introduction of such information would have confused the negotiations. The participants understood and respected this.

The negotiation process was both as smooth and as confrontational as the Prep Team hoped it would be. The debriefing afterwards brought up a number of issues surrounding the differences and similarities between different types of negotiation. The most obvious difference was that in international negotiation situations, the role of the mediator is much more intrusive than in peer mediation because their political interests push them to work towards a certain end. In this case, the mediator (President Jimmy Carter) was under pressure to achieve any peace by any means, whereas earlier exercises had demonstrated that in peer situations, it is critical that the mediator remain as unattached and objective as possible. The participants observed how in the role play both sides realized that the mediator had an agenda of its own, and observed how this made both suspicious about the entire process and made it more difficult to find a solution. The participants also noted that in an international negotiation, although you are dealing with individuals at the table, they are acting as representatives of millions of others, and so the stakes and pressures involved in finding a solution that works are much higher than in a peer mediation session. This has the effect of making it even more difficult to find solutions, particularly when one or both of the two sides is paranoid or suspicious of the intentions of the other, since solution-finding usually involves some risk-taking and trust.

## **Final Evaluation, Results and Follow-Up**

### **Evaluation**

The prep-team's final evaluation of the study session was very positive. As a team we reviewed our original aims and the extent to which we felt they had been met. Our aims were:

- To reach a common understanding of conflict, mediation and its application in youth organisations and wider society
- To equip participants with basic mediation skills for use in peer group settings
- To explore the use of mediation in a wider context including international conflicts
- To initiate national and international mediation projects and form an international peer mediation team for Global Village 2006

We felt that all of these aims had been comfortably met with the programme that we developed. The session was divided into quite neat and easily distinguishable blocks which fitted well with our aims. The first block spanned day one and two and involved looking at conflict and mediation and its applications. The content was reaffirmed throughout the session to ensure the group were comfortable with their level of understanding. The second block involved basic skills – communication and going through the stages of mediation in turn. The participants appreciated learning the theory and then trying it in practice. Block three comprised a series of activities looking at conflict and mediation in a wider context. For this we utilised the skills of Kjersti Lilloe Olsen, a mediator in the Norwegian Mediation service and also undertook a large-scale role-play illustrating international conflict and mediation. Finally we introduced the Global Village and built a network of those interested in running the peer mediation centre there.

### **IFM-SEI Study Session Outcomes**

#### **Global Village 2006**

A major outcome of the study session was the preparation of the participants for IFM-SEI's 2006 Global Village event ([www.globalvillage2006.org](http://www.globalvillage2006.org)). In this regard, the focused outcome of this study session was rather different from that of the 2000 IFM-SEI study session on mediation. The methodology of the 2005 study session was scaled up in order to prepare participants to not only undertake mediation within their home organizations or in their communities, but also in a large international setting like the Global Village. The Study Session was intended to give participants initial skills that they could use and refine by practicing at home with the expectation that some would also choose to return to the Global Village to volunteer as peer mediators. Encouragingly, a number of the participants already indicated at the end of the Study Session that despite their lack of experience that they were nevertheless willing and eager to work as peer mediators at the Global Village in a year's time. A number of others indicated that although they were interested, they would need further training and opportunities to practice before they felt fully confident in taking on the role of a peer mediator at the Global Village.

#### **Specific Learning Points**

- Techniques of mediation
- Better understanding of conflict and how to approach it with mediation
- How to identify conflicts and how they function

- Development of personal strengths and confidence in mediation
- Self exploration – in terms of competence in youth work and mediation
- Better understanding of group dynamics
- Learned about facilitation of group processes by example
- Mediation in the context of youth work

Beyond the learning of the participants, a major outcome for IFM-SEI was the opportunity to test a revised and improved methodology of teaching mediation to young people. It was tested for its ability to train young people, but also for its ability to encourage and empower them to assume the role and responsibilities of being mediators in their home communities. The methodology has been documented in a user-friendly manner and will be distributed among each of the participants should they wish to multiply the learning with their colleagues back in their home organizations.

### **Evaluation Analysis**

Participants were unanimously positive in their evaluations of the experience of the study session. They appreciated both the content and the methodology, as well as the active and very practice-oriented facilitation of the team. They appreciated the several opportunities to learn from each other and as well as from invited experts on the topic. Most participants indicated that the experience had taught them things that would help them mediate more constructively in the future with other youth in situations where they feel mediation is needed. However, relatively few of the participants felt fully competent by the end of the study session to mediate independently without assistance from somebody with more experience, and several mentioned that they wanted to learn more. Nevertheless, participants appreciated the opportunities to practice mediation that the study session provided and felt more confident of their abilities to handle conflict and to help others look for mutual solutions to common problems.

### **A Selection of Participants' Comments:**

*What are the most important things you learned during this seminar?*

- Mediation is much more useful than I thought and I see now the importance of having a good mediator.
- Solution-making is not the role of a mediator. Mediator has to be patient and only lead the conversation to agreement. Mediator does not have to be in the centre, there are strict rules to be followed.
- Mediators work is very hard and exhausting, but one can achieve a lot by using mediation.
- Now I know what mediation really is, what kind of conflicts there are and how can I help to solve the problems with mediation
- Things about conflict, how to solve it that all parties would be satisfied. Phases of mediation, how to communicate, all the rules including how to start, how to make parties comfortable and how to lead them to the best solution. Not to be afraid of communication because of the language barrier.

*How has your understanding of mediation changed during the Study Session?*

- Before the seminar I could not even understand why mediation is so needed and what role mediation should play. This seminar helped me to realise what kind of importance mediation has, even if it is just a simple conflict or an international one.
- My understanding of mediation and what it means has completely changed during this week. I feel I know a lot more, but I still have a long way to go in mediation training.

- Before this seminar I was quite aware what is mediation, but only in a very general definition. Each day I learned new things and also repeated things I learned the day before. Now I know how it works from A-Z.

*What do you feel more confident or able to do as a result of your participation in the seminar?*

- I know that it is my job to help people to find a solution instead of finding it for them. I feel more confident asking open questions instead of just assuming.
- I feel that I am able to use mediation as a method to find solutions to conflicts not everything but at least some.
- I have a greater understanding of communication, conflict and mediation and I feel this is something I can use in my organisation. I would feel more confident in a conflict situation since I have some tools I can use

*How will you follow-up your participation in the seminar?*

- Will teach some of the methods in our national educational weekend
- By making a seminar for others back home
- I want to put my mediation knowledge into practise in my organisation
- I will give the materials to my organisation. Hope to have the chance to make some kind of lecture in my organisation, at school courses, because to my opinion it is very good and interesting and also a needed topic.
- Try to find more information about this and to improve myself as a successful mediator.
- I would like to learn more, so I will see how I can get more training in mediation.
- I will use parts of these “materials” to train our leaders.

### **Follow-up**

The follow up to the study session will be four-fold:

1. Several participants will act as peer mediators at the Global Village event (camp of 5,000) in the UK where a peer mediation centre will be organised to deal with conflicts that appear among the participants
2. An additional training course is envisaged for this group to ensure they feel confident in the task.
3. An extensive report about the content of the study session
4. CD of reusable materials about mediation based on sessions developed for the study session



