



**Transgenerational
Trauma in Kosovo: A
Personal Perspective and
Path to Reconciliation**

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Early Life and Inherited Trauma

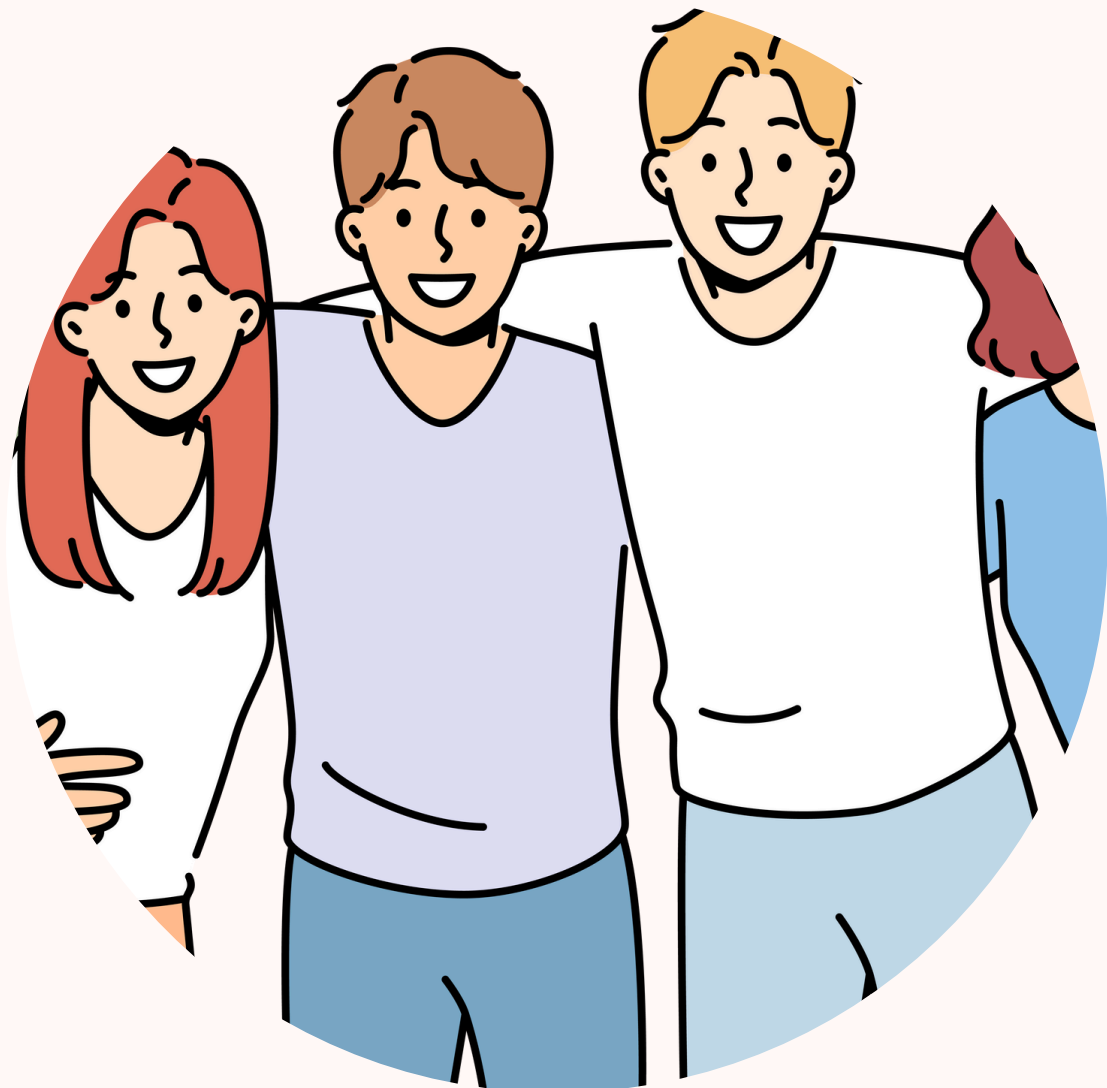


I was born in 1999, after the war in Kosovo. Although I don't have direct memories of the war, I lived through the traumas of my family and community. Growing up, there was a lot of fear and anger instilled in me. This fear extended to things like hearing a language I never heard before or seeing a flag that I only saw on TV. These symbols became sources of anxiety and anger.



