

Extrait du School forging new paths

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Generation Mediation

- English - Cooperation and competition -

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Young people are sometimes the cause but are most certainly often the victims of a climate of violence. The idea that they may be mediators for their peers has therefore started to spread. The organization Generation Mediators (GM) is convinced that it is possible to associate the education for peace and for non violence and the challenge to raise youngsters so they become responsible adults who can then become the actors of their own lives. Since 1993, GM has therefore worked with this objective.

The specificity of GM is that it trains instructors (teachers of course but also supervisors, nurses, parents, social workers etc.) to manage conflicts and to mediate.

With the help of play equipment and during 15 sessions, the trainees go through the steps they will then lead young people through. The young people trained may be in primary, junior high or high schools and in various environments (schools, day care centers...) By learning and using the values associated to non violence (respect, cooperation, humor, creativity...) young people learn to know themselves, to understand their peers, to study their reactions in difficult situations, to listen to them in order to communicate better and to see that two people may be right at the same time... The last sessions are meant for volunteers only. They are dedicated to the mediation by one's peers. This is the process which enables communication to be restored with the help of a third party and through which a win-win situation can be found.

The next step is when young mediators propose their help to their friend. They work in pairs and for a limited time. Help may be offered to people who are the same age or younger. In order for this project to work well, it is of course necessary that the education team invests itself fully in it.

The strong points of mediation by one's peers are the following: Mediators can intervene in conflicts before they get out of hand and "mediated" people know for sure that young people their age can understand them and they also know that they will save face.

GM has a 15-year experience in mediation. This enables us to reach different conclusions: First: a collective goal is reached as disciplinary committees and exclusions from school decrease. The atmosphere is also more peaceful. Second: on a personal level, when they become adults, mediators tell us that they are more confident and that mediation has helped them in their professional and relational lives.

The story of mediation by one's peers is just starting but it will bring hope in the challenge that represents the construction of peace.