CONFLICT SENSITIVE CONSERVATION (CSC)

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR YOUTH ACTION ON BIODIVERSITY

Global Youth Biodiversity Network

PeaceNexus Foundation

This document was prepared by

Global Youth Biodiversity Network
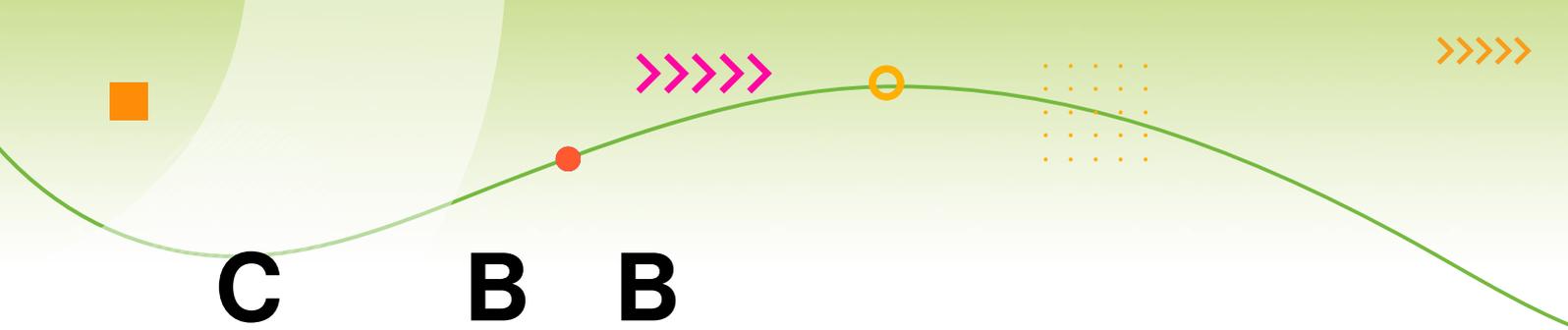
PeaceNexus Foundation

Recognizing the interconnectedness of peace, the environment, and conflict, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) in collaboration with PeaceNexus (PN) have formed a strategic partnership aimed at equipping young people active in biodiversity conservation with the tools to navigate complex dynamics. The work being carried out under this collaboration focuses on addressing how environmental degradation, and particularly biodiversity loss, can fuel conflicts, while also uncovering how conservation efforts can serve as a foundation for peacebuilding. It also draws on the interconnectedness of how all forms of violent conflicts undermine our ability to conserve nature.

This guidebook is a result of a series of webinars and training that were hosted to equip young biodiversity protection leaders with the necessary tools to navigate conflict situations, map actors, design effective interventions and to apply a conflict sensitive lens to the projects and activities that they undertake. These webinars brought together a diverse range of participants to explore the role youth can play in resolving environmental conflicts and promoting peaceful, sustainable coexistence. Youth, peace, and conflict are critical topics for biodiversity conservation because young people are often ignored and are not only deeply affected in a conflict situation but also have the greatest potential to drive lasting peace. As the largest demographic group globally, youth have the capacity to bring in and develop unique perspectives, creativity, and energy that can transform societies. Engaging them in peacebuilding efforts helps address root causes of conflict, biodiversity loss including environmental degradation and social inequalities, and fosters inclusive solutions. By empowering youth with tools to navigate conflicts and promote understanding, we ensure a future where sustainable peace and biodiversity/environmental stewardship go hand in hand.

Drawing from the rich discussions and insights of the webinars, this guidebook offers practical tools and methodologies for young people to incorporate conflict sensitivity and actor mapping into their day-to-day activities and work. This guidebook serves as a valuable resource for youth-driven initiatives in conservation and peacebuilding, ensuring that young changemakers are better equipped to understand the root causes of conflicts, engage with different stakeholders, and foster solutions that are both inclusive and sustainable. This guidebook also serves as a critical first step to address a gap in equipping young people with the necessary skills and tools to be able to navigate tense situations as part of their work. Apart from being used as a resource, this guidebook stands as a testament to how important this topic is for young people all over the world. It highlights what youth want to see changed and improved in our societies in order to live in harmony with nature.
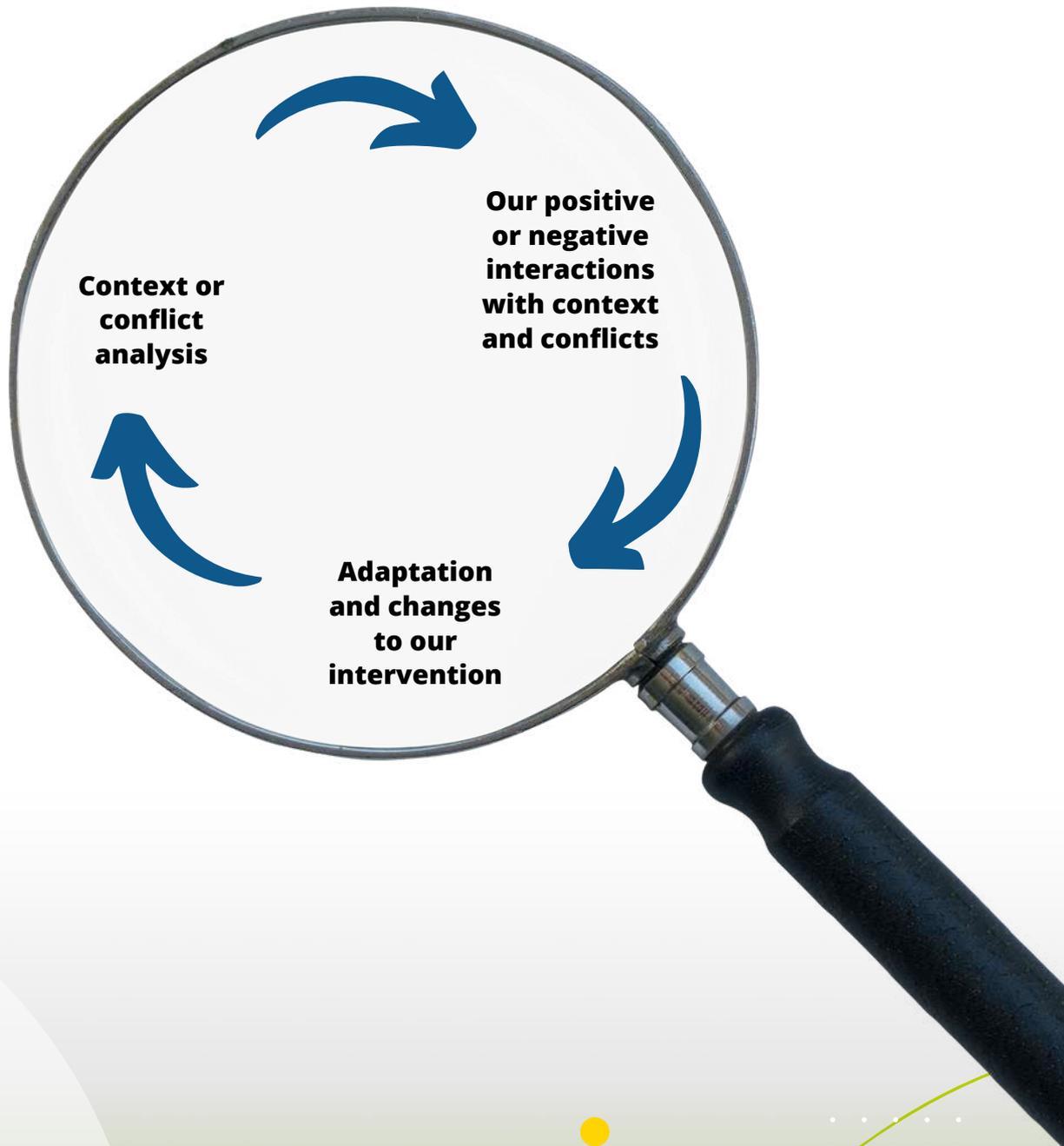
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Our positive
or negative
interactions
with context
and conflicts

Adaptation
and changes
to our
intervention

Context or
conflict
analysis

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When intervening in any context, such as for the purpose of biodiversity conservation, we interact with several actors and the existing social, political, economic, institutional and cultural dynamics. In doing so, we may, consciously or unconsciously, exacerbate conflicts or have a negative effect on existing dynamics. We may also contribute to better social cohesion and peace and stimulate positive effects on those factors.

