

# Peace and Coexistence during COVID-19 Pandemic

A quick analysis of the different conflicts and disasters that have plagued the entire world shows that peace and coexistence are easily said than done. Conflicts of different forms have resulted in nations going to war, civil wars, divorce, lawsuits between organizations/institutions and individuals. Currently, the situation is further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic which raises more questions than answers. Leaders of many organizations need to start thinking outside the box to promote peace and coexistence during trying times like the current one caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are in a situation that is as never before! This is the comment you hear from many quarters of our world today... and rightly so. COVID-19 is described as novel and may be exempt from the Biblical expression “there is nothing new under the sun”.

As we conform to the rather drastic changes and perhaps the hard realities of ourselves and our partners, families, communities, etc. we find that many issues of coexistence steer us in the face. They are a challenge that should not be ignored or brushed aside... they must be tackled. Some of these are manifested in domestic violence, verbal and physical abuses, depression, doubts, uncontrolled thoughts, and the like.

Low income countries with weaker health systems and infrastructures, lower state capacity, and greater paucity of data to inform policy face an even tougher challenge between health and economic costs. The need to balance these challenges during the crisis has been much discussed, but an equally important aspect to think through is the potentially longer lasting impacts of policies used now to tackle the pandemic.

This is where key institutions that want to make a difference need to take advantage of the required skill sets and methodology for crafting policies that will either keep their organizations stable or even put them in a commanding position. LDI is poised to work with and support such institutions at this time and help them gain that confidence and advantage.

We have to seek ways to understand, analyze, and address issues of conflict and coexistence. While such issues are always with us and determine significant cornerstones for the way we relate to each other, they do not have to contain or lead into harmful elements.

Actually, if we see that crises can have an advantage, we will take advantage of the preparation now. Do not waste the advantages that conflicts and crises in general bring. If you are opened to it, you will soon be able to see many positive aspects of conflicts and the crisis in general. This may include all of the conflicts and crises posed by COVID-19. Some of these positive aspects include, but not limited to, the following:

- ✓ Social change for the common good
- ✓ Proper and collective decision making
- ✓ Reconciliation at various levels
- ✓ Group unity and cooperation
- ✓ Inspired creativity for benefit
- ✓ Mutual respect and understanding each other's perspective
- ✓ Improvement in communication
- ✓ Taking notice of new and potential members

Theoretically, it is noted that Conflict-sensitive approaches enable understanding of a context and acute awareness of interventions in a fragile context. All engagements undertaken in situations of potential unrest or undergoing or emerging from conflict must be conflict sensitive. Panel of experts on the LDI team have supported many national and local institutions in the public and private sectors with these skills sets and methodology and you could be a beneficiary for your personal and corporate growth and development.

In simple terms, this actually means “do no harm”. This should be a principle to which all practitioners and practically everyone should subscribe. We do not have to be experts to analyze conflict and the failures of our coexistence. Every organization or community/family can honestly come to a clear agreement on what is the major factor for their conflict. They may only want to go the next step of what is causing this issue. They can better understand this than anyone coming from the outside of that group.

However, the need for competent helpers to sit with us and work through these issues may be an added ingredient for coexistence. Ideally, if respectable members of our community or organization can do this, it is best. However, they need the requisite training and LDI is ready to do that. We help you develop your internal capacity for policy development, assessment, alignment, and strategic planning that moves your organization forward and upwards. “Outsiders” may bring to us perspectives that we may not see or recognize, and if that is taken well, many benefits may arise from it for our community/family/organization. But, with the right competencies, your own internally developed strategies and methodologies will always serve you best. They can be replicated when the need arises, and or modified to meet the next generation of challenges.

It might be helpful to understand some of the key sources of conflict that affect us more regularly.

- ✓ The lack of economic opportunities either hidden or under-utilized. Economic opportunity here refers to the potential that is available to every member of our community/organization based on merit or clearly defined needs to enable that person or group to empower themselves to their fullest capacity.
- ✓ The presence of previous grievances that have not been resolved or addressed. Most organizations and societies have clearly defined ways for dealing with and acting on grievances. However, many grievances remain unresolved. This breeds all kinds of responses including conflicts, resentment, rebellion, and or resistance. During this period of lockdowns, many people are closer together than they have been in a long time or have ever been. In light of this, a great opportunity avails itself for us to work on these grievances and their related issues. Resolving grievances breeds positive relations and unity in organizations/ communities. Let's seek to do that during this lockdown and pandemic period.
- ✓ Marginalization of people and/or groups. This has to do with pushing people to a disadvantage that constrains them to the outer limits of exclusion. They are made to feel like they are unimportant or powerless in the organization/community. People who are made to feel that way will seldom be willing and/or able to contribute to the wellbeing and growth of the organization/community.

The challenge thrown out by this brief article is simple... how can I play an effective role in the search for peace in the era of COVID-19? Each of us can play a very important role and seek to build and foster smooth and supportive coexistence even if this is a very abnormal time. We can do this without being demanding of rights, but being more sensitive to our responsibilities. We can do this accepting that life has some adjustment periods that have to take their course. Be hopeful that this period is not just to be a negative era without purpose ... look with anticipation how this period may bring out a "better person in you" and remove impediments that you have struggled with for years on end, but now may be the time for that move.

Finally, there are benefits for coexistence. Some of them include:

- ✓ Promoting mutual respect
- ✓ Enhancing trust
- ✓ Accepting the kindness and support of others. We all have something we can offer each other.
- ✓ Planning should be done with considerations for learning by doing less.
- ✓ Some potentials in the organizations/community may only be visible during these critical times.

As we close this insight, are you aware that there have now been over 9.5million confirmed cases of COVID-19 around the world, with the number of deaths moving towards 490,000. Policymakers in many countries have responded to the pandemic by implementing measures related to social distancing and a large share of humanity remains in some form of lockdown condition. As a consequence of the uncertainty

caused by the pandemic, economic activity has contracted, hitting hardest firms and workers whose activities rely on face-to-face contacts. This situation will not just fade away, it requires organizations to be proactive and put in the requisites that will immune them to the shocks and downtrends this pandemic has brought and most likely to leave especially on lower developed countries.

We believe Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) is well-positioned to help addressing the challenge of conflict in any given organization. Reach out to us and we will offer our help in whatever way we can to help you and your organization to resolve your challenges.

As nations have adopted different policies on travel coupled with LDI's internal policy to help reduce the spread of the corona virus, all engagement by LDI with organizations will be conducted virtually through Skype, Zoom or any other virtual communication platform available for the immediate future.



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think |  
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