


The Battle of the River

 **Step:** Four - Look for solutions!

 **Time:** 45 min

 **Space and materials:**

- Cards with the description of roles;
- List of arguments (optional).

 **Description of the tool**

The activity is based on the concept of role play. The participants will negotiate and try to influence each other.

1. Divide the participants into four subgroups and assign them with roles (annexed).
2. After the groups are formed and instructed with their roles, give them 15 minutes to prepare the arguments and select speakers (optional). Then the groups will start negotiating with each other.
3. Let the participants negotiate in their roles until they reach an agreement or run out of arguments.
4. Invite the participants to get out of their roles and discuss what happened. Questions for discussion:
 - Is the result of the meeting satisfactory and to whom?
 - Was the argumentation good?
 - Did the discussion allow to see the issue from another perspective and understand the problems of other groups?
 - Was the meeting realistic and how are issues like this usually resolved?
 - Are you aware of similar cases in real life? Were they resolved and how?

Annex: Roles

You are the **representatives of the big factory producing toothpaste (or any other product)**, from which the chemicals are drained into a nearby river. You aim to maintain the current situation unchanged.

You need to discuss within your group why the current situation is satisfactory, what are the benefits and what arguments you will use to avoid being influenced by the local community and organisations which protect the environment.

However, you know that your practices are neither appropriate nor lawful.

You are the **representatives of organisations which protect the environment** and are concerned about the extinction of the fish in the river and the sea. You have conducted field research and studied the chemical composition of water. You are convinced that the activity of the factory is a cause of fish mortality and illness of the people in a nearby village.

Your goal is to influence the factory not to contaminate the river.

You are the **representatives of the local community** living next to the river recently suffering from several health problems. Your aim is to find the best solution for the problem of your community. On one hand, more and more people your from village have health problems, and there are suspicions that it is due to the activities of the factory. On the other hand, most of the residents are employees of the factory and want to keep their jobs.

You represent the **local authorities (government, police)**. You are somewhat neutral but can be influenced by the representatives of the local community in order to ban the activities of the factory, which are detrimental to the overall prosperity of the village. On the other hand, you could be bribed from the factory and all the key stakeholders that can have a share.