

16 X 16 BLOG SERIES

Conflict resolution from resilience and peacebuilding

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Conflict is at the center of human life; conflict is inevitable and inherent in the experience of living. It is also true that each one of us has different ways of dealing with it. I experience this as a young peace activist in Venezuela. As agents of change, our way of dealing with conflict is and always will be in a positive way - each problem is an opportunity to generate change.

How conflict is faced is what determines so-called resilience. We, who live in situations of adversity, can use the occasion to improve ourselves, but it depends upon the attitude that we take. This blog makes visible how resilience is a significant contribution to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Adaptation to the environment, self-control, the ability to accept, resolve and overcome problems, dealing with frustrations, managing stress, moving from being a victim to being survivor and fight, among other situations, are characteristics that encompass resilience.



*Dalia at the Preparatory Conference on
SDG 16, Rome, 2019. Photo: Arnaldo
Rene Diaz Bonilla.*

Something good always comes from something bad. More than 4 million Venezuelans have had to leave the country due to the humanitarian crisis, now we are all over the world. Violence, the increase of poverty, the complex humanitarian



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crises, has awakened actions and initiatives of solidarity by others and has made us more human and more sensitive to pain. It has also allowed us to evolve, help others to cope with the difficulties and improve ourselves, that is why I can be called a resilient person.

In its origins the word resilience comes from "resilio-resilire", a Latin term that has the meaning: "The (or an) act of rebounding or springing back; rebound, (The -o a - act of bouncing or jumping back; bounce back), according to Oxford English Dictionary. Another second meaning of the word "resilience", from the Oxford English Dictionary, is "Elasticity; the power of resuming the original shape or position after compression, bending, etc. (Elasticity; power return to the original shape or position after being compressed, folded, etc.); so we can see how the origins of the word resilience find the return factor to the original form.

In the same way, Physics incorporated the word "resilience" and its translation into Spanish "Resiliencia" as a property of bodies and especially metals that they resist against shock or percussion. The term was incorporated in the social sciences in the 1960s and refers to the ability that people have to be psychologically healthy and successful in spite of living in high-risk contexts, and overcoming adversities, especially civil wars and concentration camps.

Resilience in individuals is characterized by understanding: resistance to "knock"; and the ability to build or perform positively despite the difficulties. The most recent researches coincide in affirming that all people have some resilience and can all promote resilience as they become attached to their common humanity - to what makes them identify with other human beings and realize that they are part of a whole despite their differences.

Resilience is a skill that every activist must have, every day we face different scenarios that do not seem to get better. Anyway, we invest work and efforts to improve those aspects and attract other people who want to generate positive change in their society and own lives.

Situation of violence and inner peace

Even where there is no war declared officially between states, there are countries that suffer armed conflicts. Others have remained for years in situations of violence or

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war – still to be resolved - that are of "high" or "low" intensity. Complex humanitarian crises bring challenges of systematic violations of human rights (torture, repression, arbitrary arrests) and displacements of millions of citizens to other territories.

To respond to arising conflicts we must search for peace and the cessation of conflict, with sensitivity to each context. Peace transcends the absence of war and reaches the respect for human rights, the guarantee of justice and respect for dignity. Peacebuilding transcends the resolution of conflicts through peace negotiations or military victories or from any of the parties, since it directly involves civil society and other social actors, generating conditions for a lasting peace and preventing conflicts from reoccurring.

I believe that only through inner peace you can achieve world peace. And for that reason, there is an individual responsibility, peace must be born in ourselves. In this sense, it is possible to conceive the definition of peace as a permanent search to achieve evolution of the quality of human relationships, based on tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. These are values that we cultivate every day in our organization "[United Youth in Action](#)" through our projects and training programs.

Cultivating resilience to unleash the potential of agents of change

Resolving conflicts help fostering the dynamic process of resilience, peacebuilding and responds to a yearning and a human need that seeks the common good. Peacebuilding requires not only the absence of conflict, also the tools that allow us to know how to face the conflict and overcome it. That is why it is necessary to cultivate resilience to be able to cope with stress, maintain a positive attitude and promote positive change that allow to mitigate conflict.

From my experience, I can say that our generation is really committed to change the world as we know it today. We build peace from resilience, because despite the difficult circumstances that life puts us through every day, we become stronger and better. It is not easy to overcome the situation, we feel fear, confusion and frustration. But we have a spark, a flame, which cannot be put out. Every day this flame grows and is the power of change.

It is important to highlight how resilience is a quality of peacebuilding social actors, who face the conflict and seek solutions to overcome traumatic events and evolve despite the circumstances.

We, young people have a special role in peacebuilding. We are called to face the adversities and generate tangible and effective solutions for the cessation of conflict, violence and

the violation of human rights, since all this is necessary to be able to reach peace.

What I admire most of our generation is that we always go for more. Despite the injustices, the limitations and the context we face, there will always be reasons to continue fighting and working for a better world. Because in the end we are all part of the universe, and we see ourselves reflected in every human being who lives an injustice. That compassion and that ability to find our common humanity is what drives us to move forward, to move on even in adversity. Let's keep getting involved and encouraging others to generate solutions to the problems we face every day in our contexts. Let's be the change that we want to see in the world.

As a young woman who lives in a country where the most basic things, what you never think you will be missing, are missing, I can say that every obstacle, every difficulty has made me stronger and more capable of facing difficult situations. I know that a better world is possible and we are here, on this planet called Earth, to work for it.

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