

# War or Peace

*Managing conflicts*

*Engaging, learning, succeeding together*

## Cooperative Approaches

"The only path offering humanity hope for a better future is one of cooperation and partnership".

Kofi Annan



#14 - October 2022





**POLISH SCOUTS WELCOME REFUGEES AT THE BORDER**

Cooperative Approaches, a quarterly journal (4 issues per year) has set itself the mission of promoting cooperative approaches in four key areas: youth and adult education, social action, organizational management, economics and citizen participation.

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## EDITORIAL

# Alternatives to destructive violence?

Dominique Bénard

**T**he war in progress in Ukraine has burst into our peaceful Europe.

The ultimate irony is that Putin claims that his special operation objective is to "denazify" Ukraine while adopting the same strategy used by Hitler in 1938 against Czechoslovakia. Today Russia is locked in a paranoid delirium that uses a

pseudo-threat against the Russian speakers of the Donbass as a pretext for attempting to conquer Ukraine by force. Hitler made similar claims at the time. Coming to the aid of the German minority of the Sudetenland and in the process seizing Czechoslovakia.

In this issue we give the stage to our Ukrainian friends who are confronted by



this savage aggression. How are they reacting to the unleashed violence? How would we react if in their place? Is there not a time when only the struggle to protect our loved ones counts?

There is also a time for compassion and for coming to each other's aid. We met Ewa, our Polish friend, who rushed to the border in the first days of the conflict to help welcome Ukrainian refugees. To date, Poland has welcomed more than 2 million. Approches Coopératives is launching a cooperative financing operation to participate in this solidarity effort. We hope that many of you will participate as well.

But this event is also an opportunity to reflect on peace and war and the question of conflict management. In Chinese, two characters make up the word conflict: one expresses the idea of danger, the other the idea of opportunity.

Maria Montessori was one of the leading figures of the new school movement at the beginning of the last century. She wrote a remarkable little book called "Education for Peace" from which we have drawn a kind of meditation on peace and education.

Conflict cannot be eradicated. The potential for conflict exists in and around us all the time. Life and conflict are inextricably linked. When energies meet,

there is movement and potential opposition, challenge and change. Conflict is part of life and growth. Without conflict, there would be no challenge and no change.

However, we must also be aware that we and those around us can fuel violent conflict which is more often counterproductive and destructive. How can we discover alternatives to destructive violence? In every conflict there is creative potential as well as destructive potential. Though much of growth involves pain it need not go to such extremes.

Conflict becomes harmful when it is ignored or repressed, or when it is responded to with intimidation, aggression or withdrawal. Destructive conflict often implies there being a lack of resources, lack of imagination, and lack of strategy. We need to strengthen our personal skills so that in our responses to conflict and violence we can better draw on a range of well-established resources.

It is up to us to know how to work on the potential for challenge and growth of conflict rather than letting it fester due to lack of attention and awareness so let's continue learning to manage conflict without violence.

We need to identify and explore situations where conflict and potential

violence exist, practice the skills necessary to deal with them in a positive way, and practice possible strategies and techniques for resolving them peacefully.

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DECIPHERING

# The war in Ukraine

## *Causes and consequences*



### THE ORIGINS

**T**he conflict between Russia and Ukraine has its origins in a long and complex history.

### The Rus' of Kiev

The Kievan Rus' was an East Slavic principality that existed from the mid-ninth to the mid-thirteenth century, disintegrating into a multitude of principalities before formally disappearing as a result of the Mongol

invasion that began in 1223. This led to the principality's demise in 1240. Rus' is the oldest common political entity in the history of the three modern East Slavic states of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine.

Meanwhile in the north, Muscovy gradually freed itself from the Mongols and conquered new territories, especially thanks to Tsar Ivan the Terrible in the 16th century. In the south, Kiev fell under the control of Lithuania, then of Poland. Its populations will be mixed, with Poles, Moldavians, Germans, Armenians, Jews, Russians, Tatars.

## Ukraine submitted to the Russian Empire

In the 18th century, Empress Catherine II recovered half of Ukraine (the east) while the other half was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

## Development of Ukrainian national feeling

During the whole 19th century, a Ukrainian national feeling will grow, repressed by Russia which forbids the Ukrainian language, close to Russian but different.

In 1917, taking advantage of the disorder of the First World War, a Ukrainian state is proclaimed, which will be fought on all sides and finally integrated into the Soviet Union in 1922.

## Ukraine submitted to the USSR

During sixty-nine years, Ukraine will be one of the republics of the USSR. Russians and Ukrainians live as cousins and will mix or marry. The official language is Russian, but Ukrainian is still spoken in most of the country.

## Ukrainian independence

In 1991, the USSR broke up and Ukraine regained its autonomy. In a referendum, more than 92% of the population voted in favor of independence. Russia, very weakened, can do nothing, but thirty years later, 20 to 30% of Ukrainians are Russian-speaking and many Russians think that Russia and Ukraine are still the same country. Vladimir Putin will use this to justify his invasion, under the pretext of "liberating" the Ukrainian cousins.

Split between the Russian bosom and the European horizon, the country remains deeply divided. The divide is first of all linguistic: the Ukrainian east, in particular the territories of Donbass, remains predominantly Russian-speaking, Orthodox and pro-Russian. The western part of the country, which is more populated, is more oriented towards Europe and speaks mostly Ukrainian.

In November 2004, pro-Russian sentiment in the east of the country was expressed at the ballot box: at the end of the second round of voting, Prime





2013 : DEMONSTRATION ON THE MAĪDAN SQUARE IN KIEV. PHOTO : LA PRESSE CANADIENNE / SERGEI CHUZAVKOV

Minister Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian supported by Moscow, was declared the winner, even though the polls had predicted that he would lose. The pro-Western camp denounced the rigged results. It was the beginning of the "Orange Revolution": Ukrainians took to the streets to demand a new second round.

On the day after Christmas, December 26, the pro-European candidate Viktor Yushchenko was finally elected president in a third round. The gap widened between the West, which had voted mostly for Yushchenko, and the East, which had largely voted for the pro-Russian Yanukovich. The "Orange Revolution" shook Ukraine to the core.

## THE CONFLICT

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine broke out in September 2013. The pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich, finally elected in 2010, decided to unilaterally withdraw from an association agreement with the European Union.

## Maidan

This will trigger mass demonstrations on Maidan, the main square in Kiev. Despite fierce police repression, the supporters of a rapprochement with the EU did not waver. For three months, 250,000 people demonstrated every day to demand the departure of President Yanukovich, more freedom and the signing of the agreement with Europe. The protest brought in its wake the death of several demonstrators and police officers.

## The Minsk agreements

The Minsk Protocol (or Minsk I) is an agreement signed in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on September 5, 2014 by representatives of Ukraine, Russia, and insurgents of the self-proclaimed "people's republics" of Donetsk and Lugansk, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and whose objective is to end the war in Donbass in eastern Ukraine.

The text of the protocol includes in particular the following points:

- \* An immediate bilateral cease-fire under the supervision of the OSCE;
- \* Local autonomy in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts;
- \* The establishment of a security zone on the Russian-Ukrainian border with permanent monitoring by the OSCE;
- \* The immediate release of all hostages and illegally detained persons;
- \* The withdrawal from Ukrainian territory of illegal armed formations and military equipment, as well as irregular fighters and mercenaries;
- \* The implementation of an economic program to promote the resumption of activities and local economy in the Donbass.

Since the signing of the Minsk Protocol, ceasefire violations have been frequent on both sides of the conflict. Discussions are continuing in Minsk. The second battle for Donetsk International Airport breaks out on September 28, 2014, and both sides accuse each other of continued ceasefire violations.

Finally, on February 21, 2014, Viktor Yanukovich fled Kiev and took refuge in Russia. Accused of violating human rights, he was impeached the next day by the Ukrainian Parliament.

## The annexation of Crimea

In response, Russian armed groups took control of the Crimean Parliament, which elected a new Prime Minister in favor of

union with Russia. A referendum, organized under Russian control, resulted in a vote in favor of the attachment of Crimea to Russia, causing an international diplomatic crisis. The annexation of Crimea by Russia is not recognized by the international community. Several other Ukrainian provinces with large Russian-speaking populations, notably Donbass, experienced similar uprisings and in turn

organized referendums on self-determination in order to separate themselves from the Ukrainian government in place.

## The war in Donbass

The Ukrainian parliament scheduled a presidential election for May 25, and appointed an interim president. However, the predominantly Russian-speaking regions of eastern Ukraine do not recognize the new institutions. A Russian-backed separatist movement emerged in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions (Donbass). An open war began between the separatists, supported by the Russian army, and the Ukrainian army. Russia, a border country, being accused of militarily supporting the insurgents by conducting a hybrid war there.

On July 17, 2014, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down in mid-air near the Russian-Ukrainian border while flying over the Donbass. The destruction of this civilian plane amplified the diplomatic crisis, with the Ukrainian army and "pro-Russian separatists" blaming each other. An investigation identified the shooters as belonging to the Russian army, although they were not supposed to be present on the ground. Several countries, led by France and Germany, attempted to mediate, resulting in the Minsk agreements.



**A UKRAINIAN SOLDIER IN THE DONBASS. FROM 2014 TO 2022, 14,000 PEOPLE DIED IN THIS CONFLICT.**

Events will accelerate from February 2022. Under the pretext of maneuvers, Russia massed tens of thousands of soldiers on the borders of Ukraine. On February 15, 2022, the Russian Duma (parliament) voted to ask President Putin to recognize the self-proclaimed republics of eastern Ukraine. The next day, a Russian government spokesman admitted that recognition of the Donbass republics would not be in line with the Minsk agreements. A very significant increase in bombings and explosions in Donbass is noted from 17 February 2022. On February 21, 2022, Russia officially recognizes the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk, which puts an end to the Minsk agreements.

## "The special operation"

On February 23, Putin announced to launch a "special military operation" in Ukraine. He says: "With the approval of the Security Council, I have decided to conduct a special military operation. Its





**A WOMAN AND CHILD EVACUATE A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN KIEV THAT WAS HIT BY MISSILE FIRE. PHOTO REUTERS / EMERGENCY SERVICES OF UKRAINE**

purpose is to protect the people who have been intimidated and genocided by the Kiev regime for eight years. And for this, we will fight for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.

On the night of 23-24, the Ukrainian territory was bombed and Russian troops began the invasion of the country.

The Russians quickly occupied Kherson Oblast and a large part of Zaporizhia Oblast in a successful southern offensive, but were repulsed in unsuccessful offensives against Kiev and against Kharkiv. The Russians occupied Mariupol after a long siege, taking control of the entire Azov Sea coast. A new Donbass offensive brought Luhansk oblast under Russian control. The invasion provoked a

broad international response, with unprecedented isolation of Russia and multifaceted assistance to Ukraine by NATO and EU members.

### **The UN, the European Union and NATO**

Three international organizations are expected to play a key role in the evolution of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

#### ***The United Nations***

Through the voice of its Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, the United Nations has of course strongly condemned the Russian offensive in Ukraine. But its effects are very limited. Why? Because Russia is one of the five permanent members of the Security

## Putin's justifications

Putin claimed, without providing evidence, that "preparations were openly underway for an operation in the Donbass and an invasion of our historic lands, including Crimea. Kiev announced its possible acquisition of nuclear weapons. And Nato began to expand militarily in territories adjacent to ours "... Given this "unacceptable threat (which) was formed directly on our borders, we were forced to take the only right decision possible," added the head of the Kremlin.

He also gave a whole series of other justifications that make his real objectives more vague. For example, it seems that the Russian president does not really recognize Ukraine's right to be a country independent of Russia. He also believes that if Ukraine moves closer to Western Europe, and especially if it becomes part of the military alliance that includes these countries as well as the United States and Canada (NATO), Russia will find itself surrounded by enemies.

For Moscow, NATO, dominated by the American army, took advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 to expand eastward, hoping to reach its borders. Vladimir Putin has said it several times: according to him, NATO's objective was to install missile batteries in Ukraine to target Russia. This is why, he says, the alliance decided in 2008 to accept Ukraine's and Georgia's application for membership. For the West, Vladimir Putin is fantasizing and thus justifying his desire for power, and his desire to reconstitute the Russian Empire. The proof according to them? the war in Georgia in 2008 and the recognition of separatist republics, then the annexation of Crimea (Ukrainian territory) in 2014, then the war in eastern Ukraine followed, now, by the Russian invasion, irrefutable proof of Putin's double game. He claims to be threatened, but aggresses his neighbor and unleashes a murderous war in defiance of all international rules in force.

Council of the organization, and as such has a veto right. It even held the rotating presidency in February... when it invaded Ukraine. In short: no significant decision against Russia can be adopted by the UN.

### ***The European Union***

The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, has just formally applied for his country's membership in the EU, which has accepted his application in principle. Member countries sometimes have difficulty speaking with one voice. France and Germany played a leading role in the

Ukrainian crisis, with the primary goal of preventing an invasion of Ukraine. Numerous discussions with Putin did not lead to anything. So we have to resort to aggressive sanctions, in coordination with the Americans. A weapon both economic and political. On February 27, the EU decided above all to facilitate the delivery of lethal weapons to Ukraine, by releasing an amount of 450 million euros. A historic decision!

### **NATO**

Born in 1949, NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a political and military alliance that today has 30 member states (most European countries, the United States and Canada). The basic principle is simple: if one of the NATO countries is attacked, the others come to its rescue, with military and equipment. But beware: Ukraine is not a member of NATO. This is precisely one of the stakes of the war. Vladimir Putin fears an expansion of NATO to include countries of the former USSR. NATO member countries are on alert, supplying arms to Ukraine and deploying troops to neighboring countries. U.S. President Joe Biden has made it clear: "The United States will defend every inch of NATO territory!"

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR**

Already, the war in Ukraine has had considerable humanitarian and economic consequences.

### **Humanitarian disaster**

The intensity and scale of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army has caused a humanitarian catastrophe of a gravity not seen in Europe since the Second World War. This attack is being carried out by one of the most powerful armies in the world against a large country of 44 million people before the invasion. As evidence of the violence of the fighting, more than 11 million Ukrainians have fled their homes and nearly 4 million have taken refuge in neighboring countries, mainly in Poland.

The speed of this exodus has been unprecedented. There are already more Ukrainian refugees in European countries than the number of Syrians who fled the war in their country in 2015. At the time, there was talk of a refugee "crisis." Europe, with the exception of Germany, had closed its borders. Today, the attitude towards Ukrainians is quite different.

The situation is even more dramatic inside Ukraine. After failing to quickly take the capital, Kiev, to replace the Ukrainian government, the Russian army has intensified its bombing in an attempt to break the Ukrainians' resistance. The





**RENAUD PHILIPPE LE DEVOIR** A HUGE SHED WITH 2,000 COTS HAS BEEN SET UP IN KORCZOWA, POLAND, NEAR THE BORDER CROSSING OF THE SAME NAME. THOSE WHO HAVE FLED UKRAINE ARE MAINLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

strikes on densely populated cities are killing many residents. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are trapped in bombed cities. Some of them are surrounded by the Russian army. In the besieged cities, the population is finding it increasingly difficult to find drinking water or food. Negotiations between Ukraine and Russia continue, despite the fighting, to evacuate the population of several cities.

On the other hand, the tension rises every day around the nuclear power plant of Zaporizhja, the largest in Europe. Russia and Ukraine are accusing each other of artillery strikes on the plant. Russia is accused of using the plant as a nuclear shield knowing that the Ukrainians will not be able to attack the Russian artillery

installed at the foot of Zaporizhja. Ukraine has demanded that a demilitarized zone be established around the nuclear power plant.

### Economic disaster

Although Russia and Ukraine are relatively small in terms of production, they are major producers and exporters of food, minerals and essential energy products. They account for 30% of world exports of wheat, 20% of corn, mineral fertilizers and natural gas, and 11% of oil, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

If the price surge continues for a year after the outbreak of the conflict, then global growth could be cut by one point and inflation increase by another 2.5

points, the institution estimates. Its secretary-general, Mathias Cormann, told a press conference that "the economic upheavals are broad and are expected to continue in the future.

Major international economic organizations such as the EBRD, the IMF and the World Bank have warned of the "vast" consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for the global economy. In a joint statement, they said they were "*horrified and deeply concerned*". The signatory organizations, which also include the European Investment Bank (EIB), point out that in addition to "the devastating humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine, the war is disrupting livelihoods in the region and beyond. It reduces energy supplies, food supplies, increases prices, "will undermine the global post-pandemic recovery".

*"The entire global economy will feel the effects through slower growth, trade disruptions, and the poorest and most vulnerable will be the hardest hit,"* the signatory organizations worry.

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## TESTIMONY

# Solidarity with the Ukrainian people

By Ewa Urbańczyk

*Ewa Urbańczyk is a Polish Scout and social activist, founder of ZHR - Scouting Organization of the Polish Republic . In 1989-1995 : International Commissioner in ZHR. member of a National Council of ZHR. MSc in Medical Analytics. Diploma in Public Health. In 1994 -2021 worked in Pharmaceutical Industry (Sandoz, Novartis, Solvay, Abbott, Mylan, Viatris) on managerial positions in marketing and medical departments. Interested in Public Health and Clinical Trials. Board Member of the Scouting of the Second Century Foundation.*

## MY UKRAINIAN FRIENDS

**I** am in constant contact with Ukrainians. Many Poles emigrated to the West, people had to settle in Poland to do the work. A lot of Ukrainians have been living in my town for at least 18 years. For example, my house was renovated by Ukrainians. I have many friends among them. We expected something to happen, yet we couldn't believe it when it did.

When the Russian army invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, I called a Ukrainian friend, who had recently arrived in Poland, because I knew that she had left her child in Ukraine. I offered to



accompany her to the border so that she could get her child back.

So on February 25, like a good Scout, I followed the motto "Be prepared", took





AT THE BORDER, MARCH 5, 2022

my backpack, good shoes, some food and we reached the border in my car. We were among the first there, she had contacted her sister, and she was able to get her child back.

From the first days, there were already many people at the border to welcome the refugees, many of whom had relatives in Western Ukraine or Poland.

## ON THE BORDER OF THE WAR

I stayed there. My function was to liaise with the government, I had a small

impact but at least I got information and we could plan things reasonably. During the first days I was also in constant cooperation with the Polish Scout organizations.

We organized the reception, accommodation and transportation of people to the interior of the country. I was in constant contact with Krzysztof Stanowski<sup>1</sup>, the former Commissioner General of ZHR<sup>2</sup>. He has been involved since 2014 in helping Ukraine, for example, transporting wounded

<sup>1</sup> Krzysztof Piotr Stanowski: Polish scout and social activist, state and local government official, democratic opposition activist during the People's Republic of Poland, political prisoner. In 1989-1990, first leader of the Association of Scouts of the Republic of Poland, in 2007-2010, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of National Education, in 2010-2012, undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2012-2017, chairman of the board of the PL Solidarity Fund, since 2017 director of the Center for International Cooperation in Lublin.

<sup>2</sup> ZHR - the Catholic Association of Scouts of the Republic of Poland with about 20 000 members.

Ukrainian soldiers to Polish hospitals. He has worked permanently with the Ukrainian community, especially to change the attitude of Polish society, which was initially very negative towards Ukrainians. Thanks to Krystof we had contacts with the Ukrainian authorities to see how to speed up the process of crossing the border. The first people had to queue at the border for 24 hours without food, because on the Ukrainian side nothing had been prepared: no toilets, no water, no food. There were only a few officers and their instructions were not to allow men between 18 and 50 years old to cross the border. Women were also not allowed if they were doctors, nurses, police officers, or worked in government services.

