

Perspectivas internacionales sobre el desarrollo de una pedagogía para la construcción de Paz en Colombia

International perspectives on developing pedagogy towards the construction of Peace in Colombia

Perspectives internationales sur le développement de la pédagogie vers la construction de Paix en Colombie

Perspectivas internacionais sobre o desenvolvimento de uma pedagogia para a construção de Paz na Colômbia

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Resumen

Este artículo busca proponer ejemplos probados de la pedagogía en el ámbito internacional que puede ayudar al desarrollo de la pedagogía de la paz en Colombia, a la luz de una compleja actitud hacia la paz entre el público en general. El artículo sostiene que sólo una pedagogía crítica, como la enmarcada por primera vez por Paulo Freire, puede ser realmente eficaz en el tratamiento de las razones de múltiples facetas para el conflicto armado en Colombia hacia la construcción de un futuro sostenible pacífico. Los casos de la pedagogía de Irlanda del Norte y Sudáfrica son discutidos junto con las posibilidades que ofrece la pedagogía de la no violencia, la justicia restaurativa y la justicia económica en cuanto a cómo pueden ayudar a la práctica de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje dirigidos hacia el cambio personal, social, política e institucional y transformación. El artículo sostiene que tales enfoques de la pedagogía, tras su adaptación a la situación de Colombia tiene el potencial de lograr la reconciliación real y un compromiso con la justicia en la vida económica, política y social de todos los colombianos.

Palabras clave: justicia restaurativa, no violencia, pedagogía para la paz, reconciliación.

Abstract

This article seeks to propose proven examples from pedagogy in the international sphere that can help the development of pedagogy for peace in Colombia in light of a complex attitude towards peace among the general public. The article will argue that only a Critical pedagogy, as first framed by Paulo Freire, can be truly effective in addressing the multi-faceted reasons for the armed conflict in Colombia towards building a sustainably peaceful future. Cases of pedagogy from Northern Ireland and South Africa will be discussed along with the possibilities offered by pedagogies of nonviolence, restorative justice and economic justice as to how they can help the practice of teaching and learning directed toward personal, social, political and institutional change and transformation. The article will argue that such approaches to pedagogy when adapted to the Colombian situation have the potential to bring about real reconciliation and a commitment to justice in the economic, political and social lives of all Colombians.

Keywords: nonviolence, pedagogy for peace, reconciliation, restorative justice.

Résumé

Cet article cherche à proposer des exemples prouvés de la pédagogie dans la sphère internationale qui puisse aider au développement de la pédagogie pour la paix en Colombie à la lumière d'une attitude complexe vers la paix parmi le public en général. L'article soutiendra que seulement une pédagogie critique, comme d'abord encadré par Paulo Freire, peut être vraiment effective dans l'adressage

des raisons à multiples facettes au conflit armé en Colombie vers la construction d'un avenir durablement paisible. Les cas de pédagogie de l'Irlande du Nord et l'Afrique du Sud seront discutés avec les possibilités offertes par les pédagogies de non-violence, la justice réparatrice et la justice économique quant à comment ils peuvent aider la pratique d'enseignement et l'apprentissage adressés vers le changement personnel, social, politique et institutionnel et la transformation. L'article soutiendra que de telles approches à la pédagogie une fois adaptés à la situation colombienne ont le potentiel pour apporter sur la réconciliation réelle et un engagement à la justice dans l'économie, la politique et la vie social de tous les Colombiens.

Mots clefs : justice réparatrice, non-violence, pédagogie pour paix, réconciliation.

