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Towards a better world

Tourism, Pandemics, Climate Emergency and
Human Rights

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Article No. 11 – From Adversity to Overcoming: Resilience in times of crisis *Cláudia Luísa and Ana Baião*

Abstract

The pandemic caused by the new Coronavirus has provoked, serious damage and challenges to the world.

In this text we intend to identify competencies that favor the strengthening of the individual and his health.

We will address the concept of resilience and how it can help to overcome the crisis.

Keywords: Resilience; Crisis; Coronavirus.

1- Introduction

“Human beings can be deprived of anything ... except the ultimate freedom to assume an alternative attitude in the face of the conditions given...” (Frankl, 2017, p.88)

A Crisis is a moment of sudden change or an important change in the development of any event. Crisis is also a complicated or a scarcity situation and depends on the context. We can experience social, economic, health, emotional, family, political crises, among others.

We are currently experiencing a serious health crisis, caused by the new coronavirus, which combined with the lack of a vaccine has brought us several challenges.

The world is suffering deep losses. There are millions of infected people, hundreds of thousands of dead, a global economic disaster and general suffering. The dimension of reality is such, that even if an individual is not infected, will suffer from the consequences of it.

The pandemic caused the loss or alteration of routines, whether in employment, social, family, cultural and financial changes. To overcome this crisis, never before experienced, and with so many negative consequences, it is necessary to understand how society has been affected and at what levels, as well as what kind of strategies must be found, in order to minimize the damage.

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We were out of our comfort zone by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite all the defense mechanisms available in our psyche, at this moment it is totally impossible not to feel affected by a situation that challenge in extremis our physical, mental health, world economy and survival.

Providing individuals with adaptive resources to face this pandemic does not depend only on adapting our lifestyle, but also a subjective adaptation, that is, the way we see our existence in the world, which is why it is important to have resilient skills.

2- Resilience and its characteristics

Resilience is an emerging approach in the world that emphasizes the ability of an organization or an individual to recover from and adapt in face of adverse events.

However, studies on the importance of resilience in pandemic contexts are still rare, although on the part of some organizations that issue is a concern.

On the other hand, there is a lack of definition for the concept of resilience, universally accepted, as well as a practice that allows the connection between the different areas of application.

Golan, Jernegan e Linkov (2020) surveyed the literature review on resilience and concluded that there was an increase in the production of documentation, between 2007 and 2016, 47 articles were published and between 2017 and 2019, 94 articles. However, given the current pandemic, they have also found that the number of investigations continues to increase.

The study of resilience presents itself as a growing field of investigation, as a need to grasp the situation that make the individual more unprotected in the course of his development process and which mechanisms allow him, despite the unfavorable conditions, to develop physically and psychologically healthy.

Conceptually, Bowlby was the first author to use the term resilience in a psychological sense, a concept already used in physics. For Grotberg (1995), resilience is the universal human capacity to face life's adversities, overcome them, or even be positively transformed by them. It is a dynamic process, which constitutes a connection between the inner and the external of the individual, in a social context, resulting from the interaction of several microsystems (family, school, friends) and macrosystems (community, beliefs, ideologies, values and customs, means of communication, economic situation and educational system), from the perspective of the bioecological development model of Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1996).

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According to Manciaux (2003), the *Foundation pour l'Enfance* describes resilience as the ability of a person or group to be able to project them into the future, despite disrupting events, difficult living conditions and trauma. In other words, it is the ability that individuals have to face adversity without losing their emotional and physical stability.

According to Sousa (2008), resilience presents itself as a necessity to find an answer to problems experienced by people, groups and organizations that are often faced with the need to positively overcome existential crises, life adversities, academic professional and / or organizational difficulties.

It can be developed and acquired throughout different stages of a life cycle, from the relationships that the individual establishes with his environment, seeming to be strengthened with the development of self-concept and self-esteem, contributing to the individual becoming stronger, more effective and able to collaborate for a balanced and just society.

