

Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis

Background

Conflicts and wars have been recurrent throughout history. In 2010, over 300 conflicts have affected the lives of millions of individuals around the world. Despite their different occurrences, conflicts have common characteristics and working mechanisms. Only by analyzing the causes, actors and specific dynamics, conflicts can be efficiently mediated. To this end, conflict analysis is a vital source of information as it helps actors on the ground to gain a better comprehension of the environment in which they work and of their role in preventing the escalation of tensions.

Event Objectives

The goal of the course is to provide participants with an overview of the key elements of conflict analysis and how these can be integrated into the context of pre-intervention assessment and planning of a peace operation.

Learning objectives

At the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Identify potential and existing conflict causes as well as possible factors contributing to peace;
- Map out the actors that are engaged in or affected by conflict;
- Trace conflict dynamics;
- Analyze the interaction between the specific context and current/future interventions.

Content and Structure

The course is composed of five modules that will be covered over five weeks:

- Module 1: Causes of conflict
- Module 2: Actors in conflict
- Module 3: Dynamics of conflict
- Module 4: Integrating conflict analysis in the planning of a peace operation
- Module 5: Good practices and evaluation in conflict analysis

Methodology

The course is based on the synergy of theory and practice. The conceptual foundations of conflict analysis are explained through illustrated narratives and interactive lessons. These concepts will be applied in scenario-based activities.

During these scenarios students will apply various conflict analysis tools and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Students can also continuously check their progress through self-assessment activities. In order to create collective knowledge and to facilitate interaction and experience sharing among participants, discussion forums are organized.

Taking advantage of the opportunities of technology-enhanced learning, the learning materials are presented through various media, such as text, graphs, images and video material, which contribute to better retention and enhance the learning process.

Facilitators guide participants through this process, delivering and conveying information, clarifying doubts and supporting participants through different activities.