

Reducing Conflict 100 The Cost of Conflict

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Intergroup conflict is a fact of life wherever there are people involved. The phenomenon can be observed from small groups of children in kindergarten to worldwide nuclear superpowers. We see ample evidence every day in the government. In this article, I will focus on groups in a professional work setting.

We know there are costs to the organization of parochial groups bickering. We may look past some of the symptoms and damage that is happening. It may be a lot more costly than we recognize. Intergroup conflict can have various costs, both tangible and intangible.

Here are some of the common costs associated with intergroup conflict:

1. **Economic Costs.** Intergroup friction can lead to significant economic losses. It can disrupt business activities, decrease productivity, and damage infrastructure. Disruptions in supply chains, reduced consumer confidence, and increased costs of doing business are all potential economic consequences.
2. **Financial Losses.** Conflict often results in financial losses due to increased expenditures on security measures, legal fees, and dispute resolution processes. Additionally, intergroup confrontation can discourage investors or volunteers.
3. **Human Casualties.** In severe cases, intergroup disputes can result in physical injuries or even loss of life. When things spiral out of control, the situation becomes increasingly dangerous.
4. **Emotional Impact.** Conflict can have profound psychological and emotional effects on individuals. Fear, stress, anxiety, and trauma are common outcomes of intergroup struggles.
5. **Social Fragmentation.** Intergroup conflict can lead to social fragmentation and erode social cohesion. It can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to the breakdown of trust and cooperation between different groups.
6. **Opportunity Costs.** Intergroup conflicts divert resources, attention, and energy away from productive activities. These opportunity costs can slow progress and hinder the overall development of the organization.
7. **Sabotage.** Conflict can lead to the destruction of tangible assets through sabotage.

Conclusion

It is important to note that the costs of intergroup discord will vary depending on the intensity. The damages will be different based on the particular situation. The important point is to be alert to the scope of the damage being done by intergroup conflict.

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