

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



December 06, 2017

Handling Conflicts Properly

Conflicts exist within every human society. And, it points towards the fact that there are different kinds of people and groups of people within a society and their interests are different and in certain cases, they are even different from one another. There is no possible way of avoiding all sorts of conflicts; however, it is possible to minimize them and their influences if they are understood and handled properly.

Understanding the reasons of conflicts may provide an opportunity that can support in handling it them properly. One of the basic reasons of conflict is misunderstanding. Misunderstanding has the tendency to generate and enlarge a conflict to a great extent. One of the basic reasons of misunderstanding is the communication gap or communication errors.

Every human being has his unique perception and frame of reference through which he/she understands the world or the different phenomena, processes and happenings in the world. So, the objective reality is not necessarily what a person perceives; what a person perceives is basically the subjective interpretation of the objective reality.

The differences in interests are another main reason of conflict. There are different sorts of interests that a person strives to pursue in his or her life. These interests range from a very minor personal benefit to the large economic and political benefits. However, most of the interests are measured in economic terms in today's capitalist society where almost every person is running after money. There is a tough competition among the people to achieve different resources so as to make their lives comfortable; unfortunately, these resources are limited and everybody cannot have what he/she wants. This gives rise to a competition and on most of the occasions this competition ends in clashes and conflicts. Therefore, the differences in interests have a potential to generate different types of clashes.

The differences in interests turning into conflicts can be best understood in the context of collective life. Take the example of different countries. All the countries in the world have certain interests, which are pursued and defined by the countries' political systems and governments. All the countries want to pursue their national interests through diplomatic means; however, the diplomatic trickery cannot always earn the countries their interests as others also have certain interests which clash with them. This situation generates conflicts among nations, which, if not resolved through diplomatic prudence may turn into wars.

The conflicts have the capacity to bring wars, disorders and destructions; therefore, efforts should be made to resolve the conflicts in a proper manner. It basically starts with the personal endeavors. In personal life, conflict can be resolved in so many ways. The most important point is to understand that the conflicts are unavoidable and they are bound to occur; therefore, the imperative thing is how to respond to the conflicts. There are three main categories of an individual's response to the conflict.

First, he/she may remain very much pessimistic to the conflict and try to avoid it even though it is affecting him/her.

The second response is that of very aggressive people. They are the ones who overdo most of the things on most of the occasions. Then there is the moderate response and that is considered as the most appropriate one. That is response of a real peace-maker.

With a moderate response it is possible to thwart certain conflicts. For a moderate response it is important to have certain personal qualities as well. The personality traits like tolerance and prudence can be very much helpful in resolving conflicts.

If taken on collective level, there are conflicts among groups, institutions, states and even groups of states. In order to resolve the conflicts among the groups and institutions, it is necessary to adopt democratic culture and tradition. The democratic principles allow the groups, institutions and states to form an administration or government through the consent of all the people involved. These principles make sure that everybody should have a say not only in the formation of the administration or the government but also in the undertakings of the government.

Another important key to resolving conflict within the groups and among the groups is the rule of law. It is necessary to prioritize justice and consider it above the social, economic and political status. Both the weak and the strong should be treated alike and they should be considered equal while justice is being implemented.

Afghanistan is also one of the nations that have been suffering from conflicts. There are different reasons of the conflicts in Afghanistan. There have been religious intolerance, tribal bounds and ethnic controversies. All these conflicts have basically been utilized politically and have been intentionally turned into troublesome issues; therefore, they have influenced Afghan nation to a large extent. There is no doubt in the fact that Afghan society is a heterogeneous society; but this heterogeneity could best be used in order to embellish the social structure with variety and different colors.

The Globalization of Our Discontent

By Joseph E. Stiglitz

Fifteen years ago, I published *Globalization and Its Discontents*, a book that sought to explain why there was so much dissatisfaction with globalization within the developing countries. Quite simply, many believed that the system was "rigged" against them, and global trade agreements were singled out for being particularly unfair.

Now discontent with globalization has fueled a wave of populism in the United States and other advanced economies, led by politicians who claim that the system is unfair to their countries. In the US, President Donald Trump insists that America's trade negotiators were snookered by those from Mexico and China.

So how could something that was supposed to benefit all, in developed and developing countries alike, now be reviled almost everywhere? How can a trade agreement be unfair to all parties?

