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Report

Workshop on Mediation & Conflict Resolution

SWAPO Women's Council
Executive Committee & Regional Coordinators

30 March - 1 April 2007

in

Windhoek, Namibia

Jan Ligthart Training Centre, Rossing Foundation

"Enhancing Peace through Capacity Building in non-violent Conflict Resolution"

Objectives:

Main objectives of the workshop:

- Introduce SWAPO women in key party and political functions from different cultural and professional backgrounds to mediation and conflict resolution,
- Deepen their understanding of conflict genesis, escalation and resolution,
- Create a basis for empowerment and interest-based political work of women, to provide a supporting environment for networking and further development in this field.
- prepare the way for future trainers of CR within the party structure, who can continue training the rank and file in all regions.

Participants:

Members of SWAPO Women's Council executive committee and regional coordinators, who work in party's functions, government institutions and other fields, as well as in various regions.

Most of the participants had attended the Congress in Rundu in December 2006 and heard A. Mickley's presentation on the role of Mediation and Conflict Resolution in political work, in inner-party and other conflicts, and in efforts towards reconciliation. They were keen to learn the methods of Conflict Resolution (CR) and be able to apply them in their respective fields of private, party, political and professional life.

Facilitators:

- Prof. Dr. Angela Mickley, Professor for Peace Education, Conflict Resolution and Ecology at the Social Faculty of Potsdam University of Applied Sciences
- Ms. Birgit Sinnwell-Wenzel, Lawyer and Mediator from Southern Germany

Assistance and Co-Facilitation:

- Ms. Julia Ortmann, Lawyer and Mediator in Munich, Germany

Program: (Please find the originally planned Program in the Appendix)

Friday 30/03/2007 17.00 - 20.00 hrs

17.00 - 18.30 Arrival of Participants

18.30 - 19.30 Dinner

Saturday 31/03/2007 08.00 - 19.00 hrs

Introduction - Hon. Mildred Jantjies (SPWC)
Ms. Sylvia Mundjindi (FES)
Prof. Dr. Angela Mickley (FHP)

Exercise - Teambuilding, control parallel processes: 'Ball-Game'

Input and Exercise Images of Conflict

Exercise - Sociometric reflection: 'Conflict Positions'

Exercise - Helpful or destructive behaviour in Conflict
Situations: 'Failure/Success' in groups of three

Input - Attitudes in Dealing with Conflict Intrapersonal Conflicts

Exercise - Identifying of and dealing with Emotions: 'Red Flags'

BREAK

Input - Personal Values
Mediation Phases
Iceberg Model: subconscious feelings, fears, experiences not
visible in outside demeanour

Input & Exercise Four Sides of a Message

Input - Onion Model: Image for working from positions in
conflict or negotiation via interests to needs, wishes and fears

Exercise - Active Listening & Paraphrasing: 'A-B-C', using
account of emotional event with facts and feelings to be stated

Input - Body Language as additional indicator of state
of relationship and conflict escalation in it

Input - Reproaches & I-Messages

Role-Play - Mediation: 'Labour Dispute'

Input Micro-, Meso- and Macro-Levels of Society in their importance
for addressing conflicts effectively and sustainably

Feedback - Brief Flashlight: what did I learn, what do I take with me?

Closure - Singing & Prayer

Sunday 01/04/2007 08.00 - 11.30 hrs

Prayer

Discussion - Open Questions & Experiences

Input - Mediation: Introductory Aspects

Exercise - Teambuilding, group coordination, working with stress factors: 'Clapping Hands'

Exercise - Communication & Cooperation under special rules: 'Pentagons'

BREAK

Role-Play - Mediation: Introduction, barriers/background, brainstorming phases, elements: conflict diagnosis, emotional aspects, objectives for agreement, hindrances, ideas for solution (& Evaluation=

Overall Evaluation: Wrap Up

Prayer & Singing

Outcomes:

Day 1:

16 women attended the conference, among them the Namibian minister for information and communication, former Secretary of Women's Council, who initiated taking up this subject, co-ordinators from the northern regions of the country, a representative of FES and members of deputy minister's office MoHSS and SWAPO Headquarters.

Due to an invitation on short notice to the birthday celebrations of the wife of the Party's president, many executive members had to travel north and this reduced the number of participants by around ten.