For the promotion of resilience as an instrument to overcome difficulties, we must strive to provide human beings with certain conditions. It is very important to have positive thoughts and emotions, as well as to try to live life with more joy, to laugh often, to love yourself and others. Thus, we can affirm that resilience fits into a perspective of development throughout life, based on a continuous adjustment in face of the difficulties present in the subjects' lives and their ability to face them (Brown et al., 2001; Wyman et al., 1990).

A resilient person should have the presence, the demand and the gradual increase of competences of confrontation in the face of adversity, using all internal and external resources.

According to Rouse (2001) the higher the level of competence is, the higher the levels of resilience the individual can access, given that the level of competence is strongly influenced by the level of development of the individual.

Also, research indicates that resilience has multiple dimensions that vary according to age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, employment and relationship with the state.

In addition, research has found that ethnicity contributes to social vulnerability through the lack of access to social, economic and political resources.

(Ferreira, Buttell, & Cannon, 2020).

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Resilience can be developed through education, since we can educate the human being, in order to growth their resilient level, directly providing an increase in educational success, health status, psychological well-being in all its dimensions.

In Grotberg's perspective (1995) resilience is supported by three pillars - I have: resources, external supports, family, religion and friends who help me in difficult situations; I Can: have interpersonal and social skills and competences; I Am: a human being with internal skills.

For Grotberg, the full implementation of resilient concept defines the subjects' personal and social problem-solving profile. Resilience is an individual's ability to cope with risk, adversity and stress, and each faces the harmful effects of disasters differently.

There are some skills that contribute to a more resilient behavior, namely self-confidence, optimism, emotional stability, empathy, relational competence, proactivity, self-determination, mental flexibility and tenacity.

Also, there are some factors of individual's support as religiosity (which can also be understood here, in a broad sense, as spirituality), artistic expression and self-knowledge. That is, it is supported by these resources that the individual can extract the "strength" to face the situation that appears to be adverse (Barlach, 2020).

We can perceive that the ability to analyze and reflect on the different challenges of life, in a personal and professional scope and the search for self-development, focused on the pillars of resilience, can contribute to our strengthening, giving us conditions to deal with the changes and complexities of nowadays, in a more well-adjusted way.

Resilience: from adversity to overcoming

The current context in which we are living has been marked by some intrinsic conditions imposed by Covid-19, with special emphasis on the speed of transmission of the disease and its high risk of intensification and death.

Without effective or preventive treatment, the main measure of protection in addition to hygiene care and mask use is still social distance. As a result of this reality, mental health, which includes emotional, psychological and social well-being, is affected as well as the way we think, feel and act.

This pandemic emergency appears to be alerting governments around the world to the possibility of new crises of an unpredictable nature, the combination of environ-

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mental degradation, societies with growing inequalities and deep economic interconnections have made the world more vulnerable. In these circumstances, ensuring the resilience of our society is crucial. We need to be able to face persistent shocks and structural changes in order to preserve the well-being of society, leaving no one behind and without compromising heritage for future generations.

To respond resiliently to Covid-19, policies must provide the necessary positive measures, such as, awareness, protection, promotion and transformation. These efforts can reinforce political ambitions to place the European Union (EU) on a more sustainable economic, social, environmental and institutional path. Such a transformative resilience that can also strengthen people, and mobilize their creativity and the necessary commitment to deal with the crisis.

The consequences of the pandemic are visible in several areas, as already mentioned. On an emotional level, we may be experiencing traumatic stress crises, especially those who are on the front line, such as doctors, nurses, and all agents of social support, security and help. However, there are many others who may be experiencing this reality in the family, in neighborhood networks, or simply through the media.

Isolation, lockdown, as well as the lack of support for those suffering from Covid-19 will have serious consequences and the world will never be the same, and all who dwell therein.

On the other hand, we can experience feelings of anguish, anxiety and incapacity in the face of the entire world scenario. It is urgent to be aware of acute stress situations, although as normal as it can be, need a supportive care network.

According to Joan Halifax, some people may be suffering from common pain with the loss of several things, anticipating mourning in the face of loss. Another frequent feeling is moral anguish and indignation, expressions of anger at witnessing the injustice and inadequate management of this crisis.

