

## UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina Ambassadors for Peace panel: Education and Values

Miguel Werner  
October 14, 2020



Buenos Aires, Argentina -- "Education and Values" was the theme of UPF-Argentina's monthly Ambassadors for Peace panel held on October 14, 2020, with more than 30 Zoom connections. Presentations on the UPF-Argentina's lines of action "Education in Principles and Values" (1) were in the charge of Ambassadors for Peace Silvia Olguín, director of the Native Dance Studio "El Triunfo;" Silvia Gabriela Vázquez, director of the Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Degree Program on Social Responsibility and Resilience of the UdeMM Private University; Luba Opeka, founder and member of the Advisory Council of Akamasoa Argentina Foundation; and Emanuel Sayavedra, President of Youth and Students for Peace (YSP)-Argentina.

The information section was in the charge of Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina, where National Senator Silvia del Rosario Giacoppo (2) gave a report on September's online International Leadership Conference of the Americas. Patricia Pitaluga, president of the civil association Acercando Naciones, reported on IAPP/UPF Argentina's Parliamentarians panel "Development and Cooperation" (3); and Christian Oreb, general coordinator of Red Cooperar, encouraged guests to join the upcoming Peace Road, which will include a virtual walk across Argentina's various provinces (4).



At the beginning, we shared a video on the 15th anniversary of UPF's inauguration (5). The closing, as usual, was artistic, with a recitation by Antonia Russo, writer and cultural manager (6); Marta Palacio, Provincial Director of SIPEA Buenos Aires (7); and Lito Carmona, festival entertainer. The meeting was moderated by Julio Nardini, member of UPF-Argentina's Peace Council.

To see the video of the monthly Ambassadors for Peace meeting on October 14, [click here](#).



**Silvia Olgún - Director of the Native Dance Studio "El Triunfo," Ezeiza, Province of Buenos Aires**

No one doubts educational institutions were built from a first foundation contract, for which all institutions have a social mandate. Nowadays, facing a pandemic, social discomfort is perceived and interpreted in various ways. Thus, we ask ourselves: What happens to education? Which are the new issues we should face? Which are the new challenges? Which new contract should arise after this pandemic?

The first challenge will be to secure material and technological conditions to face sustainability of long-distance pedagogical relations. The second challenge will be to accompany families, especially children and adolescents, through a difficult process that requires containing social anxieties towards a balanced point. Above all, it will be necessary to keep in touch with those who are on the fringe of the system.

Those who educate know that teaching and learning processes cannot be directly translated into a completely virtual environment. This is mainly because there is inequality in the distribution of social and cultural assets, which makes this inequality even more explicit.

It seems that schools do not only function as a minimal threshold of social recognition but as an emotional support that heals primary relationships that have been deeply broken: family violence, unemployed parents, abandonment, and so forth. What we find in the poverty circle and at the threshold of the 21st century are groups of young people who seek in school a place where they can repair broken primary bonds.

In terms of education, preexistent issues have been exposed more than ever. However, critical experience linked to this crisis can be the breeding ground for more innovative, lasting solutions. Today's successes and errors, in times of a pandemic, will serve to teach us to keep rethinking education and schools in the future contemporaneous societies. As always, the future will have the last word.

Silvia Gabriela Vázquez - Director of the Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Degree Program on Social Responsibility and Resilience of the UdeMM Private University – Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

Gabriela gave a presentation with the title "The Educator as a Service Leader," with a PowerPoint presentation. She began contributing based on the "Ubuntu philosophy:" "I am because we are;" and the five pillars of self-knowledge, self-confidence, resilience, empathy and service. Then, she emphasized that a service leader "trains committed professionals, willing to protect, connect and serve. They provide their students some fundamental questions: What can I do for others? What does my community need? What do I like to do and what can I do? How can I provide my vocation to others? (applied social commitment)."

She added that a service leader "seeks the value in each person. They promote inclusion and dialogue. They listen with true interest. They accept unconditionally. They help build even during adversity. They become a master of resilience. They inspire others. They always learn from all." She finished with a phrase by Parker Palmer, an American educator who focuses on issues in community, leadership, spirituality and social change: "The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open."

## **Luba Opeka - Founder and Member of the Advisory Council of Akamasoa Argentina Foundation**

Education is the process of providing learning, of providing knowledge, which does not only produce through words. Education is always present in all our actions, feelings and attitudes, and it is performed through figures such as parents, teachers and professors.

Education should be the integral training, in all levels, for the proper development of human beings. Education is what culture transmits, allowing children's growth and evolution, educating them in values... But what are values? Values are part of our life, our everyday life. They are a set of virtues and skills needed for the common good. They are beliefs, principles that determine our attitudes and behaviors. They indicate what is important and what is not.

Human values are passed on generation after generation through education and being a model at home, at school, at the club. Children imitate their elders. Thus, we should always agree on what we say and do. There are many types of values, but there are values that are essential and accepted by all humanity. Those values allow life in society and a good relationship among people. Some of them are respect, responsibility, honesty, solidarity, and justice.

For the success of a school's educational program, it is important to keep contact with the family, the vital environment where students develop a great part of their lives and that decisively determines their personality, character and behavior. Collaboration with the family is crucial, even more so in our current situation: family breakdown and relativism of values and behavioral patterns.

A clear example of what education and values can do is Akamasoa, a humanitarian movement created in Madagascar, one of the five poorest countries in the world with no natural resources or water, such important elements. However, people who lived among garbage stood up one day when Father Peter reached them and told them they would change their fates if they worked and educated their children. They spent years of intense effort, work, education and discipline. That reflects a reality: Akamasoa is an oasis of peace and hope. Twenty-four towns were built, and there is one school in each town. Children who were 5, 6, 7 years old and lived surrounded by garbage are now 36, 37, 38 year-old professionals. They are doctors, nurses, police officers, sports people, professional singers, plastic artists, and teachers.

