



CREATING RESILIENCE CAPACITIES TO FACE THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

Miriam Castillo P., Hortensia Castillo P., and Susana Castillo P.

Venezuela is experiencing a severe social, political and economic crisis, exacerbated in the last six years by the growing deterioration of State Institutions, which has impacted the coexistence and quality of life of the population. The precarious conditions of health, education, employment, housing and security; the deficit of basic services (water, electricity, gas); the generalized shortage of food, medicine, circulating money, gasoline and transportation, coupled with a social climate where the loss of guarantees and freedoms prevails, has pushed civil society to demand in the streets their right to a dignified life, and despite repression and impunity protests have increased in the first quarter of 2019.

According to the Observatory of Social Conflict (OVCS), in the first 90 days of this year, 6,211 protests have been registered, equivalent to 69 daily. This figure represents an increase of 157% compared to the same period last year and 395% compared to 2017.

Added to the social conflict, is the panorama of massive emigration: Venezuela has become a country expelling its citizens. The UN, through its UNHCR agency, reported a diaspora of more than 4,000,000 people leaving Venezuela, without distinction of their socio-economic level, profession, occupation, age or sex. Parents who emigrate leaving their minor children with grandparents or other relatives, or elderly people who are left without a family network to support them, are only two sides of how the humanitarian crisis has impacted Venezuelan families.

But in the midst of it all, this crisis has shown the "resilience of Venezuelans." Indeed, those who leave Venezuela (a large majority against their will) must create new benchmarks for survival and security in the host country; for their part, those who remain (whatever their reason) must find ways to fill the void of those who are absent while avoiding the best survival practices in a chaotic and uncertain environment. In other words, at the present time, for Venezuelans resilience is an indispensable resource.

In this context, on May 25 and June 6, we held a 16-hour workshop "Crisis-Change-Choice" aimed at teachers of the Santa Rosa Catholic University (Caracas-Venezuela), with the purpose of training them as multipliers capable of lead the psychosocial and resilience strengthening of its educational community, to more effectively face the challenges of the social, economic and political crisis that the country is experiencing. We want to emphasize that this workshop is unprecedented for dealing with a crisis with different characteristics

to those derived from disasters or natural impacts, since this is a crisis of political, social and economic origin, of a humanitarian nature, which broadens the applicability of the GFSC Model.

The invitation to train as multiplier leaders of the GFSC Crisis-Change-Choice Model was attended by 19 participants who expressed high enthusiasm and commitment to the mission entrusted. The teachers expressed the importance of the topics proposed in the workshop as tools to face in a more effective and resilient way the generalized crisis that Venezuelans are experiencing. At the same time that they became aware of the strategies they were using to face the current crisis and what new practices would be healthier, more effective and resilient for their personal and group well-being.

We highlight the deep reflection of the group on the theme "Caregiver care", since their teaching role in the humanitarian crisis we are experiencing has heightened the feeling of powerlessness in the face of the problems experienced by their students, many of whom decide to emigrate leaving his studies halfway through. In particular, they became aware of the risks of the secondary crisis to which they are exposed as "caregivers" and the need to take action to protect themselves.

The assessment of the Crisis-Change-Choice Model as an option to face the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, turning it into an opportunity to strengthen ourselves and grow as individuals and as members of a community was revealed in the wealth of projects proposed to multiply the GFSC model not only in the Educational Community of the Santa Rosa Catholic University, but also in the communities of residence of some teachers, because as one of them said "we must begin by applying this first of all to ourselves, to our families and to the community where we live".

In this way, we all leave this experience very hopeful and optimistic, with the certainty that this group of UCSAR teachers will be multipliers of the capacities we require to face with a strengthened and renewed resilience the challenges that the current times of crisis and change of our country sue us.