

## **Chapter 23**

### **Evaluation Models in Conflict Resolution and Management Education**

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#### **Introduction**

Evaluation is a systematic process of determining the value, significance, or effectiveness of an object, activity, or program e, based on specific criteria or objectives while identifying improvement areas for decision-making. The process of evaluation in conflict management can help achieve several positive outcomes, such as improving communication and collaboration, boosting creativity and innovation, increasing productivity and efficiency, enhancing performance and quality, and strengthening relationships and loyalty. Conducting evaluation in conflict resolution is an essential instrument for monitoring and improving upon existing initiatives. Proper evaluation model in conflict resolution would facilitate the ability to understand ‘what went wrong’, and scholars would have the ability to build a body of theory about the causes of and remedies to the conflicts. Therefore, evaluation is an important universal obligation to fulfil during conflict resolution and management in any organization or society.

Various scholars have provided insight into the process of conflict resolution. Some have offered new approaches to conceptualizing the meaning of success in conflict resolution interventions and reconciliation initiatives. Others have highlighted particular case studies in an effort to demonstrate the conditions and contexts that lead to more-or-less successful outcome. Still others have outlined specific questions or frameworks that could be applied to conflict resolution activities. However, despite this impressive body of work, many scholars remain skeptical about the usability of evaluation model to conflict management. Hence, the goal of this write-up is to examine the possibilities of applying evaluation frameworks, methodologies and tools to conflict resolution and management, and to illustrate how evaluation models can be effectively used or adapted to conflict resolution frameworks. The paper provides an understanding of evaluation model, an overview of the concept of conflict resolution and management, a review of the evaluation model that can be applied in the field of conflict resolution;

#### **Understanding the Concept of Evaluation and its Models**

Evaluation is a process that critically examines policy, program or institution. It involves collecting and analyzing information about a program's activities, characteristics, and outcomes. Essentially, it refers to the combination of evidence and values to determine whether an intervention has merit, worth, or significance

(Bamberger, Rugh & Mabry, 2016). Its purpose is to make judgments about a program, to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform programming decisions. Evaluation is used in almost all areas of life in theory and practice. It is well established in the fields of development and humanitarian action, and investigators have the opportunity to decide on a set of evaluation criteria that can be applied to any programme. Evaluation process has objectives which include: reviewing and judging present status of an intervention in order to improve the intervention; checking and controlling processes and procedures for purposes of accountability; assessing and documenting what has been achieved (Mark, Henry & Jones, 2020). The evaluation process can occur at any time during the implementation process. It can also be conducted in the middle of an intervention or at the end, depending on the objective of the evaluation. It can also take place periodically when evaluating long-term or complex programmes.

Evaluation models are systematic frameworks designed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and outcome of interventions or programmes within society or organizations (Stufflebeam, 2017). These models provide a structured approach to measuring the impact of strategies on participants, as well as their alignment with goals of the intervention. Evaluation models help to gather data, analyze results, and make informed decisions to optimize strategies employed for the interventions or programmes. They consist of various levels or stages that guide the evaluation process, ranging from assessing participant reactions and programme outcomes to measuring their impact. They offer valuable frameworks for gauging the effectiveness of programme efforts, facilitating continuous improvement, and demonstrating the value of the initiatives to stakeholders. A large number of evaluation models have been developed and are widely applied in program evaluation. Selection of this evaluation model allows structuring and planning to assure that important information is not overlooked. These evaluation models include: Kirkpatrick model, CIPP model, CIRO Model, Kaufman's model, Phillips ROI model, Brinkerhoff model, Anderson's model and a host of others. The appropriate evaluation model is the one that is ideally suited to the goals of the programme.

