

UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ambassadors for Peace - Peace With Creation

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UNIVERSAL PEACE FEDERATION
A Global Network of Peacebuilders

UPF Argentina

Reunión mensual Embajadores para la Paz
Miércoles 13 de mayo 2020: 18.30 horas
Informes, próximas actividades y panel "Paz con la Creación"

Expondrán Gabriela Abarzúa, profesional responsable en Coordinación de Políticas de Educación Ambiental del Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de la Nación; Esteban Fauret y Amalia Daibes, directores del Programa literario-ecológico "Y volverán a ser árboles" de la Fundación Chacras de Buenos Aires.
Luego de las exposiciones, el auditorio podrá formular preguntas.

Buenos Aires, Argentina -- Environmental issues were addressed at UPF-Argentina's monthly Ambassadors for Peace meeting. "Peace With Creation" was the theme of the meeting held on May 13, with 36 connections via Zoom. Speakers were Gabriela Abarzúa, professional responsible at of the Coordination of Environmental Policies -- Environmental Education Doctorate of the National Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; Esteban Fauret and Amalia Daibes, directors of the literary-ecological program Y Volverán a Ser Árboles; and Andrea Vega, director of the Chacras de Buenos Aires Foundation. They shared their knowledge and expertise to address the various types of damage to flora and fauna, the importance of recycling and educating for our harmonious coexistence with nature, and the need to raise awareness and create further commitment from the different fields for a healthy life in this planet.

At the end, there was a QandA section moderated by Adrián De Angelis, member of the UPF Peace Council. The informative section, which provided a review of our activities, was in the charge of Emanuel Sayavedra, member of the UPF-Argentina's Governing Board; while Miguel Werner, UPF-Argentina's secretary general, announced upcoming activities. During the meeting, Erika Alcaraz, Ailen Marquesano and Patricia Seput were in charge of promoting UPF-Argentina's International Poetry Contest 2020. Then, we invited each Ambassador for Peace to write on a sheet of paper "Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values" and show it to the camera for a group photo.

Gabriela Abarzúa explained that she began her environmental activity in Neuquén Province, in Patagonia, and continued to develop it in Buenos Aires. She has a master's degree in environmental education and works at the National Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. She began to question the role of human beings in creation in that we tend to forget about interdependence with all living beings: animals, vegetation, and everything that contributes to existence. She regrets that we are not in contact with the "kindness of nature." She proposed "responsible consumption," a "type of sobriety." She shared that she is currently working on the preservation of native species, which are essential to the Argentine ecosystem. In particular, the Andean condors are "emblematic birds for our country and all peoples who live in the Andean areas," whose population is being decimated. This is taking us to a systemic crisis. In the end, she took a few questions. The current COVID-19 situation, she said, makes us "reconsider our roles as human beings." She also asked how to ensure our existence, living in harmony with all Creation.

Andrea Vega began by thanking the hosts and Ambassadors for Peace. She appreciated an expression by Gabriela Abarzúa: sharing resources is a "type of sobriety." This is in contrast with what we are currently doing with an "exaggerated, rampant, immoderate style" of using resources, which undermines sustainability. She mentioned that the Chacras Foundation she directs has a goal of sustainable human development, focusing on education and trying to spread good environmental practices. Sustainable has to do with sharing resources in this new style. She said that "we have been missionaries since 2001," formally since 2011, when she remembers: "We received the first encouragement and symbolic embrace of UPF, who rewarded our activity." She confessed that this renewed their hope and gave them the desire to keep working "with an even greater commitment."

Then, she said she signed the Global Compact, and they committed to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as 6, which is Clean Water and Sanitation; and 16, which is Peace and Justice. They are also committed to keep ocean waters clean (SDG 14: Life Below Water) through the environment guardian program involving young people with neurological disabilities that the foundation helps train. She explained that the foundation provides training that allows these children to go to schools, various institutions, and the government. They go wherever they are called or wherever they are received. Among their tasks, she highlights "responsible waste separation," not because it is stated by the foundation or the SDGs, but from a smaller, individual purpose that aims for the totality. She exemplified: when separating waste and reusing plastic bottles, they make them into "eco-bricks," which the Foundation uses to build houses and even schools.



Amalia Daibes recalled how the program "Y Volverán a Ser Árboles" began, in conversation with her husband Esteban Fauret, with an article from a newspaper about "our common future" and about sustainability. The article addressed, "Why preserve the spotted owl?" And they asked themselves, "What is sustainable, and why do we have to preserve this little animal? We belong to the creation, and not any part, really." She highlighted our responsibility to ourselves and to all living creatures. Thus, they came up with the idea of planting a tree after a book is printed.

Esteban Fauret stated that "everything indicated we have a very important role as human beings," considering that every activity of ours should create a positive change. If we are not committed, "it is really not possible to achieve a change for the better as we expect." He also specified that in the field of literature, which is favorable toward the environment, there is a contradiction, since every book that is printed means the removal of trees. This is why "we began to fight for commitment," so "literature is not only about writing a poem, writing a text without any commitment," he reflected.

That is how the project was begun, "to protect our own home." If we print a book, we should bring something back to Mother Nature. Then, he explained the journey of the planting campaign in different countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and México) and his plan to expand this commitment to other artistic expressions. He stated that word and action go hand in hand, as well as the need to work to change the world, even though it "may seem utopic." He also mentioned the creation of international congresses on literature and ecology, with participants from "so many places," with projects at schools and everywhere they can raise awareness. He stated, "Creation is part of our lives and we work to make creation even more sustainable. . . . There is a great horizon to do things, to reforest," but "we have to work hard and move forward." In the end, he thanked and recognized the work and support of UPF in this task and commitment.