Resumo

Este artigo procura propor exemplos comprovados da pedagogia na esfera internacional, que pode ajudar o desenvolvimento da pedagogia para a paz na Colômbia num contexto de complexa atitude para a paz entre o público em geral. O artigo discutirá que somente a pedagogia Crítica, como foi primeiramente sustentada pelo Paulo Freire, poderia ser verdadeiramente efetiva em abordar as multifacetadas razões para o conflito armado na Colômbia, para assim construir uma paz futura sustentável. Casos da pedagogia da Irlanda do Norte e da África do Sul, serão discutidos junto às possibilidades oferecidas pelas pedagogias da não-violência, justiça reconstituente e justiça econômica, assim também no fato de como elas podem ajudar na prática do ensino e da aprendizagem diretamente para o pessoal, o social, político, mudança institucional e transformação. Também o artigo discute as abordagens para a pedagogia, quem quando adaptada à situação colombiana, apresenta o potencial para alcançar uma real reconciliação e um compromisso na justiça no escopo econômico, político e na vida social de todos os colombianos.

Palavras chave: justiça retroativa, não violência, pedagogia para a paz, reconciliação.

Introduction

The achievement of a peaceful society is no simple task, especially in the context of Colombia, a country where war and violence have been ever present among vast swathes of the country due to the activities of various and distinct armed actors since 1948.² The current peace negotiations in Habana, Cuba, between the

² In 1948 popular Liberal leader and presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated in Bogota sparking off massive riots known as the "Bogotazo" and a decade of violence across Colombia between Liberals and Conservatives in a period known as "La Violencia". Retrieved 10th May 2015 from: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/223578/Jorge-Eliecer-Gaitan>



Colombian Government and the largest insurgent force in Colombia, FARC, have given hope to many Colombians, that a settlement to end the armed insurgency of the left-wing guerrillas and the violence of the State forces in response may be in sight. Despite this hope however, there exists a sizeable mass of Colombians who are sceptical of the peace-process and want nothing to do with it.

The FARC's killing of 11 soldiers in Buenos Aires, Cauca on 15th April 2015 sparked outrage among many Colombians who responded by posting messages on social media calling for the return of Uribe and the disappearance of Santos from the political scene. Santos was seen as traitorous for being “soft” on terrorism, whereas Uribe, the former militant president who has been a consistent and outspoken opponent of the peace talks, was seen to be the “hard-man” who would not bow down to the guerrillas in such a humiliating way as had Santos. (Vulliamy, 2015) With the bulk of the Colombian national media feeding into such a portrayal of events, the peace process was suspended for a day and Santos lifted the ban on aerial bombing, resulting in the killing of 5 civilians a short time after, which was barely reported in the national media. (Alsema, 2015) These events served to demonstrate that a vocal and sizeable group of Colombians have not tired of war as the means by which to solve Latin America's longest running conflict and see the talks in Havana as a sop to “terrorists”, who are seen as the principal cause of Colombia's woes.

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper, “El País”, Colombian Jesuit priest, Francisco de Roux, claimed that if there was a referendum on the outcome of any successful conclusion to the peace talks in Habana, the result would probably be a resounding rejection. He claimed that the urban classes in particular, had not experienced the conflict as a living reality as had the “zonas rojas” and for them, the end to the violence was not hugely pressing (Criollo, 2014). What makes this claim disturbing is the lack of empathy that Father de Roux describes as existing between ordinary everyday Colombians. Despite the half century duration of the Civil War and the diverse opportunities that a political settlement between the FARC and the Colombian Government could bring, it seemed that a huge amount of Colombians were simply not ready for peace.

In contrast to the complexities of public opinion within Colombia towards the peace process, internationally there is huge support and hope for an end to the armed conflict. Governments, International institutions, NGOs and social movements from all over the world are starting the conversation about the potential development of a Colombia in a post-conflict stage. The view that too much progress has been made on key issues to turn back on the path to agreement is shared by these international actors and they are actively involved in extending

whatever help they can give towards a positive conclusion to the Havana talks. (Bouvier, 2014).