### **Overview of Conflict Resolution and Management**

The word “conflict” is from the Latin word meaning ‘to clash or engage in a fight’. As a noun, it denotes a situation in which there is open, protracted conflict, belligerency, confrontation, animosity, strife, struggle, battle, warfare, etc. In the modern world, disagreements and discord between states as well as inside them are typical occurrences. International peace and security are threatened by these wars because they have expanded beyond their original region and into other sovereign governments. There are a variety of definitions of conflict proposed by different authors. Nonetheless, a dispute is typically understood to be an open altercation between two opposed parties or persons. It is a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Hence, Okeke (2017) defines conflict as a process that begins when one party

perceives that another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about. More so, Deutsch (2019) describes conflict as a form of interaction among parties with differing interests or goals, where actions taken by one party frustrate the attempts of another to achieve their desired outcomes. While Thomas (2019) defines conflict as a disagreement or clash between ideas, principles, or people, arising from a perception of incompatibility in objectives or needs, and Jehn and Mannix (2020) defined conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.

Conflict arises when people cannot agree on values, goals, points of view, ideas, or ambitions, and, if not settled peacefully, can result in bitter disagreements and occasionally violent altercations. Generally, differences in viewpoints, opinions, or access to common resources can lead to disagreements. Many of the political disputes in Nigeria have their roots in the country's communities and ethnic groups (Albert, 2020). Positive (constructive) conflict can result in a good relationship, or negative (destructive) conflict can lead to an unhealthy relationship. In human relationship, disputes will inevitably arise, but developing healthy coping mechanisms is essential. A mishandled dispute can be detrimental to the human relationship. However, disagreement offers a chance for development when managed civilly and constructively, eventually strengthening the relationship between the two or more parties. Hence, maintaining and strengthening your personal and professional relationships is possible by acquiring the skills necessary for effective conflict resolution.

### *Types of Conflicts*

- i. *Intrapersonal Conflict:* This happens inside a person when a decision is about to be made, giving priority to one over another. This occurs on how to spend time, who to date, moral dilemmas, objectives, and desires, among other things. When someone is experiencing this sort of conflict, it might cause stress and worry in them.
- ii. *Interpersonal Conflict:* This is a dispute that arises between two or more people. It might be brought about by disparities in beliefs, intentions, idiosyncrasies, and behaviour. This type of conflict arises when two individuals are at odds with one another.
- iii. *Intragroup Conflict:* This might happen within a group of people. This is comparable to interpersonal disagreements, with the exception that it takes place inside a specific organization. When an organization is split into two or more sides of stories.
- iv. *Intergroup Conflict:* This is a dispute that arises between social groupings, such as religious denominations, activity organizations, and solidarity groups.

This type of conflict arises, for instance, when two different organizations face each other with different opinions or as opponents.

### ***Causes of Conflict***

Understanding the root causes of conflicts is crucial for developing effective conflict-resolution strategies and promoting harmonious interactions, though the causes of conflict can vary widely depending on the context. Generally, the following factors are considered to be the causes of conflict:

- i. *Communication breakdown*: Conflicts often arise from miscommunication or lack of communication between parties. When individuals or groups fail to convey their needs, expectations, or concerns effectively, misunderstandings can lead to conflicts.
- ii. *Competing interests*: Conflicts occur when individuals or groups have competing goals or interests. When resources, rewards, or opportunities are perceived as limited, competition for these scarce resources can lead to disputes.
- iii. *Differences in values and beliefs*: People often have different sets of values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world, which can lead to conflicts, especially in diverse work environments. In diverse settings, conflicts can arise due to differences in cultural backgrounds, values, and norms. What is considered acceptable behaviour in one culture may not be in another, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts.
- iv. *Personality Clashes*: Individual differences in personality, values, and attitudes can lead to interpersonal conflict. Some individuals may have difficulty working together due to differences in temperament, work style, or beliefs.
- v. *Power imbalances*: When power is unequally distributed within an organization or between individuals, those with less power may feel marginalized or unfairly treated, leading to conflict.
- vi. *Role ambiguity*: Conflicts can arise when there is a lack of clarity regarding individual roles and responsibilities. This often leads to confusion, frustration, and conflict as people may overstep or neglect their duties. Misplaced priorities of men and women can be a cause of broken homes.
- vii. *Unmet expectations*: When another does not meet one party's expectations, frustration and conflict can emerge. This is particularly common in professional relationships where expectations for performance or behaviour may be unclear.