We tried to provide as much support as possible in this extraordinary situation. I started contacting friends to inform them of what was needed. It was very cold - minus 5, minus 6 - it was winter and it was necessary to provide warm food and cold shelters to allow people to take a rest. After a few days, Polish services were allowed to cross the border to bring food and water.

## POLISH SOLIDARITY

Very quickly, all the necessary things were set up. Temporary refugee centers were opened at the border, and also everywhere, in all cities, not by the



SCOUTS ON THE BORDER (ZHP AND ZHR)

government but by the citizens themselves in a spontaneous movement of solidarity. I must say that local communities have done a wonderful job. They organized a lot of places where people were taken automatically from the border.

We have a foundation called "La Strada" whose objective is to prevent human trafficking and since at the border there were mostly women and children or single women, there were reports that traffickers were offering to take them to Germany or other countries. So, very quickly, warnings in Ukrainian were distributed to inform the refugees and stop these trafficking attempts.



HEALTH CARE CENTER (ZHR)

There were also many scouts and members of associations, foundations, private organizations providing humanitarian and educational aid and setting up tents and other means to manage such a large crowd. Near the border unused stores, shelters, military centers were made available by local governments to shelter the refugees.

The Polish Scouting organizations reacted well. They mobilized their members and especially medical and paramedical professionals to send them to the border. The ZHP, for example, organized what they call "border patrols". Coordinated through FaceBook, Scouts patrolled the border to welcome refugees, comfort them, and organize shuttles to transport them. Scouts mobilized not only at the border, but also at refugee centers set up in every city. More than 20,000 Scouts served in all the centers and especially at the border. First

they set up centers called warming centers or reception centers where they had tents to welcome people and allow them to rest. These centers were open 24 hours a day. Scouts took turns. They distributed hot food to people and provided information about transportation, instructions in Ukrainian about the precautions to be taken while traveling, e.g. not to travel alone without registering to let people know where they were going, to pay attention to the necessary documents, etc. The most important thing was to be attentive to single women with children who were lost at the border.

I am hosting a Ukrainian refugee in my home. She had traveled for two days in a bus with her almost 5 year old child and when she crossed the border she said that a guide came to meet her with a bowl of hot soup and she could not believe her eyes.





CHILD REFUGEE AT THE BORDER

After a few days, thousands and then hundreds of thousands of people gathered at the border. So the Polish authorities decided to open the doors and minimize the procedures. In fact, from the very first days, it was obvious that a large number of women and children did not have international biometric passports. They had nothing, they had to be accepted as they were. My role at the beginning was just to coordinate the information because many people wanted to go to the border to assist and through the internet they were told not to do that, but to stay in their locality to organize some kind of hospitality networks to receive the

refugees and offer them accommodation. From the beginning, we were convinced that this was not a temporary situation and that we had to prepare ourselves to face it for years. I was really positively surprised by the action of local communities.

My city council has been very good. The city council president is the former president of the ZHR. When Scouts have responsibilities in local government, everything works perfectly. My city council is really a model supporter. We provide housing, and also material support like food, clothes, all the equipment that the refugees need.

Everything is organized through the Internet.

All families receive social assistance from the government: 500 Zlotys or 100 euros per month per child. Very quickly the government made the decision to bring these people into the system. One can say a lot of bad things about this government, but in the face of this situation, it acted perfectly. In two weeks, they adopted an identity number system adapted to this specific situation and the way it works in my community is amazing. I went there with the person I am hosting and I noticed that the procedures are fast and efficient: we did everything in one hour! The administration has really adapted very quickly to deal with the situation. Since



the end of May, the Ukrainian refugees have free access to telecommunication and transportation: the telephone, buses and trains are free for them.

## SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN

The government has decided that all children will be accepted into the Polish school system free of charge. However, children from Western Ukraine, whose schools are still functioning normally, were allowed to attend classes at a distance. So not all refugee children, but a majority of them, entered the Polish school system.

The children adapted perfectly to the Polish school system because a large number of Ukrainian teachers arrived. Lublin, where Krystof works, was the first municipality that decided to employ Ukrainian teachers to open classes in Ukrainian. The children here are like in Ukraine, even better because the standards are higher than in Eastern Ukraine.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE LONG TERM

So far, since February 24, six million refugees have crossed the border, but we estimate that two million people have decided to stay in Poland permanently, mostly women with young children. At the moment the situation is quite stable, reports from the border show that the same flow of people is coming to Poland,





TRANSPORTATION CENTER

but a large number of people are returning to Ukraine. For example in the Kiev region.

At first many refugees did not want to go to Western Europe. For them it is easier to adapt in Poland, first of all because many Ukrainians have been living here for years. So the refugees can integrate into a Ukrainian community, find friends and relatives. Moreover, Ukrainian and Polish are very similar languages even if the alphabet is different. Of course, the refugees from Eastern Ukraine do not speak Ukrainian, they only speak Russian. But the Poles of my generation, who are 50 years old and more, learned Russian at school. So communication is easier.

From the beginning there was a huge solidarity movement by the Polish people, but the difficulty is for the long term... For the moment, especially in the big cities, if

I launch an appeal on the Internet I find in a few minutes everything to cover the needs of the people I host. Do we need a bicycle? In 10 minutes, we find one! I am in an excellent situation, I have a chalet in the mountains, I can accommodate my Ukrainian guests for the vacations because the kindergarten is closed here during the vacations. But in September, we will have to think about normal life... find a place to live...

In Poland we have a good housing situation because many people have bought apartments since they prefer to invest in real estate than to have savings in the bank. The broader economic situation in Poland is also relatively good. The tourist season is opening now, after the containment of the pandemic. Hotels and restaurants are looking to hire. This is a first opportunity for Ukrainians, some of



them may also find a job in agriculture. But all the job offers stipulate "without children". Because employers don't know how to organize childcare. Yet most Ukrainian refugees are single women with young children so we have to solve this problem by opening child care centers. I have already raised this issue with my local council.

In the future, we risk huge economic problems because Poland had great economic exchanges with Russia. Many companies were founded by Russians here in Poland. Now they are closed and the employees will have great difficulties.

What also worries us is that the government is in conflict with the European Union on legal issues and therefore Poland does not receive any help from the EU. Most of the costs for the reception of refugees are borne by private individuals, local communities, foundations. Will this be sustainable?

On the other hand, the government avoids as much as possible, how can I say this, to close relations with the Russians for good. We don't like each other very much, but we have common borders... Many Russians live here and this may become really dramatic in the future because we are just at the beginning of a situation and we really have to prepare ourselves for the long term. Nobody in



TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN

Poland can tell you how it will develop, it is very difficult to predict.

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TESTIMONIAL

# Facing the war

**NIKA GOROSKA, UKRAINIAN, MEMBER OF THE WORLD SCOUT COMMITTEE**



*ello Nika, you are a member of the World Scout Committee and you come from the Ukrainian Scouts Association. You lived in Kiev. How did you experience the arrival of the war?*

- Already in the autumn of 2021 the population of Ukraine was very polarized, some were very afraid and very aware of what, sooner or later, might happen. Another part of the population was very calm and thought that the threat was exaggerated, that the West was trying to scare us and that nothing would happen.
- **Yes, because there were many links between Ukraine and Russia, between Russia and Ukraine.**
- Absolutely. Many families are divided between Russia and Ukraine from the time of the Soviet Union. So many links had been woven.

**MANY LINKS EXISTED BETWEEN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA**

Obviously these ties had weakened since 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of part of the Donbass, supported by Russia. But until



the war came, the ties were still very strong. We had friends in Russia, part of our family in Russia. Of course, it depended on the cities and territories: the western part of Ukraine had fewer

ties with Russia than the eastern part.

That's why people's analysis of the situation was also different. The western part of Ukraine was more determined to break all ties with Russia, while the eastern part was less nationalistic and more concerned with maintaining relations, and that is why there were differences in the analysis of the situation with people

who said that nothing was going to happen and that one should remain calm and others who were really afraid.

In December and January this controversy was at the heart of all conversations.

My friends in Ukraine were not as worried as my friends abroad because they were reading and listening to the media in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in the European countries which said that something was going to happen according to the information gathered by the American and British intelligence services.

- ***Yes, Russia was amassing troops along the borders of Ukraine..***

**IT WAS INCREDIBLE THAT SUCH A THING COULD HAPPEN!**

- It was unbelievable that such a thing happened!

The British and American intelligence services were warning about Russian troops that were concentrated on the border. This concern, coming from abroad, started to percolate across the whole country even to the most remote villages.

- ***Nevertheless, when the Russians attacked, you were surprised.***
- Yes, I was. It was unbelievable that such a thing happened! Yet from mid-January, after the Christmas and New

Year vacations, several large companies had started to move their headquarters to the western part of the country or abroad, and several embassies had been evacuated. These were signs that made people more worried, but again not everyone was convinced that Russian aggression was going to occur, some hoped that it was just a preventive measure.

I shared an apartment with two co-tenants and they had to move to the western part of the country because their company had moved for security reasons. So there was more and more

tension, but until the last moment, until February 24, we weren't sure if anything would.

An article had appeared in the international media a week before, relaying information from American intelligence services that Russia would attack at three o'clock in the morning on Wednesday. Even in the face of this information, opinions were divided: many said that now that the information was out in the open, the attack would not happen; others thought that the information was so specific that it would happen eventually. Many people, like me, decided to leave the country because we feared the bombing of Kiev and to avoid our parents worrying too



much. It was difficult to stay, to continue shopping and to use public transportation. The tension was too much.

And then, on Thursday, February 24, at 4:30 am, the first bombings started. It was crazy! It was war! It was totally unexpected. People heard explosions and didn't know where it was coming from, it was sheer panic. We compared it to the second world war. Nobody knew what to do.

- ***And you, were you in Ukraine at that time?***

- No, As I said I was not in Ukraine anymore, I left two days before to join my friends and the rest of my family in the UK. I also wanted to feel safer and calmer.

As I was the international commissioner of the Ukrainian Scout Organization, I have a lot of friends abroad, they were worried about me and kept sending me messages telling me that I should leave the country and join them now rather than waiting until the last moment. I didn't know if I was going to be able to get out of the country because there were all these articles every day saying that something new was going to happen and that all flights would be canceled for security reasons.

**ON THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 24TH AT  
4:30 AM, THE FIRST  
BOMBINGS STARTED. IT  
WAS CRAZY!**

- ***And how did the Ukrainian Scout Organization react to this situation?***
- First of all, the national team prepared a statement calling on the members to remain calm, to be attentive to their families and to be ready for any developments.

The government also disseminated information to schools so that children would know how to react, how to behave, how to stay safe. We called on the Scouts to remain attentive, to verify the sources of the information

received. There was also an emergency call from the President of the Organization, recorded on video, broadcast to all members and to all national Scout organizations.

Of course, no one was really ready to respond to the situation, it was necessary to improvise, to organize meetings of the National Council, to receive reports from the different regions, and to develop a strategy.

- ***Did the Organization subsequently engage in services to help the population? For example, to help, to welcome, those who left home for refuge in the West of the country?***
- Obviously, at the very beginning, the National Organization and the World Organization prepared a statement

about the situation. The World Organization issued a statement condemning the violence and encouraging dialogue. The National Organization also issued a statement condemning the aggression and calling for the help of the international community to defend human rights. An emergency contact number was issued allowing people to make their situation known and ask for help.

A solidarity movement was organized within national Scout organizations for assistance. Volunteers arrived at the border to help the refugees with food. All restriction for crossing the border, including those regarding covid, had been removed. Women and children could cross the border safely into Poland, Romania or Moldova, but the government had asked the men to stay in the country to help with defense.

- ***In your opinion, was international solidarity sufficient?***
- I think that at the very beginning everyone in Ukraine wanted a quicker reaction from the international community, which did not happen, because not everyone was aware of the situation. There was a lot of frustration in the country.

### EVERYONE WANTED A FASTER REACTION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

But if we talk about the Scouts, the support was quick and very important, they organized themselves very quickly. I received a lot of emails from a lot of countries, with expressions of solidarity, asking me how to help and giving contacts so that the refugees could receive assistance in any country: for example, if you are in Poland, you can call such and such a number. Many national Scout organizations reacted immediately. They gathered support and sent volunteers to the borders to welcome refugees.

- And now what are the most important needs in Ukraine? There are undoubtedly people who are destitute, children separated from their families, etc... Do the Scouts of Ukraine have any plans to address these needs and do they need help in this regard?
- Yes, we are currently looking in two directions. First, regarding our local leaders who have moved to other cities or regions, the main objective is to help them integrate into their new community, to make sure that they are in a good situation and if their children are Scouts, to welcome them into the local Scout groups.

Also, a lot of organizations, including Scout organizations, are working in Ukraine to help people. A lot of

humanitarian aid is coming in. One of our concerns is to get this aid, coming from abroad, to those who need it because at the border it is very difficult to organize the collection and distribution. Many NGOs and Scout volunteers work there to make sure that the aid gets to where it is most needed.

The other concern is to help the refugees, in Kiev for example. A lot of help comes from Scout organizations in other countries to support these people, whether they are members of the Movement or not. For example, we try to put them in contact with a family who could host them, we receive proposals from families who are ready to host people and we put them in contact with refugees. We also try to support the integration of children and young people in Scouting in their new community because we are talking about children who will return to Ukraine and want to stay connected to Ukrainian Scouting and continue to refer to the program of our organization.

- ***Would it be possible for Scout volunteers from other countries to go to Ukraine not to fight but to help the***

**A LOT OF  
HUMANITARIAN AID  
ARRIVES, OUR  
CONCERN IS TO GET IT  
TO THOSE WHO NEED IT  
MOST**

### ***Ukrainian Scout Organization to organize solidarity actions?***

- Such help could be useful in some cases, but it could also represent a greater burden for the reception and the supervision of these volunteers who would undoubtedly have difficulties communicating in Ukrainian. In the small towns or villages that probably need the most help, few people speak a foreign language. Polish is quite close to Ukrainian and if two speakers, one Ukrainian and one Polish, speak slowly they can understand each other, but this is the exception.

This is the reason why a lot of Ukrainian refugees came to Poland and stay in this country. If you don't have relatives or relations in other countries, Poland is the easiest choice. There are many similarities between Poland and Ukraine in terms of language, culture and traditions.

- ***The solidarity shown by Poles is also very impressive...***
- Yes, because Poles feel close to us because of the geography and a similar history with the Soviet Union.
- ***In 1986 at the time of the Chernobyl disaster, I was a member of the World Scout Committee at the time, and there***



***was a great solidarity movement in European and even world Scouting. We organized summer camps all over Europe and also in the United States and Canada to welcome children from Chernobyl. Do you think that this type of action could be useful today?***

- Yes, I do. One of the objectives of the Ukrainian Scout organization is to create opportunities for children and young people to participate in summer camps. These camps should provide young people with support in terms of recovery from the trauma of war.

We are looking for financial support from governments or Scout organizations themselves to organize such a project. As many opportunities as possible should be found to organize multiple camps not only for Scouts but for all children and young people who are interested. We could use existing scout centers, but also simple temporary tented camp sites, first in Poland as it is the closest country, and in the neighboring countries in particular because at the moment it is impossible to camp and organize outdoor activities in at least one third of the territory of Ukraine because of anti-personnel mines. The demining will take a long

### PROVIDE SUPPORT TO YOUTH IN TERMS OF RECOVERY FROM THE TRAUMA OF WAR

time and for a long time it will be impossible to organize scouting activities in a large part of the territory.

- ***It is necessary to find what was done at the time of the war in ex-Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001. The Scouts of Croatia had organized, in cooperation with psychologists, specialized camps to rehabilitate young people traumatized by the war. The programs that were organized at that time in these camps should be found. We had worked hard to support this project within the European Scout Bureau.***

- Yes, absolutely, it would be very interesting. It is a project that should concern the whole World Organization because we have not seen a conflict of this size since the Second World War. Scouting should be better prepared so as to put in place emergency responses to situations like this.

- ***You are a member of the World Scout Committee and you were invited to speak at the World Scout Foundation Assembly to give your testimony on the events in Ukraine. What did you want to tell people?***

- Yes, it was an event organized by the World Scout Foundation that gathered all the donors and supporters of the

Foundation. The World Scout Committee, faced with the situation in Ukraine, had launched an emergency appeal to all national organizations to provide assistance. The World Foundation also mobilized. Tens of thousands of dollars were collected.

So, as a member of Ukrainian Scouting and the World Scout Committee, I had to explain to the donors of the World Foundation how this money was used, to thank them for their efforts and to encourage them to continue their support. I would like to thank all those who support our country more and more, showing how Scouting is an educational movement that promotes international solidarity and world citizenship.

- **To conclude, what would you like to say?**
- I would like to thank all those who support our country more and more every day. I travel a lot in Europe and around the world, as a member of the World Scout Committee, I meet Ukrainians everywhere - more than 10% of the population had to leave the country - and I see how so many cities, associations and companies are helping them to make their lives easier

**I WOULD LIKE TO  
THANK ALL THOSE  
WHO SUPPORT OUR  
COUNTRY EVERY DAY**

- ***This war also reveals how much Ukraine brings to the world; Ukrainian wheat, for example, which used to feed many people around the world, is now threatened by famine because of the invasion of Ukraine. I also personally discovered that many of the digital applications I use every day to publish the magazine are made by Ukrainian teams because they displayed the Ukrainian flag on my screen.***

***That's impressive!***

- Absolutely. Yes, many startups have appeared in Ukraine in the field of new technologies.
- ***And maybe to conclude: one last question. You are still young, you are at the beginning of your life. What does it mean to you what happened there?***
- As a member of Scouting, I am committed to peace and cooperation between peoples. Of course we have experienced other war situations in Afghanistan or Palestine, for example. All over the world there are conflicts, but often they are located in distant countries. When it suddenly stops in your country, it is a shock and we understand better that we are all in the same situation, all subjected to the same reality and the same risks. We must all feel solidarity and defend the values of human rights everywhere in the world.

- ***And what is your reaction to the Russian people? It is said that 80% of the population supports Vladimir Putin. This is very interesting. How can we educate young people in a country to develop a critical mind in order to resist propaganda?***
- Yes, it is true. Today the situation is not the same as it was at the time of the first or second world war, we have communication technologies that should allow us to have access to a wide variety of sources of information in order to be able to make an independent judgment on the facts. But in Russia, state propaganda has been active for a very long time, it is in a part of the national culture.

Everything that comes from abroad, especially from the West, is considered bad and everything that comes from the country considered good. This explains the lack of personal critical thinking: people believe the information given by the national news channels. It is only a minority of people who are able to gather information from multiple sources, especially from other countries, in order to construct their own analysis of events.

That is why a majority accepts what they are told by propaganda, i.e. that it is the Ukrainians themselves who provoked this conflict or that it is the

West that is attacking and the Russians are only defending themselves. They do not critically analyze the information they receive.

That's why critical thinking and global citizenship education is very important. Scouting has a very important role to play in this area, educationally, first of all, by developing critical thinking and life skills that help young people maintain and develop their capacity for independent judgment and active citizenship skills. But also as a global movement in order to maintain communication between all parties. It is important that we Ukrainians resist the temptation to cut off all relations with Russia or Belarus, and instead keep contacts to help people become more aware of the reality of the situation.

