Age: From 11 years (From Key stage 3)
Time: From half an hour
Subjects: Citizenship, Religious Education, Philosophy, Arts
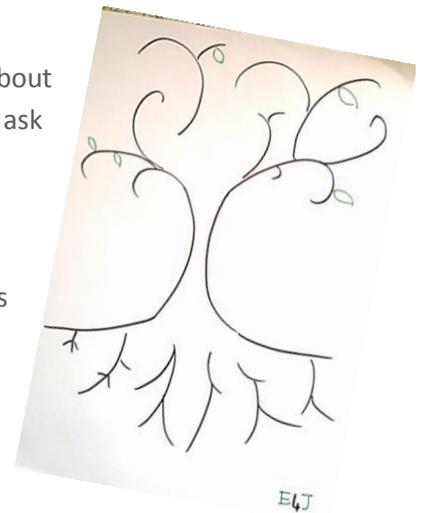**Global Dimension** Peace Education

AT THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

What lies at the roots of conflict? Students create an issue tree to identify the roots of conflict and connect them to their consequences. *This is a sensitive topic – try to keep the focus on conflict resolution, rather than conflict itself!*

Material: a large sheet of paper, markers

1. **Context.** Brainstorm – Ask students to think and list images and ideas about conflict first in their lives, and then in their communities or country. Then, ask the students to reflect individually about the following:

- List three things you do, or have done, to solve conflict in your life.

2. **Experience.** The teacher can choose a conflict to work on, or let students choose one among those listed during the brainstorming. Ideally, students should work in small groups. They draw the outline of a tree on the sheet and write the name of the conflict on the tree trunk. Then, they write the causes of the conflict on the roots, the results on the branches, and possible ways of resolving the conflict on the leaves.

3. **Reflection**

   Compare and contrast different issue trees. What are the points in common for the roots and the solutions? Are there particular behaviours and actions that always relevant in order to promote peace? You can use the following quote to guide further reflection:

   'I will not tire of declaring that if we really want an effective end to violence we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression. All this is what constitutes the primal cause, from which the rest flows naturally.' — ***Oscar Romero SJ***

Action – Exchange and work with your partner school

- Identify general roots and solutions of conflict that all the class agrees with and send them to your partner school. Does your partner school agree? Try to come up with a series of 'rules' for conflict resolution that both schools share.
- Exchange a story of conflict resolved in your local area or country with your partner class.

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