Developing a Critical Pedagogy of Peace

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root. (Henry David Thoreau, 1854, p.51)

Regardless of the outcome of the peace-process in Cuba, education and pedagogy have a central role to play in the building of a real and sustainable peace in Colombia. UNICEF describes Peace education as an essential component of quality basic education, as the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Fountain, 1999) Any agreement from Havana, while welcome in the sense that it may end a decades old civil war and reduce dramatically the level of violence in Colombia, is only a step along the way to achieving true harmony among people in Colombia. The success of the talks to date has been that there has been an explosion of discussion around issues of peace and justice, not just among the actors in the conflict but among the general population at large.

As John Paul Lederach (1997), a leading author on peace-building, advises, “Building peace in today’s conflicts calls for long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of a society, an infrastructure that empowers the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximizes the contribution from outside.” (p. xvi) Lederach argues that given the nature of contemporary armed conflict, peacebuilding faces four main challenges. First, it must transform the international culture which accepts and promotes the global sale of weapons. Second, peacebuilding approaches must take a very long-term view in order to build enduring peace. Third, peacebuilding must take a broader, more comprehensive view of the people and contexts which produce conflict. Finally, it must focus on preventing minor conflicts from escalating into open warfare (Lederach, 1997). The development of pedagogy, which tackles these key issues and more, is vital in the laying of stable foundations for a more just society where peace can prevail in Colombia.

While many important educational initiatives are already under way in the guise of peace education at the state and NGO level, much more needs to be done to plant the seeds of a peaceful and prosperous future for Colombia. The educational initiatives of the Government in the area of promoting citizenship pedagogies



and peace education³ are welcome and along with organisations who are working hard in developing pedagogies of peace like Fé y Alegría⁴ (Faith and Happiness) the Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular⁵ (Centre of Research and Popular Education) and the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica⁶ (CNMH), these approaches can be strengthened and supported by studying the examples from international pedagogy. Above all else, a pedagogy towards peace in Colombia needs to grow substantially. All educational institutions, whether public or private, formal or informal, must take responsibility for peace building by developing pedagogy that explores, analyses critically, and seeks solutions and a praxis for peace both locally and nationally for the conflict that has gripped Colombia for more than three decades.

Pedagogy determines who we are and how we present ourselves as teachers and learners, how we produce and consume knowledge, and how our actions can model and change the lives of students. In this respect, the work of Paulo Freire has been monumental in opening the debate on pedagogy towards the possibilities of promoting the liberation which in its fullest sense brings about an authentic peace among all of humankind. (Freire, 1996) It would seem fundamental to developing a pedagogy of peace, when the term peace is understood in terms of harmony among human beings and their environment, to embrace Freire's Critical pedagogy, which Henry Giroux and others have described as a praxis-oriented “educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students deve-

3 On 1st September 2014, the Government passed Law 1732 officially creating Peace Education as a subject in Colombia, which seeks to “create and consolidate space for learning, reflection and dialogue about a culture of peace and sustainable development that contributes to the general well-being and betterment of the quality of life for the people”. (Art. 1, para. 2). Retrieved 12th May from: <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/w3-article-349302.html>

4 Fé y Alegría is a Catholic international movement for popular integrated education and social wellbeing. Retrieved 12th May 2015 from: <http://www.feyalegria.org.co/>

5 The Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) is a Jesuit-run organisation that promotes a Peace Program working to promote a sustainable peace through research proposals for region- and nation-building, aimed at the protection and promotion of life, human rights, sustainable development, and peace. Retrieved 12th May 2015 from: http://www.cinep2015.org/Old/2014_V1/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=10&Itemid=39&lang=en

6 Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (CNMH) is a state funded body currently heading a model of Peace Education from the perspective of Historic Memory, for example with activities like “The Tool Box” which consists in joining together educational methodologies constructed by teachers that deals with the historical memory of the Colombian armed conflict and to use reports produced by the CNMH without negative repercussions for the students. Retrieved 12th May 2015 from: <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/areas-trabajo/pedagogia-de-la-memoria>

lop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action.” (Giroux, 2010) It may inevitably lead to tension with the more traditional approaches to pedagogy but it is one that needs exploring and perseverance if the construction of peace in Colombia is to have strong educational roots.

