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Title

If your only tool is a hammer, any issue will look like a nail : building conflict resolution and mediation capacity in South African universities

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Abstract

This article commences with an explanation of some of the technical terms in the field of conflict resolution. It then examines the common ways which parties to a conflict use in an effort to deal with it and concludes that, on a number of criteria, collaborative conflict resolution is the superior method. Using some representative examples of conflicts, estimates are made of the direct and indirect costs of typical conflicts in South African universities. Given the magnitude of these costs, a conflict resolution and mediation service is proposed to build a culture of resolving conflict in each university. A cost benefit analysis demonstrates that the benefits of such a service?which result from reduced duration of conflicts and reduced likelihood of escalation of conflicts to more expensive levels?may be three times greater than its costs, making it a highly desirable investment for universities to undertake. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Harris, Geoff, E-Mail: harrisg1@ukzn.ac.za