To those in developing countries, Trump's claims - like Trump himself - are laughable. The US basically wrote the rules and created the institutions of globalization. In some of these institutions - for example, the International Monetary Fund - the US still has veto power, despite America's diminished role in the global economy (a role which Trump seems determined to diminish still further).

To someone like me, who has watched trade negotiations closely for more than a quarter-century, it is clear that US trade negotiators got most of what they wanted. The problem was with what they wanted. Their agenda was set, behind closed doors, by corporations. It was an agenda written by and for large multinational companies, at the expense of workers and ordinary citizens everywhere.

Indeed, it often seems that workers, who have seen their wages fall and jobs disappear, are just collateral damage - innocent but unavoidable victims in the inexorable march of economic progress. But there is another interpretation of what has happened: one of the objectives of globalization was to weaken workers' bargaining power. What corporations wanted was cheaper labor, however they could get it.

This interpretation helps explain some puzzling aspects of trade agreements. Why is it, for example, that advanced countries gave away one of their biggest advantages, the rule of law? Indeed, provisions embedded in most recent trade agreements give foreign investors more rights than are provided to investors in the US.

They are compensated, for example, should the government adopt a regulation that hurts their bottom line, no matter how desirable the regulation or how great the harm caused by the corporation in its absence.

There are three responses to globalized discontent with globalization. The first - call it the Las Vegas strategy - is to double down on the bet on globalization as it has been managed

for the past quarter-century. This bet, like all bets on proven policy failures (such as trickle-down economics) is based on the hope that somehow it will succeed in the future.

The second response is Trumpism: cut oneself off from globalization, in the hope that doing so will somehow bring back a bygone world. But protectionism won't work. Globally, manufacturing jobs are on the decline, simply because productivity growth has outpaced growth in demand.

Even if manufacturing were to come back, the jobs won't. Advanced manufacturing technology, including robots, means that the few jobs created will require higher skills and will be placed at different locations than the jobs that were lost. Like doubling down, this approach is doomed to fail, further increasing the discontent felt by those left behind.

Trump will fail even in his proclaimed goal of reducing the trade deficit, which is determined by the disparity between domestic savings and investment.

Now that the Republicans have gotten their way and enacted a tax cut for billionaires, national savings will fall and the trade deficit will rise, owing to an increase in the value of the dollar. (Fiscal deficits and trade deficits normally move so closely together that they are called "twin" deficits.) Trump may not like it, but as he is slowly finding out, there are some things that even a person in the most powerful position in the world cannot control.

There is a third approach: social protection without protectionism, the kind of approach that the small Nordic countries took. They knew that as small countries they had to remain open. But they also knew that remaining open would expose workers to risk. Thus, they had to have a social contract that helped workers move from old jobs to new and provide some help in the interim.

The Nordic countries are deeply democratic societies, so they knew that unless most workers regarded globalization as benefiting them, it wouldn't be sustained. And the wealthy in these countries recognized that if globalization worked as it should, there would be enough benefits to go around.

American capitalism in recent years has been marked by unbridled greed - the 2008 financial crisis provides ample confirmation of that. But, as some countries have shown, a market economy can take forms that temper the excesses of both capitalism and globalization, and deliver more sustainable growth and higher standards of living for most citizens.

We can learn from such successes what to do, just as we can learn from past mistakes what not to do. As has become evident, if we do not manage globalization so that it benefits all, the backlash - from the New Discontents in the North and the Old Discontents in the South - is at risk of intensifying. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Joseph E. Stiglitz is the winner of the 2001 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. His most recent book is *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*.

Refugee Doctors for Refugee Health

By Vural Özdemir

Syrian refugees are often portrayed as an unwelcome drain on the communities to which they relocate, especially with regard to health care. But, for those escaping Syria's civil war, ignorance of their plight is overshadowed only by the reality of their needs - and the diversity of their expertise. Although refugees do bring with them extensive health-care issues, they also bring years of experience in the medical profession that, if put to proper use, could be a boon to the communities that receive them, not to mention for other refugees.

One of the biggest challenges for refugees anywhere is finding a doctor. In many host countries, inadequate treatment is the result of xenophobia, language barriers, or insufficient supply of medical staff. This is especially true for Syrians, who are scattered across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America.