Peace pedagogy can therefore be understood as a value informed philosophy and practice of teaching and learning directed toward personal, social, political and institutional change and transformation. It is a learner-centred pedagogy that is transformational in nature, transdisciplinary in scope, and comprehensively and holistically presented and explored so as to be oriented toward capacitating learners to transform the culture of violence and nurture a culture of peace (Jenkins, 2013).

This is where lessons and examples of pedagogy from the international arena can help Colombia on the road to the construction of a sustainable and just peace. The examples that follow have their roots in Critical pedagogy and while by no means they are the only approaches to creating peace, they have had significant success in the settings where they have been employed and are described with the intention of presenting workable examples for those who work in education in Colombia to follow and experiment with.

The case of Northern Ireland

One country that benefitted enormously from international support for the construction of peace and without which the peace process would likely not have concluded in an agreement, was Northern Ireland. Ending a conflict that had lasted for a period of almost 30 thirty years since 1969 was no small achievement. Similar to the situation that Colombia now faces, there were many challenges to the peace process that had begun in 1994, which resulted in many crisis moments and times when any progress that had been made looked to be for nothing. However, due to the efforts of the Irish and British Governments with support from the US Government and the opposing political parties involved in the peace negotiations, an unlikely compromise was reached on Good Friday 18th April, 1998. It was far from a perfect compromise however, and in the months and years that followed, the implementation of the Agreement was fraught with difficulties and further violence, most notably the horrific bombing of a small town in County Tyrone called Omagh in August 1998 by Irish Republican opponents of the Peace deal which claimed the lives of 33 people.

While nothing like the scale and intensity of the violence that has raged in Colombia, the violence in Northern Ireland nevertheless encompassed many of the aspects of the Colombian conflict. Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries (often in collu-



sion with British State forces), State terrorism of the local populations, secret and extra-judicial assassinations by State forces, torture, kidnappings, disappearances, massacres, civilian casualties and many more violent acts were all features of the 30 year conflict in Northern Ireland, as they have been in Colombia's Civil War. While the origins of the conflict in Northern Ireland differ enormously from the origins of the conflict in Colombia, the legacy of the violence has had strikingly similar tones.

Northern Ireland, which had been a divided society from its foundation in 1921⁷, was, by virtue of the daily scandal of violence by all sides, thrust into a spiral of darkness in which no resolution seemed likely. Despite the entrenchment of opposing mindsets hardened by the level of violence, there were many attempts at peace-building and reconciliation, which were in part responsible for the bi-lateral cease-fires announced in 1994 by the various armed groups involved in the conflict which facilitated the peace talks and subsequent Agreement. One such initiative which continues to the present day in the construction of peace was the opening of the internationally renowned Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in the picturesque mountains outside the capital of the Republic of Ireland, Dublin.

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was founded as a response to violent conflict in Irish society, and in light of a conviction that there must be a better way than violence and vandalism, intolerance and sectarianism. Opened in 1974, Glencree has engaged in practical peacebuilding and reconciliation in Ireland, north and south, and more recently, internationally. They work with former combatants, community leaders, victims/survivors, politicians, faith groups, young people and women with the aim to transform violent conflict with sustainable peaceful methods by including and respecting all stakeholders. A spirit of commitment to these ideals inspired the foundation of the Centre and continues to motivate its varied activities of peace training and peacemaking. (Murphy and Adair, 2004)

As a non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation, it was a response of ordinary people to spearhead an effective and non-violent alternative to the

⁷ Ireland witnessed many rebellions to English rule all of which ended in failure until negotiations in 1921 saw Britain grant partial independence to Ireland, the result of which was the partition of the island into north and south. The North was retained as British territory and the subsequent parliament granted the authority to rule on Britain's behalf was composed entirely of British Protestant loyalists who were the descendants of the successful British plantation of that part of Ireland in the 1500s. This Protestant elite refused to grant civil rights to the minority Catholic population who found themselves victims of history and completely impoverished.

