4.2 Behaviour elements in conflict management
4.2.1 Basic principles in conflict management

Schwedes and Werner (2010) indicated six basic principles of conflict management that the PLUP team should follow to resolve conflicts that might arise during PLUP processes. These are:

Principle – I: **Distinguish between the people and the problem and treat the two separately:** the key things in this principle are remaining neutral, respect both parties and establish good relationships with all conflict parties.

Principle II: **Foster stakeholder collaboration and restore trust:** this principle focuses on resolving conflicts with negotiation and building trust among conflicting parties.

Principle III: **Avoid further escalation of tensions** always be aware of risks when addressing a conflict, you might reinforce tensions without intending to do so. Try to find "connectors", people who maintain good relationships with both parties and to make use of them. On the other hand, if you identify "spoilers", people dividing conflicting parties, try to develop a strategy (isolation or incorporation) to cope with the person(s).

Principle IV: **Improve and manage information:** check for "information needs" the parties might have and seek for neutral and technical expertise if needed. All parties need to know their rights, roles, and responsibilities.

Principle V: **Use and/or build up local capacities for conflict management:** in most cases, communities have existing institutions and structures that help to resolve conflicts (Box 4.2). To avoid undermining the existing local capacities, an assessment should be made of whether these structures have been used already to settle the conflict and if so, why they were not successful. New efforts to mediate between two conflicting parties should in any case also enhance the capacities for autonomous conflict management in the future.

Principle VI: **Concentrate on interests and not on positions:** the conflict parties often position themselves about the issue of the conflict. To mention: "We don't want the new National Park" or "We don't want the land to be used for mining". Underneath these positions, there are a number of interests, needs, desires and fears, like the interest in gaining more income by intensifying farming activities, the need to sustain a family or the fear of water becoming contaminated. Having moved from positions to interests, the aim in conflict resolution is to find mutual interests of both parties involved to achieve collaborative solutions.

4.2.2   Requirements for successful conflict resolution

The basic principles of conflict resolution discussed above need to fulfil certain conditions for successful outcomes. Some of these requirements as summarized by (International Network for Capacity Building (CAP-NET), 2008) are:

Willingness to participate

The participants must be free to decide when to participate and when to withdraw from a conflict resolution process should that be necessary. They should set the agenda and decide on the method to be followed in the process. It is, however, impossible even to agree to discuss a problem if either of the parties holds deeply entrenched position or system of values.

Opportunity for mutual gain

Linked to the above is the requirement of opportunity of mutual gain. The key to success of conflict resolution is the probability that the contending parties will be better off through cooperative action. If one or both believe that they can achieve a better outcome through unilateral action, they will not be willing to participate in the process.

Inclusiveness

For successful conflict resolution, all interested parties must have the opportunity to participate in the process. Exclusion of an interested party is not only unfair but also risky since such party may obstruct the implementation of the outcome by legal or extra-legal means.

Identification of interests

It is important, in working towards consensus, to identify interests rather than positions. Conflicting parties often engage in positional bargaining without listening to the interests of the other parties. This creates confrontation and a barrier to consensus.

Developing options

An important part of a conflict resolution process is the neutral development of possible solutions and options. An impartial third party can be a great asset to the process as it can put forward ideas and suggestions from a neutral perspective.

Carrying out an agreement

Not only must the issue be capable of resolution through the participatory process but the parties themselves must also be capable of entering into and carrying out an agreement.