Professor Shira Maguen, of the University of California, a specialist in moral damage in war veterans, says that moral damage is an important framework to help understand the mental health impact associated with the current coronavirus pandemic.

Health workers can also feel responsible for the death of others during the pandemic, where sometimes fair choices are impossible, such as the shortage of ventilators for those in need.

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Some symptoms of moral injury have been identified, including demoralization, inability to self-decompensate, guilt, shame, and self-punishing behavior.

Also, health professionals may struggle with them, feeling that their morals and values collide with the choices they must make during this crisis. Other people may suffer moral damage because, such as losing their jobs or infecting others, who have gone bad and died, resulting in continued guilt.

Professor Mardi Horowitz also highlights the importance of being attentive to the processes of loss and mourning. He states that they can be mitigated, but never eliminated.

Each individual's personal experiences differ, even in the same household. Each person must negotiate their own darkened passage with the help of their community supports. For a time after a loss, you may experience feelings of apathy, insomnia, poor or increased appetite, anxiety, irritability and weight loss or gain. These symptoms are often associated with feeling deeply sad and having severe worries. But do not be surprised if there is a stage of feeling numb and a bit unreal or not yourself. There are stages of reaction and not all affected parties to a loss of loved one go through the phases at the same time. (Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 2020, p.9)

This pandemic has also brought us invisible losses, secondary traumas, or guilt over being alive, as reported by Michael W. Rabow and David. Bullard (2020).

We can be hurt by what we bear witness to in others. In caring for our patients, we can experience secondary trauma. Repeatedly seeing and hearing about, working to ameliorate or treat the traumatic losses experienced by others, we are at risk of being traumatized ourselves, going beyond just empathy for another's pain to an actual vicarious experience of suffering and trauma (Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 2020, p.12).

In the face of Covid-19's deep pandemic losses, it is urgent to promote self-care, social and family support, in order to avoid prolonged psychological consequences, such as post-traumatic stress, fear, anxiety, panic or depression and to favor the

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general emotional well-being of individuals and their health care. Strategies need to be developed to help overcome pain and manage negative emotions.

We live in unprecedented times and Health Literacy is equally important, given that the World Health Organization (WHO) classifies it as a set of "cognitive and social skills and the person's ability to access, understand and use information in order to promote and maintaining good health" (Directorate-General for Health, 2020, p. 4).

In the current pandemic, the promotion of Health Literacy is fundamental to people, communities, and organizations, constituting an important Public Health response. (General Directorate of Health (DGS) (2020).

The magnitude and uncertainty in the evolution of this pandemic are major challenges for Health, especially due to the need to convey to the population that the behaviors adopted, both at an individual and population level, and the acceptance of the measures and recommendations transmitted by Health Authorities are one of the keys to prevent and control Covid-19. (DGS, 2020, p.5).

However, given the repercussions on the health and life of individuals, it is essential to create tools to strengthen it. Among these tools, resilience stands out, as mentioned above.

Currently and without grasping it, resilience has been present in several aspects. It acts as a "cushion" for the negative impact of the pandemic. Present in the way we have adapted to the new reality, changing, and adjusting routines; present in the way we overcome obstacles and setbacks that we face daily, improvising and reinventing ourselves; present in the way we deal with and resist pressure, making efforts to reconcile our professional lives and our personal lives; present in the way we look for and find strategies that allow us, as much as possible, to maintain our mental and emotional stability in the midst of "chaos".

It is the capacity for resilience that has allowed us to move forward despite the adversities we have been facing. It is this ability that makes us understand that difficulties are ways to strengthen ourselves and be more effective in dealing with problems in the future.

To have resilience is also an educational act, as is self-determination, which is acquired throughout life either in formal or informal contexts. Family, school, friends, and society are excellent agents for resilient learning.

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McCubbin and McCubbin (1993) defend a model of family resilience, adjustment and adaptation that aims to explain the family's potential to deal with crisis situations and understand the factors related to families' adjustment and adaptation to situations of illness.