violence that they saw engulfing the society around them. As part of their work they developed a Peace Education Programme, which offered learning opportunities on peacebuilding and reconciliation to primary, secondary schools and youth groups. Through a series of programmes, young people visiting Glenree were able to explore their understanding of themselves, others, and their relationship to communities at local, national and global levels. This was particularly relevant and important for students from the divided communities in Northern Ireland who despite sharing the same geographical proximity, had very little social and cultural interaction, given, among other factors, the largely separated education system where Catholics attended Catholic Ethos Schools and Protestants by and large attended State funded and private schools. The programme developed high quality progressive learning opportunities in Peace Education that were relevant to the National Curriculum. During the lifetime of the project over 6,000 young people participated in the programme. (Murphy and Adair, 2004)

Despite the popularity and general effectiveness of the Peace Education Programme, sustained funding for the project was not achieved and the project ended abruptly in March 2008, losing both the personnel and much of the learning that had been gained in the previous three years. (Murphy and Adair, 2004) The example remains though for Colombia to adopt a space for schools and youth groups to encounter each other in neutral territory and explore the issues of peace and reconciliation that require their active participation in the construction of a sustainable peaceful future in Colombia. Such centres could be opened in places where the conflict has been particularly prevalent but they would require the financial support of businesses networks, philanthropists and State bodies, without losing their independence to produce pedagogy that explores the real issues of peace-building without fear of censure.

In addition to developing pedagogy aimed at transforming the attitudes of young people, Glenree also offered a space for a project involving ex-combatants in the conflict. This programme built relationships in an inclusive forum where current and former military and paramilitary participants met, exchanged views, built relationships and addressed issues important to them. The Programme included loyalist and republican ex-prisoners as well as participants from military and police backgrounds. (Murphy and Adair, 2004) In Colombia, where there has been much anxiety expressed about the re-integration of ex-combatants into civil society, this pedagogical approach can perhaps offer an example of helping the process of humanisation of the other among former enemies. Rather than sensationalising ex-combatants as evil degenerates, incapable of human feelings, the Glenree Centre recognised the humanity inherent in the participants of the conflict, who in their own way were victims to the forces of history and under different circumstances could have lead very different and peaceful lives. In



Ireland this was a difficult message to get across, particularly in the case of IRA ex-prisoners, largely due to the predominant influence of a right-wing, British biased mass media, who favoured scape-goating the IRA for all the ills that the conflict brought to Northern Ireland, not dissimilar to the treatment of the FARC Guerrillas by the mass media in Colombia.

Finally, the success of the Glenree approach to Peace pedagogy can be seen in its programme to address the pain and suffering of the victims of the conflict called, "Let's Involve the Victims' Experience" (LIVE). LIVE brought together survivors from the divided communities in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Britain to engage in dialogue to help build relationships between individuals and their communities. The programme also created space for dialogue between survivors and those who have been actively engaged in the violence of the conflict. (Murphy and Adair, 2004) The victims were a largely forgotten group when it came to the peace negotiations and had to campaign tirelessly to highlight their concerns and need to be heard. Glenree facilitated this vital aspect of peace construction.

Although in Colombia, the groups of people representing the "victims" have been able to make their voices heard in the talks in Havana (and make significant contributions) there remains the challenge as to how to build understanding and reconciliation between them and the perpetrators of the crimes against them and their loved ones. In many cases surrounding incidents in the conflict of Northern Ireland, groups of victims seeking justice or at least recognition of the violence inflicted upon them by whatever actor in the conflict, were denied this, in large part to the absence of a Truth and Reconciliation Forum, which the British Establishment couldn't agree to. In Colombia, such a forum would be an extremely painful step for the victims, especially in cases of extreme violence and cruelty, but more than justice, the victims value truth to aid the healing process after years of bitter violence.

