





Interest-based Conflict Resolution

Ben Ziegler, MERIT TA August 29, 2022



Poll (Single choice)

Which type of interpersonal conflict do you find most difficult to deal with?

- The conflict is out in the open; both you and the other person know about your concerns.
- The conflict is hidden; you haven't told the other person about your concerns.

Agenda



- 1. Conflict definition and types
- 2. Conflict continuum
- 3. Positions, interests and issues
- 4. Interest-based conflict resolution case study
- 5. Communications in Conflict



Conflict Definition

Any situation in which people have apparently incompatible goals, interests, principles or feelings.



CONFLICT TYPE

Rejection of Claim

EVENT

Dispute

Manifest Conflict

One Party Manifest Conflict

Latent Conflict

Claim

Name and Blame Perceived Injurious Event

Unperceived Injurious Event

Source: Felstiner, Abel and Sarat



CONFLICT TYPE

Dispute

Manifest Conflict

One Party Manifest Conflict

Latent Conflict

EVENT

"No way – it was your mistake."

"Joe - you screwed up."

Joe screwed up.

Something's not right.

Source: Felstiner, Abel and Sarat



Conflict Continuum

Involved	Peace	
	Negotiation	
	Mediation	
	Conciliation	
Imposed	Arbitration	
	Labor Relations Board / Tribunals	
	Tribunals, Courts	
	War	

Negotiation – two or more parties confer with the goal of resolving differences between them, without assistance from another party.

Mediation – a neutral 3rd party assists conflicted parties to confer with the goal of resolving differences between them, in a manner that leaves the outcome in the hands of the parties.

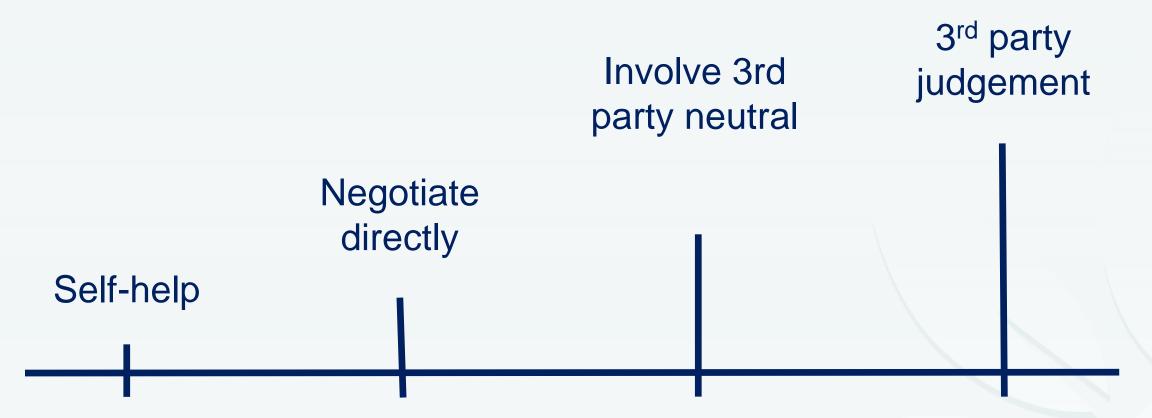
Conciliation – a neutral 3rd party acts as a go-between with conflicted parties to assist them in resolving differences between them.

Арбитр – Маргалдагч талуудын хооронд үүссэн маргаан, тайлбар, мэдэгдлийг хараат бус хөндлөнгийн этгээд сонсож, хянан шийдвэрлэхийг хэлнэ. Арбитрын үйл ажиллагаа нь шүүхийн хатуу дэг журам, шат дамжлагын дагуу явагддаггүй уян хатан шинж чанартай тул маргалдагч талууд тэгш эрх, харилцан тохиролцооны зарчмыг баримтлана. Арбитрийн шийдвэр эцсийн байдаг тул давж заалдах боломж цөөн байдаг.

