

Santos, Brazil

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In August 2017 I took part in the international Youth Conference for Peace in the Future, held in Hiroshima. I have been to a few academic conferences, although I had never been to one of this kind. Specially, in this year of 2017, the international arena is right now a place of intense conflicts; from North Korea's sixth nuclear test in September 3rd¹ to the political migration crisis in Europe², and the humanitarian forced displacement crisis in the Middle East^{3,4}.

Going to a Peace Conference in this context is tough, and to discuss peace is something that should not be taken lightly, especially in this international context. I recognize this is a huge responsibility. In times of shadow, we should be ready for when the sun shines again, and we must have hope that it will shine once again. Perhaps one of the very first steps towards a Culture of Peace given to us by all areas of science working together was the realization that the Human species is indeed capable of peace since war is not embedded into our genes and is instead cultural⁵. We invented war, so, most certainly, we can also invent peace. It will take time to build a common, global, and truly universal understanding that fostering a Culture of Peace is in everyone's interests, even when immediate material interests may indicate otherwise. This must be true, since, essentially, we must be alive to

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GATOPOULOS, A. ALJAZEERA. **Three things to know about North Korea's missile tests.** Online: 3 Sep. 2017. Available at: < <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/07/north-korea-missile-tests-170706081545433.html> >. Access in 11 Sep. 2017.

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BBC. **Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts.** Online: 4 Mar. 2016. Available at: < <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911> >. Access in 11 Sep. 2017.

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The Globe and Mail: The great displacement: **Middle East now has more migrants than Spain has people.** Online, 18 oct. 2016. Available at: < <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/migrants-in-the-middle-east-pew-research-report/article32408673/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&> >. Access in 11 Sep. 2017.

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ARAR, R; HINTZ, L; NORMAN, K. P. The Washington Post. **The Real refugee crisis is in the Middle East, not Europe.** Online: 14 May. 2016. Available at: < https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/14/the-real-refugee-crisis-is-in-the-middle-east-not-europe/?utm_term=.29d147b35c5a > Access in 11 Sep. 2017.

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ADAMS. D. **Moving from a Culture of War to a Culture of Peace.** New York, Fellowship Magazine: 2002. Available at: < <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/vita/2002/moving.pdf> >. Access in 11 Sep. 2017.

pursue our interests, thus war is not interesting if it disables life and disallows people, states, and governments to pursue their long-term interests.

The ideas are here for us to build up layer after layer, with more ideas, so that in the future we can see their applications, like the effective nuclear disarmament and the better use of resources towards human development and not towards arms races. Therefore, a promising preface for effective global action is also to gather knowledge and promote cultural exchange, to foster mutual understanding between peoples.

What we learned in Hiroshima during the Youth Meeting is part of this. The shared histories and experiences of cities are necessary for building global awareness on peace. We must collectively and globally condemn war and arms race. Isolated actions would only go so far, therefore we assume that together we can be stronger. We, each citizen from each one of those participant cities, must apply, in our own local contexts and according to local needs, the positive experiences learned in Hiroshima. This must be done simultaneously in our cities located in different parts of the world. For the whole world to see the practical results of those actions, it may take some time, but just like science, education, and awareness eventually and inevitably lead to practical results.

One of my wishes is that those amazing exchange experiences and accounts are passed to many people and other generations. We must foster awareness about Peace and War. We can grasp how undeveloped we are in terms of being aware of what Peace is when we realize that it is relatively easy to conceive a debate about conflict and war, whereas one about Peace is much harder. It is sad that Peace seems to be a scarce idea in the perspective of all peoples compared to how easier it seems to discuss about war itself. I suggest you try and search images online for the word "War" and then for the word "Peace". For "War", we have many more examples, while the findings for "Peace" seem to be scarce in comparison.

To promote a conscience on Peace is not easy but it is not an idealist goal; it is perfectly possible. To communicate and educate are effective practical actions and central aspects for encouraging the building of a Culture of Peace. At the simplest, a room is needed, and listeners are needed. Our job is to bring those conditions together and build, collectively, ideas and real actions that can make Peace possible, one step at a time.

In this regard, the Conference held in Hiroshima was very productive. It fostered cooperation, cultural exchange. We learned more about ourselves, our differences and our similarities. We discussed our purposes in this conference and many times we realized that by fostering peaceful co-existence between ourselves regardless of our differences we were closed to understanding each other. Those teachings are by themselves very valuable as elements for promoting Peace Globally. I feel truly gifted to be part of this. In the conference I made many friends from all over the world, and I learned about many cultures. But I also learned that regardless of our contexts, origins and nations, we can debate even the most sensitive subjects peacefully. We, as individuals living in the same speck of dust in the solar system,

Planet Earth itself, we should co-exist peacefully regardless of our nationalities, geographical locations and differences.

After I came back to Brazil, I took part in several events related to the dissemination of the messages and lessons learned in Hiroshima. I also shared the experiences with the students of my University in the following weeks of my arrival. In 27 September a discussion round table About IYCPF 2015 and 2017 was held at an Academic Event about International Relations with the presence of other Santos participants of IYCPF and Hiroshima Exchange Programs from previous years. Since then, I had the opportunity to share the experiences I had in Hiroshima in different contexts, from major events to talks with friends, students and researchers. I believe the major goal is to foster, progressively, a collective consciousness regarding Peace, cultural co-existence, and the issues raised regarding nuclear weapons and world peace in our communities.

By having enough people educated and aware of the benefits and necessity of true Global Peace, I expect that leaders and eventually nations demand and promote actions that are more peaceful. If one day, any of us become leaders of our classrooms, corporations, institutes, cities or in any stances of our countries and nations, we must remember the experiences of the days we conceived and wrote, collectively, the Hiroshima Appeal 2017, with values we believe and must apply alongside our interests and those of who we represent during any point in our lives.