Impact on Relationships

This fear and anger built up over time. I developed negative feelings towards people I had never interacted with, simply because of the stories and experiences shared by those around me. Many young people, including myself, would get into altercations as a way to vent this built-up anger



Realization and Reflection

Meeting young people from the Serbian community challenged these assumptions. I understood that the trauma, fears, and experiences of my family and community had led me to adopt the same fears, even though I never experienced them myself. This realization was pivotal for me, and it made me see the importance of breaking the cycle of inherited trauma

First Encounter with the Serbian Community

- It wasn't until I was 20 that I met someone from the Serbian community for the first time. I traveled to a city filled with Serbian flags, surrounded by people speaking Serbian, a language I do not understand. This was a significant moment for me, as I realized that I had created an image of these people as my enemies based on assumptions and inherited fears.
- **Realization and Reflection:** Meeting young people from the Serbian community challenged these assumptions. I understood that the trauma, fears, and experiences of my family and community had led me to adopt the same fears, even though I never experienced them myself. This realization was pivotal for me, and it made me see the importance of breaking the cycle of inherited trauma

Working in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation



BRIDGES OF PEACE

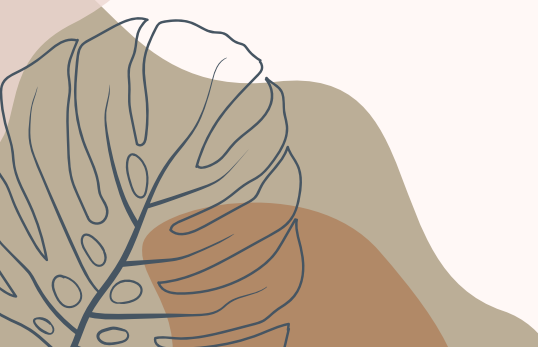
Introduction to Peacebuilding Work

- Working in the field of peacebuilding and reconciliation with my small organization in Kosovo has given me the opportunity to meet many young people who go through the same path I did—holding assumptions about people they've never met. This is true for young people from both the Albanian and Serbian communities..
- **Challenges Faced by Young People:** The fear they have is fueled by the stories they heard while growing up. These fears and assumptions are deeply ingrained and shape their perceptions and interactions. However, from my experience, these assumptions and fears usually don't survive the first contact



Positive Outcomes of First Contact

As soon as these young people start speaking with each other, their opinions begin to change. Even if they don't speak the same language, they try to find similarities—whether it's through simple words, music, food, or cultural practices. This effort to connect on a human level is incredibly powerful.



Role of Peacebuilding Activities



In our activities, we facilitate these initial contacts and support the young people as they navigate their fears and assumptions. We create safe spaces where they can share their stories, listen to others, and discover common ground. This process is essential for breaking down the barriers built by transgenerational trauma. I approached the experience with an open mind.

Generational Differences in Perspectives

Another thing that my colleagues and I have realized is that the generation born about five years after the war has a different perspective. They are more eager and curious to meet each other and don't have the same fear instilled in them. The escalation of the situation affects them differently, as we can see from the ages of people who join our activities. When it is calmer, we have more participants born between 1998 and 2002/3, while after tensions rise, we usually see younger people born after 2005

Impact on the Youth:

I've seen firsthand how these interactions transform young people. They begin to question their inherited biases and build new, positive relationships with individuals from different communities. This not only helps in personal healing but also contributes to the broader goal of reconciliation and peacebuilding in Kosovo

Conclusion

In conclusion, my personal experiences with transgenerational trauma have deeply influenced my work as a peacebuilder. By fostering dialogue and understanding, we can help young people move past inherited traumas and build a more inclusive and peaceful society. Thank you for listening, and I look forward to any questions or discussions.



*Thank
You*