The Case of South Africa

Until 1994 South Africa was ruled by a white minority government which enforced a separation of races with its policy called apartheid. The government introduced grand social engineering schemes such as the forced resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people. It also killed, imprisoned and exiled its opponents and fomented instability in hostile neighbouring countries. Originally the use of civil resistance against apartheid was based on Gandhian ideas, which originated in South Africa in 1906 where Gandhi was a lawyer working for an Indian trading firm. Soon the African National Congress (ANC), founded in 1912, became the major force opposing the apartheid system's oppression of the 80% non-European population of the country. Using mostly legal tactics of protest during its first four decades, the ANC became more militant in the early 1950s

and began using nonviolent direct action (Kondlo, Saunders and Zondi, 2014). White South Africans (Afrikaners) monopolized control over the state and the economy, including rich natural resources such as a third of the world's known gold reserves. The Afrikaners developed an explicit theology and philosophy of white racial superiority and a legal and economic system enforced by a modern military and police force that deliberately excluded nonwhites from economic and political power. Nevertheless, the system became increasingly reliant upon non-white labour and isolated from international diplomacy and trade (Kondlo et al., 2014). Discouraged about the lack of results from their nonviolent campaign, Nelson Mandela and others called for an armed uprising, creating the *Umkhonto We Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation") that paralleled the nonviolent resistance. That, too, failed to tear down the apartheid system, and in the end a concerted grassroots nonviolent civil resistance movement in coalition with international support and sanctions forced the white government to negotiate. Despite its powerful security forces, mineral wealth and industrial capacity, apartheid South Africa was dependent on its non-white labour force, southern African neighbours, and international ties with the industrial West. As these pillars withdrew their support the regime became unsustainable (Kondlo et al., 2014).

On 17 March 1992 two-thirds of South Africa's white voters approved a negotiated end of the minority regime and the apartheid system. Nelson Mandela, a political prisoner for 27 years, was elected as the President of the new South Africa in the first free elections by the entire population. With Mandela seen internationally as embodiment of the healing process of forgiveness in a divided South Africa, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established as an attempt to build reconciliation and deal with the legacy of the horrendous violence that South Africa had experienced in the previous decades and has had important lessons in developing a pedagogy of peace, which can be learned from in the Colombian context.

The TRC operated through three committees: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Amnesty Committee and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. Its mandate was to gather submissions, conduct research, hold public hearings and report to parliament on the gross violations of human rights between the infamous Sharpeville massacre in 1960⁸ up to the elections of 1994. It didn't seek to address all the wrongs of apartheid, nor did it cover the full period of apartheid but rather its focus was on extreme acts of violence by individuals,

8 69 black people were killed and 180 injured when police opened fire on a peaceful protest in the South African township of Sharpeville against the pass laws, which were designed by the apartheid government to seriously restrict black people's movement in white areas. Retrieved 10th May from: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/sharpeville-massacre-21-march-1960>



thus not covering the structural violence of South African society that was a daily reality for many people. It handled more than 21,000 victim statements relating to 38,000 incidents and 14,000 killings, which was nowhere near the amount of violations and killings that were known to have taken place. Of the 7,127 applications for amnesty that its Amnesty Committee received, 1,146 were granted. (Ahluwalia et al, 2012)

The criticisms which followed the work of the TRC were anticipated by the Commission which alluded to such concerns in the pages of its own reports. There was anger over its narrow terms of reference which failed to deal with South Africa's colonial legacy and the structural violence of apartheid; in addition many in the academic community were aghast at its use of the conceptions of "truth", "reconciliation" and "restorative justice"; and the Amnesty given to perpetrators of human rights who walked free often times without remorse or material compensation to those they harmed was controversial to say the least. (TRC Report, 1998) There was a feeling afterwards that the overall work of TRC, given its inability to cast light on all human rights abuses, was an exercise in managing the past and simply allowed those with the greatest responsibility for human rights violations like former presidents, PW Botha and FW de Clerk and army generals to evade the normal processes of justice and accountability. Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, many gains were made by the TRC. An opportunity was provided for public suffering as accounts of the brutality of apartheid were laid bare for the general populace to see. Public spaces, which were seldom given over to such images and narratives of the suffering of thousands of ordinary people, particularly at the hands of the State, were flooded with accounts of inhumane treatment, systematic torture, and killings which gave a voice to the voiceless to tell their story. (Ahluwalia et al, 2012).

