

# CONFLICT DEGRADATION

## CASE STUDY

### GHANA

CHIPS works in Northern Ghana to peacemake between the Konkomba and Nanumba tribes. The community relies on agriculture for their income, but land rights are a big source of conflict.

During the Harmattan (dry and dusty) season, people prepare their land for planting in the next season. Unclear boundaries between fields lead to conflicts.

For this example we will use 2 neighbours Hassan and Timothy. Hassan went to farm and saw that a clearing next to his land was not being used so he has started to prepare it. Later that night, Timothy came to his house claiming that the clearing was part of his land. Hassan claims that Timothy's land is no where near his land so why would the clearing be his - 'You are a liar, you lied to my brother and now you are lying to me'.

Timothy leaves because Hassan threatens to get his machete. He goes back to his house and speaks to his brothers the next day. The families have a previous history of dispute about a goat and Timothy's family are still frustrated at the Chiefs decision to award the goat to Hassan's family back then. They decide to go to farm the next day in the clearing.

The next day, both families arrive at the clearing with machetes in hand ...

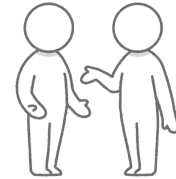
*This case study is illustrative, names and events have been adapted.*

# CHIPS

We take sides. Both sides.

## STAGES OF BREAKDOWN

These stages of conflict degradation were identified by John Paul Lederach, a Mennonite Theologian. They help us understand how conflict escalates and, therefore, the stages that we can intervene.



### 1. Disagreement

Parties engaging face to face, discussing the problem. If not resolved, leads to frustration.

### 2. Personalising

Move away from 'it' statements to 'you' statements.

### 3. Obscuring the issue

Still face to face but the original issue recedes and others, more latent and potentially fundamental, emerge.



### 4. Facing away/backing up

Parties turn their backs leading to rapid degradation and increasing distance.

### 5. Triangulation involving 3rd parties

Gossip, public criticism, gaining people 'on their side'.

### 6. Aggression/Assault - physical/verbal

Only form of 'face to face' engagement, but conversation has ceased.



### 7. Polarisation

Enormous distance now between 2 parties.