### ***Conflict Prevention***

Since it's often believed that prevention is preferable to treatment, the goal of conflict prevention is to stop violent disputes before they start. Preventing intractable disputes is preferable to trying to resolve or manage them after they have arisen since it is simpler to do so. Because the scars left behind by violent conflicts can always spark new conflicts. The ultimate goal of conflict prevention

is to establish an atmosphere where disagreements are resolved early on and before they spiral out of control. However, the strategy must shift from conflict avoidance to conflict management or resolution, which is far more difficult to handle well, as the dispute intensifies and other complicating variables emerge.

### ***Conflict Mediation***

Through mediation, parties may resolve conflicts, mend past wrongs, and acquire the skills necessary to handle conflict in the future. Mediation involves parties transferring dispute resolution processes to mediators, unlike negotiation where mediators are used, but the process is similar when facilitators are used. Also, mediation differs from arbitration in that a mediator guides the parties in determining the resolution of the case, rather than making decisions. More so, mediation differs from case evaluation in that the mediator does not determine the value of claims and there is no penalty for successful mediation. Mediators may assist participants in opening their eyes to what they may be missing, widening their viewpoints, and even fumbling through the process of addressing problems. Mediation is a quicker, less expensive alternative to litigation, allowing parties to work out their solutions privately, rather than facing unknown results through a lengthy, expensive, and formal process.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

It is necessary to find a reasonably stable solution that addresses the root causes of the conflict to terminate or conclude a protracted dispute. This is a more challenging endeavour than straightforward dispute resolution since resolution entails finding a technique to respect each party's fundamental requirements while also going beyond negotiation interests to address those needs. Unlike dispute settlement, conflict resolution necessitates a more analytical, problem-solving approach. The primary distinction is that conflict resolution involves determining the root causes of the dispute and devising strategies to address them. However, a settlement's goal is to simply end a disagreement as soon as possible in an amicable manner. This implies that a disagreement that arises inside the framework of a more extensive conflict can be resolved without ending the conflict as a whole. It is important to note that resolving conflict in a good manner is the best which conflict resolution is bringing up. The objective is to pinpoint the root causes of the problems and devise fresh approaches for bringing the parties together and fostering new social bonds. Compared to disagreements, conflicts are more enduring and have deeper roots. They typically result from non-negotiable problems like basic human necessities, morally repugnant disagreements, or contentious disputes over the allocation of vital resources like money, water, or land. A solution to a conflict must address more than simply the parties' interests, as in dispute resolution, to be considered resolved.

### **Conflict Management**

Effective conflict resolution helps parties to handle their differences and coexist together without necessarily ending the main issue. For instance, we might never be able to settle the numerous disputes between Nigeria's different ethnic groups, we are still a nation sixty-four years after independence because we have only been able to manage the struggle. The long-term management of unresolvable disputes through institutionalized policies and regulatory processes for handling disputes as they arise is known as conflict management. It explains how we handle disagreements and react to them before, during, and after they happen. It is a term used to describe the range of approaches people use to resolving conflicts, defending what they believe to be right and opposing what they believe to be wrong. In a nutshell, conflict management is the application of managerial strategies to control the environment, and contain, and hide a disagreement. Many people believe that conflict management and conflict resolution are two different things. We refer to conflict management rather than conflict resolution because many disagreements are truly unresolvable. Resolving conflicts by intervening in ways that increase their benefits and decrease their negative effects is the aim of conflict management.

The effectiveness of conflict resolution and management stands as a critical determinant of social relationships in any societal or organizational growth and success. Hence, evaluation models in conflict resolution come into play, offering structured frameworks to assess the impact, efficiency, and value of conflict resolution initiatives.