In political terms, it helped South Africa come to terms with the violence of its past sufficiently enough to establish common ground for moving forward into a post-apartheid era. A key success was that acts of retribution or political killings as a result of the publication of the TRC Report failed to materialise. The exchange of Amnesty for public truth, while not a perfect legal process, provided sufficient "due process" for the rule of law to be acknowledged. Forgiveness and healing for all the individuals concerns was always going to be an impossible task and one that belonged to a much fuller process of time. But for all its flaws and failure to provide a complete picture of the suffering of people during apartheid, the processes of the TRC helped in the creation of a new State and an imagined community (Ahluwalia et al, 2012).

The lessons for pedagogy to come out of the work of the TRC revolve around the development of an ethics of responsibility. The TRC report argued that all

those who did not oppose violations of human rights under apartheid should be prepared to accept some responsibility for their occurrence. This stretched from those in industry and the banking sectors who provided the different materials and finance for the military to carry out their operations against the oppressed black population, the South African Chaplains who prayed for “victory” and the schools and universities who educated for war to the media who provided the justification and propaganda to sustain human rights abusers and the citizens who time after time voted white minority governments back into power, each time with ever increasing majorities. (TRC Report, 1998) The pedagogical challenge is to provide students with the opportunities to explore the implications of being part of a shared public realm and the necessity of engagement with it. It doesn’t necessarily involve the politicisation of students into any particular ideology but rather cultivating an awareness that the public shared spaces are precarious and is built and eroded in the ordinary everyday activities of ordinary people as well as in the grand gestures of those who hold political power and influence. (Ahluwalia et al, 2012)

It is in the cultivation of an ethical imagination, where students learn to take responsibility for their surrounding and what happens in the world that Colombia could learn from the experiences of South Africa. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be of tremendous benefit, like it was in South Africa, for ordinary Colombians to come to terms with the violence of the past. It could facilitate a critical and honest study of the origins of the conflict in Colombia, allowing for the different versions of history and the reasons for the violent events that took place, no matter how grotesque, to be examined and analysed critically. Victims of this history should be facilitated to come in and recount their own story as a testimony to the cruelty that peace education seeks to eradicate from a new shared future. It could also help to dismantle what Rene Girard termed the “scapegoat mechanism” in Colombian society where all of Colombia’s ills are blamed on the FARC and its fellow Guerrilla groups. (Girard, 2003) It could enable pedagogy of ethical responsibility in exploring the causes of the violence in Colombia and the complicity of everyone in the society in it. Any such TRC in Colombia would have the benefit of learning from the flaws and shortcomings of what took place in South Africa and while it would be impossible to have a perfect process of truth and reconciliation, it would have the potential to influence large swathes of Colombian society who are not convinced about peace and the sacrifices it demands, to come on board given the testimony who those who have suffered the horrendous effects of war. In addition, the work of French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur could be of huge help in his work towards what can be termed, “a Pedagogy of Pardon”. Having lived through two world wars in Europe he came to believe that the first step towards reconciliation lay in work of evolving a culture of “just memory” in efforts to find common narratives of the past. In challenging



post-conflict communities towards an ethical discussion of the past, he believed that the re-opening and re-examination of the tensions between the narrative memories can lead to a healing which ultimately results in reconciliation. Any potential TRC in Colombia, would be greatly enhanced by incorporating Ricoeur's approach to individual and collective forgiveness (Duffy, 2009).