Adjudication – a 3rd party listens to conflicted parties and makes a decision regarding issues of dispute between the, which the parties may accept or appeal. The parties do not have control over the process, but may be able to appeal the outcome.



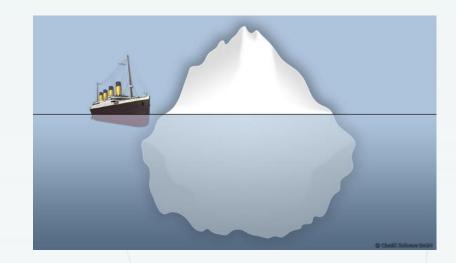
Resolve disputes appropriately



Who decides?

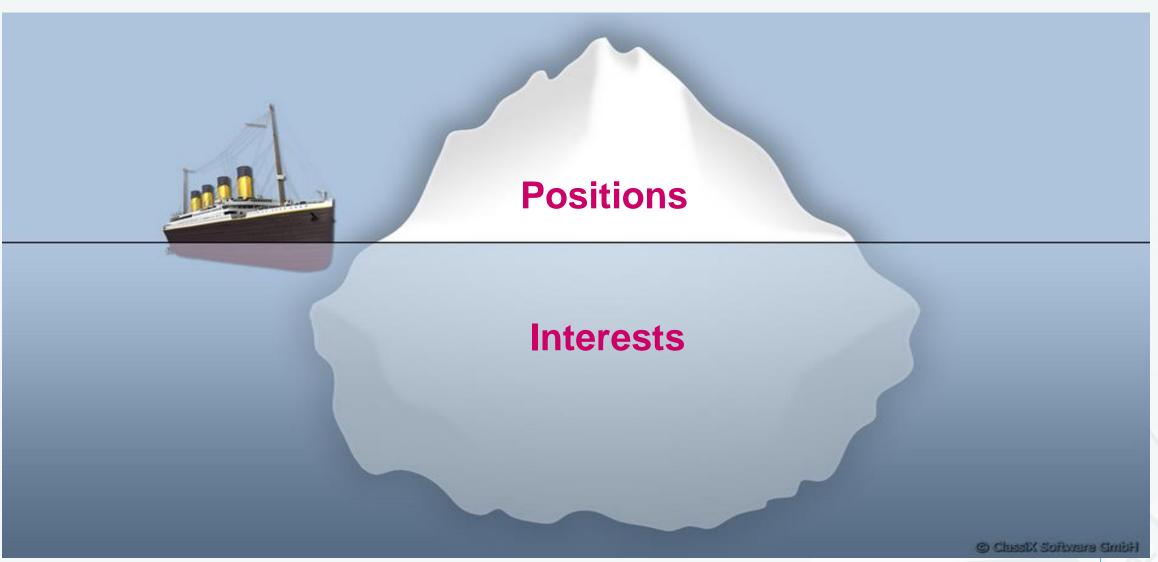


Icebergs. 90% of an iceberg lies below the surface of the water. What you see is above the water. What's below the water is more dangerous.



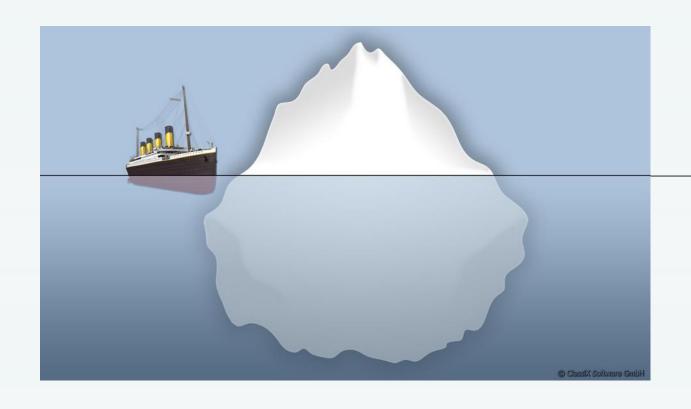


Interest-based Conflict Resolution





Separate issues, positions, interests



Positions:

What you want as an outcome

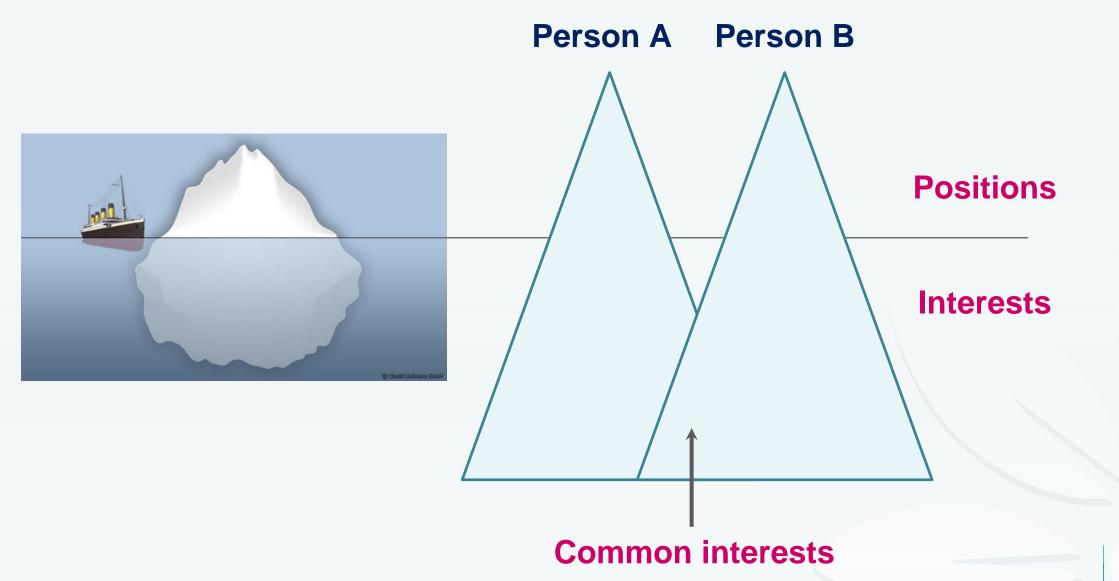
Interests:

Why you want it

Issue: What conflict is about (non-blaming)



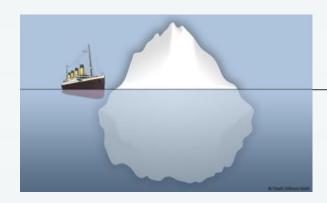
Build on (shared) common interests







Positions



Interests

Person A

"Things are working fine, as they are."

Job security

Person B

"We should think bigger, about what's possible!"

Career advancement

Common interests?

What do you see in the picture?

(Art of the reframe)





Interest-based conflict resolution – case study

Situation (a dispute between Dorj and Best Renovations):

- Dorj contracted Best Renovations to customize his company's board room.
- 2. When the work was done, Best Renovations sent their bill to Dorj, \$20,000.
- On receiving the invoice, Dorj paid \$15,000. Dorj told Best Renovations he wouldn't pay the remaining \$5,000 because of work "deficiencies". What's more, Dorj became sick and tired of dealing with Best Renovations.
- 4. Best Renovations weren't happy. They figured they'd done everything Dorj had asked for, and then some, especially as he kept hovering over their work, and requesting changes, on the fly.
- 5. Best Renovations were fed up. It had been 6 months since they finished the work, and still the \$5,000 hadn't been paid. They demanded payment we have "principles". At the same time, Best Renovations wanted to put this troublesome client behind them and move on to better things.