### **Evaluation in Conflict Resolution**

Evaluation is rarely a preferred task for anyone working in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Hence, evaluation is seen as a systematic process of evaluating the value, significance, or effectiveness of conflict resolution activity based on the determine goals and guide decision-making (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2019). Evaluation in conflict resolution takes time, uses limited resources, necessitates a high level of skill, and may produce assessment outcomes that are too obvious or that fail to adequately convey the subtleties of conflict transformation work. Hence, evaluation used in conflict resolution should focus on assessing the effectiveness of interventions, understanding the dynamics of conflicts, and determining the best strategies for resolution. To effectively evaluate conflict resolution, some prerequisites must be put in place. This include:

- i. *Adequate resources*: Successful conflict resolution evaluation requires sufficient resources, including time, budget, personnel, and technology. Without these, the evaluation may be incomplete or less reliable.
- ii. *Baseline Data*: Having baseline data on the conflict or pre-intervention data allows the evaluator to compare the situation before and after the resolution process, offering a clearer understanding of its impact.

- iii. *Clear objectives and goals:* The evaluator must understand the purpose of the conflict resolution evaluation and what specific outcomes or changes are being assessed. This provides a focus on what data to collect and how to analyze it.
- iv. *Data availability and access:* The evaluator must ensure that relevant, accurate, and up-to-date data is accessible, including feedback from the parties involved, records of conflict resolution processes, and outcome reports. This may involve gaining permission from stakeholders to access confidential or sensitive information.
- v. *Defined criteria and standards:* The evaluator must establish clear and measurable criteria to assess the effectiveness of the conflict resolution efforts. These standards provide benchmarks against which the results of the evaluation are compared.
- vi. *Ethical considerations:* Conflict resolution evaluations should follow ethical guidelines, including confidentiality, informed consent, and respect for the rights of all parties involved. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the evaluation and protecting participants.
- vii. *Stakeholder involvement:* Engaging key stakeholders (e.g., mediators, parties involved in the conflict, management) from the beginning ensures that the evaluation reflects their needs and priorities. Their input can help refine evaluation questions and promote the use of findings.
- viii. *Evaluators' competence:* The person or team conducting the conflict resolution evaluation should have the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience in conflict management, data collection, and analysis to carry out a valid evaluation.
- ix. *Evaluation framework or model:* The use of an established evaluation framework or model can guide the structure and method. A structured plan outlining the scope, timeline, methodologies, and data collection processes is essential. This includes specifying the type of conflict resolution evaluation framework (e.g., process, outcome, or impact evaluation), target audience, and evaluation questions.

### ***Forms of Evaluation in Conflict Resolution and Management***

An evaluation can have multiple and concurrent goals such as evaluating the current state to improve the interventions in conflict resolution, verifying and controlling processes and procedures for conflict resolution, and identifying lessons learned to be applied in future interventions. Evaluation may take place at any stage of the conflict resolution. The evaluations can be conducted in the middle of the intervention (mid-term review) or at the end (ex-post evaluation), depending on the objective of the evaluation. The forms of evaluation are:

- i. *Behavioral change evaluation:* This evaluation examines changes in behaviour following conflict resolution. It assesses whether individuals or groups involved in the conflict have altered their behaviours to prevent future disputes, foster better collaboration, or improve communication.

- ii. *Cost-Benefit Analysis:* This is a quantitative evaluation used to assess the resources (e.g., time, money, and effort) spent on resolving the conflict compared to the benefits gained from its resolution. This type of analysis is particularly useful for organizations looking to optimize their conflict resolution strategies.
- iii. *Impact evaluation:* This evaluation assesses the broader effects of conflict resolution, particularly on the stakeholders, the organization, or the community involved. It explores how conflict resolution has affected productivity, trust, communication, and cooperation among parties over time.
- iv. *Outcome evaluation:* Outcome evaluation assesses whether the conflict resolution efforts achieved the desired results, such as reducing tensions or reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. This evaluation measures the long-term impact of the resolution on relationships and overall organizational or group dynamics.
- v. *Process evaluation:* This type of evaluation assesses the steps taken during the conflict resolution process to ensure that the methods used are appropriate and implemented correctly. It focuses on whether mediators, facilitators, or negotiators followed the agreed-upon processes and how well they engaged the parties involved in the conflict.
- vi. *Stakeholder satisfaction:* This form of evaluation collects feedback from all parties involved to measure their satisfaction with the process and outcome of the conflict resolution. It provides insights into how fair and equitable the process was perceived to be, as well as how well the resolution addressed the underlying issues.
- vii. *Third-Party Mediation evaluation:* In cases where a mediator or arbitrator is involved, this evaluation examines the effectiveness of the third-party intervention. It looks at how well the mediator facilitated communication and whether their intervention helped achieve a resolution.