Information on Workshop contents and objectives to NBC reporter

Identify expectations and interests of participants in view of reduced numbers present.

Clarify general theories and approaches of CR and mediation with minister, SWAPO officials and some regional co-ordinators

Discuss and adapt participation and schedule changes

Day 2:

NBC records introduction phase, requests interview at later stage.

Opening speeches by Sylvia (FES representative) and the Secretary of SWAPO Women's Council and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, Petrina Haingura, on the importance of Conflict Resolution in Namibian society gave a very subject oriented and focused support for addressing this difficult area of human communication - conflict. They both stressed the necessity of including CR compe-

tences in everyday dealings of institutions and government agencies as well as family, and outlined the wider implications of applying them for the peaceful development of the whole country.

Methods for working with emotional difficulties in conflicts received much attention, common request of all participants was a role-played mediation process:

Mediation:

An exemplary mediation scenario was chosen by the participants, in which a labour dispute within an institution between employer and employee had developed over payment for overtime. All women present knew about this type of conflict and could easily identify with one or other of the views described by the problem owners.

In the role-played mediation, the two conflicting parties, a representative of the company's Human Resources department and the two mediators were present. The co-mediator who volunteered to lead proceedings with Angela Mickley was a member of the Namibian government. The other participants took observer tasks for the different people and phases in the process.

The very detailed questions asked after this model-mediation focused on

- attitude of the mediators,
- methods of de-escalation within the setting,
- reframing reproachful language of clients to one another,
- working with emotions while all conflicting parties are present,
- shaping the process without yet knowing the conflict and its setting,
- the effect of allowing a wide range of controversial opinions being voiced,
- directing the process through the more emotional and the more factual phases,
- giving different amount of time, space and attention to the clients.

Participants pointed out that unfortunately they could not address the relevant bigger problems of party and political areas, as they did not master the CR methods sufficiently.

Day 3:

In a mixture of in-put to theoretical background and application examples, participants used reflection of their conflict, cooperative and group behaviour for further insight into their "conflict profile" which was used as a basis for clarification of existing and new competencies.

In the final evaluation and during the workshop the participants gave feedback.

Exemplary quotes:

We should have done this long ago..

Communication and CR can be useful in party proceedings.

This should become a standard training for SWAPO officials and leading members.

We can use these methods in many areas of life and work.

Mediation helps discovering people's interests behind their positions

The facilitators announced that the pilot-course of a comprehensive 9-months training in Mediation and Conflict Transformation would begin towards the end of

2007. Some could be identified as possible participants and showed great interest in becoming professional mediators.

Once a complete training has been established in Namibia and will be run and staffed by Namibians, the German contribution can be reduced to coaching, consulting and assisting in highly escalated or complex conflicts.

Overall Outcome:

The objective of providing the party with a professional perspective in building capacity for Conflict Resolution was reached with the officials present. They appreciated experiencing the methods in practice, experiment with their existing repertoire and the new procedures, and have available the many texts in the reader/manual. They can use it as a widening of the CR/Mediation application scope and a valid help in reflecting the workshop activities afterwards.

Some language difficulties people had, were addressed and dealt with quickly and unobtrusively, through participants requesting translation for differentiated and complex contributions they wanted to make.

In conversations between working phases, participants pointed out that they felt able to integrate communication techniques and elements of mediation in their social and professional areas, but not confident yet to use them as a specific means of resolving conflicts. They would like to be able to continue similar trainings and for the time being, draw on outside expertise when needed.

The needs mentioned by workshop participants included:

- Further training and coaching for the use of mediation in party political field,
- regular exchange of experiences and further learning steps,
- creation of consulting body or individuals within party to help in problem situations,
- further intense training of personal competences in this field,
- practising and experimenting under supervision for more effective reflection of processes,
- widen the use of CR and mediation in society and especially in politics.
- use of mediation or single elements of it in family, work and community
- reflection of the differences in people's value systems
- knowledge of and ability to control escalation of conflicts in private and professional sphere

Continuation in Future:

The Secretary, Ms. Haingura, plans to continue this type of workshop in the near future, August or September 2007, depending on the scheduling of the SWAPO Congress planned for this winter and on the necessary financing. On the day after the workshop she acknowledged the successful running of it, had been informed of proceedings throughout the three days and gained the impression that the right decision had been taken in organising it.