- ***Thank you very much, dear Nika, I wish you much success in your actions and I hope that your country will soon find unity and peace.***

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TESTIMONIAL

# Facing the war

## VOLODYMYR IZVARIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE UKRAINIAN SCOUTS ORGANIZATION

**H**ello Volodymir. You are the chairman of the Ukrainian Scouts Organization and as such you had to face a particularly difficult situation with the aggression of Russia. Can you explain to us how the Scouting Ukraine reacted in this dramatic situation?

- The answer to this question is very complex. We started to prepare actively several days before the war broke out. We were in contact with the Regional Office of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, located in Kiev, and from the very first days of the war, we centralized all the information at the national level to analyze the humanitarian needs.

We had to help all these refugees meet their basic needs and be ready to provide answers, especially to internal refugees, people who had to leave regions affected by the aggression.

We also developed very strong communication, thanks to our

**ALL THESE REFUGEES HAD TO BE HELPED TO MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS**



international team, with the World Organization of the Scout Movement, the World Scout Committee and other national Scout organizations. As a result, we were able to collect funds that allowed us to react and help Ukrainian citizens in need by providing them with support in different areas: medicine, clothing, etc.

From the first days we contacted all the local groups to check if they were safe and if they needed help. Fortunately all our members were ready and able to

react very quickly to the problems that needed to be addressed. For example, a team at the national level was in charge of identifying places abroad, near the border, where it was possible to access medicines, clothes, etc., to supply the Scout groups that were very active helping people. In many towns and villages the population more than doubled with the arrival of the evacuees from the east of the country and we had to help all these people.

We were also very active with our international scouting contacts and thanks to our international team managed the support that came from abroad. We were in a situation where we needed very quick reactions and decisions because solutions had to be in place the next day, not in a month.

Another thing I would like to mention is that from the very beginning of the war, our Scout leaders and our elders, the Rovers, were able to carry out some supportive programming that was open to all young people, not just Scouts, to help them overcome the trauma resulting from war.

- ***And how have the public and government authorities reacted to***

**WE WERE ABLE TO  
REACT TO HELP  
UKRAINIAN CITIZENS IN  
NEED**

### ***these initiatives developed by the Scout Movement?***

- Obviously, they are grateful, but it's quite difficult to express, they don't really have time to say thank you given the constraint pressures they are facing.

For people, the first concern is to overcome their difficulties and survive. Nevertheless, the work of the Scouts has been noticed by the media and by the authorities who have thanked the

NGOs and the Scout Association for the work done in the country and beyond. Our greatest reward was to see that our action had an impact and made a difference.

Do you have plans to take other actions, for example, supporting refugee children abroad or for children traumatized by war?

Yes, we have a project to organize camps and activity-based programs during vacations that focus on psychological support not only to the children but also to the families. We have contacted several national Scout organizations asking them to help.

We are working on identifying the needs and priorities and distinguishing between what is covered by government programs and what still

needs to be done that we could take over. We will create action steps based on this analysis.

UNICEF has started to develop actions for refugees abroad and internally displaced people. We want to contribute and participate in long-term programs for people affected by the war. It is also a process of learning through action and we already have many leaders involved in this kind of process.

- ***Finally, Volodymir, what message do you want to communicate to our readers as a leader of the Ukrainian Scout organization and also as a Ukrainian citizen?***
- I would like to say that all Ukrainians are very grateful for all the support that refugees receive. It may be that people, after a while, become tired of providing this support, but they should realize that our refugee citizens had to flee the war because their homes were destroyed, they left the place where they felt useful, where they felt loved and supported. Now, thanks to the support they receive abroad and there are many examples of this, their lives will be a little bit easier and better able to overcome this incredible setback they have endured. For the rest of their lives they will be grateful to the people who took them in and helped them.

- ***Thank you Volodymir, everyone here greatly admires the way the Ukrainian people react and resist against the aggression. We feel that this resistance is very important for the future of Europe and the world.***

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## TESTIMONIAL

# Facing the war

**YAROSLAV KOSTIOUTCHENKO, TEACHER AND SCOUT LEADER, MEMBER OF THE UKRAINIAN TERRITORIAL DEFENSE**

**H**ello Yaroslav, thank you for accepting this interview. I have a few questions. My first is: How did you react when the Russian aggression started?

- Until the last moment it seemed clear to everyone that war was no longer accepted as a way to resolve conflicts. At the beginning of the attacks I found it hard to believe the news that was being spread, but I had to quickly acknowledge reality

When I received my mobilization order, I joined the army. It was what I had to do as a citizen: the war had started and it was very important to take a clear position.

- **What were your personal feelings at that time?**

- My first thought was: in such a situation, everyone has to do what they have to do. So I continued my work at school. I am a teacher. The courses were online at that time. And then when I received my mobilization order, I joined the army.

**WHEN I RECEIVED MY MOBILIZATION ORDER, I JOINED THE ARMY, IT WAS WHAT I HAD TO DO AS A CITIZEN**



- **In Europe, we have a lot of admiration for the way Ukrainians reacted and the spirit of resistance they showed. We want to help you as much as possible. Do you think that international solidarity towards Ukraine is sufficient? Do you feel sufficiently supported?**

- I am grateful to the other countries that have supported us from the very first hour, for the support they have given not only to those fighting on the frontline but also for the support to the refugees who have left Ukraine. This is invaluable help and I don't know how we can show enough gratitude. But I think that the help on the military side could have been faster and more



significant. We are getting information that military aid is coming, that there will be sanctions against Russia, that there will be an embargo, but we would like to see that said in the present tense instead of the future.

- ***You are a Scout leader, how do the young people, whom you support in Scouting react?***

Most of my Scouts have left. I am glad their parents made this decision. From the first days, the scouts organized themselves to help the refugees and also to support the mobilized soldiers, they could see what the situation was and they analyzed it correctly. In my scout group, as in school, everyone speaks with one voice. In my role as a scout leader as well as in my role as a teacher, I tried to explain what the country represents, what the motherland represents, what civics represents in the scout law, and what values one must defend in one's life and in one's work. You can see here the parcels I received from the scouts of my city and also from German scouts. I received them with a lot of emotion. I think that the German government could learn a lot by seeing these parcels sent by German scouts.

- ***Do you think it is important to help young people to manage conflicts as much as possible without violence?***

- Yes, I absolutely agree. I also think that in any conflict you can find positive aspects. We just have to analyze and understand the positive and negative sides. We should not be afraid of conflicts. They are necessary sometimes like the salt of the earth. A good argument is the basis of

everything. If both young and old understand this, they will learn how to analyze and manage conflicts and this will be very useful.

- ***Where are you now and what is your personal situation?***

- I can't give you all the details, I am not in my house, I am in the army with my friends.
- ***You said earlier that you think that Ukraine is not getting enough support, but I have to tell you that the majority of public opinion in France, and in Europe, is on the side of Ukraine and the governments understand that they have to give more support. I think that now things are moving. Europe has also decided to stop imports of Russian oil. Maybe all this is a bit late but now things are accelerating. What do you expect from other Scout associations and the Scout movement in general?***
- Scouting is a non-political movement, but Scouts can engage in humanitarian

**FROM THE VERY FIRST DAYS, THE SCOUTS ORGANIZED THEMSELVES TO HELP THE REFUGEES AND ALSO TO SUPPORT THE MOBILIZED SOLDIERS**

aid: to participate in the reception and support of Ukrainian refugees in their country and also to encourage public and governmental support for Ukraine.

I am glad that people in Ukraine are reacting differently, more critically with its 50 million members, they can raise their voice for the return to peace.

**I AM GLAD THAT  
PEOPLE IN UKRAINE  
REACT DIFFERENTLY,  
WITH MORE CRITICAL  
THINKING**

- ***What is surprising to many is the seeming acceptance of the situation by the Russian people and the lack of critical eye towards the official propaganda. How do you judge this situation?***
- I make the same analysis as you. In youth movements and in schools we are now teaching young people to exercise critical judgment, for example, by looking for a variety of information and checking sources and asking questions. We see that in Russia the approach is different: information is prepared in advance and delivered in a way to influence people. And what is most worrying is to see how this influence acts not only on young people but also on adults and especially on adults who lived in Ukraine and who went to live in Russia. They are subjected to Russian propaganda which manages to manipulate them.

- ***To conclude, what message would you like to send to people here in the rest of Europe about your situation?***

- First of all, to those who are Scouts or who know Scouting, I would like to wish them good luck and tell them that in the face of all the questions I have about the situation in the world today, the only answers I find are in the values of the Scout Law and Promise which guide me in the way I act and react. To the general public I express the wish that they never find themselves in the situation that Ukraine is in today and I hope that this is the last attempt to interrupt the process of world unification and international solidarity. The sooner we stop this attempt, the sooner we will restore the great family of world citizens.

- ***Thank you very much dear Yaroslav. Take care of yourself, we are with you.***

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TESTIMONIAL

# Facing the war

## DIMITRI, RUSSIAN EDUCATOR AND SCOUT LEADER



*ello Dimitri, you are an educator and scout leader in Russia.*

*Thank you for accepting to answer my questions about the situation in Ukraine. You wished not to be named in this interview and we will respect this choice. What do you think are the reasons for the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine?*

- We have seen the strengthening of the vertical power. I think that the policy of the Russian president and his team has gradually changed. Even before 2014, we had already seen the strengthening of the "power vertical", the cancellation of elections of mayors, and increased control over the courts. In general, I would say that the role of the state, especially the central authorities, has increased. At the same time, the economic situation improved and the standard of living increased. Therefore, ordinary people, who lived through the terrible period of the 1990s and who wanted a stable

### WE HAVE SEEN THE STRENGTHENING OF THE VERTICALE OF POWER

government and an improved economic situation, did not care much about this process of getting there. I think that our leaders, after some success in their domestic policy, started to pay more attention to foreign policy, especially with neighboring countries. We have seen economic and military convergence with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and

other post-Soviet countries.

At the same time, Russia has made efforts to open up more to the world: the 2014 Winter Olympics, the 2018

World Cup, international economic forums, etc. I think the conflict in Ukraine arose because the foreign policy interests of our government did not coincide with the interests of the majority of Ukrainian society, which wanted greater integration of the country into Europe. Relations between the two countries were not easy before, but diplomatic solutions had always been found.

- ***Why did President Putin decide to invade Ukraine on February 24?***
- It is difficult for me to answer this question due to the lack of information, but there are probably several reasons. Maybe it was a tacit agreement with some powerful countries, maybe because of economic interests, maybe to leave a mark in history, maybe because of the military threat, maybe other reasons or a mixture of them. I don't think it was to help the autonomous republics of Donbass.

**MANY PEOPLE WERE  
STRESSED AND TRIED TO  
EXPRESS THEIR PERPLEXITY  
IN DIFFERENT WAYS**

- ***How did the Russian people as a whole react? How did young people in particular react?***
  - I would say that people watching the official TV channels were not very surprised.
- Many people were stressed and tried to express their perplexity in different ways, some asking why it was not done earlier. Other people, who prefer to read the news on the Internet, were shocked, really stressed and tried to express their perplexity through: rallies, petitions, posts and reposts on social media, public statements. But very soon a 'military discrediting law' was passed and all rights to express oneself

were dashed. The reaction of the youth was not very prominent. Some students tried to sabotage classes and picket the streets, but the university management quickly put a stop to this.

- ***President Putin probably hoped to take Kiev quickly, oust the government and take control of the country. But the Ukrainians resisted. It seems that a long war is underway. Are people in Russia informed and aware of this situation?***

-I think so. In general, people in the country can access any information, including Ukrainian, American or

British media. We don't have a global firewall, some sources are restricted, but by using different services, everyone can access any information.

- The economic and human damage caused by the war is already very high. More than 6 million refugees have left Ukraine. Dozens of towns and villages have been destroyed, civilian casualties are in the thousands, military casualties on both sides are in the tens of thousands, are people in Russia aware of this? Is there a will to stop this disaster?
- Yes, I think people are aware of it. The second question is difficult to answer.



As individuals, of course, most of them say that the war is bad, they sympathize with the suffering civilians. But I think individuals cannot think of appropriate ways to stop it. The attitude "My house is on the brink - I don't know anything" trumps "What can I do to stop this?". If people choose the second attitude, the question is whether you condemn or support the special operation. If you condemn, you must consider the risks, including public censure (even within a family), loss of employment, and even imprisonment.

- ***Do you see any possibility of stopping the war and starting negotiations? In your opinion, what could be the subject of a possible negotiation?***
- I remember O. Henry's statement, something like, "*The death of the union lies in the union itself*". I understand that the war can be ended by the same powers that started it.
- I have the feeling that the negotiations have not stopped. Oil is still flowing through Ukraine, the military leaders of Russia and the United States are still in contact. European leaders are calling each other and visiting Russia.

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## ANALYSIS

# The role of international youth organizations in building world peace

Interview with Srinath TIRUMALE VENUGOPAL

Director of the Eurasia Region of the World Organization of the Scout Movement



*ello Srinath. You are the Regional Director of the World Organization of the Scout*

*Movement (WOSM) for Eurasia, that is to say the part of the world that covers almost all the territory of the former Soviet Union. The purpose of an international organization like WOSM is to facilitate cooperation between its member national associations for better educational impact and international understanding. The Region you are in charge of has already experienced at least two conflicts: Armenia versus Azerbaijan and Russia versus Ukraine. In both cases, what were the effects of these conflicts on the organization and how was it able to react in order to safeguard its raison d'être?*

- This is a very important question because it also concerns the constitutional role of the Region, which is



to encourage and support cooperation between the national member organizations of the Region. This has been a challenge since the Region was created because there have always been more or less latent conflicts, since the

collapse of the Soviet Union, between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Moldova and Russia, Georgia and Russia, and finally between Ukraine and Russia, already in 2014 with the invasion of Crimea, then with Russia's support of the secession of the Donbas region, and finally with Russia's attack on Ukraine last February.

Because of these conflicts, some national organizations could no longer host certain regional events, meetings or training courses. The institutional functioning of the Region has also often been altered; the Region is indeed run by a committee composed of individuals of various national organizations elected by the regional conference to take on governance of the Region. The members of the Committee must meet to cooperate, share, learn from each other, and make decisions together. This is not easy when some of them belong to countries in conflict.

And so the number of national organizations, able to send representatives to meetings to work with representatives of other national organizations, has started to decrease. Already, before the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, less than 50% of our member countries were able to organize

events open to all other member countries of our Region. Because Belarus and Ukraine also have problems since a few years. So only 1 or 2 countries can host regional events on their territory.

Some of them are located in the very east of the Region and travelling there is very expensive. So, these particular circumstances have created a lot of difficulties for intraregional cooperation.

**THE VALUES OF  
SCOUTING IMPLY  
THAT  
COOPERATION  
BETWEEN SCOUTS  
GOES BEYOND THE  
ENMITIES  
BETWEEN  
COUNTRIES**

*-And also I suppose for the functioning of the Regional Committee, which is the executive body of the Region,*

*because in the Regional Committee you have members from different countries. For example, one member of the Committee came from Azerbaijan and another from Armenia, right? How can they cooperate?*

- You know, ideally, if you have well-functioning national organizations, their members have learned that the values of Scouting imply that cooperation between Scouts goes beyond the enmities between countries. It is true that this is very difficult to explain to everyone and especially to adults because young people are less involved in political and nationalistic conflicts and more sensitive to the values of international understanding that we are trying to make them discover.

- ***Yes, and with the fall of the Soviet Union, there was a resurgence of nationalistic ideologies.***
- Yes, and the adult leaders were not scouts during their youth, they were not introduced to the fundamental values of Scouting, so their nationalism is sometimes stronger than their scouting spirit. Their vision does not go beyond the challenges their country is facing.

So international cooperation is difficult. Nevertheless, they understand well the conflict between nationalism and Scouting values.

I must say that when the government invited the leaders of youth associations to intervene with their international organizations to get Russia's membership suspended, the Ukrainian national Scout leaders responded that this was not a good idea because Scouting is not a governmental organization. They pointed out that given the values of Scouting, the more Scouts in Russia, the greater the chance for a just and lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine. The Ukrainian government understood and accepted their reasoning.

This was a perfect example of the role that Scouting can play in building

bridges to the future by helping to see beyond the conflicts of the present. Nevertheless, in the present circumstances, we have many questions even about the validity of our Region because we have many practical challenges. This hypothesis is currently discussed.

However, this does not mean that we cannot communicate and cooperate in the present circumstances. But there are

practical challenges: how to travel abroad, how to get visas, and also security issues. That's really critical. As you said, the value of international organizations is their ability to contribute to peace and security. Important resolutions have been adopted by the World Scout Conference following the

resolutions of the United Nations on Peace and Security. Associations from countries in conflict want to build on this and enter into cooperation.

- ***You mean that on the basis of the values they carry, international organizations, such as the World Organization of the Scout Movement, are able to persuade their members to go beyond nationalistic approaches...***
- Absolutely. In the case of Scouting, for example, the founder, Baden-Powell, had a career in the army, but he clearly insists on the non-militaristic character of

**THERE ARE PRACTICAL CHALLENGES: HOW TO TRAVEL ABROAD, HOW TO GET VISAS, AND ALSO SECURITY ISSUES.**



Scouting. He defines Scouts as "peace scouts" and the Scouting movement as an international brotherhood (kinship). The Scout Law states that "a Scout is a friend to all and a brother (or sister) to every other Scout.

- ***And how are these values challenged by the reality of war?***

- In our Region, it was precisely this issue that allowed me to negotiate most of the activities we implemented. We have highlighted the conflict between some practical approaches and the values of Scouting. For example, we helped young people to critically analyse and learn from social media positions in the light of these values. Some people have lost family members, friends in this war. They are suffering because of this and they want to express this suffering. In Scouting, that expression is accepted.

- ***But however, I learned that some national organizations want to leave the Region so that they don't have to cooperate with the representatives of an enemy country... For example, the Scout organization of Ukraine doesn't want to be in the same Region as the Scout organization of Russia.***

- The problem was that the Ukrainian Scout organization was criticized in Ukraine itself by people who accused it of belonging to the same organization as the Russian Scout organization. Their position was caused by the fear of being attacked in their own country. They asked for help in this difficult circumstance.

- ***There was a pressure on them from the Ukrainian society...***

-Not so much the society as a whole, but some nationalist organizations which criticized them for not being patriotic enough and criticized them through social media.

### SCOUTS AS "PEACE SCOUTS" AND THE SCOUTING MOVEMENT AS AN INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

But the Ukrainian Scout organization received unprecedented support from the world movement in the critical situation of the war. This is said by the leaders of the organization themselves. Just as parents need to provide great support to their children to ensure their safety, so the World Scout Bureau needs to provide direct support to a young organization like the Ukrainian one to help it face the challenges it faces. This is what we have been doing in recent years. They are aware of this support which allows them to reach a critical level of competence and the ability to spread the values of Scouting to the grassroots.

- ***What you are saying is very interesting because it means that in today's world where there are more and more conflicts, more than in the 90's for example, international civil society organizations, volunteer organizations, like Scouting, can play an important role in helping people to look beyond the current nationalistic oppositions in order to build a different future.***

***Countries such as Russia and Ukraine, which are currently engaged in a bloody conflict, will have to find the path of cooperation and peace in the future. It is therefore important to help people, despite the present difficulties, to look beyond the present reality to the future. Scouts as "peace scouts" and the Scouting movement as an international brotherhood***

***Of course, this is largely utopian because the people involved in the conflict are immersed in a vortex of negative emotions: fear, anxiety, suffering, anger... Instead of broadening their horizons and vision, nationalism narrows them and channels their energy into violence and the desire for revenge. But international organizations, by the very fact that they are not directly involved in the conflict, can help those who are trapped in it to get out of the tunnel. This is the very meaning of the action you are taking.***

- Let me give you a personal example. When I was 14 years old, I was invited to Japan for an international friendship camp. It was the first time I left not only my country but also my city.