### **Evaluation Models Applicable to Conflict Resolution and Management**

Evaluation models provide frameworks for assessing the effectiveness and impact of programs, policies, and interventions. A well designed model examines various components in conflict resolution and management, the application of conflict resolution techniques, and the concomitant behavioral changes. Here is an overview of some prominent evaluation models:

#### ***1. Results-Based Management (RBM)***

Results-Based Management (RBM) is an evaluation model used to ensure that conflict resolution programs achieve measurable results. It focuses on resources allocated for conflict resolution interventions for the input while in activities, the actions taken to address the conflict, such as peace talks, negotiations, or interventions and the outputs seek immediate products of the activities (e.g., agreements, improved communication). The outcome of result-based management is short-term and medium-term results, such as reduced tension or restored

communication between parties and the impact is long-term changes in conflict dynamics or overall peace. RBM is used by governments, NGOs, and international organizations to assess the success of peacebuilding initiatives and large-scale conflict resolution efforts.

### ***2. Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) Model***

The Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) model focuses on the engagement of adversaries in direct, facilitated dialogue. This model is particularly useful for evaluating the effectiveness of interpersonal and intergroup dialogue in conflict situations. Its process of evaluation focuses on the quality and structure of the interactions between conflicting parties (e.g., inclusivity, dialogue format), while the outcome evaluation measures whether mutual understanding, trust, and reconciliation have been achieved and sustainability evaluation assesses whether dialogue sessions lead to long-lasting peace and relationship improvements. The interactive Conflict Resolution Model is often used in community mediation, international peacebuilding, and ethnic conflict resolution, where dialogue is central to overcoming differences.

### ***3. Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model in Conflict Resolution***

Originally developed for evaluating training programs, the Kirkpatrick Model has been adapted for conflict resolution to evaluate conflict management and mediation training programs. It takes into account the style of training, both informal and formal, and rates them against four levels of criteria which include: reaction, learning, behavior and results. It measures reaction by participant satisfaction with the conflict resolution training, learning the extent to which participants acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for conflict resolution, and behaviour whether participants apply conflict resolution techniques in real-life scenarios, with the result which yields tangible outcomes, such as improved workplace relations or reduced conflicts. This model is widely used in organizations and institutions that provide training in mediation, negotiation, and other conflict resolution skills.

### ***4. CIRO Evaluation Model***

This is developed by Peter Warr, Michael Bird, and Neil Rackham. CIRO stands for Context, Input, Reaction, and Outcome. This comprehensive framework offers a holistic approach to assessing the effectiveness of intervention programs. In this model context refers to the environmental factors that influence intervention effectiveness. It involves understanding the institutional culture, goals, and specific needs that prompted the intervention. Input evaluation focuses on the design and content of the conflict resolution program. It assesses whether the intervention materials are relevant, engaging, and conducive to effective conflict resolution. Reaction evaluation gauges participants' immediate responses and satisfaction with the intervention. It involves collecting feedback through surveys, questionnaires, or discussions to measure participants' perceptions of the

intervention's relevance, clarity, and overall quality. Outcome evaluation assesses the actual impact of the conflict resolution program on participants. It examines whether the intervention led to desired behavior changes and results. Outcome evaluation may involve pre-and post-intervention technique assessments, observations, and performance metrics to determine the extent to which the conflict resolution technique achieved its intended goals. The CIRO model emphasizes a comprehensive view of the conflict resolution technique evaluation by considering the broader context, the quality of intervention process, participants' reactions, and the tangible outcomes of the intervention program.

