

ADI: AGREEMENT, DISAGREEMENT AND IRRELEVANCE

The EBS mapping exercise leads almost directly into the ADI, which stands for Agreement, Disagreement and Irrelevance. The two maps are compared (from the examination of both sides) and the areas of agreement are noted. Next, the areas of disagreement are noted; finally, the areas of irrelevance. It often turns out that this neutral exploration shows that the areas of disagreement may be quite small but appear very much larger in the argument situation because neither side dare concede a point for fear that this will be used against the arguer. At the end of an effective ADI both parties should be able to point directly at the area of disagreement: 'What we are really in disagreement about is this point here.' Since there will usually be quite a lot on which there is agreement, this can be used as a base for trying to design a way around the disagreement. In any case there is a stronger negotiating base.

Isolating the area of disagreement also means that it can be further examined in order to find out how basic the disagreement may be. Whatever the outcome, it is easier to make progress than with the blanket opposition of the adversary system. Even if the fundamental area of disagreement is one of principle or value it becomes easier to design an outcome that might satisfy both sides. For instance, if there is basic agreement that change must come in the end, then the area of disagreement is about the rate of change, method or stages.

The ADI can be done separately by both parties or it can be done as a cooperative undertaking with both parties sitting down together. The best procedure is the cooperative one but this does depend on the mood of the parties. If this is antagonistic it might be better for each party to do the ADI on its own. Even if the other party is unwilling to do it, there is nothing to stop one party doing it and then presenting it to the other party for modification.

A girl of fifteen wants to smoke. She and her father have an argument. The ADI works out something as follows:

AGREEMENT

- that the father has a right to his point of view, so does the girl
- that smoking is held to be harmful to the health, now and later
- that many girls of this age do smoke
- that the father has a right to forbid smoking in his house
- that smoking is expensive
- that now or later the girl will eventually have to make her own decision.

DISAGREEMENT

- whether father has a right to make his daughter's decisions for her just because she lives in his house
- whether there is any harm in just smoking a few a day
- whether what is at stake is cigarette smoking as such or the girl's independence
- whether if the girl does not smoke now she may never want to smoke.

IRRELEVANCE

- that Susie's father lets her smoke
- that the father has banned some other things
- that the father himself smokes
- that smokers do not harm anyone else
- that the girl could be made into a rebel
- that the girl would smoke secretly anyway.

For exercise, lay out an ADI for each of the following situations:

- 1 A neighbour plays music too loudly at night.
- 2 Workers want a pay rise but management say this would raise prices too much.
- 3 A new road is to be built through a country beauty spot.
- 4 A seventeen-year-old girl wants to come home at night whenever she wishes.
- 5 Producers want to put a lot of violence into films.
- 6 Fines for parking in the wrong place are to be doubled.