Coming to a developed country like Japan was an opportunity for me to have many new experiences and discoveries.

On the first day, I stayed in the hostel of the national scouting organization, I was told that there were other Indians present and I heard someone playing an Indian national song on the flute.

I thought, I have to get to know this guy. I talked to him, we became very close, I was very impressed with his scouting skills, how much he knew and how he addressed me in a friendly and respectful way although I was much younger than him.

It was only later that I discovered that he was not Indian but Pakistani. He appeared in the uniform of his association and I was shocked.

I thought to myself, what's going on, is this a joke? Obviously, Indians and Pakistanis have national songs which only change from Hindustan (India) to Pakistan because before the separation in 1947, at the time of independence, they were part of the same country. This separation made them enemies from one day to another.

This discovery shocked me and became a permanent part of my life. All the brainwashing that I had gone through in India from everyone, including my family and friends, presenting Pakistanis as bad people, as enemies, all that brainwashing disappeared along with all the prejudices I had been taught about Muslims.

People had told me when I was young that Muslims were dirty. A little while before going to Japan I had discovered first hand, also in a Scout camp (in India) that the Muslim Scouts I shared my tent with were the cleanest and had a great awareness of hygiene and personal care compared to others including myself.

Suddenly I realized that since I was young I had been brought up with a stigma about Muslims and Pakistanis, and I understood that everything I had been told was a lie.

And I am sure that this is not only Srinath's story, it is the story of many Scouts. And that's why meeting, cooperating with people of other nationalities, other cultures is so important in Scouting.

And this discovery that I had made in Japan, I brought it back home. I shared it

with friends who had not had the chance to break the prejudices in which they had been trapped. This is why we need to create opportunities for young people to meet and make similar discoveries.

- ***Yes, allow young people to experience international and intercultural encounters to free themselves from nationalistic or racist prejudices.***

**SUDDENLY I REALIZED THAT SINCE I WAS YOUNG I HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP WITH A STIGMA ABOUT MUSLIMS AND PAKISTANIS, AND I UNDERSTOOD THAT EVERYTHING I HAD BEEN TOLD WAS A LIE.**

-And really discover for themselves the difference between propaganda and reality.

Because what is happening today in Russia and Ukraine was created by propaganda. It is necessary to help young Ukrainians to discover that beyond the conflict between the two countries, people in Russia are the same as they are. It is important that the scouts in Russia, even if they are few, have the same feeling about the

Ukrainians.

In our region there is a team that prepares a meeting for Rovers called "Excel Scouts" and in this team there are two young Ukrainians and they took the decision to invite to this team a Russian youth based on the skills and personal merit of the person, not even for the gesture of going beyond prejudices, but taking into account only the personality and experience.

So it was clear to the young leaders of this team that only personal merit could be taken into account for invitations to this meeting and that no one could be excluded because of his nationality. And the Ukrainian scout organization fully accepted this choice in the middle of the conflict. This means that doors are still open and that when the conflict ends, the Scouts will move faster towards reconciliation than the society in which they live.

- *This reminds me of what happened in France in 1947 when the World Jamboree was organized after the Second World War - the Peace Jamboree. Scouting was just being reborn in Germany, where it had been banned by Hitler in 1933 and the young German Scouts could not participate in the World Jamboree because their organization was not yet recognized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement. Well, French Scouting took the decision to include German Scouts in its delegation to the World Jamboree. This was a rather incredible gesture and a sign for reconciliation and peace because there was still a lot of hatred and prejudice between France and Germany at that time.*

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- What you have shared from WW2 is an excellent example, it was not just a matter of welcoming the German scouts to the Jamboree but to do so by including them in the French delegation as a demonstration of brotherhood.

The next World Jamboree is planned for next year in Korea and we hope that the Russian Scouts will be able to participate as well as the Ukrainian Scouts. It will be an important moment. If that happens, we should be careful not to make it a political demonstration or a publicity stunt, because the most important thing is the experience that the young people will have by participating in the Jamboree.

*- Thank you very much Srinath for helping us to understand how international youth organizations can play an important role in building a world peace that is not only the absence of war, but the intensification of cooperation and friendship between peoples.*

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## ANALYSIS

# Africa and countries of the South: Diverging allegiances on war in Europe

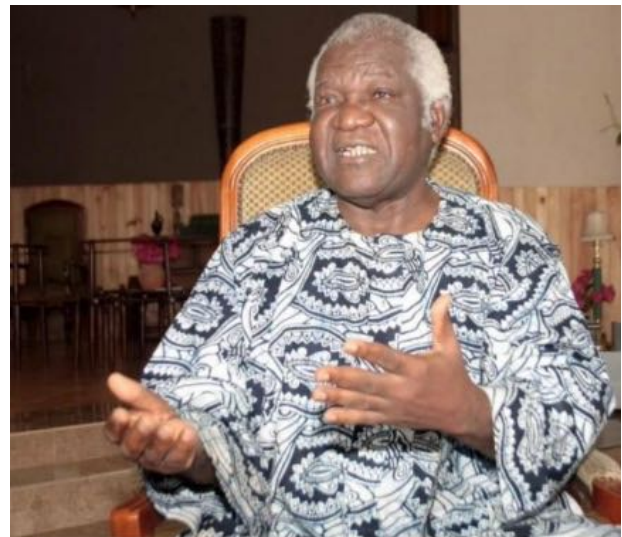
Interview with Mr Mamadou N'Doye by D. Monferrer and D. Bénard.



*ello Mr. N'Doye. Before starting our interview could you please introduce yourself?*

- I am basically a teacher having worked at all levels of the Senegalese education system. I have also been a National Education Inspector and a researcher in education sciences. I was active in the Senegalese Democratic Education trade union movement, and then internationally in the African trade union movement as vice-president of the International Federation of Teachers' Unions.

At the political level, I have been a member, since my youth, of the Democratic League (a former communist party that became democratic and progressive). When the party became the government, I was Minister of Literacy and National Languages, then of Basic Education and National Languages. On the associative level, among other commitments, I am



a founding member and the first President of REPTA (Education for All Network in Africa).

From 1998 to 2001, I coordinated the United Nations Special Initiative on Education in Africa, hosted by the World Bank in Washington. I then led the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, bringing together African governments, including ministers of education, and national and international agencies supporting

education. I held this position for about ten years in Paris and then in Tunis

- ***Given your background, you are well placed to help us better understand the differences in perspective regarding Ukraine between the West (and more particularly Europe) and the countries of the South (more particularly Africa).***
- Your question has several dimensions but much of this comes down to the positions of States and that of public opinion.

Many countries in the south do not wish to take a side so as to safeguard their relations with both the West and Russia.

That said, though there is an impression that African countries largely abstained from the UN vote regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the reality is that was the case for only 17 of the 54 African states.

The decision to abstain or condemn are two very different positions - decisions largely based on national interests and preservation of international relations. It should be emphasized that there are also different sub regional positions. For instance countries of southern Africa hold a position closer to that of Algeria (which fought against France).

During their struggles for national liberation many wove very strong ties of

solidarity with the USSR. These relations have sustained despite the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet empire. Thus, countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique generally took positions that safeguard their traditional ties with Russia. Then others, such as Senegal, though lacking historic relations of liberation, have engaged in Russian cooperation

through intergovernmental

commissions which were strengthened by the recent

Russia/Africa summit held in

Sochi. It is also noteworthy that

public opinion is even less critical than the state on Russian

aggression. Many believe it is

western provocation that led to

this war, in particular the expansionist ambitions of NATO.

Young people in particular are more critical as they consider the West responsible for this situation. Meanwhile others, myself included, believe that in the 21st century it is simply not acceptable for any one country to attack another. But this is the position of progressive intellectuals, and more particularly those of a certain age. I try to explain to young people that, just as we condemned the US aggression against Iraq which was based on false allegations, so we must condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine. But

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evidently we do not always follow the same reasoning.

Another aggravating factor is that democratization efforts in Africa over the last 30 years have not brought about the economic and social development expected.

Fundamentally these positions favoring Russia reflect a deep frustration with the west - even a deterioration of the relationships and questioning of the universalist values promoted. These democratic values in particular are now being strongly challenged in the form of multiple military coups in West African countries this past year (Mali, Burkina, Guinea).

Lately, young people in Senegal have organized to question Western and more specifically French interests. For example, there is strong mobilization against the CFA Franc, considered an expression of African countries' dependence on France, a dependence that many want to see broken. Others are organizing against the monopolization of African economic levers by Westerners, with, for example, riots last year targeting certain symbols of French presence in Africa (Auchan, Orange, etc.). This movement is very

broad, and when the situation in Ukraine burst onto the international scene, these young people interpreted it through a lens of anti-Western positioning.

- *Does the analysis made by these young people with their denunciation of imperialism distinguish between the political leaders and the French civil society that actually shares this anti-imperialist sentiment? Moreover, isn't it important that civil societies can recognize their common interests and form solidarity across countries and beyond government policies?*

-When I listen to young people, especially those who are more advanced in terms of their

analysis and awareness and who provide the political leadership of these movements, this awareness is clear and in their discourse generally makes a distinction between the leaders and the French people. But it is not so obvious to the young people at the base. And this is understandable, they are deeper in the emotional dimensions of the struggle and therefore such distinctions are more difficult. This means there is still a lot of work to be done.

**THESE POSITIONS FAVORING RUSSIA REFLECT A DEEP FRUSTRATION WITH THE WEST - EVEN A DETERIORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AND QUESTIONING OF THE UNIVERSALIST VALUES PROMOTED.**

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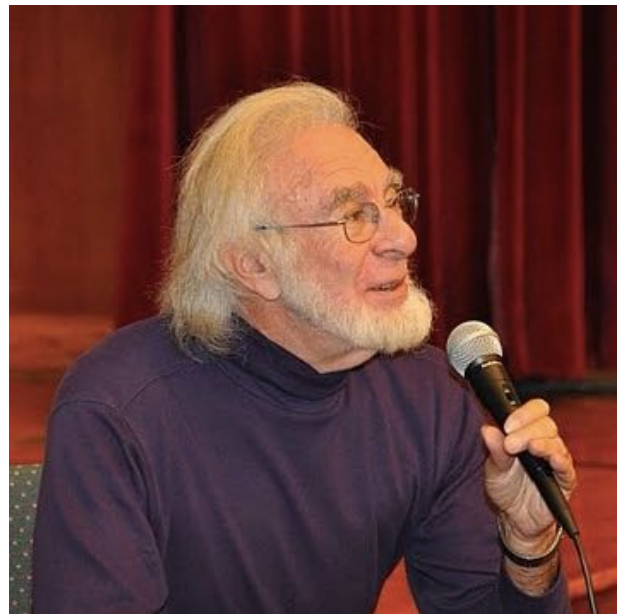
## MEETING WITH ...

# David Adams

Patrick Gallaud interviews David Adams, main collaborator of Federico Mayor, former Director-General of UNESCO, in the field of the Culture of Peace

**P**atrick Gallaud (PG) - UNESCO's "Culture of Peace" program was born in 1989, at the end of the World Congress in Yamoussoukro. However, since its creation in 1945, UNESCO has never ceased to promote texts, guidelines and recommendations on peace. So why did the Organization wish to "accelerate" the peace movement in 1989?

- David Adams (DA) - The year 1989 was one of those special moments in history when the door was opened to move towards peace. It was the end of the Cold War and peace seemed possible. Federico Mayor, the new Director-General of UNESCO, felt that UNESCO should take the lead. Taking advantage of Felix Houghouet-Boigny's invitation for a meeting in Yamoussoukro, he put Georges Kutukdjian in charge of planning. He invited me to be the first speaker and to introduce the Seville Declaration on Violence. The Declaration states scientifically that war is not biologically determined, that the same species that



invented war is capable of inventing peace.

I proposed a culture of peace program to Federico Mayor in May 1992, and he submitted the proposal to the UNESCO Executive Board in October. After interventions by many supportive states, the Board passed a resolution followed by a rare standing ovation. The first two national programs were then launched in El Salvador and Mozambique.

Unfortunately the action plans developed over the next few years in these programs did not receive



funding from the wealthy member states of UNESCO. I began to understand that the great powers did not want peace.

- **PG - *The involvement of civil society was one of the characteristics of this program. Can you give us some examples of "success stories" of this involvement?***

- DA - Yes, I can. Disappointed by the member states, we turned to civil society at the end of the last century with the "Manifesto 2000", a personal commitment to promote a culture of peace in everyday life.

At the end of the last century, we turned to civil society with "Manifesto 2000", a personal commitment to promote a culture of peace on a daily basis. The United Nations system, UNESCO's field offices and National Commissions were the keys to its success, enabling us to get 75 million people to sign (and thus commit to) it. The first million signatures came from Algeria, where the manifesto was sung from the minarets and distributed in the streets by the scout movement.

**AT THE END OF THE LAST CENTURY, WE TURNED TO CIVIL SOCIETY WITH THE "MANIFESTO 2000", A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF PEACE IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

In India, it was the NGO Brahma Kumaris that collected several million signatures. In Colombia, UNICEF reached 40% of the population. In Brazil, millions of signatures were obtained at Carnival. In South Korea, more than a million people signed, coordinated by the UNESCO National Commission. And in Japan, more than a million people have pledged through the UNESCO Associations of Japan.

- **PG - *You published "I have seen the promised Land a utopian novella", a fictional work on the culture of peace in which you outline a profound (utopian?) reform of the United Nations system. What would be, according to you, the first reform to be undertaken by the UN to promote the culture of peace?***

- DA - worked at a high level at UNESCO in the UN system from 1992 to 2001 and I learned that the system is capable of promoting a culture of peace. We made great strides for peace after the civil wars in El Salvador and Mozambique, and later we put in place, as I just explained in the Manifesto 2000, but all these efforts were thwarted by the major powers of the UN because not all of them want peace.

After all, the first "right" of the state is the right to wage war. When the Culture of Peace resolution was introduced at the UN in 1999, the American delegate said, "Peace must not be elevated to a human right, otherwise it will be very difficult to start a war." The major powers control the UN through their permanent memberships and veto rights in the UN Security Council. It is this permanent status and veto power that must be changed.

- ***PG - In this book, we see the essential role that cities could play in the promotion of a culture of peace. Can you tell us more about this?***

- DA - As already mentioned, the first "right" of the state is the right to wage war. And in many cases, this is reflected in the priority given to military spending in the national budget.

Every dollar, euro or ruble spent on the military is taken away from education, health and modern pensions have come to monopolize the culture of war. Only the state has the right to kill. Cities, on the other hand, have no military budget, no army, no borders to defend, no enemies. And yet, they already carry out many actions in the

field of the culture of peace. That is why I proposed to establish an alternative security council composed of representatives of mayors from all over the world.

- ***PG - Since your retirement, you set up an information network on the culture of peace. Who is it for and do you feel that there is a rise in the aspirations of citizens in the field of peace?***

- DA - Thanks to this information network on the culture of peace, I publish an average of one article per day on actions and media for a culture of peace around the world. I publish a

summary of the month's events in a newsletter, as well as personal comments in a monthly blog.

The monthly newsletter mailing list has about four thousand people, many of whom are activists, but I'm afraid that's

not enough to have much effect. But history is not a straight, well-paved street; rather, it is marked by crises and sudden, revolutionary changes. I continue to lead this network with the conviction that the time will come when millions of people will mobilize, when they will try to find out what is happening in support of a culture of peace and how they can get involved.

**EVERY DOLLAR,  
EURO OR RUBLE  
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HEALTH AND  
PENSIONS**



- **PG - Finally, do you have a specific message for young people?**
- DA - I have an important message for young people. Although rich countries do not want peace, they are doomed to collapse under the weight of their military investments. Every dollar, euro or ruble spent on the military is a dollar taken away from education, health and pensions. As for utopia, know that in Spanish, utopia does not mean that something is impossible; it simply means that it is radically different and better. And a better world is possible!

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## ANALYSIS

# UNESCO and the culture of peace in 2022

Patrick Gallaud talks with Cecilia Barbieri, head of Education for Global Citizenship and Peace at UNESCO.

**P**atrick Gallaud (PG): *Since the 2000s, the culture of peace has been less present in UNESCO's discourse. Does this mean it is no longer a priority?*

- Cecilia Barbieri (CB): Over the past two decades, we have witnessed a shift in the discourse on "peace" or "culture of peace" towards a more dynamic and participatory process, which is both internal and external to countries and people.

As such, it is first and foremost about people, and it is therefore fundamental that peace be built first in the minds of people (exactly as inscribed in the UNESCO preamble). In this context, peace is understood to include the pursuit of equity, inclusion, well-being and sustainability of the planet.

And to answer this question, I would like to refer to the current major undertaking of the revision of the Recommendation on Education for



International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted in 1974 by the General Conference of UNESCO.

It was a landmark legal instrument bringing together for the first time peace, international understanding,



human rights, fundamental freedoms and education.

The Recommendation called on Member States to ensure that their educational policies were guided by a global perspective and a commitment to international solidarity.

However, since 1974, new threats have emerged that endanger peace and human survival. These include climate change, infectious diseases, pandemics and other health crises, the rapid spread of hateful and violent ideologies, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, systemic racism and latent inequalities.

Finally, 50 years later, educational research and technological developments have also changed the field of education. These developments offer new opportunities for peacebuilding and the promotion of international solidarity. The international community has thus acquired a solid set of normative instruments and technological tools to promote peace and non-violence, which did not exist in 1974.

For these reasons, UNESCO's Member States decided to revise the 1974 Recommendation to take into account

the changes in the global and educational landscape, in particular the requirements of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education, with a view to firmly anchor the role of education in promoting global peace, international understanding and sustainable development.

The revision will also take into account the recent findings of the Report on the Future of Education "Rethinking

our futures together: a new social contract for education".

This renewal process illustrates that the culture of peace, defined in relation to a world in constant transformation and also a dynamic and evolving

notion, remains a major concern for UNESCO

- ***PG: What must UNESCO do to assure that this revision truly leads to the emancipation of the international community?***
- CB: The Director-General of UNESCO has already set up a multidisciplinary Group of International Experts (GEI) composed of women and men from all regions appointed in their personal capacity to advise the Organization on the revision of the Recommendation.

**GENDER  
INEQUALITY AND  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE ARE A  
THREAT TO GLOBAL  
PEACE**

Our objective is to present a revised text at the General Conference in the fall of 2023. Already, these experts have documents available to support their work and accompany their proposals.

For example, UNESCO's global survey which gathers the views of stakeholders on the needs and ambitions should be reflected in the revised Recommendation. The survey included officials and technical staff from relevant ministries, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as academic stakeholders (including UNESCO Chairs), teachers, students and private sector professionals.

The survey was conducted from February 1 to 28, 2022 in three languages: English, French and Spanish. UNESCO disseminated the questionnaire with the assistance of its field offices, National Commissions and partners. Links to the questionnaire were also posted on various partner websites and social media. In total, the survey yielded 1,550 complete responses.

More than 60% of respondents felt that "sustainability issues", "climate change" and "media and information literacy" should be included in education to

advance peace, international understanding, fundamental freedoms and human rights.