### ***5. Theory of Change (ToC) Model***

The Theory of Change model involves identifying the desired outcomes of a conflict resolution intervention and working backwards to determine the necessary steps to achieve those outcomes. It is commonly used in peacebuilding and international conflict resolution. The input is the resources such as mediation expertise, training, or negotiation platforms, while the activities involve specific conflict resolution actions (e.g., dialogue sessions, and trust-building exercises). The outputs of the theory of change for conflict resolution are immediate results, such as signed agreements or ceasefire declarations, outcome is short- to medium-term results, including restored relationships and reduced hostility, and the impact should be long-term changes, such as sustained peace or improved community cohesion. The theory of change for conflict resolution is used in international development projects to design and evaluate peace processes, the ToC model helps clarify assumptions about how conflict resolution efforts lead to desired changes.

### ***6. Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) Model***

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) model involves evaluating conflict resolution programs to produce findings that will be directly used by stakeholders. The model involves stakeholder engagement in ensuring that key stakeholders, such as mediators, community leaders, and affected parties, are involved in designing and interpreting the evaluation and focus on the use of evaluation results which are tailored to be actionable and practical while focusing on how findings will improve future conflict resolution efforts. UFE model adapts its methods to ensure relevance and utility and it is particularly useful in community-based conflict resolution programs or where stakeholders have a direct influence on the implementation of interventions.

### ***7. Conflict Resolution Evaluation Framework (CREF)***

The Conflict Resolution Evaluation Framework is designed to assess mediation and negotiation interventions. It focuses on several key aspects. In its process, it examines how the conflict resolution process is implemented, including how negotiations or mediation sessions are structured while the outcome of the evaluation measures the results, such as whether the conflict was resolved, the

durability of the agreement, and satisfaction of the parties involved, and impact evaluation assesses the long-term impact of the resolution, such as whether it reduces future conflicts or enhances relationships between the parties. CREF can be applied in various settings, including workplace conflicts, community disputes, or international peace-building efforts. By analyzing both processes and outcomes, it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of conflict resolution interventions.

### ***Steps in Tailor-Made Evaluation Model for Conflict Resolution***

- i. *Identify the purpose of the evaluation:* The first step in creating a tailor-made evaluation model is to clearly define the purpose of the evaluation. This involves determining what you aim to assess in the conflict resolution process, such as the effectiveness of mediation, negotiation outcomes, or long-term peacebuilding efforts. The purpose should be linked to measurable objectives and aligned with the goals of the stakeholders involved.
- ii. *Engage Stakeholders:* Effective evaluation models involve stakeholder participation to ensure that their interests and needs are addressed. This step includes identifying key stakeholders, such as mediators, disputants, community leaders, and external evaluators, and engaging them in the design of the evaluation. Their input ensures that the evaluation criteria are relevant and that the results will be used to improve future conflict resolution processes.
- iii. *Define Evaluation Criteria:* Establish clear and relevant criteria for evaluating the conflict resolution process. Criteria could include aspects like fairness, efficiency, the satisfaction of parties, the durability of the agreement, and the broader impact on relationships and community dynamics. The criteria should be tailored to the specific conflict resolution mechanism being evaluated (e.g., mediation, arbitration, or peace talks).
- iv. *Select Evaluation Methods:* Choose appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative methods to assess the conflict resolution process. Methods might include surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis. The methods should align with the objectives of the evaluation and the specific conflict resolution approach being used. For instance, qualitative methods may be better suited for evaluating interpersonal conflict resolution, while quantitative metrics may be used in large-scale peace processes.
- v. *Develop an Evaluation Framework:* Create a structured evaluation framework that outlines the specific steps in the conflict resolution process to be evaluated. This framework should include key elements such as inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The framework helps in organizing the evaluation process and ensuring that all necessary components are measured.
- vi. *Data Collection and Analysis:* Collect data based on the chosen methods, and analyze the results in the context of the conflict resolution process. This may involve both formative and summative assessments. Data analysis may

involve thematic analysis for qualitative data or statistical analysis for quantitative data.

