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# Education for peace in Colombia: from well-being in education to a real social change?

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## Résumé

Education for peace in Colombia: from well-being in education to a real social change? Within the theme 3 ("School climate and communal life") of the conference on "Well-being in education", my paper seeks to examine the challenge that Colombian society faces in a post-conflict era regarding education for peace. My proposal is based on my work experience as an adviser to the vice-ministry of higher education in Colombia between 2012 and 2014, and seeks to analyze the extent to which the political intentions exposed by the Presidential Decree 1038 of 2015 (indicating that educational institutions must create a chair of peace) are sufficient to understand the dimension of what it means to learn to live in peace after 60 years of war.

Methodologically speaking, this paper is based on an inductive reasoning that arises from the seminars held on the subject with educational communities of higher education institutions in Colombia between 2012 and 2014. The different observations made by the actors allowed us to analyze from their own experience the central elements that are important to consider when it comes to talking about education for peace in Colombia. It is not only about presenting a firsthand public policy educational experience including its pros and cons, but also about examining the challenges that the Colombian educational system faces in the construction of well-being and peace. The scope of this peace cannot be limited to negotiations in Havana, but must extend to a change of mentality that involves active participation of the community and a public policy that supports such participation. Today a vast majority of schools do not feel entirely responsible for these processes and believe, wrongly, that these depend solely on agreements between the government and the FARC.

Throughout this presentation, the paper seeks to answer two main questions, the study of which could lay the foundations for a cutting-edge contribution on how to reflect once education policy for peace in Colombia. The questions are as follows:

**Who should be educated for peace?** Traditionally, education for peace was thought as a complementary curricular option, and at the most as a not so dominant side topic across subjects taught in the classroom. The practices of peace education are not only to promote social harmony within schools and the educational community: rather, they are a holistic project of social action. That is, a transformative project that goes beyond the classroom and develops as part of a policy designed for citizenship.

**To what extent is education for peace in Colombia a real challenge to build well-being in education and lasting peace and what are its characteristics?** Education

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for peace requires a change of mentality and a preparation for the changes in society taking into account specific contexts. In this case this requires a clear understanding of Colombian society as a whole before dealing with changes in a country where several generations are used to live in the midst of an armed conflict. It also means valuing and fostering diversity in this society (understanding and protecting its particularities) as well as promoting respect for difference.

To answer these two questions, and after a brief theoretical presentation of what it means to educate for peace, following a definition of positive peace (I), I will focus on what could be defined as the central aspects of peace education in the Colombian context taking into account the testimonies of educational higher education communities in different parts of the country (II). These aspects will allow me to discuss the challenges facing the Colombian educational system to implement a real social change (III).

Bibliography (exceeds allowed characters)

**Mots-Clés:** education for peace, inclusive education, violence, well, being, participation