The context in which we intervene can also impact our decisions and actions, sometimes even our purpose and our own security. As young people, we may have specific opportunities for action, or vulnerabilities to risk.

Conflict-sensitive conservation (CSC) is a set of tools and methods that enable us at the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and our partners to better consider the context and conflicts in which we want to intervene so that:

- We don't exacerbate conflicts and have negative impacts on the existing situation and context through our actions.
- We instead contribute better to peace and dialogue.
- We protect ourselves and our activities in tough contexts.
- Our interventions are much more holistic and well formed

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We know that biodiversity loss and conservation are closely linked to human dynamics, be it positive or negative. We acknowledge that without taking existing contexts into account, we may fail, in many settings, to conserve and protect biodiversity.

We are also aware that social bonds and inclusiveness are crucial for the well-being of humanity and nature. Therefore, we want to take care of both human and natural systems and the interactions between them.

Increasingly, many of us are facing violence and insecurity in delivering our mission as young people working for biodiversity conservation. In an online survey that we conducted with GYBN members in early 2022, 90% of them said that conflict is present in their work. Some people said that it affected the frequency of their visits to field sites, made them scared of doing their work, and affected the way they were able to interact with the different actors. Over 60% of the respondents also reported that they experienced violence in relation to biodiversity conservation. Therefore, we at GYBN felt that we need to be equipped to deal with those situations, so that we can work towards our mission and protect our lives.

"Through the training, I realized that our efforts (even if it's with a good intention) can affect other communities which are not in our target group"

Before you delve into this guidebook, there are some points to keep in mind!

Some guidance and tips from GYBN's Madagascar chapter

- A tool to navigate the complexity: The Conflict Sensitivity approach makes it easier to navigate through complex problems, in particular to identify key leverage points on which to focus our analysis and build our strategy for action.
- About biases and prejudice: Avoid making assumptions when the situation doesn't involve you, and always ensure you have the most accurate, up-to-date information. Conflict sensitivity analysis is rooted in valuing each actor in the system. Each actor's value system, intentions, interests, goals, modus operandi, and attitude provide important perspectives. A single detail about them can shift the entire system and the analysis in a totally different direction. Thus, we really need to investigate and get as much information as possible about each actor and detach ourselves from our own prejudice or biased perception of each actor. Nothing is totally black or white when it concerns Conflict Sensitivity.
- Needs are the primary factor that explains why things happen in a certain way and the way they do. For most of the actors in our context, we discovered that "need" can be about very different things, such as the need to feel that one belongs somewhere or with a certain group of people, the need for security, the need to express themselves, etc. It was challenging yet very interesting to investigate the need behind each action. Also, connectors and dividers were a kind of revelation for us to find leverage points in order to tackle the highly complex problems and the intricate web of actors and interactions.

- The situation is ever-changing. All of the information we used during the actors' mapping activity and when applying the conflict sensitivity tool was at least 5 years old. Since then, the situation may have gotten better or worse and actors may have changed (in number, needs, or other characteristics). The best analysis is based on verifiable, proven, and up-to-date information.
- Look at ourselves first: Even coming from a 7-year old youth organization, it was surprising to realize that when asked "why and where do youth come into play within the map of interactions", it was hard for us to answer and to see how youth were somehow "isolated" from the dynamics. This means that there's work that needs to be done internally to find our (here young people) place in the system and defend it. This means not just to be more visible, but also to work strategically and in a conflict-sensitive way to identify leverage points where we as young people might be better positioned to act on certain things, both for ourselves and for other actors in the system.
- We are always part of the context: As soon as we intervene in a context we become part of it and thus need to work out in a conflict sensitive manner which role we can play to have a positive impact on the system.

Ready to dive into conflict sensitive conservation? Follow the guide!

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This guide has been produced by an international task force of members from 8 different GYBN National Chapters spread across 5 continents after being trained to apply Conflict Sensitivity in practice in their ongoing projects. The document provides methods, stories and tools not only for each GYBN member but for all young people to get acquainted with the approach of conflict sensitivity for the purpose of biodiversity conservation.

The guide is divided into 3 parts, corresponding to the 3 steps of conflict sensitivity for biodiversity conservation:

Step 1. Context/conflict analysis
What are the dynamics at stake for conflict sensitive conservation?

Step 2. Our positive and negative interactions with contexts/conflicts
How to anticipate these interactions and monitor them?

Step 3. Adaptations and changes to our interventions
What other options can we come up with to be more conflict sensitive?

Each part of the conflict sensitivity step will be explained using the below listed sections for easier flow and understanding:

DEFINITIONS - What do we look at?

ILLUSTRATION - A look at real life

TOOLS - How do I do it myself?

METHOD - Tips for users!

Context or conflict analysis

Our positive or negative interactions with context and conflicts

Adaptation and changes to our intervention
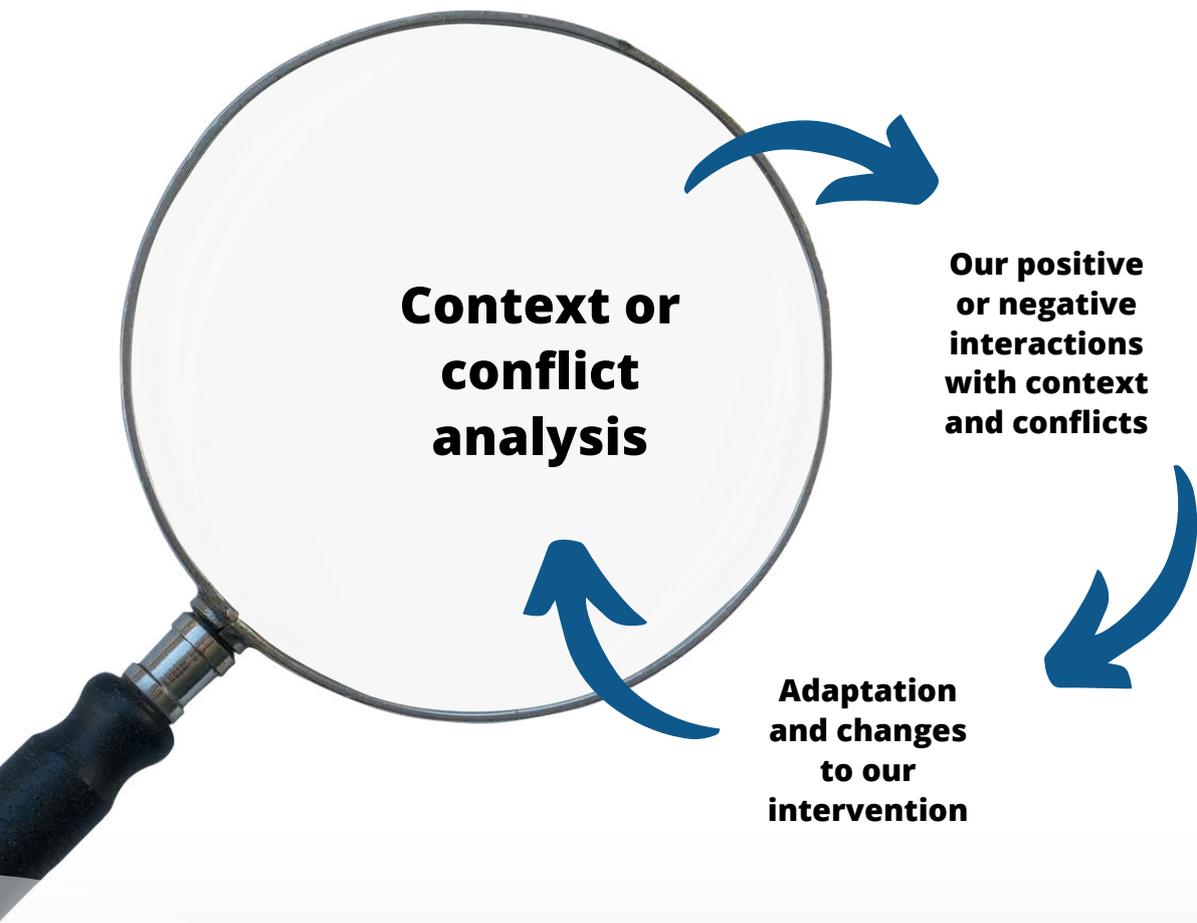
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To effectively intervene in a situation, it is crucial to first understand the relevant concepts, as our actions become an integral part of the context we are influencing:

- ## What conflicts are we talking about?

Defined as the result of two or more parties (individuals or groups) having, or perceiving to have, incompatible goals and interests and acting upon these differences. **Conflict does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes, and can even be a constructive process of change.** *All forms of conflicts are of interest for us to identify*

- ## Violence:

Violent conflict always has negative repercussions. It refers to the actions, attitudes or systems that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage. Killing and intimidation are the most visible forms of violent conflict. **We don't want to stop all conflicts but to prevent violence.**

- ## The key drivers of the conflict or instability:

What are the sources of the conflicts or problems? What are the factors without which there would be no conflict or problem? What is the context (is it a case of land expansion, pollution etc.).

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- **The relationship between the key actors involved in the conflict:**

Who talks to whom? Who needs whom? Who has power over whom? Which relationships are tense/violent/harmonious? Who are we connected to and what is the nature of these relationships?

- **What are the interests and needs of the different key actors:**

What do they really want/need? Not what they say they want. This is important as what the key actors say they want is not always the same as what they really need/want.

- **The connectors and dividers:**

Dividers are elements in the context that pull groups or people apart and connectors are those that gather them together and connect them. We want to use those elements later to ensure that GYBN reinforces connectors and does not stimulate dividers through its intervention.

- **Dynamics of the conflicts/problems:**

What has happened in the past? Why? How could it be in the future? Why?

"I realized the different actors at play in a situation and the background reading needed"
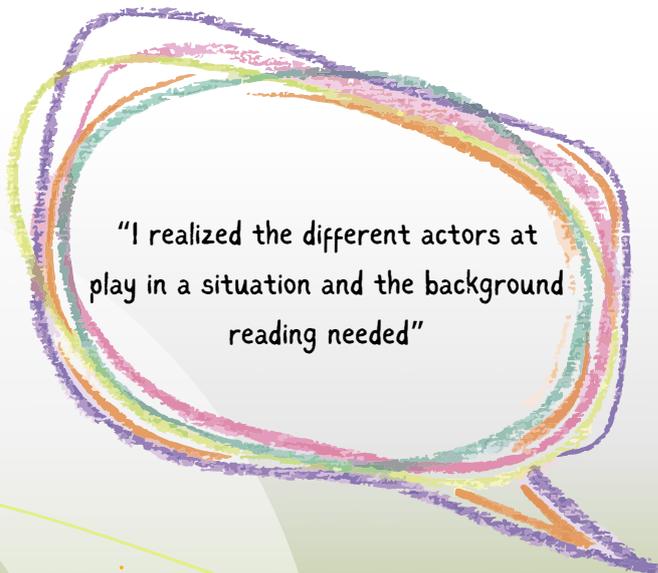
Illustration of a conflict analysis from the Bolivia CSC case study -

Land use in the context of extreme natural events in La Paz, Bolivia: using conflict sensitivity to better design GYBN intervention

Key drivers of conflict: Crime and unsafe public spaces in various areas in La Paz surroundings, the loss of homes, unclear and/or unenforced land regulation, and poor urban planning have caused tension between residents of the affected areas and the municipality, as well as between activists and *loteadores* (people who illegally occupy land to sell it later). These *loteadores* take unstable lands prone to collapse and, in many cases, have started occupying parts of the city's protected areas.

Key Actors dynamics: The map allows one to look at actors' dynamics quickly, and to understand the relationships at play, as well as the different interests and needs of the different actors. GYBN must be able to identify the needs and interests of the different actors because that's what moves them - despite the law, the constraints and the risks.

Connectors and dividers: Connectors and dividers are elements of the context that either gather people/actors together (sometimes despite the existing lines of tension or pull them apart). We want to use those elements later to ensure that GYBN reinforces connectors and does not stimulate dividers through its intervention.
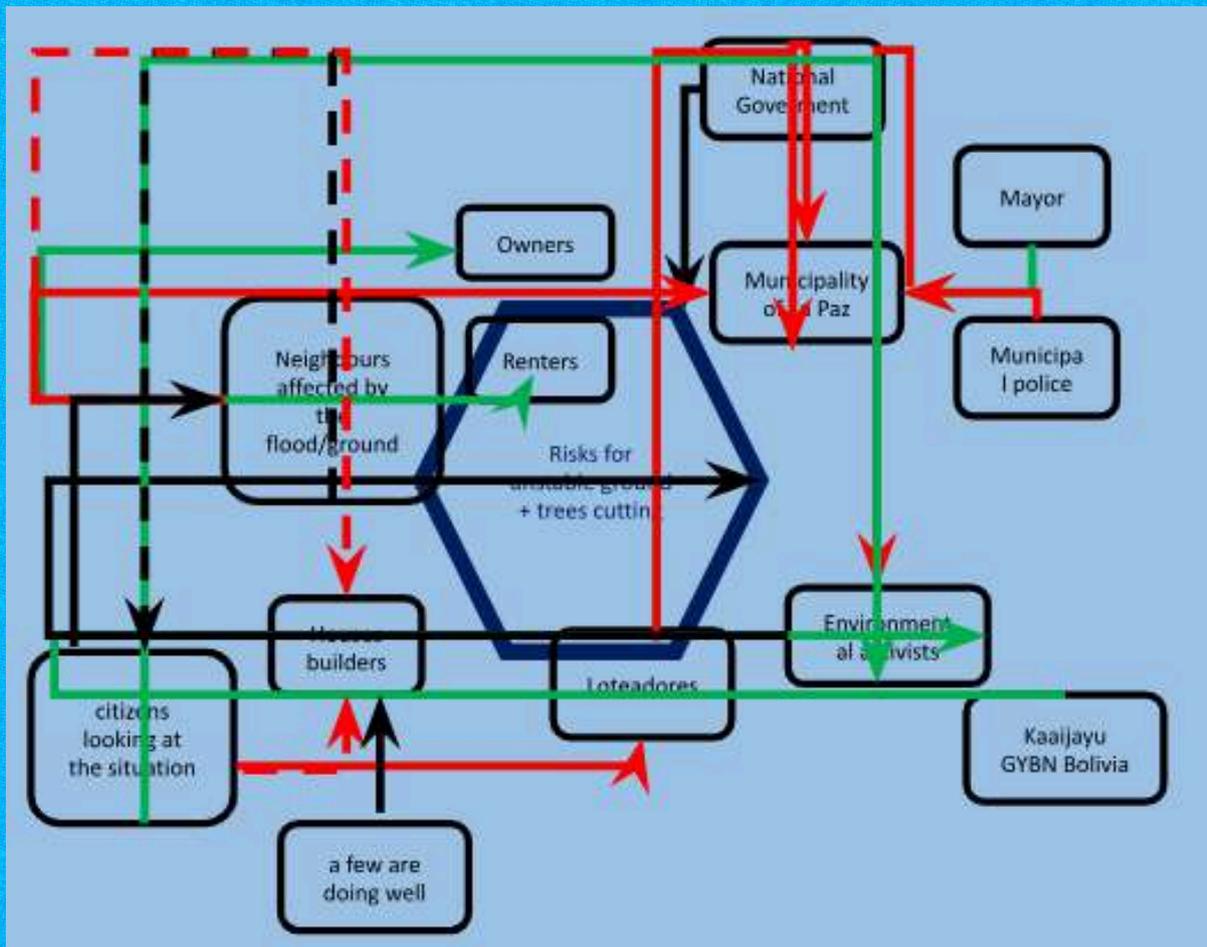
Key:

Green lines: strong ties or alliances

Red lines: conflictual/tense

Black lines: neutral

Dotted lines: changing relationship and the colour indicates the type of relationship.

Connectors	Dividers
The law that forbids building in the area.	Political differences between Municipality and Government bodies
Belonging to La Paz	Climate disaster
The security of having a safe house	Habit of criticizing the actors instead of taking charge of the problem
Empathy with victims	No application of the rule of law
	Lack of transparency by house sellers

... to have access to the full case study, click <u>here</u>

Illustration of connectors and dividers from the Madagascar CSC case study -

Locally-based peri-urban mangrove governance in Antsohihy, Madagascar: Using conflict sensitivity to better design GYBN intervention.

Connectors and dividers:

These are key elements of the context that gather groups and people, sometimes beyond the conflictual lines. We want to identify them so that our intervention later reinforces the connectors and avoids exacerbating the dividers.

Connectors	Dividers
Legislation unclear on the legitimacy of the community association.	Markets for illegally harvested timber without controls because it meets an existing demand.
Existence of mangroves and importance of this resource	Real estate boom, so need for timber exploitation increases
Presence of the State but fragile connector	Monitoring of the community association's management is no longer serious since the Order.
Mangrove well restored in the community managed area	Violent behavior by outside loggers.
Tripartite mangrove management contract between the town council, the State and the community association	Lack of clarification of roles between municipal police and forest police. & Corruption, as illegal loggers have the means to co-opt the authorities/police

Illustration of dynamics at stake in the context from the Cameroun CSC case study

Putting the social and political context at the heart of the fight against water Hyacinth in the Wouri Basin in Cameroon: a conflict sensitivity analysis of biodiversity conservation

Identifying connectors:

- A strong attachment and respect between the local population and traditional authorities (Chiefs and other opinion leaders except political leaders).
- Ancestral knowledge from some historical local populations about the mangrove, acknowledged by people inside and outside the mangrove.
- Active elected people on mangrove issue (for example the mayor of Mouanko – a town lying on the north bank of Sanaga River) who wish things would change and are ready to engage.

Identifying dividers:

- Practice of mangrove exploitation being an activity shared by most of the population: many are contributing to the mangrove degradation on a daily basis.
- Competition between conservation agencies in the same field of action.
- A high percentage of the economic activities of the local population rely on these mangrove resources, with an opposite interest from any organization coming to conserve the mangrove in this region.

- There are some industrial firms practicing agriculture in the area and this tends to pollute the zone. This can only be a divider between those actors and mangrove restoration as these organizations see little interest in the continuation of conservation activities.
- Despite increasing degradation and constant information-sharing, the local population still continues to cut the mangrove for wood, especially the young plants that are still growing.
- Many tensions and potential conflict situations between government and other local actors (as seen in the map), therefore lack of trust on my issues.
- The relationship between unrecognized local and international NGOs is tense, so is the relationship between an international NGO working in the region and the Government of Cameroon.

The dynamic actors map below synthesizes the complex relationships between the different actors. It is therefore interesting to understand that any intervention from CYBN will impact those existing relationships and carry risks of reinforcing conflict, which would most probably complicate actions, make the situation in the region even more fragile and drastically reduce opportunities to contribute to peace and social cohesion. Without analyzing the present context, CYBN's intervention will put at risk its ambition and objective to implement its action in this region.

… to have access to the full case study, click here

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1. A **few questions** that can help you get started on analyzing the conflict context.

- **Profile**

  a. What is the political, economic, socio-cultural context in the area? What are the environmental issues at stake?

  b. What emerging economic, social, political issues can you see? What are the conflicts at work? What keeps people together/makes them collaborate?

  c. What zones are affected or prone to violent conflict in this context? What zones are peaceful and protected from violence? Why?

  d. Are there any stories/narratives of conflict?

- **Causes**

  a. What are the structural causes of conflict (root causes)? What are the socio-cultural causes (related to group dynamics, psychological causes, etc.)?

  b. What topics can be considered as secondary causes (triggers for violence)?

  c. What are the trends of conflict, what are missed opportunities for resolution?

  d. What factors contribute to peace in the area?

- **Actors (see next tool on actors mapping)**

  a. What is the political, economic, socio-cultural context in the area? What are the environmental issues at stake?

  b. What emerging economic, social, political issues can you see? What are the conflicts at work? What keeps people together/makes them collaborate?

c. What zones are affected or prone to violent conflict in this context? What zones are peaceful and protected from violence? Why?

d. Are there any stories/narratives of conflict?

- **Dynamics**

a. What are the current trends in the context? How can you explain the current situation, considering past events and social transformations?

b. Do you see windows of opportunity in the context (moments when conflict lessen or when dialogue is fostered)?

c. What different scenarios could you identify from the context profile, conflict causes and actors dynamics?

d. What are the challenges/threats involved while intervening in the situation?

2. **Actors' dynamics mapping**

Based on the examples you can read from the Bolivia, Caremoun, Madagascar case studies :
Identify the groups/individuals that play some role in the conflict/context and in the intervention. Write the different actors or groups on a flipchart.

Look at all the conflicts you have identified. Ask yourself: which of these conflicts, if it no longer existed, would really improve the situation or enable you to carry out work in the area?
Once you have the answer, consider how you could work on this conflict. Bear in mind that you may need to work, for instance, with a government agency. But your role could be to lobby them to resolve the issue; or to mobilise communities to ask for a dialogue with the government. It helps to think through how your skills, resources and influence could make the most difference to start dealing with this conflict.

Remember that your main objective is not to resolve the conflict, but to achieve your conservation goal despite the conflict and to do so in a way that bring people together.