But many Syrian refugees are also highly educated. As they settle in places far from the hospitals and clinics in which they once practiced, Syria's doctors simply want to get back to work. Isn't it time that they did?

In the United Kingdom, efforts are underway to make that happen. The National Health Service and the British Medical Association have begun retraining refugee doctors, including many from Syria and Afghanistan, to fill the ranks of depleted clinics in UK. Through English-language training, postgraduate study, and professional registration, programs in London, Lincolnshire, and Scotland aim to reintegrate refugee doctors into the medical profession. These efforts should be lauded.

Retraining refugee doctors is not only a moral exercise; it also makes practical sense. Displaced doctors are better able to treat refugee patients' ailments. Refugee doctors can also help ensure that the flood of new patients does not overwhelm host countries' health-care systems. And retraining a refugee doctor is cheaper and faster than educating a new medical student. With approximately 600 refugee doctors living in Britain, the well of untapped talent in the UK is deep.

Moreover, refugee patients benefit when treated by doctors who understand their circumstances, including the enormous psychosocial stress that displacement causes. Translators can help, but they are not always available in crisis settings. Doctors who understand refugees emotionally and culturally are better equipped to put patients at ease.

Britain is not alone in recognizing the potential of refugee doctors. In Turkey, Syrian doctors and nurses have received training to help them become familiar with the Turkish health-care system. The goal is to enable qualified Syrian professionals to

treat refugee patients, thus mitigating the language and logistical barriers to effective, accessible, and dignified care.

But other host countries have not been as forward thinking. In Lebanon and Jordan, for example, where more than 1.6 million registered Syrian refugees currently live, efforts to allow Syrian doctors to care for refugee patients have been criminalized. Doctors ignoring the law face arrest and possible deportation. Even Canada, a country that generally welcomes diversity and values human rights, is behind the curve on innovative approaches to refugee health. Syrian doctors face "many, many years" of retraining in Canada, and often struggle to fund the high cost of recertification.

Amid this resistance, refugee health care should be viewed as more than a set of logistical and operational challenges, but also as an inherently political process. Two dimensions of the issue must be addressed if refugee patients are ever to be properly cared for, and refugee doctors properly deployed.

For starters, refugee doctors may struggle to be accepted by their local colleagues, owing to political or personal bias. Recognizing the potential for local resistance to integration programs for refugee doctors is essential to develop proactive policies that ensure success.

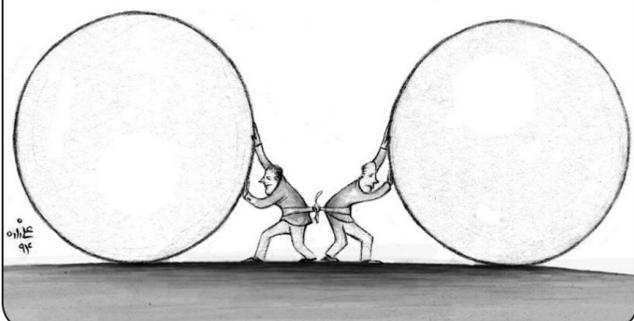
Moreover, refugee doctors must be trained to address the diversity of medical needs they will face in their adoptive homes. For example, in many countries where refugees originate, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) health concerns remain taboo, even among medical professionals. For refugee doctors relocating to countries where LGBTI health and rights are recognized, integration curricula should include training on LGBTI health, particularly the rights of exceptionally vulnerable LGBTI refugees. Improving health for LGBTI refugees can serve as a foundation for a more open society.

The refugee crisis that has engulfed Syria is just one ripple in a tidal wave of global displacement.

Around the world, some 22.5 million people are officially registered as refugees, and nearly 66 million have been forced from their homes. These numbers are unlikely to fall in the near term, as calamities caused by climate change, and by human and natural disasters, continue to push even more people from their communities.

Every one of these future refugees will need access, at some point, to medical professionals trained in refugee health, diversity, and inclusion. Empowering refugee doctors to become part of the solution will help overcome entrenched dogmas toward refugee diversity and social identities. But, just as important, it will mark a crucial step forward in ensuring more inclusive refugee health. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Vural Özdemir is a medical doctor, independent writer, and adviser on technology, society, and democracy.



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