This has been recently applied in Lima City, in Buenos Aires Province, where the last census showed that many families live in extreme poverty, even though they are near industrial sites such as Zarate and Campana. We gathered there, rented a venue, talked to the families, and now we work all together. We wrote maxims that should be accomplished. It is an integral, formal and compulsory education. They are taught about professions, community discipline, habits, schedules, respect, fellowship, and so forth.

Confucius said: "The nation which cannot respect their ancestors, parents and masters will decline." And Don Bosco: "Education is a matter of the heart."



## **Emanuel Sayavedra - President of Youth and Students for Peace (YSP)-Argentina and member of UPF-Argentina's Governing Board**

YSP is a globally renowned organization. Its goal is that young people can become peacemakers... protagonists of change in this world... making a difference, not only by having different thoughts, but mainly by doing,... going out of their comfort zone and living for the sake of others by developing peace projects. We have programs such as Peace Designer and Sinergy. These are trainings that educate young people so they learn to create projects from beginning to end. These projects aim to solve the different issues in a specific place.

With YSP we undertake various types of projects, with the participation of young volunteers. We have cultural festivals that encourage the development of the culture of the heart. We have the support of other associations, such as the Women's Federation for World Peace and the Universal Peace Federation.

YSP is a global organization of an interreligious, intercultural and intergenerational nature. It develops academic, sports and environmental projects, from Asia to Africa and from Europe to our continent. YSP is helping millions of young people around the world have a more public purpose in their lives, and it encourages them to develop their personal talents.



#### Quotes:

##### 1) "Education and Values" Goal

Education is considered a key discipline and tool for social integration and progress of peoples. However, a long time ago it has been left behind of the public agenda in practical terms, in a context of cultural changes, a greater social prevalence of the media and new technologies, which seem to consider formal teaching in classrooms as outdated. How can we face these challenges, which now include ideological fights and impositions and commercial imperatives, filled with their own sectorial and particular interests?

Education has been related to the raise of talents, training based on values and artistic creativity, as an expression of the heart and soul. In some way, it involves a more universal language, a more practical and current learning in the desire of social and global integration. This, at the same time, implies providing a greater view of intelligence, which can include emotional and spiritual development: more skills and deeper knowledge, from the physical and metaphysical worlds, with new analysis categories and approaches, which considers each person's dignity and focuses on common good.

##### 2) Online International Leadership Conference (ILC) of the Americas:

[es.slideshare.net/UPFArgentina/conferencia-internacional-de-liderazgo-ilc-de-las-amricas-online-11-al-13-de-septiembre-2020](https://es.slideshare.net/UPFArgentina/conferencia-internacional-de-liderazgo-ilc-de-las-amricas-online-11-al-13-de-septiembre-2020)

##### 3) "Cooperation and Development" – IAPP/UPF Argentina Parliamentarians panel 26-10-2020:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3qavBBRfsE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3qavBBRfsE)

##### 4) Peace Road 2020: "Argentina United by Peace": [socince.com/2020/10/28/preparatorias-peace-road-ruta-de-la-paz-argentina-2020/](https://socince.com/2020/10/28/preparatorias-peace-road-ruta-de-la-paz-argentina-2020/)

##### 5) Video on the 15th Anniversary of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF):

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrYGSM0sN5Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrYGSM0sN5Q)

##### 6) Poem "Niño":

Quando mire tus ojitos tristes  
mi corazón dejo de latir  
ese instante que se hizo eterno  
dibujó mil preguntas en mi alma.  
Por qué tus ojos están húmedos

si solo deberían ver el sol  
jugar con las estrellas  
y soñar con ángeles?  
Por qué tus manos están vacías  
si el supremo las creó  
para llenarlas de amor  
y no del polvo del camino?  
Por qué tu cuerpecito  
tiene hambre, sed y dolor  
si es tan tierno, frágil  
y está hecho solo para jugar?  
Por qué tu sonrisa no aparece  
no dibuja un sol en tu carita  
si te imaginamos lleno  
de luces y arco iris?  
Por qué tus piecitos descalzos  
sufren frío, llagas y desgarros  
si un ángel como vos  
sólo debe caminar entre nubes?  
Por qué tus oídos tiernos  
deben sentir fragor de bombas  
gritos de dolor, llantos desesperados  
si tu madre solo soñaba  
cantarte canciones de cuna?  
Tonya

Antonia Russo, writer and cultural manager  
San Nicolás – Province of Buenos Aires

7) Poem "La Paz":

Si te detienes en un lugar  
donde encuentres solo campo  
allí donde haya mucho verde  
y el trinar de los pájaros.  
En ese agraciado momento  
conocerás esa paz infinita  
que te cubre el alma  
sintiendo que estás viva.  
La paz se parece a la felicidad  
la encontramos pocas veces en el camino,  
y nos sirve para suministrarnos fuerza  
para nuestros forjados destinos.  
Donde ya no hay quejas  
y que el mismo silencio te enmudece,  
cuando el día se hace sombra  
aunque el sol este resplandeciente.  
En ese tiempo o lugar de dolor  
o tal vez el silencio de la muerte,  
también te abraza la paz  
como un consuelo, como un presente.  
Y si en algún instante de tu vida  
obtienes un encuentro incondicional,  
donde adviertes la presencia de Dios  
habrás alcanzado la paz, en su plenitud total.  
Solo debes cerrar los ojos  
y sentir los de Dios en los de uno mismo,  
esa meta ansiada por muchos  
que es desprenderse del orgullo, para el perdón infinito.

Marta Palacio, Provincial Director of SIPEA Buenos Aires  
Florencio Varela – Province of Buenos Aires