

World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Introduction

Cities have become microcosms of what is happening in the world, places where all types of violence that oppress and threaten individual and community life merge together. The most worrying among them all is undoubtedly terrorist violence that strikes many cities; but there are also other types of violence that proliferate, some of them are more hidden, others are more visible, but they are all insidious and must be identified and tackled in order to make cities establish greater social justice leading to improve coexistence and peace.

Madrid City Council has launched a **Global Forum on 'Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace'** to address this situation and lay the foundations to work against urban violence. A Forum allowing to outline the different types of urban violence and discuss channels and ways to prevent, tackle and, if possible, eradicate it. It is a Forum to spread thoughts and practices that allow us to transform the cultures of violence into cultures of peace.

Cities have also suffered the effects of globalisation and have become strategic spaces for advanced economic functions, but also for those expelled from these economic functions who are no longer needed - either as employees or as consumers. Thus, we speak of 'failed cities', 'urban jungles', 'urbanisation of war' and 'urbicide'. In fact, there are processes of 'de-citizenization' or human beings becoming mere 'residents' with no rights, and even as human beings as they lose their 'right to have rights'. These are challenges to the new municipal policies that the Forum must address as a process of transformation of global conflicts at a local level.

Violence falls into three interrelated categories which feed off each other: **direct violence**, **structural violence** and **cultural violence**. Structural violence generates social imbalances producing marginalisation, poverty, exclusion and expulsion from the daily life of people, human groups and entire neighbourhoods. Cultural violence consists of ideologies, beliefs and symbolic universes that justify structural violence and even direct violence. This latter is fed by the previous types of violence and ranges from sexist violence to organised crime and by using the city as a war setting.

In this sense, the transformation of cultures generating violence into cultures of peace is a fundamental task for City Councils through the stimulation of policies that erode legitimacy and the use of violence, and serve for the prevention and peaceful transformation of conflicts. Cultures of peace can and must be mediated by all areas which fall within the competence of City Councils, thus contributing to strengthening coexistence in cities, with justice criteria and care policies.



Since the new global governance proposals that go beyond the borders of existing national States affect new forms of local governance, the **World Forum on 'Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace'** will allow **Madrid** to become **the Capital of Peace**, bringing together public figures, experts on municipal public policies who address this manifestation of violence and the corresponding alternatives to conflicts in urban environments. A Forum which is a great opportunity to outline the tasks that municipalities and citizens should take on to work towards coexistence and peace.

What is it?

The Madrid Global Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace is a meeting place for local leaders, international organisations and networks, academic world, NGOs and civil society. Its purpose is to open a joint process of debate, reflection and construction of common solutions that foster urban environments capable of eliminating expressions of violence.

Cities are spaces of coexistence and conflict, territories where dreams of prosperity are projected, where protection and shelter are sought but where, at the same time, tensions are exacerbated. Various types of violence exist in cities: direct, structural and cultural. Terrorist attacks, racism, xenophobia, violence against women, youth violence, lack of access to education and healthcare, violence at sporting events and in the media - there are many violent manifestations with a strong urban presence.

This Forum aims to identify the main challenges of violence and conflicts that cities should cope with and facilitate the exchange of experiences and offer alternatives to ensure coexistence. To do this, the problem should be addressed with practice, focusing on those experiences of education for coexistence and peace where solutions are identified.

Why?

In our societies cities are the main spaces to meet, exchange and interact with people, groups, companies, ideas and values. However, they are also spaces where inequalities are generated and where various types of violence proliferate.

Local authorities have a growing framework for action that may help **prevent and transform conflicts and reduce violence**. The success or failure of the future of the humanity passes, to a large extent, through cities. A good example of this is the recent adoption of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in which cities are a key element.

- **Paris World Council Resolution, United Cities and Local Governments:** *Cities and local governments have the duty, the responsibility, to work for Peace, against violence as a means of conflict resolution, and to strengthen education for Peace as an instrument of coexistence and future welfare.*

- **2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations General Assembly:** *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (GOAL 11); and Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective and accountable institutions at all levels (GOAL 16).*

How?

The Forum is mainly aimed at mayors, and is open to civil society, citizens, international organisations and networks, and any stakeholders who can help build cities of peace in order to create spaces to share experiences and facilitate the exchange of knowledge. It is important to identify existing violence (terrorism, racism and xenophobia, youth gangs, gender, sport, schools, social networks and new technologies, media, etc.), but always emphasising coexistence, that is, peaceful responses for conflict management.

The Forum will be **agile, dynamic and highly audio-visual**, structured in panel discussions, debates and an Agora open space. It will be focused on existing challenges, so the Forum should be a space to identify and develop proposals for the prevention and transformation of urban violence.

The Organising Committee of the World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace would like the event to be open and participatory. Therefore, we invite local governments, international organisations and networks, experts and universities, the private sector, civil society and NGOs to join the Forum preparation activities by:

- **Identifying existing initiatives** and projects aimed at managing urban coexistence conflicts peacefully.
- **Providing audio-visual material** (maximum 2 minutes) on a conflictive reality or a violent problem in urban areas.
- **Designing a stand or poster** about a coexistence and culture of peace initiative.
- **Proposing a workshop** or a parallel session (scope, description, format).
- **Participating in the diagnosis** of urban violence in the city of Madrid.

Contributions should be received by February 28th, 2017 by email.

Where and when?

The Global Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace will be held at **La Nave** (c/ Cifuentes, 5, Villaverde district, 28021, MADRID) **on April 19, 20 and 21, 2017.**

Prior to the Forum, various festivals, events, conferences and programmes will be held throughout the city to emphasise the role of coexistence and the culture of peace in our cities. Additionally, various parallel events will be held under the Forum framework, such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Executive Committee.



Communication, information and contact

Free registration (from January 2017).

Forum website: <https://capitaldepaz.madrid.es> | E-mail: capitaldepaz@madrid.es

Video invitation Mayor Manuela Carmena:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohDZxCpYOrA&t=191s>