- ***PG: On your website, you also mention the recent regional consultations.***
- CB: Yes, UNESCO has organized five interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder regional technical consultations in the regions of Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The regional consultations identified certain trends within each region that will inform the development of the preliminary draft Revised Recommendation.

The objective was to gather preliminary ideas on the possible scope of the revisions that UNESCO will need to prepare, and to consider region-specific issues that will need to be considered in the revision, as well as contributions in terms of vision and structure, or any new ideas. These consultations also aimed to identify opportunities for cooperation in each region to promote the revised Recommendation once it is adopted in 2023.

- ***PG: UNESCO also regularly publishes open-access technical notes and documents that are additional tools for experts.***



- CB: The thematic papers focus on topics that are not or not sufficiently covered in the current Recommendation (freedom of expression, media and information literacy, and digital skills for peace for sustainable development etc).

The technical notes address broad principles that could accompany the revision, such as the one on "New understandings of the contributions of education to peace" which suggests prioritizing gender equity and equality in and through education, as gender inequalities and gender-based violence are a threat to global peace.

It also reminds us of the need to re-emphasize human rights-based approaches and to foster strong partnerships between formal and non-formal education.

- **PG: Does UNESCO have any other peace initiatives?**
- CB: Since 1995 until today, there has been an application of the culture of peace as a transversal program of UNESCO and intrinsically linked to sustainable development, because peace cannot be achieved without sustainable development and vice versa.

Among the various actions that UNESCO has carried out and is

supporting around the world is the integration of peace education into national education plans, including support for teacher training and focus on conflict or post-conflict contexts, as a way to prevent violence; integrating peace education into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration interventions, combating hate speech and building peace by developing digital peace education games with, by and for youth.

It is important to recall that since 2013, within the framework of "Priority Africa", a biennial culture of peace has been launched in line with the Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace in Africa adopted in Luanda (Angola) during the Pan-African Forum "Sources and Resources for a Culture of Peace" jointly organized by UNESCO, the African Union and the Government of Angola in March 2013.

This Forum made it possible, on the one hand, to launch a continental and sustainable Movement for a Culture of Peace in Africa and, on the other hand, to spark the birth of awareness and mobilization campaigns at the national level, under the motto of the African Union "Let's Act for Peace".

Following the adoption of this Action Plan in March 2013, many were

launched at the continental and national levels in several African countries, including The creation of the Network of Research Foundations and Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa in September 2013 in Addis Ababa, the creation of the Pan-African Youth Network for a Culture of Peace (PAYNCOP) in December 2014 in Libreville, and the establishment of the

Pan-African Women's Network for a Culture of Peace project with the creation of the first section of this network in Gabon in 2017.

We should also mention programs related to the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination, to the memory and teaching of the Holocaust, to the promotion of cultural diversity, UNESCO thus remaining faithful to its Constitution « *since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed* ».

## A CONTINENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE IN AFRICA

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AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

# Gun violence in America

Biorn Maybury-Lewis interviewed by Larry Childs



**A**round the globe people are perplexed by Americans' fixation on guns, our permissive gun laws, and a seeming tolerance for high gun-related accidents and deaths. US death rates far exceed those of all countries outside of the Americas. Those which are even close are at war. Why is this the case? How did this public health epidemic develop and why is it seemingly impossible for the government to address through legislation? To explore these questions, I interviewed Biorn Maybury-Lewis, a

prominent American social scientist and Approaches Cooperative contributing editor.

Key questions framing our discussion:

1. How big a public health concern are gun-related accidents and deaths in the US and the Americas?
2. Why do so many American citizens love their guns? Who among them insist on preserving the constitutional right to bear arms, and the continuation of lax gun laws

3. *Why is it so difficult for The US Congress to enact more restrictive gun control measures?*
4. *How is it that a radical, conservative fringe holds such a powerful sway over elected officials?*
5. *What are the prospects and implications for better managing this public health crisis in the future?*

## AMERICAN ACCEPTANCE OF GUN DEATHS

- Biorn - The most recent statistics suggest that the US, Mexico and Brazil experience upward of 30,000 gun-related deaths per year. With gun related injuries, the number in the US is 100,000. In the past year, about 45,000 Americans died by gunfire: murders and suicides.

Let me put these numbers in perspective. The Vietnam war began in 1960 and ended around 1975. During that time, spanning 15 years, 58,000 Americans died in combat. This number, with the warfare and excessive death toll, resulting from the invasion of a small Southeast Asian country, traumatized the US. Yet, now, we lose close to that number every year to gun violence. Guns are now the leading cause of death among young people.

Public health officials are calling this a public health crisis in part because we have massacres, the definition of which is killings of more than two, now occurring twice a day. Yet only the big ones make the news.

## 'THE AMERICAN DISEASE'

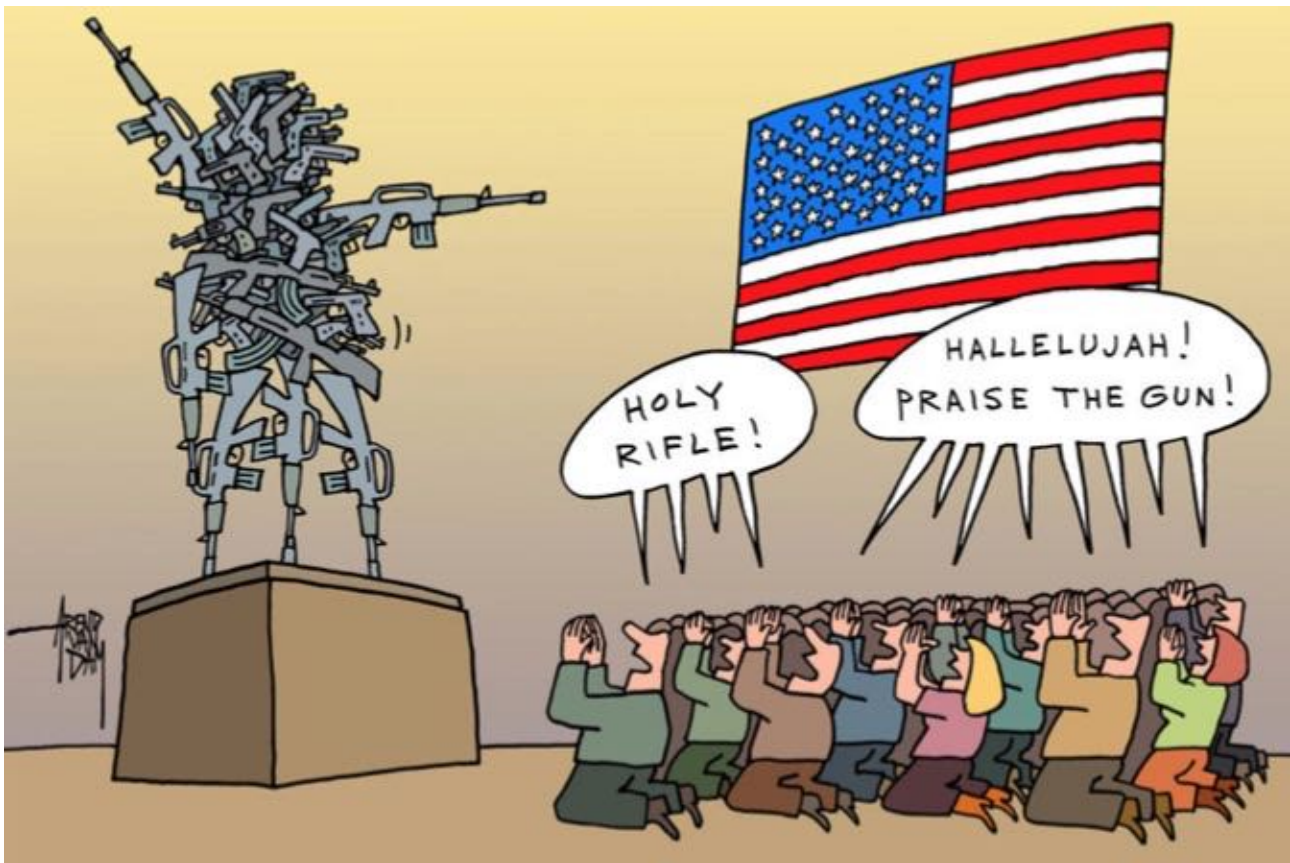
My father was a professor of anthropology at Harvard for 44 years, specializing in Brazil, especially Brazilian indigenous peoples. He described gun violence as 'The American disease.' Because if you look beyond the USA, Brazil and Mexico, you will find Central American gun homicide rates in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador are also very high... all these countries have incredibly high homicide rates compared to the rest of the world.

This is like living day after day, year after year in a low intensity conflict zone. The only countries exceeding these rates are those in active war zones - like Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and now Ukraine.

So we have a big problem.

## HAMSTRUNG BY INSTITUTIONAL MAKE-UP

What makes matters worse is we don't seem to know what to do about it. We are hamstrung by our institutional make up, by civil society ideology



about guns, and by our history - a long, long history of glorifying guns.

The specificity of the US is that we proudly got rid of the English colonial authorities during the Revolutionary War from 1776 into the 1780's. In that time we were a union of 13 colonies, united basically by our dislike of the British. But in so many ways the colonies did not like each other - we were profoundly different from each other.

The southern colonists were really slave colonies, where small groups of white men lorded it over a large population of African slaves. In the north we were really more of a trading society: small farmers, embryonic

capitalist enterprises, and a shipping industry networked into the Atlantic Economy: also very much involved in the slave trade, though slavery was concentrated in the south. The mid-Atlantic colonies were somewhere in between. In the middle states - New Jersey, Pennsylvania, especially, there were many different kinds of European immigrants: English, of course, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes... More tolerant than the Puritans to the North and certainly more so than the slave owners to the South.

The inhabitants of the 13 colonies up and down the eastern seaboard were at risk of being overrun again after defeating the British Army in the Revolutionary War.





So the colonies got together and wrote the first Articles of Confederation on which to base their first national government. But it really was not a very strong compact, and we were at risk of being over-run again by the British. The Articles of Confederation government could neither raise taxes nor fund an army, as it gave minimal authority to federal authorities.

So, the new American leaders got together to make a more powerful state with a constitution, getting rid of this inadequate Articles of Confederation regime.

The new constitution American leaders wrote remains the oldest more or less democratic constitution that exists anywhere, today, and we are very proud of it. Within its Bill of Rights – the first ten Amendments of the US

Constitution – is the Second Amendment. The Second Amendment guarantees for US citizens the right to bear arms and the right of states to maintain a well regulated militia.

This would ensure that men (men not women), would have the constitutionally guaranteed right to bear arms to protect themselves against the tyranny of the national state and other threats. That right is quite literally enshrined in the constitution.

### **‘THESE WEAPONS HAVE NO PLACE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY’**

Of course, in 1776, it took a few minutes to load your gun. You had to pack the powder, there was one shot per loading, and the guns were not even very accurate.



Today, men and now women too still have the original Second Amendment; a constitutionally assured right to bear arms. Yet we live in far different times. We now we have AR 15's - the weapon of choice for mass murder. They are easily modified so you can shoot 100 rounds without stopping to reload.

During the latest big incident in the US - a maniac got to the top of a building during the July 4th celebration in Chicago - a day with families and little kids in the street watching parades - that's what everybody does - like Bastille Day. He went up there and started shooting into the crowd - the shots were powerful and rapid - and many people died. Afterwards the Illinois United States Senator, Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq War veteran,

spoke. Her anger was palpable. Senator Duckworth, a combat helicopter pilot, had had both her legs shot off in war.

After the Illinois massacre, Senator Duckworth got up on her artificial stumps and declared, *'I have not heard fire power like that since I was doing my tour of duty in Iraq. These weapons have no place in American society.'*

### LICENSE TO DRIVE A CAR BUT NOT FOR A GUN

But we have these weapons. There are astronomical figures on the nature of gun ownership in America - the average American has 3 or 4 guns, which when totaled exceeds the number owned by all the world's militaries outside of the US combined.



It is 'a thing, 'a fetish,' with its roots in this post-Revolutionary Second Amendment.

However, today that right has been perverted since it was originally based on ancient weapons technology. Now, you pop in a high capacity cartridge magazine and shoot into a crowd of civilians as if you were out there fighting the Islamic State.

These are weapons of war and they are easy to get without even demonstrating safety competence. If you want to drive a car in this country you need to pass a series of tests including a written exam and a road test. Then you must have your eyes checked. You also need to attest responsibility in front of a state official. Many don't even pass their driver's exams in their first attempts.

For a gun, in many states you don't even need a background check regarding, for instance, having perhaps committed past violent criminal offenses with a gun, These days if you want a gun it is easy. Simply rendezvous with someone at a rest area along our American interstate highway system. He'll pop open the trunk of his car, you give him \$2,000, and you walk away with an AR-15 fully loaded with a high capacity clip/magazine of bullets. Next you go onto any 'appropriate'

web site to learn how to modify your semi-automatic weapon into a fully automatic machine gun. It is that easy.

## THE GUN LOBBY AND MARKETING TO TEENS

Having restrictive gun laws in one state, like here in Massachusetts, is good but anyone who wants a real weapon of war can get one in another state. We have this murder rate, as well as a constant flood of weapons and laws protecting one's right to own weapons.

Furthermore we have in Washington what is called 'the gun lobby.' Manufacturers are marketing guns to teens who also love violent TV programs, films and video games. They are marketed to young people - these weapons of war.

This lobby is so powerful that any research, even simply studying the effects of the weapons, is shut down. The US Congress has banned any government funding for such research. How do they do this?

The gun lobby funds selected congressional campaigns and even grades all of our federal representatives on their gun control positions and voting history.

So, if you have an F/failing rating, gun owners will vote against you, especially



the radicalized ones. It is a crisis, to the point that young people die from gunshot wounds more than any other cause including car accidents. And because of the money involved, the political system seems incapable of doing anything.

Incidentally, we in Massachusetts are very proud of our low gun mortality rate and strict gun laws. Yet our state has a long history in weapons manufacturing and export to other states and abroad. The whole country is involved in this madness.

- ***Larry - There seems to be a perfect storm of history, corporate greed, politicians for sale and legislative inaction all contributing to this***

***incessant nightmare. But perhaps there is something that unites us. What about cultural factors?***

- The strength of the USA is our diversity. We have people from all over the world who are now American. I myself am the first US citizen in my family, naturalized in my early 20s. I'm a child of immigrants. My father was English and my mother Danish, which is why I'm called 'Biorn' – a Danish name.

That is our strength in America - we have very smart and creative people from all over the world, creating businesses and inventions, becoming professors, doctors, and working their way up through the service industry;



volunteering for our armed forces; and as farm workers and owners.

No other country has this variety of interesting, brainy, and hardworking people. Yet, on the other hand, how do you keep such a diverse population together? What unites us?

Well, we share the rule of law. Until recent efforts – as in the January 6th resurrection, an attempted coup to install a dictatorship – it is the rule of law that keeps us together. It is very important to all of us. This is especially the case since there are such vast cultural differences within and across states. Our laws are what unites us – they undergird our democracy, however beleaguered it may appear today.

## RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM

But then beyond the laws, from the founding Constitution to contemporary town ordinances, there is also an American ideology of ‘rugged individualism.’ Think of the American cowboy.

Essentially it means that every man must take care of himself, every man is his own castle, and every man's house is sacrosanct. I say “man” self-consciously because this is a highly patriarchal ideology that has involved



mostly men since the beginning of US history.

In some states ‘stand your ground’ laws allow you to shoot someone on your property if they are simply approaching you. ‘Shoot first, ask questions later.’ is an American idea describing this mentality. When many of these cases go to court, and there are many, those who murder a suspected home intruder are almost always acquitted.



## “CASE DISMISSED!”

Treyvan Martin, a famous case of a teenage African American boy in Florida, was walking home eating skittles (candy) and drinking a soda.

In this case, he was on public property when approached by a self-styled ‘community protector’ who questioned this young man, was confrontational, and eventually pulled a gun and shot him.

The murderer was acquitted on the basis of stand your ground laws. Now, Trevan Martin remains dead – shot off the earth... But vigilantism is alive and well, especially against “people of color.”

- **Larry: What about race, class, slavery and origins of gun laws?**
- Biorn - The other aspect that needs to be discussed in the case of the US is the role of race and class.

Guns have been used since colonial times and after to keep slaves in place and, with the fall of slavery during the Civil War (1861-1865), to keep down African Americans. To this day, African American young men are lectured by their parents about never talking back to police, being super polite, using chosen, calming words, keeping hands always visible and on the wheel... and

yet every week a policeman kills a young black.

There is a sardonic term, ‘*driving while black*’, to describe the ‘offense’ of being young, black and male in America - a behavior which can be very dangerous indeed. Young black men die during routine traffic stops at a much higher rate than young white men.

Let’s get back to the other day when this white guy with a machine gun on a rooftop in Chicago killed 24+ and injured many more – and yet the police, once they tracked him down, took him alive. Alive!!

Afterwards people said, “*Imagine if he were black...*” If that had been the case, the cops would surely have filled him with bullets. He never would have been taken alive, never taken to trial - and everyone in this country understands that. This is the ‘norm’ and the expectation. This is how it is in America. And it is shameful.

- **Larry - How do you link this to lax gun laws? Is there some kind of corresponding fear of black people or low income people of color that would cause white men in particular to feel they need to be well armed defensively?**



- Biorn - I do think it is about fear - an irrational fear. Americans are always in fear of their neighbors. But maybe I am exaggerating? What do you think Larry?
- **Larry - I think to some extent people are motivated to possess guns due to exaggerated fears of being assaulted by a criminal. This is despite sound research indicating that owning a gun ironically makes one less safe: guns are often accidentally discharged with lethal effect and in family/marital disputes, having a gun around is not a good idea. Some also hold an existential fear that people of color will one day rise up against a white power structure. Bolstering this hype is the theory of ['great replacement'](#), a conspiracy theory response to the country becoming increasingly 'brown.' Is there any evidence of an**

***impending, organized uprising against white people? No, but media personalities promote this notion to their 10's of millions of followers. So, it seems the status quo on gun laws is maintained in part due to irrational fears. What do you think?***

## **POLICE FORCES AND THEIR MILITIA ORIGINS**

- Biorn - Well, I think you are right on target. Your point also needs to be examined in the context of the US Constitution. Today regrettably we have a place and need for a powerful police force. However the history of police is quite specific. It derives from that 'right to bear arms within a well regulated militia.' Well, what was the purpose of such militia?

Primarily to keep slaves in their place and by use of weapons in the Southern states, especially, where white owners

were outnumbered by masses of enslaved black men. This was more the routine purpose of “*guns and a well regulated militia*” than any fear of the British. In the north, the corollary police force was established to protect the interests of business owners.

In fact the first police force was founded in Boston where both you and I, Larry, have lived for many years. There was a lot of merchandise going in and out of the port of Boston and merchants were tired of theft, so the government created police to protect their interests. So, police were born from slave owners in the south and the port of Boston in the north.

Today, as back then, we have truculent police all too often prone to argue and fight: in the defense of those who own property.

## PRIVATE SECURITY AND UNION BUSTING

Back then, there were also private police (‘private security’ companies, as they are known today) who were even worse, more violent, and above the law. Business owners were often wanting a way to suppress perceived threats to their interests from labor unions.

Since this issue was not within the public domain, they used private

police who were more lawless, often shooting down pro-union protesters with machine guns. ‘Union busting,’ it was called and this was based largely on class differences.

The USA has the most violent labor history in the Western world, which is saying something... The gun and private police forces are very much responsible for this.