- Discuss their relationships (strong ties or alliances – in green; conflictual/tense – in red; changing relationship - in dotted line; etc.) and write the cause of the relationship's quality on the line you draw.
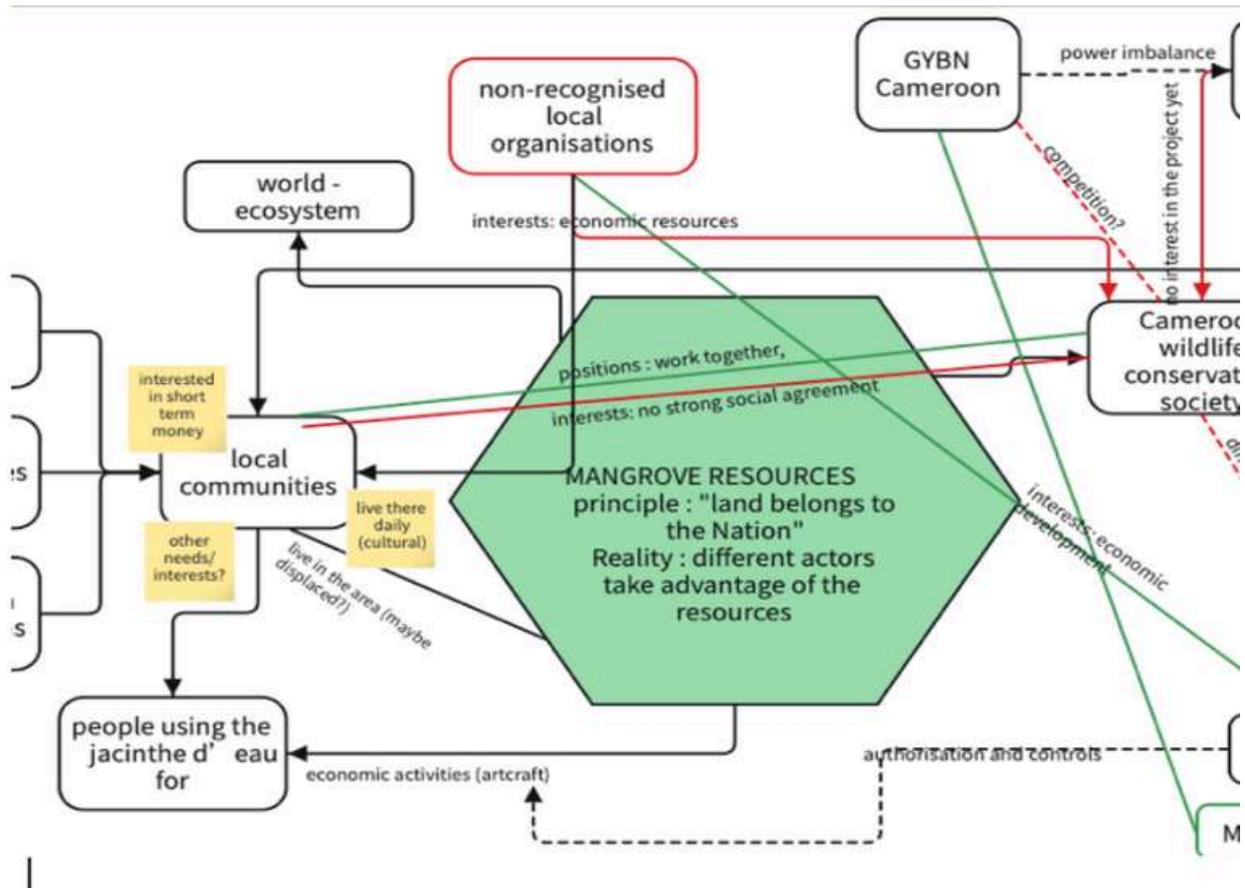
Looking at your completed map, analyze what you see:
- Do you see actors and relations you were not aware of before?
- Do you see tensions, conflicts you were not aware of before?
- What relationships do you see between actors/partners of your intervention and the other actors?
- How is your organization positioned in this situation? Who do you have relationships with and what is the nature of these relationships? Who do you need to have relationships with? Who are best not to engage at a particular stage? How can youth interact with other actors?
- Are there gaps in terms of understanding/mapping the relationship between some key stakeholders?

3. **Understanding interests and needs**

The "onion": In most conflicts, parties' positions are very different from each other while it may be possible to reconcile their real needs. The positions parties take are what they say publicly, the things **they say they want**. But, like an onion, we can peel back our own situation and the other party's situation to get to the "heart" and understand what is really important for each actor. For instance, if two parties are arguing over an orange, they may both say "I want that orange" (their position). But it could be that the one wants the orange juice (interest) because they need the Vitamin C to get healthy (need); and the other one wants the orange peel (interest) to bake a cake for an important birthday party (need). When we dig deeper into their interests and needs, it becomes possible to creatively identify how to respond to the different needs in a way that may reconcile with all actors or activities. There are always other options!

Positions
What we say we want

Interests
What we really want

Needs
What we must have
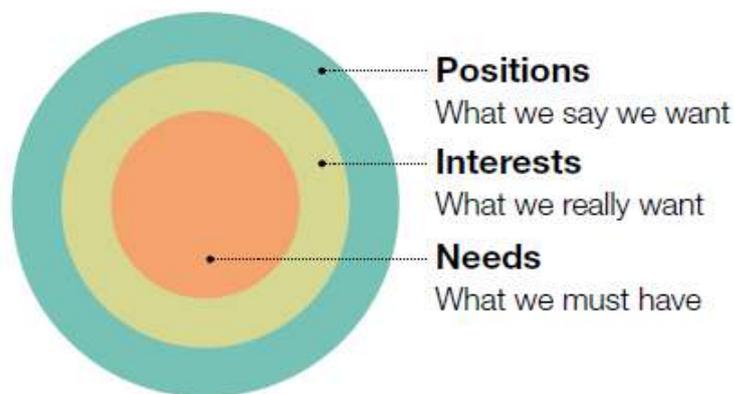
a. From the actor mapping exercise, identify actors who are in conflict.

b. Identify the needs or interests of each actor (and add it on the map or draw the following matrix).

Issues/Problems Stakeholder	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
Actor 1	Interests, needs, fears, attitudes		
Actor 2	Interests, needs, fears, attitudes		

c. When the matrix is filled in, analyze and discuss your observations with your team/ partners:

- What aspects (shared needs, hidden needs) emerged that you were not aware of before?

- How does the matrix analysis help you to better understand the logic in each actor's perception (without judging)?

- How does it help you to better understand the motivations of each actor?

- If you disaggregate the actor groups (by age, gender, etc.), how could this help you to understand better?

- What are your lessons learnt?

4. <u>**Questions to find connectors and dividers in a context**</u>.

Categories	Examples of connectors (in a given context)	Examples of dividers (in a given context)
Systems and institutionsWhat social structures are or are perceived to be fair/unfair by one or several groups?Which institutions or systems are questioned or exacerbate tensions? Or gather people together?	Shared markets or schools; existing laws; common language	Social, historical, traditional or legal discrimination.
Attitudes and actionsWhich activities are carried out together by individuals or groups? Or are excluding some parties?	Protests against violence, corruption, etc.Help a child from any group when in danger.	Aggressive attitudes, weapons use, incitement of hatred, saying bad things about others.

<u>Keep in mind:</u> A connector can also be a divider and therefore, you need to be specific about what really gathers actors together? What exactly pulls them apart? Who is connected/divided, when, how? Is the connector/divider evolving to become stronger or weaker? Why?

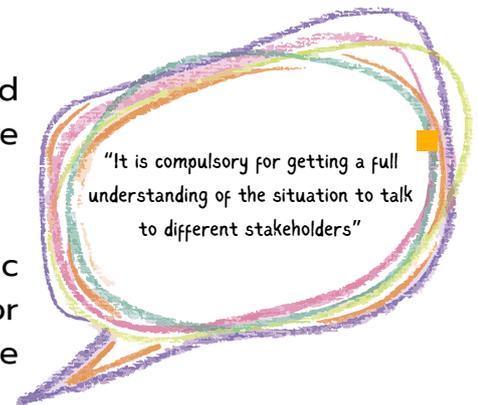| Categories	Examples of connectors (in a given context)	Examples of dividers (in a given context)
Values and interests: What cultural, philosophical or religious values are shared by actors or groups? Which are not?	Common economic interestsImportance of faith.	Politically opposite interests.Opposing social norms.Religion or culture used to incite hatred of the other group.
Experiences: What are shared lived or historical experiences between groups? Which daily routines or experiences tear them apart?	Being tired of the situation or the conflict.Loss of family members.	Violence experienced by some and not others.Loss of trust between groups.
Symbols and events: What symbols are used by different groups to differentiate themselves? Which are shared?	National flagTraditional ceremonies	Party flag of a separatist group.