### **Benefits of Evaluation Models in Conflict Resolution and Management**

Evaluation models offer a range of benefits that contribute to the overall effectiveness and impact of conflict resolution techniques.

- i. *Measure intervention effectiveness:* Evaluation models provide structured methodologies to measure conflict resolution methods effectiveness. By assessing participant reactions, learning the extent to which participants acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for conflict resolution, behavior changes, and intervention impact, these models offer a comprehensive view of how well the intervention aligns with the goal of conflict resolution and contributes to peace building.
- ii. *Monitor and improve the process of conflict management:* evaluation models helps to track the progress and outcomes of the conflict resolution or transformation, and measure the satisfaction and performance of the parties involved. It helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your approach, and learn from the feedback and experience of others. By collecting and analyzing data at various levels, evaluators can pinpoint what aspects of the conflict resolution methods are working well and where improvements are needed. These insights guide decision-making for refining content, methods delivery, and overall intervention strategies. This way, you can adjust and improve your conflict management skills and strategies, and prevent or minimize future conflicts.
- iii. *Enhance intervention design:* Through evaluation models, stakeholders gain insights into how intervention techniques that are being used by the affected parties. This information allows them to tailor the content of the techniques to match participants' needs, ensuring that the intervention remains engaging, relevant, and aligned with the intended outcomes.
- iv. *Improve ROI on intervention investments:* Effective evaluation models enable stakeholders to assess the return on investment (ROI) of their conflict resolution initiatives. By measuring the impact of the intervention on the disputes and conflicts, stakeholders can make informed decisions about the allocation of resources and ensure that conflict resolution efforts are delivering measurable value.
- v. *Enhancing accountability:* Evaluation models encourage accountability at various levels. With clear metrics and evaluation criteria, stakeholders can be held accountable for their roles in the resolution process. Additionally, affected parties can use evaluation results to hold stakeholders accountable for the success of conflict resolution methods within the broader context of the goals.

### **Best Practices for Implementing Evaluation Models in Conflict Resolution**

Implementing evaluation models requires careful planning and execution to ensure accurate and meaningful results. Here are some best practices to consider:

- i. *Align evaluation with training objectives:* Ensure that your evaluation aligns with the specific goals and objectives of the conflict resolution program. Each level of the evaluation should reflect the intended outcomes of the conflict resolution process.
- ii. *Involve stakeholders from the beginning:* Engage key stakeholders and all the affected parties while designing the evaluation process. Their input ensures that the evaluation model captures relevant aspects of the conflict resolution and addresses their expectations.
- iii. *Develop reliable data collection methods:* Design data collection methods that are both reliable and appropriate for each evaluation level. This includes pre- and post-conflict resolution process, surveys, assessments, interviews, observations, and outcome metrics. Ensuring data accuracy and consistency is crucial for meaningful analysis.
- iv. *Encourage honest feedback:* Create a safe and non-judgmental environment that encourages all affected parties to provide honest feedback about the conflict resolution techniques. Anonymous surveys or focus groups enable participants to share their thoughts openly, providing valuable insights for improvement.
- v. *Communicate evaluation results:* Share the evaluation results with stakeholders in a clear and transparent manner. Highlight successes and areas for improvement, and show how the data aligns with the conflict resolution objectives. Effective communication builds trust and demonstrates the value of evaluation efforts.
- vi. *Continuously improve the evaluation process:* Treat evaluation as an ongoing process of improvement. Regularly review the evaluation methods, incorporate feedback, and refine the process to enhance its effectiveness over time.

### **Challenges Facing Evaluation in Conflict Resolution and Management Education**

Evaluation in conflict resolution and management education faces several real challenges. This include:

- i. *Lack of clear goals and objectives:* Difficulty in defining and measuring the effectiveness of conflict resolution and management education programs.
- ii. *Limited resources:* Insufficient funding, time, and personnel to conduct comprehensive evaluations.
- iii. *Complexity of conflict resolution:* Difficulty in measuring the impact of education programs on complex and dynamic conflict situations.
- iv. *Diverse stakeholders:* Managing the expectations and needs of various stakeholders, including students, instructors, administrators, and employers.