## US ARMED FORCES AND INDIAN GENOCIDE

There is also a third category of force; the US armed forces. “Expanding” the American frontier involved the military shooting up indians. The whole paradigm of how to get rid of Indians was formed during King Philip's war - this took place in ‘nice, puritan New England’ and specifically western Massachusetts, and the border area between Massachusetts and Rhode Island, where you and I live, Larry.

The phrase, ‘*The only good Indian is a dead Indian*’, derived from this time. They were founding the university where my Dad taught, Harvard University, in the 1630s, and murdering indians in King Phillips War, in the 1670s.

I’m not exaggerating my history, I’m just aware of it! Expulsion, today we would say genocide and ethnic

cleansing, was justified by rationales such as, 'Oh you Indians don't know how to use the land, we do. We'll put our farms here. You want to stay there? We'll bring in our militia and get rid of you.'

It's not a pretty history. Racism, violence, "might makes right," and the gun were all involved in a pattern that began in what would become the United States of America and would last until *all* indigenous resistance was wiped out in the Ghost Dances of the 1890s. A 300-year process beginning in New England.

- **Larry - Biorn, you make this history so vivid and help us see the bridge to present conditions. This is very helpful for understanding the core elements of US culture that underlie our constitutional right to bear arms. It strikes me that perceptions today around individual rights and guns don't feel that different from historical**

***times yet so much else has changed. Is there any hope for social change with gun legislation which might catch up with other advances of the past 250 years? What do you think? Is there a possibility for a societal shift away from these exaggerated perceived threats, insistence on violence, or threats to use violence as the normative means for preserving status quo power structures?***

### CAUGHT IN A CYCLE OF HISTORY

- Biorn - The problem facing the US, in the summer of 2022, is that we are caught in a cycle of history.

We go through reformist/progressive periods and then truly reactionary periods. We had our last reformist period in the late 1950's into the mid 1970s. During this time, civil rights and voting rights for African Americans were established, in 1964-1965. Just a little later, there was the Stonewall







protest, in New York City, advocating successfully for gay rights. The burgeoning women's rights movement was the context for the passing of truly important pro-women laws, including Roe v. Wade on abortion, in the early 1970s. This occurred because we had a progressive Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Since then, the United States Supreme Court has returned to becoming a pillar of reaction, the more prevalent stance of the Supreme Court throughout most of its history.

Consider how the Supreme Courts, of the past, repeatedly made ruling after ruling in support of slave owners: one

of the Chief Justices himself was a slave owner.

Today we are experiencing the Supreme Court, once again at an extremely anti-progressive moment, becoming, again, a pillar of reaction in American life. What's more, Supreme Court justices are appointed for life. They are unelected. And it is almost impossible to impeach and remove any one of them. We are stuck, therefore, with quite young reactionaries on the high court for the next 30 to 40 years.

From the mid 1960s until the late 1970s, during a short and unusual



window of time, the US had a democracy - a small window in which we had an actual functioning democracy - one which was aspirational. It was closed after the Reagan revolution when huge concentrations of money accumulated.

It is not possible to have a functioning democracy if disproportionate economic power is in the hands of a few who can bankroll *all* the elections. So much progress was swept aside! Now, with ever increasing concentrations of money in the hands of a few, those congressmen, and (especially) senators and presidents have installed very conservative judges on the Supreme Court.

They have been responsible for overturning many individual rights. Justice

Clarence Thomas recently suggested, after knocking down *Roe vs. Wade*, that the Court should consider 'other things,' meaning the reduction of other individual rights affecting other categories of American citizens. What he meant was gay rights, transgender rights, even the right to use contraception in the privacy of one's own home or personal relationship between consenting adults.

We are at the nadir, at this moment, of a reactionary push – having just survived a right wing attempted coup that was the 'January 6th insurrection' which tried to disrespect the will of American voters and overturn the election that clearly defeated Mr. Trump. We now have three of the nine justices having been installed by the coup instigator, former president

Donald Trump. They are in their 50s and will likely remain on the Supreme Court into the 2050s..

### WITH BACKS AGAINST THE WALL WILL PEOPLE GO OUT AND VOTE?

We are with backs against the wall – with so many individual rights facing assault and with the agenda around gun laws finally more seriously questioned than anytime in history – but will people go out to vote?

They are making it so difficult to vote, especially for poor people and black people, and they are trying to make it virtually impossible. They do this because they know that the majority

understand that women should have the right to do what they want with their own bodies and to start families when they are emotionally and economically prepared to do so. Majorities also believe gun rights come with responsibility, and that we therefore need to have sensible laws, that you should have to prove that you are not insane or that assault weapons are not acceptable in civil society.

So you ask about hope? Let's hope people will realize what is happening to them and that they will go out and vote in the November 2022 "midterm elections." Historically, many Americans don't vote in midterm





elections when critical majorities shift - and these are coming in November 2022.

My hope is that enough people are going to realize what is happening to them - that they will go and vote this time. In Wisconsin during the pandemic, they made it very difficult in 2020, but people came out and stood in lines in pouring rain, for hours, despite COVID and freezing weather - my hope is Americans will wake up.

Particularly our sisters, mothers, wives, and daughters, America's women. They have just suffered a terrible assault on their human rights. We need them more than ever in the coming election to send a message that reducing these rights in the United States is completely unacceptable for *any* category of people.

Also, the recent restrictions on voting have been designed to curtail the African American vote. I think that we can depend on African Americans to vote in favor of progressive congressmen and senators. African American *women* can always be counted upon: they vote consistently and progressively. I hope that they will inspire the rest of the country.

## AFTER-THOUGHT

- ***Larry- I fear that the militant anti-democratic behaviors of the far right are too often mimicked by the left. Many on the left have become increasingly prescriptive and pedantic, telling people how to think and policing language usage. I fear this has and will alienate voters, particularly swing voters..***
- Biorn - I couldn't agree with you more. If you believe in free speech this trend is insufferable and pernicious. It distracts us from the more serious points.

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WITH MARIA MONTESSORI

# A meditation on peace and education

Dominique Bénard

**I**n a speech delivered at the International Office of Education in Geneva in 1932, Maria Montessori, Italian doctor, pedagogue and pioneer of the New Education, expressed her convictions about peace and education.

*"If peace were to become a discipline in its own right, it would be the noblest of all, for the very life of mankind depends on it,"* she declared, at the outset, and asked: Is it not strange that such a science of peace is not being formed while the science of war, strategy, and the technologies of armament are in constant development? Man has unraveled many of the mysteries of the universe, but his research into his own inner energies is far from having achieved similar results.

## THE TRUE PEACE

The concept of peace, notes Maria Montessori, has not been rigorously defined either. Most generally, peace is understood as the absence of war. The



reflection that she develops on this subject deserves all our attention at the very moment when the "special operation" unleashed by Vladimir Putin brings once again to Europe the nightmare of war.

Maria Montessori shows that domination is the real reason for waging wars: *"Why do the human masses set out to meet death when their homeland is threatened by the spectre of invasion?"* And the answer she gives to this question can enlighten our judgment regarding the present situation in Ukraine: *"Simply out*



*of fear of the situation that will bear the name of peace when the war is over". Because, she adds, "Human history shows us that when the invader has consolidated his victory, peace means, for the defeated, forced submission, the loss of everything they hold dearest and the impossibility of enjoying the fruits of their labor and their successes."*

In *Le Monde* dated Monday, August 1, a collective of intellectuals and child psychiatrists, including Bernard Golse and anthropologist Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, alerted the world on the forced displacement of Ukrainian children in Russia, which is part, they say, of Putin's project "to eradicate the Ukrainian identity and nation." Between February 24 and June 18, according to the Russian

Defense Ministry, more than 1.9 million Ukrainians, including more than 307,000 children, were forcibly transferred to the Russian Federation, with no guarantees on their living conditions and future. They were "evacuated" from besieged and bombed cities in eastern Ukraine to "filtration camps" and then transferred to places as remote as Murmansk, Kamchatka or the North Korean border.

The signatories of this letter are particularly concerned about the fate of the most vulnerable among the displaced children: unaccompanied minors or those placed in institutions, often orphans. More than 2,000 of them were registered before the invasion in Ukrainian reception facilities in the Donetsk. On July 20, 108 of them had

already been adopted by Russian families, according to the Ukrainian rights defender, Dmytro Luninets.

Russia has not ratified the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect to Intercountry Adoption, the only transnational legal framework for international adoption procedures. Requests by the Ukrainian government for the return of children have been largely ignored by Russia.

Some of these children "are being reeducated," said Maria Lvova Belova, the Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, on May 31. The "re-education" of children is part of the plan to eradicate the Ukrainian nation published in April by the ideologist Timofei Sergeyev, a close associate of Putin, accompanied by remarks denying the Ukrainian identity made daily in the Russian media.

## THE END OF FIGHTING CANNOT BE QUALIFIED OF PEACE

*"The victors," writes Maria Montessori, "flaunt the rights they believe they have won over the defeated peoples, who are condemned to remain the victims of disaster. Under these conditions, the end of the fighting cannot, according to her, be qualified as peace. It only marks the entrenchment of the moral scourge."*

The "peace preachers", who urge the Ukrainians to enter into negotiations to conclude peace with Russia, would do well to reread this text by Maria Montessori. She compares this kind of peace to the situation of a man who dies of an illness: *"A war had broken out in his body between his vital forces and the bacteria that had invaded him, and finally he lost the battle. Very appropriately, we express the hope that this deceased man will rest in peace. But that peace is very different from the peace that comes from good health"*. And she adds: *"...Even today, the life of peoples who are not at war consists in accepting a situation that has been created by their victors. The victors take their impotent revenge, while the vanquished can only curse their fate like the devils and the damned in Dante's hell. Both are far from the divine influence of love; they are fallen creatures, for whom universal harmony has been broken into a thousand pieces."*

The prospect of true peace, Maria Montessori asserts, is the construction of a better world where harmony is established on the triumph of justice and love among men reigns.

## WAR AND THE PLAGUE

Maria Montessori then asks about war, which she compares to the plague epidemics that have decimated humanity for centuries: *"Like wars, plague*

*epidemics broke out only sporadically and were totally unpredictable.*" Just as the plague was only defeated when its hidden causes were scientifically studied, she argues that war cannot be eradicated unless science is used to elucidate its causes.

Medical research showed that the plague was created by a microorganism, carried by rats, and that epidemics were spread because of unsanitary conditions and lack of hygiene. The decisive factor in the fight against the disease turned out to be personal hygiene because *"the perfectly healthy individual, having a strong and well-developed body, can be exposed to the germs of disease without being contaminated."*

Men had long understood that malnutrition and poverty carried dangers, but *"the real revelation was that what people crave, what they seek as an envied privilege, that itself carries death."* Maria Montessori cites *"lavish feasting for hours on end...idleness and indolence...the pleasures of lazy men who have lost their vital energy..."* which leave weakened organisms at the mercy of armies of microorganisms capable of invading them at will.

For Maria Montessori, just as the plague epidemics were created by the absence of personal hygiene rules, so wars are the fruit of greed and the ambition to acquire

great wealth: *"This ambition betrays the existence of that irresistible vice called greed, equivalent in the moral sphere to laziness in the bodily domain, for in one case as in the other it is a question of accumulation and illusory pleasure."*

The problem of humanity for Maria Montessori is that *"collectively we live in a state of moral paralysis, in a suffocating darkness, allowing ourselves to be lulled by misleading assertions that feed our illusions... The sad truth, alas, is that reason, today, is obscured by dark clouds and almost defeated. In fact our moral disorder is only one aspect of our psychic decline; the other being the loss of the power of reason."*

## THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE ADULT AND THE CHILD

*"To be able to tackle the task of restoring the human psyche,"* Maria Montessori argued, *"we must take the child as our starting point."*

In her study of the newborn, she claims to have discovered unsuspected and surprising psychic characteristics and to have become aware of *"a terrible and very real conflict..."* which she says pits *"the adult and the child, the strong and the weak... the blind and the clear-sighted."*

*"In this respect,"* she adds, *"the situation is much more serious in our time than in any other. By constructing an environment*





*that is increasingly removed from nature and therefore increasingly unsuited to the child, the adult has increased his powers and thereby tightened his control over the child... The old superficial idea that the development of the individual is progressive and uniform remains intact. The erroneous idea that the adult must fit the child into the mold desired by society continues to reign. This gross misunderstanding, enshrined in time, is the source of the fundamental conflict and warfare between human beings..."*

*After birth, the child undertakes "a new kind of gestation...to embody a spirit whose seeds are latent and unconscious within him..."*

The child becomes aware of this work only gradually, and carries it out by means of the experiences he makes in contact with the outside world, thanks to the cooperation and support of those around him. "He accomplishes his task," notes Maria Montessori, "with inner wisdom, guided by laws analogous to those that guide any other task accomplished in nature, following rhythms of activity that have not the slightest resemblance to those of the aggressive adult bent on conquest."

Maria Montessori observed that very often "the characteristics and goals of the child's independent life" different from those of the adult, are not recognized by the latter but interpreted as errors of the

child that must be corrected. "Then," she writes, *"a struggle will begin between the weaker and the stronger, a crucial struggle for humanity, because the good or bad psychic health of man, his strength or weakness of character, the light or darkness of his mind, depend on whether the child has had a calm and completed spiritual life. If, during this precious and delicate period of his life, the child undergoes a sacrilegious form of subjugation, the seeds of life within him will become sterile and it will not be possible for him, later as an adult, to carry out the great works with which life will charge him."*

The practice of cooperative pedagogies showed Maria Montessori that the child, with his passionate love for order and work, his capacity for cooperation and analysis, his sense of justice, shows intellectual and social capacities far superior to those recognized by traditional school pedagogies. So, in order to conform to the expectations of the adults who suffocate him... " *The child bends to the cruel necessity of having to hide himself, burying in his subconscious a life force that seeks expression and that, inevitably, is frustrated. Burdened with this secret burden, he too will end up perpetuating the many errors of humanity. »*

## HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES

Maria Montessori then cites a series of harmful consequences caused in the child by deficient educational practices of which we ourselves often keep the cruel memory, either for having been the innocent victims, or for having been the unconscious actors:

- *"The child who has never learned to work for himself, to set goals for his own action, or to be master of himself and his will is recognizable in the adult who leaves it to others to guide him and constantly feels the need to be approved by others."*
- *"The school-age child who is continually discouraged and depressed comes to lack confidence. He suffers from a sense of panic which goes by the name of shyness...which in the adult takes the form of frustration, submission, and the inability to resist what is morally wrong."*
- *"The coerced obedience of the child at home and at school, an obedience that does not take into account the rights of reason and justice, prepares an adult who will resign himself to anything and everything."*

- *"The practice, widespread in educational institutions, of designating to public reprobation the child who has made mistakes, to sink him, as it were, in the pillory, includes in him the irrational and uncontrollable terror of public opinion."*
- *"This practice and many other types of conditioning that lead to a feeling of inferiority, open the way to an unthinking attitude of respect, almost of idolatry, in adults, who are paralyzed in front of public leaders, who come to be considered as substitutes for the father and the educator, figures that the child has been forced to look at as perfect and infallible. Then the discipline imposed becomes almost an enslavement."*
- *"The child, so far, has been deprived of the possibility of venturing on the moral paths which his latent vital drive anxiously seeks to explore in a world completely new to him. He has never been able to test his creative energies; he has never been able to establish in himself the kind of inner order whose first consequence is an assured and unerring sense of discipline."*
- *"In his attempts to learn what true justice is, the child is demoralized and misled. He is even punished for charitably trying to help comrades who are less comfortable and less quick-witted than himself."*
- *"If, on the other hand, he has copied from others or denounced his comrades, he is treated with tolerance."*
- *"The virtue most encouraged and best rewarded? That the child does better than his classmates, that he is the first, and that he triumphantly passes those ephemeral exams that punctuate his monotonous life of slavery."*
- *"Men who have been educated in this way have not been prepared to seek the truth and consider it an integral part of their lives, nor to be charitable to others, nor to cooperate with them in creating a better world for all."*
- *"On the contrary, the education they have received has prepared them for what can only be considered an interlude in real collective life, namely war. For the truth of the matter is that war is not caused by weapons but by man. »*

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## METHODOLOGICAL FILE

# How to manage conflicts

Dominique B nard

## DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY

**I**n Chinese, the characters that comprise the word "conflict" mean danger and opportunity.

Any conflict presents both dangers, which must be apprehended, but also opportunities to reach a more satisfactory situation.

Indeed, conflict is not necessarily destructive. Without conflict, a human community cannot progress. Conflict becomes destructive when it is ignored or suppressed, or when attempts are made to resolve it through intimidation and violence. If we find ourselves in this situation, it is most often because we lack the resources and skills necessary to better manage the situation.

## RESPECT CORE VALUES

Respect, tolerance and non-judgment are cardinal values for a healthy approach to a conflict situation. Even if someone is behaving in a way that we find unacceptable, we need to maintain an attitude of listening and respect, yet this does not mean accepting their behaviour.

It is also necessary to situate ourselves in relation to violence. Misery, injustice, oppression, tyranny and imperialism may seem to leave no alternative but violence in the face of suffering, brutality and conquest. But violence always leaves traces of suffering, bitterness, revenge and destruction, which are very hard to forgive. Violence weakens both the abuser and the victim.

## TOOLS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

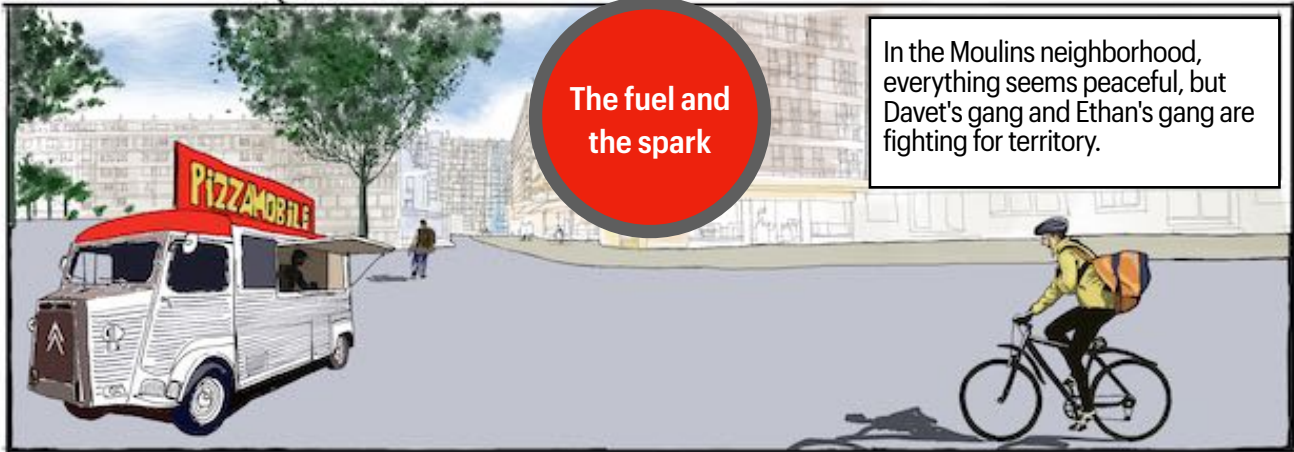
In the following pages, you will discover an episode of the Solexos in comic book form. Each page illustrates a key stage in a conflict. By clicking on the red circle that designates each stage, you can access useful tools.

