

The well-known "Z Generation" (generational range that includes people born between the years 1990 and 2010) is usually seen by older people as "the generation made of glass"; the most sensitive, untouchable, creators of pathologies never seen before.

In addition, it is evident that there is a notorious difference between generations when it comes to facing life's difficulties. The transparency and self-respect of this generation has helped thousands of people to outline a new perspective on life, for themselves and for others through self-knowledge. As a result, resilient people are on the rise.

Previous generations have always been resilient, each with its own unique context. And the Gen Z has a sense of resilience that involves self-care and a vision of prosperity, not just an individual's sense of achievement.

A great and practical example I often use is how I got to where I am. I am Brazilian, and the Brazilian people are worldwide known as warrior and suffering people. But, in fact, Brazilians have a plenty knowledge when it comes to RESILIENCE. Not that giving up has ever been an option in our entire historical context, but it is easy to say that we are not the type to give up easily on what we believe.

I'm a black girl from *the outlying ghettos* and my situation has never conditioned my dreams. Currently, at the age of 18, I am studying the third period at UFBA (Federal University of Bahia), which is known as one of the best public universities in the whole country. I was able to finish high school at a top private school with a 100 percent scholarship. And during that same time, I was able to be a student in an English course with a scholarship of 100 as well. And I wouldn't have achieved this from a philanthropic project for low-income children if it hadn't taught me about resilience.

"The **Bom Aluno** Program encourages the development of low-income students who demonstrate talent, good school performance and commitment, providing the opportunity for an academic education of excellence from the 7th year of elementary school to the conclusion of higher education. It offers educational and professional training so that students complete their studies with the necessary preparation to thrive in the demanding world of work,

achieving professional success. Together, socio-emotional skills are also improved, including aspects of citizenship and solidarity, with the aim of training agents of social transformation.

Resilience has been a hallmark of students, who give their best in the pursuit of improving their skills. In Salvador, where I live, the program was named 'Adebori' which in the Yoruba dialect means: 'The one or the one who came to win'." Brief introduction about Bom Aluno available on its website [www.bomaluno.org.br].

I joined the project after a selection process, in 2015, I was 11 years old, with more children of the same age. We had Portuguese, Math, Literature and Personal Development classes during the week, always during the afternoon. The program gave us monthly food vouchers, helped us with the public transport card, gave us school supplies at the beginning of the year and paid for materials such as uniforms for private schools. We had all this thanks to the sponsors, who made their investments and donations for the project. All free for the students. All we had to do was be good students.

The process was hard. Good grades don't just show up on your report card, you must fight for them.

At age 12, I used to spend about 12 hours away from home going from school to Bom Aluno classes. At age 14, I was taking 6 different public transports to get to classes and back home. My resilience was put to the test several times between low grades and impatience to reach my goals soon. It was a painful process of growing up, and today, as a young adult, I look back on it with affection.

Some dear colleagues stayed along the way because they had other priorities, certainly different at that moment. And there was no judgment, after all we were growing up and minds were changing either. As I said, it was a painful process. I often had to deal with low grades, even though I studied so hard. It was like nothing was enough, and I thought I was never getting better.

So many nights up late studying, so many tests, activities, schedules, demands of a teenage mind. All at the same time, testing my limits of resilience. How far could I go without giving up? How far could I believe in my potential? And my dreams, what were they? Was it worth believing in the purpose?

It was frustrating to give up being "a teenager with a regular life" and still not be instantly rewarded. Small situations in a teenager's mind are usually a big catastrophe.

Nothing in life is easy, and when it is, it's usually not appreciated. It took a long and time-consuming plantation to arrive the time for a beautiful harvest. Gradually, the conquests arrived and what before seemed the end of the world, was no longer feared. I got the scholarship in the English course, and then I got the scholarship in the private school. None of this I would have achieved if I hadn't been resilient when everything seemed to crumble on my shoulders.

The story started to change during the 2020 global pandemic, because financial problems became unsustainable. Even so, the project tried to reinvent itself, with the help of students, teachers, and parents to find new partners. All in a discreet way, so that the students could calmly complete their studies at the school. And at the end of 2021, with the students from the last group already graduated from high school after 5 years in the project, the relationship between sponsors and Bom Aluno fell apart.

Unfortunately, the project is no longer active in Salvador, where I live. The class I was part of was the last to be opened and we saw the project fade.

Project coordinators partnered with another philanthropic action in order not to abandon recent students, but things were not the same. In a way, there was a feeling of longing for the project that was so welcoming and did so much for the students and, even though it was hanging by a thread, it caused a great mobilization to not let everything go away easily. The Good Student fought

for many, and many fought for the good student, in a great symphony of sincere solidarity and resilience.

But, in a loving way, I keep the lessons and all the memories of this philanthropic initiative that transformed the lives of dozens of low-income families. Nothing was in vain; Bom Aluno is alive in each of the students who passed through there. An example of organizational resilience that inspired individual resilience in its students to fight for a cause, a purpose. Fight for education.

During my journey, I lost my grandmother, a familiar figure who had my full appreciation. It was difficult to deal with the absence of the independent and strong woman who inspired me so much. 3 years later, I lost my oldest brother to police violence. This was during the pandemic, which was even worse. I needed to reinvent myself, recalculate some routes and try to remember what I was still fighting for. I needed to remind myself what I was capable of. I bounced back to emerge stronger.

It was a long and quiet period of life. Grief can be very lonely sometimes. My father, who used to take me to Bom Aluno classes in the first year, was also a crucial part of this moment of reinvention. He had just lost his oldest son, and I had lost a brother. 3 years before, I lost a grandmother, the matriarch, and he lost his mother. Basically, we saw each other as inspirational figures to overcome grief, we were pillars for and through each other.

Sometimes, resilience is not just born within your own core. It can reflect the resilience of someone you admire. Human beings tend to copy from others what they find interesting, and my father and I saw in each other the opportunity to not only come out of grief but also to reinvent ourselves. A new version of him for a new vision of life, and a new version of me for what the future was about to show. Faith in the future was stronger than the pain of the past.

Some wounds stopped hurting and became fuel in transforming difficulties into just small goals to be overcome. Before looking at a long staircase, we must calmly look at the steps, as we must climb one at a time. Resilience exists to teach the capacity for renewal, transformation. Difficulties eventually become achievements; challenges become temporary goals. And pains that seem incessant become peace. After all, it all depends on the way we see the world, and it takes patience to see the possibilities.

And then, when it's possible to encourage resilience, it's really a time of bigger changes. Individual resilience can make us achieve great things, but resilience as a vision of prosperity in society is capable of transforming lives forever.