

CYPRUS: CONVERSATION/DIALOGUE AS A TOOL FOR CONNECTION

STORY OF ROCIO CHAVESTE, MEXICO



Rocio is the director of the Kanankil Institute in Mexico and member of the Mutual Learning Board. She shares the following story:

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I was invited to teach a multi-day workshop on Collaborative-Dialogical Practices, formerly known as collaborative therapy by Dina Mousteri, in 2017 at the Brief Systemic Dialogical Therapy Model program in Cyprus. From the moment I arrived, the experience was unforgettable. The city welcomed me with a beautiful moon and a star on the horizon. Observing them, I felt an immediate connection to the place, but I also had questions about its history. My curiosity led me to learn about the complex relationship between the Greek and Turkish peoples on the island, marked by a history of coexistence interrupted by political and territorial conflicts.

During my stay, I visited the border, where the conflict has left visible scars: bullet-marked walls that tell stories of clashes and the violent separation of communities. Since the partition of the island in 1974, following a Greek-backed coup seeking to unite Cyprus with that country, and the subsequent Turkish invasion in response, the island has been divided in two: the Republic of Cyprus, predominantly Greek Cypriot, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey.



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Most notable, however, was a space where people from both sides came together to engage in dialogue and genuine conversation. This group, made up of those who had suffered the fragmentation of their families and friendships, strove to create authentic connection, seeking to rebuild the humanity that united them instead of the differences that divided them. Their cry resonated clearly: their identity was “Cypriot,” beyond national labels. They came together with a purpose: to see each other again as family and friends. Through dialogue and being with one another, they reflected on their shared histories, putting aside past grudges and seeking common ground. This process, though long, became a beacon of hope, an innate search for connection grounded in empathy and mutual recognition.

The atmosphere generated between them, imbued with respect and curiosity about each other's experiences, helped heal the wounds of the past. The experience was moving and inspiring. Seeing how, despite deep political and territorial divisions, people found a way to unite around their common identity, Cyprus, filled me with optimism. This trip reaffirmed my belief in the power of everyday dialogue and in people's ability to transcend conflict, transforming adversity into an opportunity for human connection. They demonstrated that being with one another and listening to one another can open paths to peace and reconciliation. The possibility of rewriting their personal narratives through shared conversation was a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and its innate desire for connection.”