Activity:

- 1. Based on the above situation/scenario, complete the following table (in your zoom breakout group)
- 2. Return to whole group
- 3. (Volunteers) Share answers



	Γ	T
	Jim	Best Renovations
Issues		
(What conflict is about, non-		
blaming, in neutral language)		
Positions		
(What you want as an outcome)		
Interests		
(Why you want it)		
What are some common (shared)		
interests?		
What do you think are some		
potential resolution options to the		
conflict?		
conflict?		

Conflict Response



Active



Constructive

Destructive

Perspective Taking
Creating Solutions
Expressing Emotions

Reaching Out

Winning at All Costs
Displaying Anger
Demeaning Others
Retaliating

Reflective Thinking
Delay Responding
Adapting

Avoiding
Yielding
Hiding Emotions
Self-Criticizing



Constructive Responses – Reaching Out

Reaching Out (RO)

- Tries to repair the emotional damage caused by the conflict
- Makes the first move to get the communication started again



Questions for a whole group discussion:

- 1. What makes it so challenging for many people to engage in Reaching Out behaviors?
- 2. What is generally the impact of an apology?
- 3. Why are so many people pessimistic about the chance for successful conflict resolution?



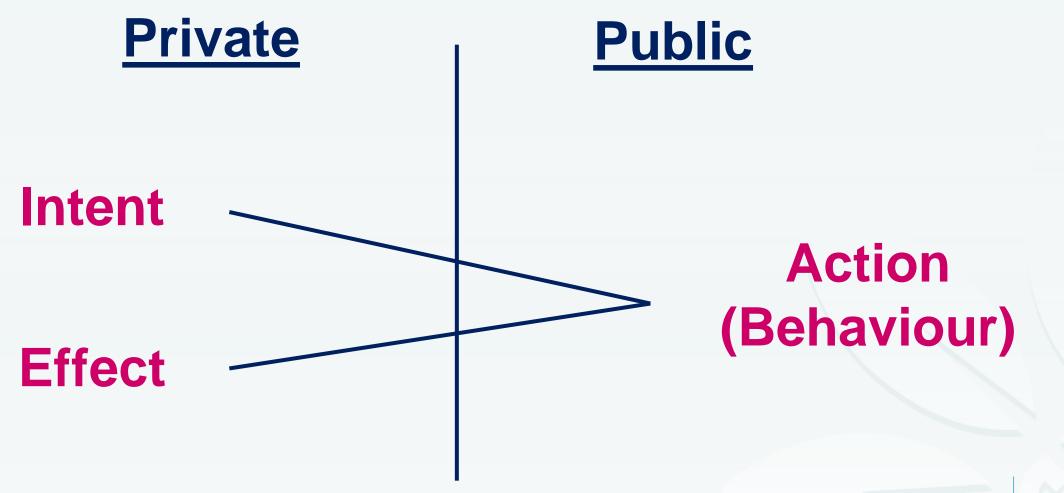
Communications in Conflict

The word 'Communication' is derived from the Latin word 'Communis' which means to make 'Common'











Strategic use of communication skills (to open discussion of issue, and discover underlying interests)

- 1. Use an OPEN QUESTION to ask about their interest or criteria
- 2. PROBE further if the interests/criteria are unclear from their response, or to elicit more interests
- 3. PARAPHRASE their interests as you understand them, and wait for confirmation that you have understood them
- 4. ASSERT your interests regarding the same topic
- 5. SUMMARIZE common, different and competing interests; new understandings, any criteria

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Wrap-up activity – What's your recipe for success?

Questions for small group discussion (Zoom breakout):

- 1. Reflect on the materials and discussions today.
- 2. Create your "recipe for success" to address today's topic; i.e., what can you and your organization do to further promote individual skills development around interest-based conflict resolution?

Activity:

- 1. (Prior to joining breakout room) Record question; e.g., take picture, write down
- 2. Identify 3 items (e.g., action items) in your group's recipe for success
- 3. Return to main room (after 20 minutes)
- 4. (Volunteers) Share answers



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