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To undertake a good context or conflict analysis

Gather several people to do the analysis so that you look at the context/conflict through different eyes (it helps to neutralize biases and provides more information about different perspectives).

- The main causes of conflict are often hidden behind the apparent causes (what we can see "on the surface").

- Go back to field inquiries - observing how specific actors behave, speaking to community members or other important actors in the situation, etc. - if you are unsure or things are unclear.

"It is compulsory for getting a full understanding of the situation to talk to different stakeholders"

Sometimes the conflict analysis can be public; at other times it must remain confidential, for security reasons.

To undertake a good actor mapping

- Identify all possible actors who are involved in the context.

- Connect actors based on the type of relationship they have: close/good, tense, changing, no relationship at all.

- If the relationship between some actors is unknown, find out what it is!

- Once the relationship of each actor with the rest is known, group actors by their interests.

- Finally, identify all the elements that connect or divide the actors.

How to facilitate the process of CSC?
By Flavia Gonzales, GYBN Bolivia

Below, we will give you a few tips so you can facilitate the process of analysing a conflict.

Personal Preparation
- If we consider that in a conflict sensitive space there is a process of analysing a context that participants consider conflictual, then it is necessary to create a space of listening, trust, respect, and confidentiality.

Listening

Each person is unique; our history, biology, and cultural context has defined who we are throughout our lives. Additionally, we have developed different beliefs and prejudices that accompany us throughout our lives, and we are often unaware of these. To listen effectively, we need to be aware of these beliefs and prejudices that could alter our listening process because we listen through them and may not understand what someone with a different life story is trying to tell us.

- Knowing our beliefs and prejudices will allow us to be aware of them and not be carried away by them, when listening to someone else.
- Clear your mind before each session; do not come to a session overloaded with thoughts, prejudices and emotions because they can influence other participants. If you are experiencing a situation with an emotional load and cannot clear your mind, it is better to postpone the session.
- Do mindfulness exercises or breathing exercises; you can do this alone or with participants.

Trust

- The basis of any interaction or relationship is trust: It is important to ensure that the team trusts you; if this trust does not exist, it is very likely that the expected results will not be achieved.

Respect

- Respect can be defined by the validation we give to a person and their entire life story. You will hear many perspectives during a single event, therefore, it is okay to disagree with some of your participants' positions, but it is important to validate them because they have a different life story, socio-cultural context, and biology than yours.

Confidentiality

- It is very important that your participants feel they can say what they really feel and think, so it is necessary to create a safe environment, which can be broken if elements (like gossip) are added to the group. If it is necessary confidentiality agreement should be proposed; neither you nor the participants can share what happens during the session outside the discussion setting/with anyone to avoid creating a hostile environment and mistrust.

Our positive or negative interactions with context and conflicts
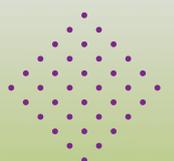
Context or conflict analysis

Adaptation and changes to our intervention

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Most often, it is the details of our intervention that will have effects on the context. We want to identify the risks that do harm to the existing context and actors and the opportunities that do good to them through the 4 lenses listed below:

- How the details of our intervention (why, what, who, when, where, how) interfere with the connectors and dividers.
- The effect of our actions (the risk of abuses – thefts or corruption; on local markets – loss of revenue for people; of substitution – withdrawal of actors' responsibility if GYBN takes the role; on distribution – if one group gets or feels like they get less than the other; or legitimized – if GYBN legitimizes a group or person, it gives them more power, so would that have a positive or negative impact on us or all of us? On the context and the relationships between groups?
- The effect(s) of our behaviors (risks of being perceived as unaccountable, unfair or biased, disrespectful, not transparent).
- The effect(s) of the context on the details of our intervention (what aspects of the context could prevent us from doing our job or even put us at risk?)
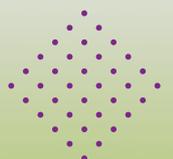
Illustration of anticipating negative or positive effects on a conflict/context and research for alternative, more conflict-sensitive solutions from the CSC Bolivia case study -

Land use in the context of extreme natural events in La Paz, Bolivia: using conflict sensitivity to better design GYBN intervention

- There is a weak and tense relationship between citizens, activists and the municipality because the floods and landslides are not a surprise—they are well-known. The municipality is blamed for poor planning and management in addressing these disasters, which seemingly increase the tension instead of decrease. One possible solution is to create an alliance between citizens and activists to request and launch a campaign for proper planning.

- There is significant tension between citizens, activists, and affected neighbors on one hand and the loteadores on the other. This tension has great potential to worsen if any approach is made. This is because many protected areas are being lost, people are losing their homes, and this illegal mechanism is the means by which loteadores people sustain themselves economically, so there is a lot of emotion involved. Different consultations could be made with each of these groups to understand their needs and requests, seek more connectors, and bring groups together through their connectors to provide joint solutions to the municipality.

- The map helps identify allies and all the elements we have in common; that is, as activists and citizens, we want good urban planning for different reasons. These connecting elements are key to forming alliances and creating a larger community to advocate and meet our needs.

- The map also helps identify strategies with a high potential to worsen the conflict, such as interacting in some way with the loteadores. If we take them as actors, we may increase their legitimacy and power, but if we ignore them while they actually have power, it may reduce our effect on the area. It is the role of the public authority to interact with them, and we should not substitute ourselves for the public role. The map helps identify the option that allows us not to interact directly with the loteadores and instead intervene with the municipality, requesting better planning and respecting already established norms without worsening the situation..

- Young people have a key neutral role in our community. We have the opportunity to identify the connectors between the different parties, allowing us to be leaders in strategies to generate the necessary changes in socio-environmental conflicts, promoting peace and reducing conflicts. Generally, society sidelines us when it comes to conflicts; we have no participation or voice, but this is an opportunity to be mediators in conflicts that concern us, such as biodiversity conservation. Therefore, it is important that no party instrumentalizes youth or uses us as a support mechanism.

...to have access to the entire case study, click here.

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Illustration of anticipating negative or positive interactions between connectors and dividers and our intervention; research for alternative more conflict-sensitive solutions: Extract from the CSC case study in Madagascar

Locally-based peri-urban mangrove governance in Antsohihy, Madagascar: Using conflict sensitivity to better design GYBN intervention

Interactions between our intervention and dividers:

- An unclear shared authority as well as the contradiction between the inter-ministerial Order and the legal mandate for community-led mangrove management makes decision-making tough and loggers are taking advantage of the situation to c-opt local authorities. This accentuates the vulnerability of the local communities to security threats and development needs. Information about the law and the role/responsibility of each public/private actor must take place before any conservation action is taken so as to prevent exacerbation of this divider.

- The principal threat is political instability and uncertainty. Due to political instability, local authorities are having trouble establishing the rule of law, and their presence is contested, mostly because of the influence of the illegal loggers. This will most probably undermine GYBN's intervention if it is not seriously addressed through constant dialogue with political actors and flexibility in the intervention to avoid being targeted or getting stuck in this instability. Although GYBN's objective is political, focusing on technical issues and challenging them in parallel may be a good strategy to keep several doors open.

Interactions between our intervention and connectors:

- The existing tripartite management contract can provide another way of exploring investment opportunities that would alleviate both insecurity and illegal exploitation. This would also strengthen the inclusion of other parties in the contract, which could help to decrease misinformation and increase collaboration. GYBN must build on this existing connector.

