

ECOSOC Youth Forum

Written Article

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Theme: HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: MEMORY AND LEARNING OF PAST GENOCIDES

Introduction

Education can play a key role in preventing genocide by providing a forum to address past violence while promoting the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that can help prevent current day group-targeted violence.

Memory and learning of past genocides: the Rwandan Example.

The occasion of the International Day of Reflection on April 7, 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, UNESCO Chair-holders specialised in genocide prevention and education have spoken about the importance of education in drawing lessons from the past and preventing the seeds of hatred from being sown for the future.

Each year UNESCO commemorates the Day established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003 which marks the beginning of the genocide perpetrated against members of the Tutsi minority by the Hutu extremist-led government. In just over 100 days, more than a million Tutsi were systematically murdered. Moderate Hutu and others who opposed the massacres were also killed during this period.

'The genocide against the Tutsi is singular by its density, by the number of murders in a very short time on a small territory and by the fact it was often perpetrated by neighbours on neighbours. But it has many points in common with other genocides: similar human mechanisms - passivity, especially on the part of the international community, submission to authority, the power of militias and propaganda, etc. This common process was the subject of a dozen years of research at Camp des Milles. It is disseminated to the general public in a unique way in a place of memory.

Ways to Build Resilience

1. Good relationships with close family members, friends, or others are important.
2. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope.
3. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.
4. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better.
5. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.
6. Accept that change is a part of living. Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations.
7. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter. Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly -- even if it seems like a small accomplishment -- that enables you to move toward your goals.
8. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?" Take decisive actions. Act on adverse situations as much as you can.
9. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away. Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often learn something about themselves and may find that they

have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and heightened appreciation for life. Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience. Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion. Maintain a hopeful outlook. An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear. Take care of yourself.

10. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience. Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful. For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope. The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.