**Bibliography** : « PLAYING WITH FIRE », Creative conflict resolution for young adults. Fiona MACBETH & Nic FINE. 1995. New Society Publishers



# Gang War in les Moulins

Script Michel Seyrat, drawings Dominique Bénard



The fuel and the spark

In the Moulins neighborhood, everything seems peaceful, but Davet's gang and Ethan's gang are fighting for territory.



Here Léo, it's for the block "Les Alpes", door 6. Watch out! It seems that Ethan's gang wants to ban you from the territory...

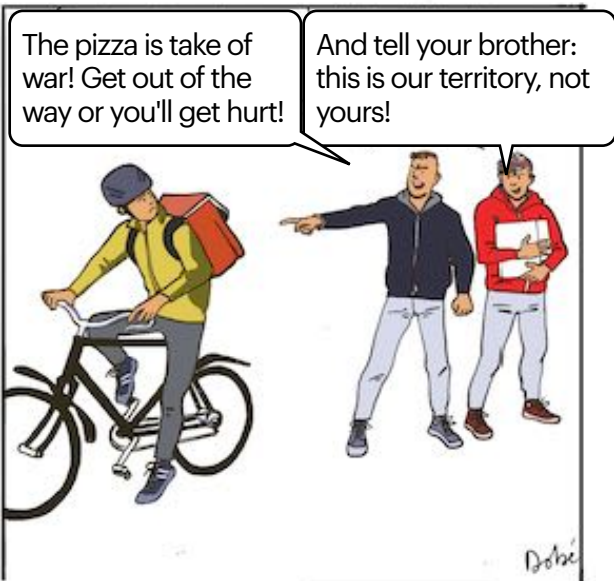
You think I'm afraid of them? With Dave, we are the strongest!



Here's little Leo delivering...  
Wait a minute, we'll get him!



**HERE YOU DON'T SET FOOT!**



The pizza is take of war! Get out of the way or you'll get hurt!

And tell your brother: this is our territory, not yours!



The fire is smoldering



The situation is getting worse between Ethan's gang and Dave's gang. This morning I had to intervene to stop a fight.

I know the deputy mayor in charge of youth, I'll talk to him.





Hello, Ludovic? It's Elodie. Emma gave me the news: tonight in the Elfwood, a big fight.

**Fire and mediation**

Let's go, this time it's serious!



Tonight at the Elf Tree Forest.

**HERE THEY COME!**



**STOPIT!**

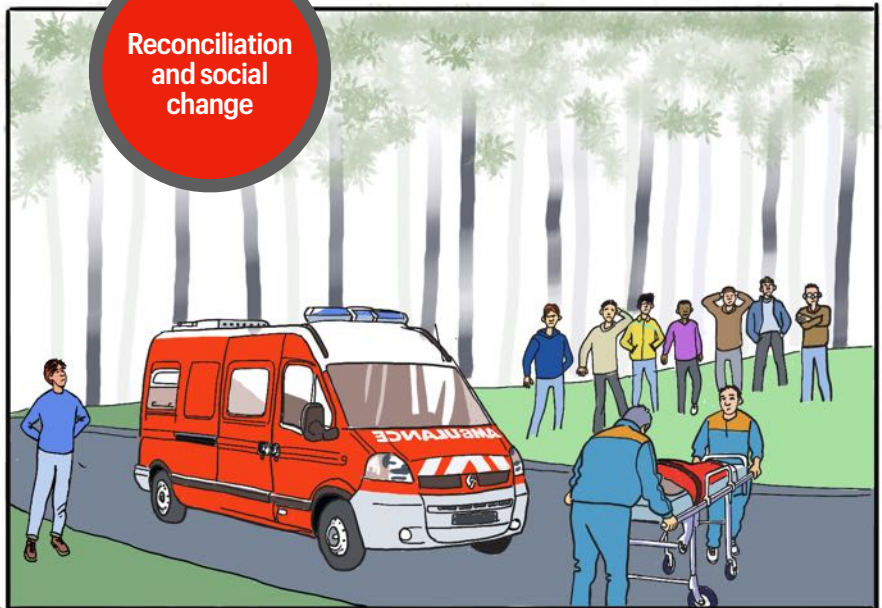
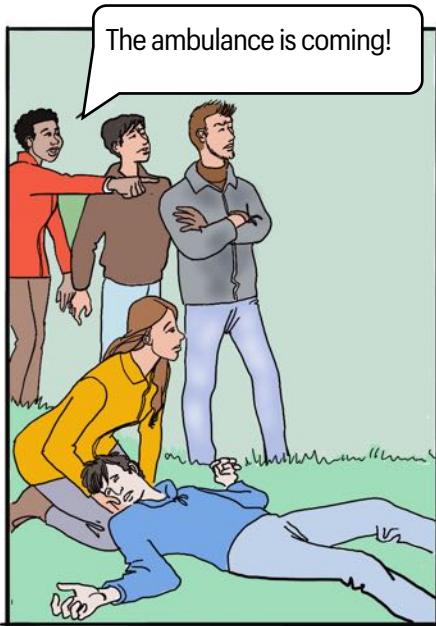


**CALL THE RESCUE TEAM, QUICK!**





Reconciliation and social change



Ethan, Dave. The three of us need to have a little talk, don't you think?

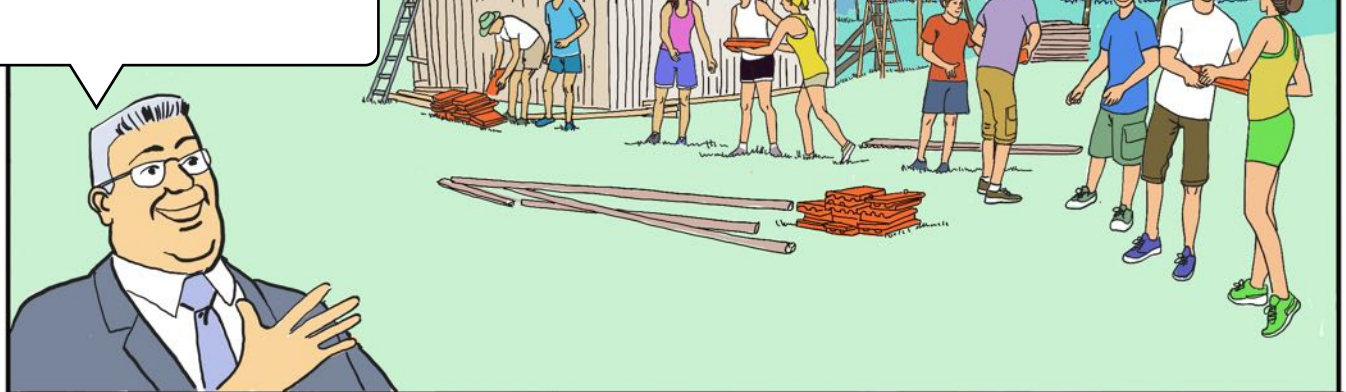


A few days later, in the deputy mayor's office.

I'm glad to hear that your injured comrade is out of danger and that, thanks to the Solexos, you're reconciled.



The municipality has decided to provide a grant supporting your youth work camp construction project for establishing an ecology activity center in the Elf's Wood... Bravo for this initiative!





## THE FUEL AND THE SPARK



We can compare a conflict to a fire. For a fire to start, an event is necessary: someone throws a match or a poorly extinguished cigarette butt, a short circuit causes a spark. It is also necessary that the match, the butt or the spark falls on a favorable ground, with combustible materials, dead and dry wood, for example. If the wood is wet, the fire will not take.

Similarly, a conflict needs raw materials to start and develop. And these raw materials are ourselves and those around us. The potential for conflict to challenge and grow exists within and around us at all times. In our lives, tensions, pressures and frustrations are constant.

Sometimes we put up with them and get through them; sometimes they make us angry, and the distress and tension increase. Some people are more "sparkly" than others. They are the ones who set things on fire, who cause conflict.

We all react differently, sometimes we are "sparkling", sometimes the opposite. Intervening in the development of conflict at this stage is possible if we control our behavior and the way we communicate with others, if we know how to listen and understand in order to avoid aggression. Developing self-awareness and communication skills is a way to work on this potential rather than letting it fester due to lack of attention and awareness.

***The following pages contain a useful tool in this regard.***

## HEAR

HEAR is a simple and very effective tool and acronym for facilitating transmission of a message in a clear and non-aggressive way and to improve communication.

Poor or ineffective communication is both a cause of conflict and a factor in escalating conflict once it has begun. Just when we most need clear, articulate thinking, the "red mist" of emotions, such as anger and frustration, prevents us from expressing ourselves clearly, eloquently and persuasively. Instead, we tend to resort to blame and emotional outbursts. This instinctive reaction has the effect of provoking the person being addressed. HEAR creates an opening for a productive conversation.

### H is for "happening"

Start by stating what happened in a neutral, non-offensive way. Be clear about what problematic behavior you are referring to. You can start with "when you...". Describe only the facts in a non-emotional way to limit the risk of the other person being provoked by what you say.

### E is for "Effect"

Describe the effect of the problematic behavior to help the other person understand the impact of the behavior on you. Communicate in neutral terms how you feel or how the problem you described in Happening/Event affects you.

### A is for "Acknowledge"

Acknowledge the other person and their intentions. This will show that you can see the situation from their point of view and that you are trying to understand why they are behaving as they are.

### R is for "Request"

Express your request: describe how you want the future behavior to be different from what you have experienced previously.

#### **Example:**

A member of your team has once again arrived late and it's time for you to say something. An inflammatory and ineffective approach might be, "Robert, you are late again. This has to stop or you'll blow the project. So I'm going to kick you off the team".

Using the HEAR tool, your response will be more like this:

- \* **Happening** - "When you show up late and don't say anything..."
- \* **Effect** - "I feel concerned and a little confused because this is not what I expected from you, plus I'm in trouble with the rest of the team"
- \* **Acknowledge** - "I recognize that you are under pressure with the project right now..."
- \* **Request** - "But if you're going to be late, I ask that you call me and also if you're having trouble with the project, let's take the time to sit down and discuss it calmly and see where we stand."

## APPLICATIONS

The HEAR tool can be used in any situation where you want to raise a concern in a clear, non-aggressive manner. It feels a little awkward or stilted when you first try to use it, but with practice, you will begin to express yourself more naturally. HEAR is recommended in the following situations:

Before a conflict begins, when you want to address an issue appropriately to prevent the situation from escalating.

If someone has been communicating with you in an aggressive or emotional manner, responding with HEAR will help them reduce their emotion. Also, by applying HEAR, rather than reacting in the heat of the moment, you will be forced to pause and think about how you are going to say something. This pause will help calm the situation and prevent inflammatory language from being used.

When others are in conflict, you can coach them with HEAR to help them be more effective in communicating with each other.

*HEAR is an adaptation of the principles of nonviolent communication developed by Marshall B Rosenberg (Rosenberg, Marshall B (2003), Nonviolent communication. A language of Life. Puddle Dance Press).*

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## THE FIRE SMOLDERS



Sparks fly and land. Smoke begins to rise. The fire is smoldering. The wind blows and fans the fire. Flames lick, leap and grow. The fire has taken over. It is no longer possible for it to go out on its own.

Likewise, in our lives, trouble is brewing. Discontent is brewing, and the situation is being aggravated by "agitators". They stir up the embers so that the flame will flare up. It is still possible to control conflict at this stage if you recognize that it is coming. Asserting yourself when you feel belittled or oppressed, or when you are asked to do something unfair, is a way to avoid escalating the conflict. When we simply growl inwardly, or feel agitated and refuse to confront the causes, we refuse to acknowledge the warning signs of the fire - we let it fester. This is dangerous.

How do we recognize a smoldering conflict? Has the conflict been brewing for a long time or not? Can we use our power as a positive force to resolve the emerging conflict? How do we express, receive and contain anger?

***On the following pages you will find some useful tools in this regard.***



## CIRCLE OF CONFLICT



### Description

The identification of the source of a conflict is essential to resolve it. Very often we only perceive the symptom and this does not allow us to address the root causes. For example, if two people refuse to talk to each other, we can try to treat the symptom of "non-communication" by encouraging them to communicate. But the conflict still exists and the solution found does not address the underlying problem that caused the non-communication.

One of the key practitioners in the development of mediation practices, Christopher W. Moore, has identified 5 main causes of conflict that constitute the "conflict circle" (Moore, C. (1986) *The Mediation Process-Practical strategies for Resolving Conflict*, Jossey-Bass).

#### 1. **Information**

Conflict can occur when there is a lack of information or when the information provided is inaccurate or false. For example, people may have a different understanding of a particular policy or conflicting interpretations of research findings. The solution to information conflicts can be found in accessing a common source of data or common criteria for evaluating data. Alternatively, a mutually agreed-upon expert may be used.

#### 2. **Relationships**

Relationship conflicts can result from poor communication and assumptions based on misperceptions or stereotypes, and strong emotions about the other person can

contribute, especially if there is repeated negative behavior. Relationship conflicts can be resolved by helping the people involved to consider the other's point of view, encouraging them to share their emotional reactions and agree on communication processes for the future.

### **3. Structures**

Conflicts based on structural causes include unequal control of resources and significant imbalances of power and authority. Physical factors may also play a role, such as geographic distance or time constraints. Resolving conflict based on structural causes may involve clarifying roles and responsibilities, adopting mutually acceptable decision-making processes, or exploring the mitigation of physical constraints, such as a mutually acceptable schedule for two people working in different time zones.

### **4. Values**

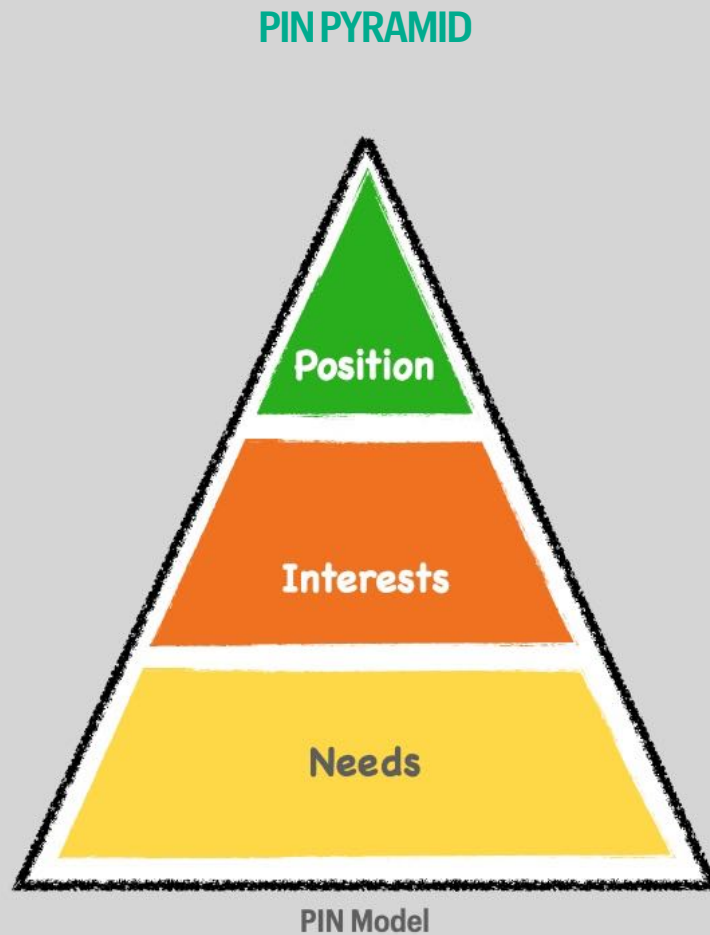
In conflicts about values, the people involved may have different approaches to life or adhere to competing ideologies, principles, or religions. They are likely to have different criteria for evaluating and judging behaviors and ideas. Resolving conflicts of this type is often difficult because no one wants to abandon their values. Instead, the focus must be on finding common overarching values and accepting disagreements about personal values.

### **5. Interests**

Conflicts of interest arise from a competition for what are, or are perceived to be, truly incompatible needs or wants. To resolve conflicts based on interests, it is important to carefully define the interests involved, then focus on where they overlap and how each person can accommodate the other's specific interests.

## **Use**

The Conflict Circle Model is particularly useful for a mediator who needs to investigate the causes of a conflict. He or she can even present the model to participants for their input and reflection. Using the model in this way can encourage people in conflict to look for the causes together. This is a useful first step in starting the process of improving relationships.



Analyze what sustains the conflicts.

### Position

At the top of the pyramid we find the "position". This is what is visible. If we compare the pyramid to an iceberg, the position is what is above the surface of the water. It is visible because it is what the person in conflict wants to show. It is their point of view, their proposed solution to the problem. It is often a request to the other party in conflict. A typical position statement is for example: "*They must apologize*", "*They must accept some justice*".

The respective positions of the two parties to the conflict are invariably in opposition.

### Interests

In the middle of the pyramid is interest. The person's interests are not usually expressed openly. They are below the surface. They need to be explored to be uncovered.

Interests determine the position the person takes. They represent what the person cares about, their emotions and desires.

Unlike positions, the interests of the two parties in conflict can be aligned. The identification of common interests is of great value in resolving the conflict.

### Needs

At the base of the pyramid is the "Need". This covers physiological needs, such as a safe environment, food and water, but also psychological needs such as a sense of belonging, positive relationships or having a purpose.

We can refer here to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

### Use

The PIB pyramid (Position, Interest, Need) is a very effective analysis tool for conflict scenarios and negotiations. Whenever it is important to find the possible way to an agreement it is essential to understand the positions, interests and needs of each party.

The position is clear, it is above the surface, but the intervention of a skilled mediator or negotiator is needed to help the participants dive below the surface to clarify the interests and needs that determine the positions taken.

This is possible through dialogue and open-ended questions that encourage participants to reveal more about their feelings, causes, and what they really want.

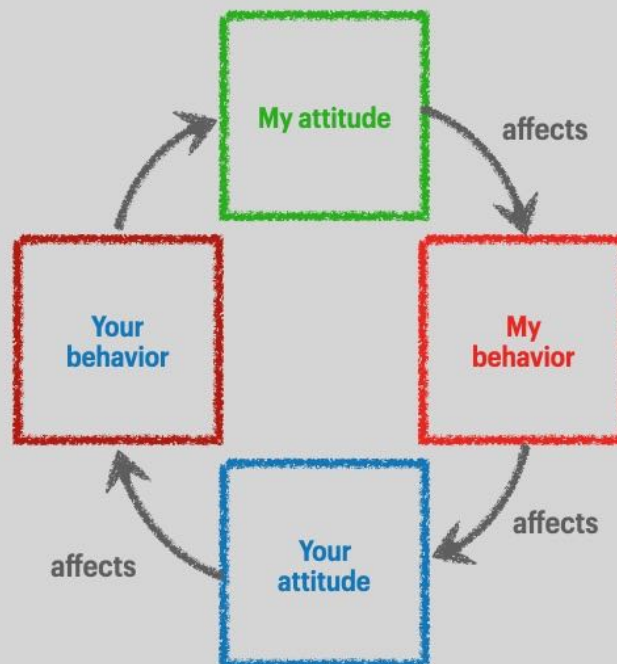
### Origin

The BIP model is known under different names: the BIP pyramid, the BIP triangle, the "onion" model. The concept of resolving conflict by focusing on interests rather than positions was popularized by Fisher and Ury in their book "Getting to Yes ».