- The impact of youth engagement: Youth are an easy-to-reach target for GYBN, and they are part of the many actors listed on our map. Engaging with youth at the local level (populations) and giving them space in the decision-making process may help them to own the work and to support joint interests. This requires identifying the potential youth allies before any activity.

- Conflict sensitivity monitoring issue: Working while there are gaps in our data could lead us to misinterpret the situation that causes and reinforces these problems. Lacking information is dangerous in this situation because each action may respond to an existing problem and be controversial for another, and each stakeholder would undoubtedly act individually according to their own interests. Keeping the pulse of the context all along our activities to identify when we are having a negative impact or facing opposition will be necessary for such a project. This requires us to sustain the present analysis within our steering committee.

*… to have access to the entire case study, click here*

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1. **Tools for anticipating and monitoring interactions between us and the context.**

Checklist of questions to explore the details of our intervention

Why?	What is our mandate?	For each answer and by using the actor's map:
	Who is funding us?	- Identify the risks that emerge regarding conflicts and social or institutional context.
	What is our organizational structure?	
	What are our motivations?	
Where and When?	Where do we intervene?	- Identify the opportunities and choices that would strengthen peace, dialogue and social cohesion.
	When do we intervene for each activity?	
What?	What are our activities and actions? What should come first (communication, meetings/events, construction, distribution, etc.)?	Does each choice made for each question :
Who? With Whom?	Target audience? Role of youth? Gender equity?	- Reinforce existing connectors? How?
		- Avoid reinforcing existing dividers? How?
	Team/staff: What messages do we send?	- Exclude some actors that need to be included? How?
	Partnerships: Who do we need to partner with? Or not partner with?	- Face risks of being targeted in return? How?
	Work with authorities?	- Weaken or strengthen the position of youth in the context? How?
How?	Way of working	
	Methods	

This exercise works best when facilitated in teams, to anticipate the risks and opportunities through different lenses.
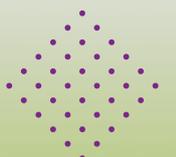
2. Checklist to anticipate the effects of actions and behaviors and the effect of the context on our intervention.

Effect(s) (positive and negative) of actions	
Distribution effects	Which actors may benefit the most from our activity? Who would be excluded?
Market effects	Which actions have/ can have an impact on costs, prices, materials availability?
Substitution effects	Can resources provided be used to fuel violence or inequity? How?
Abuse effects	What resources could be stolen or indirectly hijacked or misused?
Legitimacy effects	Which groups/actors could be legitimized/de-legitimised?
Effect(s) (positive and negative) of behaviors	

Power and arms
Cultural specificities
Resources use
Competition
Judgment
Tensions and distrust
Victimization
	How are we perceived by each actor in the context?
	Are we seen as carrying messages of:
	  - Respect
	  - Accountability
	  - Equity
	  - Transparency
	  - Inclusivity
	(This is not about our effort, but about listening to how they perceive us!)

Once you have identified the potential positive and negative impacts you may have on the context, or the context may have on you, it is time to adjust, anticipate, monitor and change!
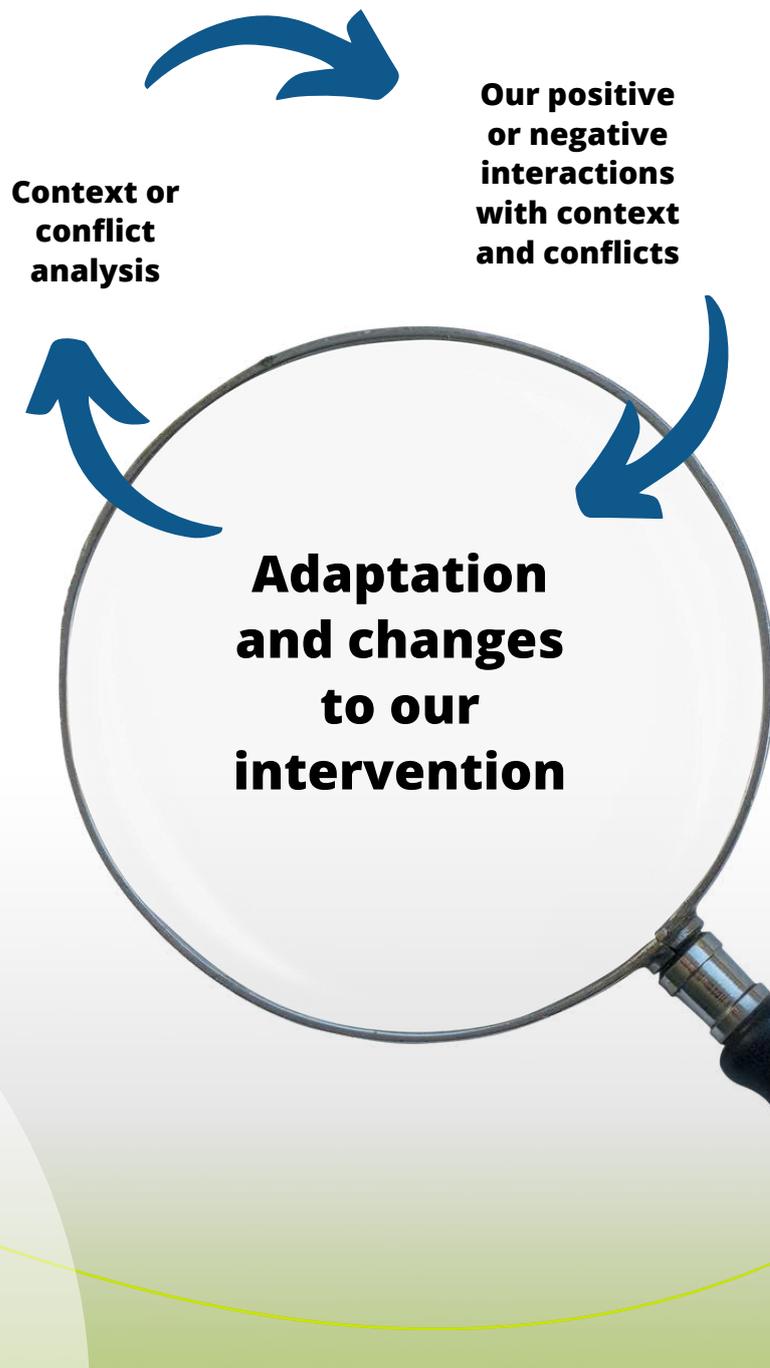
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Tips for anticipating and monitoring interactions between us and the context

Anticipating interactions

- This task is useful not only during the design step of our intervention, but also for all our activities on the ground, before any new activity and after each phase of the project.
- Monitoring the context will also prevent your staff and partners from being harmed (psychologically or physically) or your project being stopped.
- Always ask yourself: "If I do X, what could happen? Or does it not happen?" Or: "Given that there is Y in the context, it might create X or W."
- Identify the diversity of risks (social, environmental, institutional, image, security, human rights, etc.)
- Go through the checklists and identify both risks that can do harm (or cause harm to us) and opportunities to do good (or opportunities to be strengthened in front of the context). List them in the table provided above.
- Monitoring interaction between the intervention and the context will help you to adjust your activities and behaviors (see Step 3)

Context or
conflict
analysis

Our positive
or negative
interactions
with context
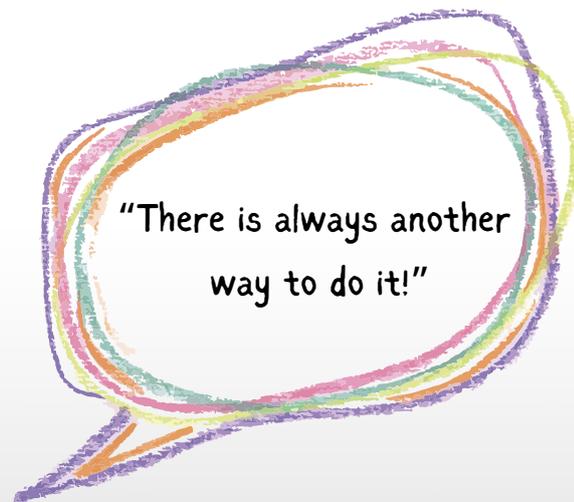and conflicts

Adaptation
and changes
to our
intervention

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In the previous step, we have identified potential or existing positive and negative interactions between our intervention (either our actions or behaviors) and the context (actors dynamics, conflict drivers, connectors and dividers). But analysis is only the easiest part of the exercise! CSC is a way of driving action, not not an invitation to only observe!

