
Kluwer Mediation Blog

The culture of peace in the Land of Football

Andrea Maia (Mediar360 – Dispute Resolution) · Sunday, May 8th, 2022

Communication is one of the most important pillars of human relationships. Connections established through communication make life in society possible and it explains why so many different types of language have been developed and improved since the early dawn of civilization.

However, while it unites us, communication can also divide us, as most of us have been trained since an early age to simply hear and react. Most of the time, we communicate in an imposing and judgmental way, an open ground for conflicts that, when not well managed, lead to the breaking of ties.

Today, much is said in Brazil about alternative dispute resolution, non-violent communication (Marshall Rosenberg), soft skills and emotional intelligence (Daniel Goleman), as tools to transform the litigant culture in which we have been forged into a culture of dialogue. That said, why not teach these skills to children from an early age? What a better place for this than schools and associations dedicated to children and adolescents?

Conflicts among students in educational institutions are usually the result of truncated and aggressive communication, and most of the time, a reflection of behaviors and values of their own family system. Therefore, training them with the appropriate tools to manage and resolve conflicts promotes a change in the way these youngsters think and act, moving from a judgmental approach and speech to empathic listening and positive conversations. This prevents cases of bullying, promotes self-knowledge, individual responsibility and respect for the collective well-being, develops self-confidence and self-esteem and encourages the use of necessary skills for every individual to understand their place in society.

There is a significant increase in the number of conflicts in Brazilian schools [in post pandemic days](#) . Local governments have been working in public policies aiming at controlling (or reducing) these numbers and teaching children to better deal with their differences.

At this point, I was delighted to learn about [Elisabeth Spaltemberg's](#) project which I will comment and share from now on with our readers.

At the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Elisabeth met teacher (coach) Guilherme Passos, coordinator of [Meninos da Vila RJ](#), a soccer school in Rio de Janeiro that, since 2016, has been training boys, ages 8 to 15. In an informal conversation with Elisabeth, and without knowing anything about her professional background on dispute resolution, he mentioned several recurrent communication issues and arguments among team members.

As Elisabeth told to me, “in light of this, both realized that mediation could add a lot of value to the sport environment, mainly soccer, which is a sport that sometimes tends to generate violent conducts, both at the playing environment (soccer fields) and in and out stadiums. Physical and verbal aggression involving players, technical staff and referees, fights among fans and organized supporters are, unfortunately, recurrent events throughout the world, leading even to tragic consequences. From the moment when good practices of coexistence and adequate methods of conflict resolution are taught and encouraged in soccer schools, starting at a very early age, children and young athletes begin to internalize these dynamics and transform them into life habits, relaying them to their families and to their future clubs, should they become professional players.”

It was then that [Projeto Conexões \(Connections Project\)](#) was born.

Since November 2020, about 150 athletes, from the under-10 to under-15 categories, have participated in [the project](#). The meetings take place on a weekly basis and include teachers and those responsible for the students.

Elisabeth says that “By learning conflict management techniques, dialogue circles and interactive dynamics, boys develop the ability to manage their own emotions, to deal with differences and to respect opposing points of view, strengthening the concepts of belonging and unity in the team, so that everyone understands that each one of them has skills that are important to the team, leading to positive results not only on the field, but also to teamwork.”

Today, two years later, the relevance of Projeto Conexões has been recognized by the Mediation and Consensual Methods Committee of the Brazilian Bar Association, Rio de Janeiro Branch (OAB-RJ). Among other similar and relevant projects from all over Brazil, the initiative was awarded the second prize in the Mediation and Conciliation category of the [Culture of Peace Award 2021](#), in honor of Professor Kazuo Watanabe.

Indeed, this example serves as a stimulus to move forward and strengthen the goal of taking Conexões` alike projects to other soccer schools in Brazil and around the world (the world famous Ronaldinho Soccer Academy, together with [Mediar360](#), have just initiated a project of similar nature).

May many other awards and successful partnerships come to Conexões!

To make sure you do not miss out on regular updates from the Kluwer Mediation Blog, please [subscribe here](#).

Profile Navigator and Relationship Indicator

Includes 7,300+ profiles of arbitrators, expert witnesses, counsels & 13,500+ relationships to uncover potential conflicts of interest.

Learn how [Kluwer Arbitration](#) can support you.

Learn more about the newly-updated *Profile Navigator and Relationship Indicator*



This entry was posted on Sunday, May 8th, 2022 at 4:40 pm and is filed under [Brazil](#), [Conflict](#), [Cooperation](#), [Dialogue](#), [Football](#), [Uncategorized](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.