- v. *Cultural and contextual factors*: Accounting for cultural and contextual differences that influence conflict resolution and management practices.
- vi. *Methodological limitations*: Challenges in using traditional evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of conflict resolution and management education programs.
- vii. *Lack of standardization*: Inconsistent evaluation approaches and metrics across conflict resolution methods and interventions.
- viii. *Difficulty in measuring long-term impact*: Challenges in assessing the long-term effects of conflict resolution and management education on individuals and organizations.
- ix. *Ethical considerations*: Ensuring that evaluations are conducted ethically and do not compromise the privacy or well-being of participants.

Addressing these challenges requires innovative evaluation approaches, collaboration among stakeholders, and a commitment to continuous improvement in conflict resolution and management.

### ***Suggestions***

Here are some suggestions to help address the challenges in evaluating conflict resolution and management:

- i. Establish clear, measurable, and achievable goals and objectives for conflict resolution and management programs. It involves stakeholders in the goal-setting process to ensure relevance and buy-in. It seeks funding from diverse sources, such as grants, donations, and partnerships.
- ii. Leverage technology to reduce evaluation costs and increase efficiency.
- iii. Use mixed-methods evaluation approaches to capture the complexity of conflict resolution. Incorporate qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide rich, contextual insights.
- iv. Engage stakeholders in the evaluation process through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Use stakeholder feedback to inform evaluation design and implementation.
- v. Incorporate cultural and contextual considerations into evaluation design and implementation. Use culturally sensitive data collection and analysis methods.
- vi. Use innovative evaluation methods, such as simulation-based evaluation or scenario planning. Incorporate technology-enhanced evaluation methods, such as online surveys or virtual focus groups.
- vii. Develop and use standardized evaluation frameworks and metrics. Collaborate with other institutions or organizations to establish industry-wide evaluation standards.
- viii. Use longitudinal evaluation designs to assess long-term impact. Incorporate follow-up evaluations or assessments to measure sustained impact.

- ix. Establish partnerships with organizations or institutions to access data and participants. Use secondary data sources or existing datasets to supplement primary data collection.
- x. Ensure informed consent and confidentiality in data collection and analysis. Use ethical evaluation practices, such as avoiding harm or bias.

By addressing these challenges, conflict resolution and management programs can develop robust evaluation approaches that inform program improvement and contribute to the field's knowledge base.

## **Conclusion**

Effective conflict resolution and management is crucial for promoting peace, stability, and development, particularly in complex contexts like Nigeria. Evaluation plays a vital role in ensuring that these programs achieve their intended goals and outcomes. However, evaluating models in conflict resolution and management programs poses significant challenges due to the complexity of conflicts, diverse stakeholders, cultural and contextual factors, methodological limitations, and limited resources. This write-up has examined the need for utilizing evaluation models, such as Results-Based Management (RBM), Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR), Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model, CIRO Evaluation Model, Theory of Change (ToC), Utilization-Focused Evaluation Model (UFE), and Conflict Resolution Evaluation Framework (CREF). These frameworks provide valuable insights into program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, inform decision-making, and enhance conflict resolution practices.

To overcome the challenges facing evaluation in conflict resolution and management education, it is essential to establish clear goals and objectives, engage stakeholders, leverage technology, use mixed-methods approaches, incorporate cultural and contextual considerations, and ensure ethical evaluation practices.

Ultimately, a robust evaluation approach will enable conflict resolution and management programs to optimize their effectiveness, contribute to the field's knowledge base, and promote sustainable peace and development in Nigeria and beyond. By adopting a comprehensive and context-specific evaluation approach, conflict resolution and management programs can maximize their impact, promote sustainable peace, and contribute to the well-being of individuals, organizations, and society as a whole.

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