Family cohesion appears as a relevant factor of resilience. Cohesive families have defined values, objectives, priorities, expectations, and worldview, the value of togetherness is more important than the self, developing a sense of belonging to the group and resilience, effectively facing risks and adversities.

When the resilient family is confronted with a disease situation, it tries to obtain collaboration and search for necessary information, always with the goal of treating it (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1993).

It will be important to find moments of hope and resilience around us, despite the uncertainty, we are all resilient individuals and with a capacity to overcome in the face of all the adversities concerning this pandemic context. Repairing the damage and preparing the world for future generations is essential. In this sense, it is urgent to work with the support of various Member States.

Hone and Quinlan (2020), from the New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience, also shared some strategies for dealing with the coronavirus:

Choose where you focus your attention. During the worst of times, it is more important than ever that our psychological health is attuned to what is still good in the world. Psychologists call this "benefit discovery" and it is a key resilience skill;

Look deliberately for people that you care about (and do the things) that make you happy. Positive emotions are fundamental to our resilience. Ten different positive emotions to consider: love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, fun, inspiration, and admiration according to Barb Fredrickson, University of North Carolina. Negative emotions are contagious, and prolonged feelings of helplessness are strongly associated with depression;

Maintaining strong and supportive relationships is the number one predictor of well-being throughout life. Maintaining these connections in times of crisis is essential. Feeling isolated from others will lead to situations of depression, anxiety, and other forms of mental distress. If you are unable to be with those people, you can use other options, such as skype, zoom, or social media applications;

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A model of family resilience, adjustment and coping potential to deal with crisis situations and adjustment and adaptation to situations

Source of resilience. Cohesive families have strong relationships, and worldview, the value of developing a sense of belonging to the family and adversities.

With a disease situation, it tries to obtain information, always with the goal of treating it

Hope and resilience around us, despite the pandemic and with a capacity to overcome in the pandemic context. Repairing the damage done is essential. In this sense, it is urgent to act.

How Zealand Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience is dealing with the coronavirus:

During the worst of times, it is more important to be attuned to what is still good in the world and it is a key resilience skill;

Focus on what you love about (and do the things) that make you resilient. Ten different positive emotions: joy, serenity, interest, hope, pride, fun, love, compassion, and prolonged feelings of helplessness

Relationships is the number one predictor of resilience. These connections in times of crisis is essential. If you are unable to be with those people, you can use social media applications;

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Maintain daily support routines or create other routines if you are now at home. Maintaining regular routines (mealtimes, bedtime, exercise, work, etc.) are fundamental to our self-regulation;

Focus on what is important, and what you can control. Focus all your attention and resources (psychological, social, physical, emotional, knowledge) on the things that matter;

Make a good management of the external information, preferably updated, not allowing them to affect you. Whenever you desire, turn off the communication channels;

Find the right people to talk to. People that make you feel good;

Help yourself by helping others. This allows us to focus our attention on others and allow us to feel useful and needed right now. The investigation is unequivocal: being able to give and receive is extremely important for our life satisfaction;

Give your brain a Coronavirus vacation. Avoid "rumination", and do other activities, such as crossword puzzles, films, dancing, listening to music, reading, talking on the phone, drawing or meditating;

Be supportive. Remember that everyone is doing their best to navigate these exceptional times;

Keep yourself safe and do not be reckless. Stress generates unusual behaviors and can sometimes lead us to forget simple things like wearing our seat belts, stopping at red lights, wearing personal protective equipment at work, turning off taps, etc. (pp.1-2)

Recovery and adaptation following disruptions is a requirement for interconnected economic, industrial, social and health systems in the 21st century, and resilience is an increasingly crucial part of strategies to prevent systemic collapse. Based on NAEC reports (New Approaches to Economic Challenges) and the literature on resilience, specific recommendations for building resilience to contain epidemics and other systemic threats include:

a) Designing systems, including infrastructure, supply chains, and economic, financial and public health systems, to be resilient, that is, recoverable and adaptable;

b) Develop methods to quantify resilience so that the counterbalances between a system's efficiency and resilience can be made explicit and guide investments;

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- c) Control the complexity of the system to minimize cascade failures resulting from unexpected disturbances, dissociating unnecessary connections through infrastructure and making the necessary connections controllable and visible;
- d) Manage the system topology through the design of appropriate connections and communications through interconnected infrastructures;
- e) Add resources to the crucial components of the system to ensure functionality;
- f) Develop tools to support real-time decision integrating data and automating the selection of management alternatives based on explicit political commitments in real time (OECD; 2020, p.12).