## THE BETARI BOX

Understanding our impact on others



### Description

The BETARI Box shows in a very simple way how attitudes and behaviors are interdependent in any relationship with another person, and how our way of being has a significant influence on those with whom we interact. The BETARI Box is a cyclical model with the following elements:

- \* **My attitude** - the mood I am in, the way I think, the way I feel will impact...
- \* **My behavior** - how I act and react will be determined by the attitude I have and my behavior will have an impact on...
- \* **Your attitude** - what I do and how I behave will influence your feelings and thoughts and in turn this will have an impact on...
- \* **Your behavior** - your actions will be affected by your feelings and your behavior will also have an impact on...my attitude - etc...

This seems obvious when you think about it and it shows that when a relationship goes wrong, it is rarely 100% the fault of one of the two parties. When two people are in a relationship, one is inevitably influenced by the other and a negative downward spiral can develop.

## Example

- \* **My attitude** - Philip started the day badly. He forgot to set his alarm clock and was late for work. His wife had used the car the day before and forgot to refill it. He had to stop at the gas station. When he got to the office, he was very upset and spilled his coffee cup on his pants.
- \* **My behavior** - He opened his computer to check on the final changes Sylvain needed to make in the presentation he was to make in an hour to the board of directors. He had asked him to update the sales figures for the last month but he realizes that the old figures are still in his presentation. His bad mood worsens because he now has to change his presentation urgently. He decides not to let Sylvain get away with it and sends him an angry e-mail: « WHERE ARE THE SALES FIGURES I ASKED YOU FOR? »
- \* **Your attitude** - Sylvain receives the email and is shocked by the capitalized text. He in turn is irritated because he stayed late at the office last night to update the sales figures and emailed them to Philip. Philip had not told him that he wanted Sylvain to change the numbers directly in his presentation.
- \* **Your behavior** - In his frustration, Sylvain sends Philip such an abrupt email back to show that he is not happy with Philip's attitude: "JUST LOOK AT YOUR EMAILS!"
- \* **My attitude** - Philip discovers Sylvain's email after making his presentation to the board and realizes that the numbers were there. He realizes that Sylvain has done the job well but thinks that this does not excuse the rudeness of his email. He will remember this in the annual staff evaluation process that is about to begin.

What started as a simple communication error escalated quickly and the BETARI box shows how it happened.

## Use

Given its simplicity, the BETARI box can be used in any relationship problem. By sharing the model with the people involved in the conflict, they can be made to reflect on their attitudes and behaviors in order to understand the impact on others. It is useful when people are struggling with relationship difficulties to make them realize that they are partly responsible for it and that they can do something about it.

## TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR IN A CONFLICT SITUATION

A conflict situation is stressful. Stress dictates reflex behaviors, ready-made solutions that we immediately resort to - without thinking - in the hope of getting out of a bad situation as quickly as possible:

- \* *Passivity*: doing nothing and hoping that things will get better on their own;
- \* *Aggressiveness*: intervening immediately and violently to impose our point of view;
- \* *Manipulation*: trying to get around the obstacle so as not to lose face.

These 3 behaviors cause a breakdown in communication. One cannot communicate effectively by being passive, aggressive or by trying to manipulate the other. However, to manage a conflict, one must communicate. A fourth attitude is possible, it is assertiveness. Assertiveness strengthens communication and makes it more effective. It consists in expressing our point of view, our rights and our interests without denying those of others.

### The passive

The passive person considers himself inferior and devalues himself. They let others invade their territory. They lack clarity about their own needs while they clearly see those of others. Passivity corresponds to the survival reflex most strongly anchored in our archaic brain: flight. The passive person avoids commitment, preserves his tranquility and protects himself. They do not try to mobilize their knowledge and resources to find a solution. They often do not perceive the seriousness of the situation and therefore do not try to change anything. Out of fear of others and their reactions, lack of self-confidence and confidence in their abilities, the passive person encourages abuse, accepts to be the scapegoat, the chosen victim. They are afraid of conflict and push it away in the vain hope of avoiding it. The conflict will eventually erupt because nothing is resolved.

### The Aggressive

Aggressive people are afraid of having their power taken away from them. They deny the needs of others and express their own needs in a forceful and hostile manner. They crush others and invade their territory. Impulsive to a fault, the aggressive person rushes ahead without thinking, does not understand others or the situation, and loses

sight of his or her long-term objective. They don't analyze well, they lack lucidity and hindsight and choose a superficial solution that is not adapted to the problem. They tend to speak out of turn, monopolize the floor and prevent others from expressing themselves. Dialogue becomes impossible. He likes to put himself forward and express his superiority, which leads him to make decisions, criticize, point out faults and practice systematic criticism. He creates a hostile atmosphere and makes enemies. He loses the attention and friendship of others. The relationship of trust is deteriorated. An odious climate is created. Aggressed in return, the aggressive person is unable to keep quiet and to listen, he lets himself be dragged into a dramatic escalation.

### The manipulator

The manipulator looks for the best ways, either to adopt a passive role and push others to accept to do things in his place, or to attack the other person in the hope of making him accept the unacceptable. He adapts his behavior to the other person in order to put himself in the best position to win. He is an actor and knows all the roles. He often resorts to seduction; he starts by making himself appreciated, loved, and indispensable. This allows him to cover his tracks by pushing his opposite number to indulgence while making him lose his pugnacity, or more simply his lucidity. He conceals, lacks sincerity, states untruths with aplomb. He willingly offers himself as an intercessor. Too sure of himself and his power, he makes errors of appreciation.

### The assertive

To be assertive is to dare to assert oneself in a positive way, to defend one's rights by respecting the rights of others, by respecting their territory, that is to say their opinions, their values and their needs, and to arouse their interest and their adhesion in order to reach the objective aimed at in common. The assertive person positively mobilizes his/her intellectual functions instead of reacting by reflex. He/she focuses all interventions on a clearly defined and attainable objective. He deals with others on an equal footing, accepting their point of view and the different aspects of an issue. He goes beyond the problems of his past personal history, he strives to be realistic and objective by accepting others as they are, by accepting that they are others. To be assertive is also to accept one's limits, to practice compromise and negotiation.

Four prerequisites are necessary to be able to adopt an assertive behavior:



- \* **Have a clear objective:** what is our essential request? What is our most important problem?
- \* **Be modest in your objective of change.** Avoid wanting to change everything. Be satisfied with a possible, easy and useful change.
- \* **Do not try to change others:** Assertiveness is an egocentric method, it aims at a change in the person who becomes aware of a problem and not in the person who poses this problem. It acts like a boomerang: any personal change forces the other person to change.
- \* **Knowing that change is possible:** many people faced with conflicting relationships become discouraged: "It will never change!" Yet, when we visualize our past life, we can be amazed at the changes that have occurred in the last ten years or five years and sometimes even closer to that time.

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## THE FIRE AND MEDIATION



The conflict flares up. There is damage and pain. Some are burned by the fire, others stay away. When a fire is in full bloom, options are limited - we either run from it or try to put it out.

When we are in the middle of a fire, the smoke and fumes overwhelm us, and the way out may not be clear.

The mediator can get into heated conflicts. His role is not to put out the fire, but to show the way out to those in the middle.

The purpose of the mediation process is to encourage the parties in conflict to "unclench their fists" and reach out to each other. Mediation is a way to help people in conflict resolve their differences by talking to each other. Mediation is never imposed on the parties to the conflict; they use it only if they want to.

The role of mediators is to facilitate reconciliation by creating a supportive space and framework. They do not take sides, nor do they force people in conflict to do anything. Their ultimate goal is to help them find their own solution to the situation, one that they are willing to live with in the future.

***The following pages contain some useful tools for this purpose***

## REASSURE

REASSURE is an acronym for the eight elements of the active listening approach:

- \* R = Reflecting
- \* E = Enquiring
- \* A = Acknowledging
- \* S = Summarizing
- \* U = Unspoken communication
- \* R = Rephrasing
- \* E = Encouraging

### Description

When people are in conflict, communication becomes difficult and often disappears completely. People in conflict feel that no one is listening to them. So, if you want to help them, it is important to give them the opportunity to be heard properly. By doing so, you will gain their trust and build a relationship with them. They will feel better able to open up to you. Listening is more than just hearing. It is paying attention not only to what is being said, but to how it is being expressed and to the body language that accompanies the verbal expression. Active listening takes into account the three main elements of interpersonal communication:

- \* Body language
- \* Voice and tone
- \* Words and content

### **Reflecting**

Reflecting consists of giving back to the person what he or she has told you, often using words that he or she has used and indicating the emotions conveyed by what he or she has said. By acting as a mirror, you are checking for understanding of what was said, but you are also acknowledging the person's feelings. This can help the other person better understand how they feel about the situation. For example: "Peter always talks to me like I don't know anything, like I'm just a piece of dirt. This really

annoys me."-"You say you feel annoyed because you think Peter is talking down to you."

### ***Inquiring***

Inquiring is about using appropriate questioning techniques. It may seem strange to include questioning in listening techniques, but it is an essential part of good listening. A well-formulated question shows that you are listening and that you are interested in learning more. In addition, the way you ask your question is as important as what you ask. If you use the wrong tone, a question can easily come across as aggressive, which damages the relationship and limits your chances of getting the person to open up.

### ***Acknowledging***

By acknowledging, you are indicating that you understand the other person's position and feelings. To be clear, this does not mean that you agree with them. As a mediator, it is essential that you remain impartial and resist any temptation to agree. You can, however, show that you recognize what the other person is saying and feeling. A good approach is to use first-person sentences. These are statements that begin with "I" and acknowledge what the person is conveying to you. For example, "Julie always ignores me in meetings, she only talks to the rest of the team and I just sit there depressed. She's not being fair to me, is she?" - "I understand that you find it upsetting that Julie treats you this way.

### ***Summarizing***

"Summarizing is summarizing the key points of what was said to show that you understand and to highlight the main points. You can use some of the words spoken by the other person or your own words. The important thing is that you don't interpret what was said, but simply give a much shorter account of it, including the main points. The summary is useful for a number of reasons: It focuses everyone on the key issues; It shows that you have been paying attention and that you understand what was said; It allows you to check that you have understood; It organizes thoughts that may sometimes be fragmented. After summarizing, it is useful to check that you have summarized correctly. This gives your interlocutor the opportunity to underline the points that you may have missed.



***Unspoken communication***

Silence, used effectively, can be one of the most powerful active listening techniques, but it takes practice and courage to use it. Indeed, we feel uncomfortable when there is a pause in a conversation and our natural reaction is to fill the void and say something. As a listener, silence has several benefits: it shows the speaker that you respect them by being patient (this is especially important if they are upset as they may need time to recover); it gives you time to think about your next question. From the speaker's point of view, the speaker's silence can be helpful as it prompts their reflection and encourages them to complete what they have said. To be a good active listener, it is essential that you pay attention to the posture, behavior, and eye contact of your interlocutor. Body language, or non-verbal communication, can communicate a complementary or different message from oral language.

***Rephrasing***

Rephrasing (or paraphrasing) consists of taking back what the person has said and restating it using your own words. The meaning is not changed, so you should not interpret what was said or imply any judgment in the words you choose. This useful technique has a number of advantages: it allows you to clarify and check your understanding ; it shows the other person that you have listened; It is a good way to remind yourself of the key points that have been made; It gives the speaker an opportunity to reflect on what he or she has said and to add to or adjust what was said. You can introduce a rephrase like this: "So, if I heard you correctly, what you're saying is..." or "Okay, so what I think I heard from you is that..." or "Thank you, if I understood you correctly, you're saying that...".

***Encouraging***

The last E in REASSURE is "Encourage" and refers to the wide range of verbal prompts and body language that indicate that you are paying attention and inviting the speaker to continue. Verbal prompts can be simple sounds such as "uh huh", "umm", "ah", etc. or short phrases such as "I understand" or "Continue". Body language indicators may be nods, inquisitive eyebrows, possibly accompanied by an encouraging smile.

**Origin**

The term active listening was first used by Carl Rogers and Richard Farson in a 1957 article that was reprinted in 1987 (Rogers and Farson. 1987. Active Listening. Communication in Business Today, Washington C.C. (Heath and Company)

## UNBLOCK

UNBLOCK is an acronym for a tool that offers seven techniques for overcoming a block or impasse in a mediation process.

- \* U for "understand each other's position"
- \* N is for "Note agreement".
- \* B for "Break": to take a break.
- \* L for "Leave it to participants".
- \* O for "Offer ideas".
- \* C for Consequences.
- \* K for "Kill it": stop everything.

### Description

In the final stage of a mediation, you have to help the participants to reach an agreement on a way to resolve the conflict. At this point, a deadlock is possible. How can you help them? You may feel frustrated because everything seems to be on track and suddenly it stalls. You may be tempted to intervene by suggesting solutions, but it is crucial to hold back, be patient and try UNBLOCK.

### ***Understanding the respective positions***

Blocking can occur when participants are unable to step out of their own perspective and do not realize how the suggestions they make affect the other party. In such a scenario, it can be helpful to reverse the roles. First, ask participants to summarize how they see the other party's position, and then consider, from that perspective, how they would respond to the suggestion that has been made.

### ***Note points of agreement***

Being stuck on one point can obscure what has already been achieved in the meeting, so it is useful to pause to reflect on the points of agreement reached and summarize them. This can help overcome the negative mood of being stuck and highlight the risk of losing the positive progress that has already been made.

### ***Taking a break***

Taking a break is often the simplest and most effective approach. Suggest that participants use the break to get some fresh air, have a drink, or do anything else that

will clear their minds of the issue being discussed. They can come back from the break with a fresher perspective and renewed vigor to find a solution.

### ***Leave the responsibility to the participants***

This technique involves confronting participants with the fact that the problem they are facing is their problem, not yours, and that it is their responsibility to solve it. You can summarize the two positions, make the blockage clear, and simply ask participants what they want to do now. Stand back and wait for the silence to pressure them into making a suggestion.

### ***Offer ideas***

You are not there to solve the problem for the participants. However, you may have more experience than they do. So, if they are really stuck, you can mention options that they may not be aware of, or solutions that you have already experienced.

If you take this approach (and it should be a last resort), offer a range of options, because if you offer only one, you risk appearing to be the one who gives the answer and you risk disempowering them. Presenting your suggestions in the form of "what if?" is a good way to get them to consider how different scenarios might work.

### ***Drawing out the consequences***

Asking participants to consider the consequences for them of failing to reach an agreement gets them to focus on the benefits of finding their own solution. Present the different likely scenarios. For example, it could be formal litigation. Do they understand what this entails? What happens if the decision is unfavorable, or even favorable, and they have to continue to meet with the other person, live near them, work with them? What would be the psychological impact of not reaching an agreement? You can then turn things around and ask them to think about how they would feel if they could resolve everything today - what would be the consequences of a favorable outcome?

### ***Stop everything***

This is your last resort. You let them know that if they can't agree, you'll end the meeting and the time and effort invested will be wasted. Hopefully, this will get them to act, but if not, you must follow through and end the meeting. Ultimately, it's up to them to find a solution, you can't force them, so if they can't agree, other options should be considered.

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## RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE



Conflict is an inevitable part of life that can be used as an opportunity for learning and personal development. Since conflict is inevitable, learning conflict resolution skills should be an essential part of youth education. Encouraging youth to collaborate in resolving a current conflict is an effective method of preventing future conflicts and developing responsibility.

### Social Change: Towards Community Action

We are all fuel for fires that can burn and destroy, but we are also fuel for fires that can light our lives and open our hearts:

- \* **The fuel:** People living and working together.
- \* **The spark:** A raw issue brings a flash of new understanding to a community.
- \* **The smoldering fire:** The idea is matured and discussed.
- \* **Fanning the Flames:** Strength is gathered as new people join the project.
- \* **Fueling the fire:** Consolidating what has been gained, advocates and pioneers gather encouragement and support for action.
- \* **The Blaze:** Finally, the fueled fire bursts into great flames. The beacon has been lit. It is a light that does not go out. It gives warmth, energy and inspiration.

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## TO CONCLUDE

# Closing words

by Michel Seyrat with Larry Childs

**T**he word conflict designates very different realities: we speak of social conflict, matrimonial conflict, world conflict or even territorial conflict between rival gangs in a neighborhood, as in the comic strip of this issue. Although very different, all conflicts share common features.

## A CLASH OF POWERS

In a conflict, forces clash, one believes to be wronged, or one wants to have power over the other. Often in such instances the imbalance within the dominating/dominated relationship is no longer tolerated and one of the parties then triggers a bigger conflict. The associated feelings may well be characterized by the old Greek term HUBRIS, when pride pushes the confrontation to excess. Sometimes the balance of power is reversed during the conflict, or is balanced which can prevent a devastating outcome.

To get out of a conflict, one may try to introduce a third party such as a mediator, arbitrator, neutral country, judge or friend. But it can only help when

the hubris is identified and calmed either by defeat, new clarity, or the opening of a "third way". Most mediation specialists agree that as long as the intensity is at its highest, peacemaking intervention is not very effective.

This issue of the magazine shows how one conflict in particular, the war in Ukraine, resists common forces that otherwise bind people like cement: that of nations, religions, ideologies. In one of his last speeches, F. Mitterrand exclaimed, based on the experience of the 20th century:

*"Nationalism is war. Hubris invades a whole society, driven by one or more leaders, who want to extend their domination without inviting mediating authorities to intervene. This despite how powerful and effective they may be, entities like the United Nations, at managing to help them listen to reason. One day, however, mediators from the conflicting groups have to find an end to the collective hubris. Some historians argue that humanity has never known a*

*day without war. But this cannot be an excuse for the war-makers' persistence!"*

## DAMAGE AND PROGRESS

Every conflict brings negative consequences, but positive as well, because the conflict changes the protagonists, the environment, the view of others, etc.

Rare are conflicts without damages - individual, collective, material - damages whose scale depends on the powers involved in the conflict and vulnerabilities of those involved: When my cat and the neighbor's cat fight, they damage a little bit of the flowerbed, but when a dictator launches his army, it is something else entirely.

When trade unions engage in a social conflict to improve the lot of those they represent, there can be damages - financial costs for the employers, inconvenience for the customers, loss of wages for the employees, etc. - but it can also result in social progress whereby top down authority is reduced, greater equity achieved and even relationships further developed between these powers.

When a conflict breaks out in a group, a class, a vacation camp, an association, serious disturbances are possible, but so is progress in shared pedagogy, training practices, management and even deeper relationships among those involved.

## VICTIMHOOD

Another characteristic is to be examined there is no conflict without victims, by the millions or isolated few. The defeated, the bombed, the boss or the worker, the mocked or the brawler, the man or the woman. This notion and light of victim is not sufficiently considered in "magical" or very unequal societies. Victims in these societies are sacrificed to the gods or disregarded as not fully human, so pity is impossible. A crushed person must be considered as inferior and rebellious so that the aggressor more easily justifies his crushing!

For the status of victim to appear, and eventually compassion to arise, the equality of all humans must be affirmed. Only a democratic and egalitarian mindset can recognize victims. However, compassion is not always strong enough to stop conflict. Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace Prize winner, was aware of this when he declared that "Mankind must devise a method for resolving all conflicts between men that excludes revenge, aggression and retaliation. This method is based on love".

## PEACE

King was assassinated in 1968, yet perhaps even due to his violent demise, his wisdom and sentiment has only grown stronger and continues to evolve over the decades. It has been integrated

throughout so many movements, education systems, and governance structures within not only the US but globally. It is therefore not unreasonable to believe considerable hope for a more peaceful future still persists. That said, such a vision is also fragile - vulnerable to cynical powers such as those which gave rise to the war in Ukraine .- so it must be constantly nurtured and never taken for granted.

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