If details do harm, details can therefore also do good! The third step of the approach invites us to take action on each of the risks (to avoid or reduce them) and opportunities (to increase and support them).

Once the negative and positive effects have been identified, we open a phase of creativity to invent alternative options:

- Look at all the dilemmas identified through your analysis.
- Find alternative options to overcome the challenges.
- Monitor your alternatives on the ground to make sure they do no harm elsewhere or to another person/group!

"There is always another way to do it!"

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Illustration of adaptation after applying conflict sensitivity analysis, from the GYBN CSC case study in Cameroon

Putting the social and political context at the heart of the fight against water hyacinth in the Wouri Basin in Cameroon : a conflict sensitivity analysis of biodiversity conservation

Listen better to people

- Public consultations should be organized to understand what the real needs of the actors are (not what they say they want – positions – but their real interests and needs). All activities should be designed in a way that stimulates and facilitates continuous dialogue between all stakeholders.
- Invent alternate livelihood sources for the local communities who rely on the invasive species, based on their needs and after consultation.
- Better understand the dynamics within the local communities and different socio-cultural groups who are utilizing the mangroves.
- Build a good relationship with government agencies, without losing our neutrality
- CYBN is known to CWCS but it would be important that there is collaboration and joint action, so that CYBN's actions are not taken as a "threat" to CSWS's work and avoid duplicating work.
- CYBN needs to better understand the relationship between different communities/social groups in the mangrove region through the process of identifying connectors and dividers. This would enable CYBN to identify appropriate actions and approaches while interacting with local communities and monitor if tensions rise due to our intervention.

Open up alternative livelihood and natural resource use options

- Open up dialogue on alternate sources of livelihood, including tourism/leisure for urban citizens once the mangroves are protected and restored.
- Train populations in the identification of mangrove trees that are at the risk of extinction and in managing the mangrove. Finding funds able to pay for the services brought by the population would be necessary.
- Develop alternative forms of using mangrove trees to smoke fish or cook (improved ovens, manufacture ecological charcoal from their household waste, dead mangrove wood, and invasive exotic plants.

Build some feedback mechanisms on a need basis between decision-makers and civil society

- Create a vigilance committee made up of young people from the locality who will be responsible for monitoring the tree nurseries and reporting on illegal or unethical felling of mangrove trees, thereby facilitating a continuous dialogue. The vigilance committee must not take the role of the public administration, but rather play its civilian role in parallel with the administration.
- Look for subsidies and develop some internal benefits-based model so that the youth involved get paid for the service (being careful that those models don't favor mangrove degradation in the long run or create conflict between paid youth and others from the community)

Avoid doing the job of the institutional actors that should be in charge of restoring the mangrove

- The vigilance committee of youths should also include members from different sections of the society in order to be able to make more effective, holistic decisions, be inclusive and it is an opportunity to not exclude youth who are already at risk (socially and economically).
- If CYBN and other groups take a role of control over the use of the mangrove resources, they will substitute themselves to the role of the local police or security forces, who may therefore abandon their mission over mangrove conservation. CYBN should make sure that each actor who is responsible for conserving the mangrove plays their role properly and effectively.

… to have access to the full case study, click here

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1. **A powerful 2 minute exercise to prevent being stuck at step 3**

What makes it difficult to invent alternative options is often threefold (and we may thank our brain for it!!):

- We fear to be judged if we bring any stupid ideas
- We feel comfortable to do what we've always done
- We tend to "think" and analyze too much instead of just being creative

Here is the tool: Present the dilemma you are facing and give your group just 2 minutes with the following instruction: in teams of 2, invent as many options as you can think of to overcome the dilemma. They don't have to be realistic or wise or smart, just invent as many as you can. The group who has the most options will win! After having shared all the options that participants have come up with, start analyzing which option (or a combination of options, as it's often a mix of creative ideas) seems to be the most effective to pursue.

2. **Synthesis table of interactions and adaptations**

The previous checklists allow us to anticipate risks or to visualize potential additional positive impacts. Based on that, GYBN must remember that "there is always another option"! Sometimes it requires creativity to invent the best (or the least bad) alternative option to a complex situation.

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Element of the context/conflict	Negative or positive interaction between our intervention and the context (what signs?)	Alternative option(s) to improve our impact on the context and prevent more conflicts (what signs?)

3. How to monitor if my alternative option is conflict sensitive?

- For each alternative option you have brought, identify the signs that could tell you if it does harm or good on the ground. Also anticipate the signs (indicators) from the context that will allow you to anticipate if it is worsening or improving.

- Once you have designed your conflict sensitive intervention and start to implement it, always remember to integrate the 3 steps in your project management - looking at context/conflict evolution (Step 1) all along the way and listening to any sign of negative and positive interaction (Step 2) so that you can adjust and adapt your intervention before any crises happen (Step 3).

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Tips for finding alternatives

Monitoring interaction between the intervention and the context should have helped you to identify where to adjust in your activities and behaviors

Inventing alternate options

- The key mantra is: THERE ARE ALWAYS OTHER OPTIONS!
- Alternative options are often small details, not costly and easy to put in place: add people, change a meeting place, improve translation, change a name, go through another actor instead of directly, etc.
- Invite people far from the action to give their inputs, which would help us to be more creative
- Never fear to do things differently from what you are used to doing!
- Don't judge foolish ideas since they will allow inspiration for a better idea.

Monitor the effect of alternate options

- Since conflict sensitivity is a cycle, any new option should request a new round of conflict sensitivity analysis!
- Signs of doing harm or contributing to dialogue could be pre-identified by GYBN. It does not have to be strict indicators, but rather signs in the context, feedback from actors, etc.

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C B B B T BC ! BC B B B B !

The authors have experienced the conflict sensitivity tools presented in this guidebook and want to share their last tips.

- Conducting a conflict sensitivity analysis with multiple people is important because it allows you to analyze a conflict situation from various perspectives and identify the maximum number of actors involved.
- A map will never be perfect; there will always be some bias since it depends on the perspective of the person conducting the analysis. Having a large number/group of people reduces bias and can broaden the perspective to better understand the conflict situation.
- Identifying more actors reduces the possibility that the intervention will worsen the conflict circumstances because the map allows you to observe and identify where there is greater tension, and identifying this is key to making a direct or indirect intervention.
- Taking the tools and methods of conflict sensitivity in hand is not a huge challenge, we did this analysis after a few hours of training and practice, and although we cannot anticipate everything, the design of our intervention has taken benefit from the conflict sensitivity analysis.
- Being conflict sensitive made us realize that as youth, we can go further and be strategic when intervening in conflict situations. It is crucial to work on our leadership skills to stimulate dialogue, create and identify strategies that promote peace, and reduce conflicts. We are a group that is very much affected by conflict, but often left out of its resolution, and we want to have our say!
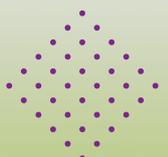
For more details or to get in touch reach out to us at
gybncontent@gmail.com

Global Youth Biodiversity Network

PeaceNexus Foundation