The OECD must help its members to anticipate, prepare and build resilience for future crises. There are four specific areas to which the NAEC (New Approaches to Economic Challenges) could contribute: 1.) to continue to develop systemic resilience approaches in the OECD based on the existing work of the CNAE 2.) to promote thinking and anticipation systems;

A OCDE tem de ajudar os seus membros a antecipar, preparar e construir resiliência para futuras crises. Há quatro áreas específicas para as quais a NAEC (*New Approaches to Economic Challenges*) poderia contribuir: 1.) continuar a desenvolver abordagens de resiliência sistémica na OCDE com base no trabalho existente da CNAE 2.) promover a utilização do pensamento e antecipação de sistemas; 3.) Fostering the use of new tools and analytical techniques to simulate the dynamics of crises using models based on networks and agents to better understand how shocks emerge and spread if a pandemic, a financial crisis, production networks collapse, environmental shocks or social disruption;

4). Work with the Open Markets Institute to quickly develop a set of principles and rules that policy makers can use to withstand the shocks of all vital human systems. (OECD, 2020, pp. 16-17)

In the communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (2020), this concern is visible, when referring,

This disruptive and evolutionary crisis is, above all, a human tragedy. In addition to the constant efforts required in the field of health, the EU must give priority to the social dimension of the crisis, notably through the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. We must invest in protecting and creating jobs and boosting

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our competitive sustainability by building a more equitable, greener, and more digital Europe. We must repair the short-term damage of the crisis in a way that is also an investment in our long-term future. To this end, the EU now must print in its policies a well-defined purpose and a set course. (p.7)

In summary, it will be fundamental and urgent that,

Governments must mitigate the associated risks of a pandemic by providing the needed resources for individuals, households, and communities to maintain resilience over a long period of time. The uncertain end of COVID-19 requires governments to offer a buffer against the pandemic impact and to ultimately reduce stress to create optimal health and well-being for citizens facing adversity (Ferreira, Buttell, & Cannon, 2020, p.8).

Conclusions

The world will never be the same after experiencing this pandemic. The high number of contagions and deaths as well as all the consequences caused by the coronavirus have led the human being to adjust and reinvent himself amid pain and uncertainty in the future.

Health, economy, culture, politics, and the whole of society are experiencing a crisis. There is a trail of death, poverty, unemployment, disruptions in the fields of health, social and education, a global anxiety.

In the face of this crisis, it is necessary to find strategies to improve and overcome its consequences, which are possible to repair. Identifying tools that favor the strengthening of the individual is essential. We saw that the concept of resilience can help and empower individuals, to mitigate the effects of the crisis caused by Covid-19.

For Field and Hoffman (1996), it is extremely relevant to identify important aspects in the individual, namely self-realization, assertiveness, creativity, belief and self-representation to guarantee the viability and realization of all potential in society and overcome adversity, resilience being equally important according to Bernard (2020).

A resilient mindset recognizes that the infinite variety of future threats cannot be adequately predicted and measured, nor can their effects be fully understood. "We need to draw all the conclusions of this epidemic about the way in which

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globalization is organized, and particularly about value chains" (Le Maire, 2020 in OECD, 2020, p.16).

In conclusion, we must be resilient and self-determined to move forward to overcome such crisis, based on individual or group strategies, which strengthen emotions, social support, solidarity and the global development of individuals in the world.

Building a better future for the next generations will not be an easy task, nor can it be based on an isolated effort. It will be necessary to have determination and political courage to gain the support of society. At stake is a common good for the sake of a common future (European Commission, 2020. p.20).

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