

REVIVING UNITY: HOW ACTION LEARNING IS REDEFINING LEADERSHIP AT RED CROSS PERU



"When you bring people together and truly listen, magic happens," says Senior Action Learning Coach and founder of MyCoaching Marcia Yokota, reflecting on her transformative work with the Red Cross in Peru.

Facing internal conflict and the risk of losing global standing, the Red Cross chapter in Peru was at a critical juncture. The organization turned to action learning to mend fractured relationships and rebuild trust.

The stakes were high: failure to resolve these issues could lead to a mass resignation, jeopardizing the chapter's future.

Brazil-based WIAL coach Marcia was selected to facilitate a crucial session with the board. Fluent in Spanish and experienced in conflict resolution, she was the ideal candidate for this delicate mission.

"Action learning was relatively unknown to them, but they were open to trying something new," she explains. Her goal was to help the board members communicate openly, uncover the root causes of their issues, and rebuild trust.

Breaking Down Barriers

The session began with an alignment meeting involving regional and global Red Cross leaders. This preparatory step was crucial.

"Understanding the context and building rapport with the team helped me prepare effectively," Marcia recalls. The actual session saw board members engaging in candid conversations, facilitated by action learning techniques.

"Everyone had a voice, and for many, it was the first time they felt truly heard," Marcia shares.

This inclusive approach allowed underlying issues, particularly the lack of trust, to surface. Identifying trust as the core problem enabled the group to take focused steps toward rebuilding it.

The Power of Commitment

A pivotal moment came when the board members agreed to sign a formal commitment to collaborate. More than symbolic, this act was a concrete step towards unity and effective teamwork.

"Signing the document was a turning point," Marcia notes. "It showed their readiness to move past conflicts and work together."

The session's impact extended beyond immediate conflict resolution. It fostered a culture of open communication and mutual respect, essential for long-term success.

Participants reported feeling more connected to and committed to their shared goals.

"Trust is foundational," Marcia emphasizes. "Once it's established, everything else becomes possible."

The session also underscored the importance of adaptability in facilitation. "I had to be flexible and adjust the methodology to fit their specific needs," Marcia reflects.

Later on, this adaptability became the key to achieving meaningful results in a short time frame.

The Red Cross Peru team is now on a path to restoring its global standing. Follow-up sessions are planned to reinforce the progress made and address remaining challenges.

"We're exploring ways to continue the work, whether virtually or through more in-person sessions," Marcia says. The initial success has set a positive tone for future efforts, and the team is committed to maintaining the momentum.

Unity in Action

Marcia's experience with the Red Cross in Peru highlights the transformative potential of action learning in resolving deep-seated conflicts and building effective leadership.



By fostering open dialogue and rebuilding trust, the methodology has helped turn a critical situation into an opportunity for growth and unity.

The journey is far from over, but the progress made so far is a testament to the power of listening, adaptability, and commitment. As Marcia aptly puts it, "When people feel heard and valued, real change happens."

The Red Cross Peru chapter's story is a powerful example of how organizations can navigate challenges and emerge stronger through innovative approaches and dedicated leadership.

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