



## CRAFTING A CARING SPACE

We live in a world where radical processes of de-humanization are shaping our realities and imaginaries. A world imbued by challenges and conflicts, which are increasingly layered, intersectional and interdependent. We are in need of a new beginning, of new processes of re-connection, re-humanisation and solidarity. We are in need of new spaces which are not only safe and protected, but also **caring and humanizing**.

Duemila30 is a **cultural space** that moves from the recognition of creativity as a powerful tool for the creation of new opportunities for understanding, compassion, and empathy. Duemila30 is a **global space**, where competing and conflicting cultural contexts are represented and can potentially become major sources of tension. We begin with the understanding that it is through our actions that we define and shape the spaces we inhabit and create, as individuals, in community.

Duemila30 is a **co-created space**, crafted by all the individuals that decide to become part of it, with awareness and accountability. It's a space in which we are creating a shared sense of meanings, participatively and interactively. We are building a community of common grounds that recognises art as a catalyst for positive change; one that is radical, collective and effective. We are crafting new practices that instead of violence and war can sustain a new culture of peace.

In doing so, we move from these unquestionable and non-negotiable universal assumptions:

- All individuals are equal in dignity and rights,
- We all adhere to the values of non-violence, interdependence, human rights, social interest, sustainability, justice, equality, diversity and participation,
- We refuse any dimension of power and oppression,
- We reject physical, verbal and psychological violence and work together for the creation of a safe space for everyone,
- Conflict is natural but in need of management and control,
- We embrace plurality and we are committed to safeguard it by rejecting isolation and any practice that separates and opposes.

# DUEMILA30



By joining Duemila30 we all agree to its objectives and shared goals and we all commit ourselves to become active members of the community, creating a space which is safe and protected for the process of re-humanization to happen. The creation of a **caring space** necessitates the active participation of each and every one of us, not only theoretically, but with active and precise behaviors. Therefore:

- **We take perspective** by putting ourselves in the place of the other side, and try to understand and experience its feelings and claims. We listen to understand instead of listen to respond;
- **We welcome vulnerability** and we understand that our own process of constructing reality is cultural and subjective and might therefore not be shared by our companions. We share parts of our story so that the complexity of who we are frames the context of our comments;
- **We accept the sense of fear** and discomfort that comes with the questioning of our system of beliefs and codes. We do the very thing that makes us nervous. We let fear propel us, to move in the direction of change and growth;
- We attend to the vocabulary of emotions, using words such as: absolve, acceptance, apology, exonerate, forgiveness, healing, heart, images, meaning, memories, pain, pardon, reconciliation, regret, remorse, repentance, self, sorrow, and trauma.
- **We examine our intentions** when engaging with others, taking time and embracing risks, to make sure they are aligned towards the achievement of new relationships rather than on prevarication and power.
- **We are mindful**, we slow down and pause before reacting. We recognise that communication is interactive, and entails a continuous process of monitoring and adjustment of our words and actions.
- **We think critically**, opening ourselves to the possibility that our thoughts might be limited. We don't take critique as a personal attack, but we see it as a way to expand our way of thinking.

Such practices are the building blocks of Duemila30 and are non-negotiable nor debatable. Although the responsibility for achieving the above goals is shared and depends on the active effort of each of us, as organizers we reserve the right to turn away anyone who does not respect those common boundaries.



## **What does it mean to build a community of common grounds?**

It's not only about gathering people together with common goals, but mostly about establishing a type of communication that accentuates the co-creation of agreement and the organization of new relationships shared by the participants. Conflict is, by definition, interactive and all behavior in an interactive situation has message value, and is therefore communicative. Messages carry cultural meanings as well as shared systems of symbols. At the same time, the complexity of communication relies in the fact that words and messages change meaning according to context. In this context, communication is conceptualized as a framework that facilitates the understanding of human behaviors as it focuses on the primary means by which individuals organize themselves into collectives, which are the processes of meaning allocation.

Meanings do not only reside in individuals or messages, but are a joint accomplishment of participants derived from the social, political, and interpersonal circumstances. The role of politics, identity, interests, and institutions in conflict means that conflict resolution must be understood as a societal and intersocietal process that is propelled by the collective actions of individuals and organizations.

Conflicts can vary with respect to emotions, realism, and rationality, but it is the experience of interaction that either exacerbates or successfully manages key elements of the conflict experience. Communication is therefore the mechanism through which all elements of conflict are practiced and processed. At the same time, individuals in different cultures develop different patterns and styles of communication enshrined in their ideology that make it difficult and scary to behave or think outside of their own symbolic boundaries. Conflict resolution requires a working relationship, established by communication, that can effectively lead to interpersonal transformation. Technical settlements are less important than changing relationships. Transformative dialogue is a participatory process that tries to redress inequality, subjugation, and oppression and is designed to stimulate genuine change and growth, which emerges from the participants in the dialogue. Gatherings governed by transformative communication approaches aimed at building positive relationships between the groups are a way to cope with the barriers of misperceptions, negative stereotyping and mutual de-legitimization that characterize conflict situations. Practices must be oriented at establishing a type of communication that improves understanding, promotes tolerance and accepts diversity, breaking the destructive communication patterns that are the basis of conflict.

It is therefore necessary to recognise that it is not only what we know that matters, but how we know it and what it means for us, so that we can become able to translate our experience for others to understand and value. By joining Duemila30 we are all moving beyond our occupational and professional roles to help advance peace and humanity, becoming *full capacity global citizens*.

*People willing to take on the twin challenge of deepening their personal capacities (intuitive, spiritual, intellectual) as well as assuming responsibility for the planet and the whole of humanity. These examples, and those from countless other groups and individuals demonstrate that we are capable of a societal vision that transcends unbridled individualism and materialism - one that is more sustainable, equitable, and multifaceted, and includes spiritual and psychological, as well as economic growth. The shift in consciousness that seems to be required includes an accommodation of our interdependence and our need to find a basis for shared meaning and purpose (Franklin, 1998, p.3).*



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