

## ***"Voluntary crisis", the B side of the disaster"*** **By Yelmo Duran K. and Enrique Rabajille G.**



### **The situation:**

We arrived at Cerro La Cruz in Valparaíso on May 6, 2014, 10 o'clock in the morning, 20 days after the big fire, without expectations, only with the intention of contributing in what we could be more useful as GFSC, since the emotional impact of that incident gave us a signal in our hearts that we should be there. We were waiting for some Volunteer Facilitators and Therapists who "wandered" through the hills looking to help and that we did not know, to whom some facilitating friends in Santiago referred us. We met in a circle in the middle of the street, on the rise, in front of the "Centro Cultural El Trafon, which was used as a shelter and a strage for food and clothing that arrived as inputs for distribution.

We smiled, we embraced, we introduced ourselves and we headed up the hill towards the common dining room where we shared a humble lunch with the victims. This dining room was located next to a sports club that only had its walls standing. In that same club we assumed a natural leadership together with the facilitators who had received us to gather information about what was being done in conjunction with community leaders.



It was one of the first among around 20 meetings we had with therapists, facilitators, volunteers in cultural and sports centers, who sought to collaborate and help from their art to such devastated people in the hills of the fifth region.



We were observing dozens of people who talked and proposed their help, their proposal, their way of supporting the advancement of those who were affected. The hordes of volunteers who had cleared the hills of steaming material and raised various foods and spices had already retreated. Shelters with hills of governmental donations and individuals, were guarded by the military so that they would not be looted and robbed by those in the surviving communities who also stored diaper hills, hygienic papers and food that could not be consumed in many years.

The authority hurried to arrive with wooden houses, which were also built by unprepared volunteers, whom in their goodwill, left electric cables exposed, when the winter rains began to fall on a naked and vulnerable population, who did not know if to thank or curse the "houses" they were receiving. Under them, the burned ground had left no traces of drains and sanitary or electrical facilities, plunging them into the darkness of the night and the lurking danger of those that with less education and respect were trying to steal what they might not even need.



The discussions and fights surfaced in the bare alleyways and tenebrous silhouettes of charred trees that united their image to human groups that did not want to leave their lands to avoid losing them, since their property documents disappeared among the flames. Wandering by he burnt streets looking to help was the voluntary contribution of many people, several weeks after the great fire was extinct.

We found ourselves, precisely in this wandering, with the great difficulty of being able to combine the visions and diverse ways of supporting that many people proposed, since from their doing, their art, they intended to be a contribution for those who were helpless. It took weeks, months, to find a path of advancement between so much conversation and meeting to pretend to collaborate. "We are ontological coaches, facilitators of human

development, and we cannot agree" resounded in our minds and in our hearts, like a dagger that hurt our feelings and embarrassed our walk.

We have experienced this repeatedly in disasters in Chile. The will to help is intermingled with the diversity of intentions and competences to be shared, blurring the central objective, which is to support the recovery of the communities soon, where egos, beliefs and attitudes emerge and subtract instead of adding. The authority, which is gaining experience, tries to avoid that volunteers reach the wrecked and bruised places, where they become more people that require water, food, shelter and transportation, while they exercise their role of helpers.



It's almost crazy! "The voluntary crisis", the one that those without global, local and group organization, provoke or increase in the midst of the crisis of the community, which only asks to have its basic elements to live again: a roof, a floor, food, work, school for their children, security and tranquility to breathe again, sleep and rest.

#### **Reflection and experience:**

We can walk through the streets of a disaster conscious of the opportune moment and the pertinent way of co-working, co-construct, recover and recreate the lost trust. That trust that tells us that we can, that someday we will listen and feel what the community cries out in a disaster: *"Do not leave us alone, get organized and agree, we need your help, your embrace, your containment, your walking with us"*.

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#### **The Authors:**

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Born in Santiago de Chile 54 years ago; father of a son and a daughter who are a gift from the universe; entrepreneur of jobs, family and couple; human being, person and friend. Volunteer facilitator of Global Facilitators Serving Communities – GFSC after the earthquake in Chile in February 27, 2010; in search for effective possibilities of collaboration with communities impacted by crises and disasters and co-founder of the "Corporacion GFSC Chile".

##### **Enrique Rabajille Gonzalez**

I am a human being, teacher and independent entrepreneur, born in South America, in a strip of long and narrow land, where the Andean mountain range shelters us with its arms of copper, where the juicy grape arises and the pacific ocean bathes us and feed. I am a grateful of life, a father in love with my children and family, friend of my friends, a firm believer in the abilities of people who come together to achieve their dreams. I am a volunteer facilitator of Global Facilitators Serving Communities - Global GFSC from February 27, 2010 to date, and co-founder of the "Corporacion GFSC Chile".