Towards a pedagogy of nonviolence

Despite the growing success of active nonviolence, nonviolent people power remains largely ignored, misunderstood and under-utilized. Assumptions based on selective readings of history and a set of persistent stereotypes (which assert that nonviolence is passive, weak and ineffective, in spite of growing evidence to the contrary) block access to this power and hinder its deployment. Active nonviolence is neither passive nor ineffective. Rather, active nonviolence is a form of effective and deeply rooted power at the disposal of people and societies. Energetic and courageous, this power creates peace, justice and meaning without maintaining and escalating the spiral of retaliatory violence. Unlike violence that threatens and dominates, the power of nonviolence is rooted in the human capacity for connection, compassion, and cooperation. Equipping people from all walks of life with the vision and toolbox of nonviolence has proven to have a multiplier effect in catalyzing and deepening the momentum of people-power movements for social change (Butigan, 2003).

One of the most effective global organizations building a pedagogy of nonviolence is "Pace e Bene", based in San Francisco in the United States. Pace e Bene's name derives from St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi who used this phrase in their own time as a form of greeting, which translated from the Italian means "Peace and all good!". Founded in 1989 by the Franciscan Friars of California, their stated mission is to foster a just and peaceful world through nonviolence education, community-building, and action (Ediger, 2009). Pace e Bene's vision is rooted in the spiritually grounded practice of active nonviolence and its unique approach has been transforming lives and reaching people around the globe. They work with individuals, organizations, and movements to strengthen their efforts to abolish war, protect human rights, end poverty, challenge injustice, heal the planet and to meet today's profound spiritual task: to build a more just, peaceful and nonviolent world. Over the two decades of its existence, over 30,000 people across the world have taken 700 Pace e Bene workshops⁹ to gain tools for more healthy relationships and to create a new society (Ediger, 2009). These workshops

9 Workshops from a Christian Nonviolence viewpoint are detailed in the book, Butigan, K. (2002) From Violence to Wholeness. Las Vegas. Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service while workshops from a secular viewpoint are detailed in Slattery, L., Butigan, K., Pelicarić, V. and Preston-Pile, K. (2005) Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living. California. Pace e Bene Press

and study groups have opened “safe space” for people to explore the experience and dynamic of violence, described in the program as: “any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural or spiritual behaviour, attitude, policy or condition that diminishes, dominates, or destroys ourselves or others” (Butigan, 2002, p. 28). It then invites people to explore nonviolent power as a force for justice and the well-being of all to challenge the pervasive “violence belief system” and to create an alternative to passivity on the one hand or retaliatory violence on the other (Butigan, 2002).

In the context of Colombia, it would seem an obvious step to develop a pedagogy of nonviolence for use in classrooms and educational centers throughout the country. However, as in most countries of the world, it is not convenient to give support for educating about nonviolence, whether that is secular or from a religious or spiritual viewpoint. As Pope Francis remarked in his answer to an Egyptian child about why people in power do not do more to help schools, he said that the question could be expanded as to why many powerful people do not want peace. He went on to say that such people live from war and profit from the industry of death. The money they make from war is at the expense of lives, culture and education among many other things. (Blumberg, 2015) Nonviolence directly challenges the norm of regular armies and resolving local, national and international disputes through the use of violence and as such it is not in the interests of governments or their financial friends, to give impetus to the development of such a pedagogical approach.

The Catholic Church too has greatly impeded a pedagogy of nonviolence, despite Jesus’ clear commitment to nonviolent means as the way to bring about the reign of the Kingdom of God, by clinging to a highly controversial and erroneous tradition of the Just-war theory. The Catholic Church is the largest supplier of non-governmental formal education in Colombia and as such is well placed to deliver the funding and facilities over to developing a pedagogy of nonviolence, such as that promoted by *Pace e Bene*. However, a great debate and sea-change in thinking over the issue of Christian nonviolence among the authorities of the Church would be necessary if such an approach to pedagogy was to be encouraged.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties of achieving support from official channels for a pedagogy of nonviolence, humankind is living in an era when, despite its enormous violence, a deep historical shift is taking place in favour of the cooperative power of active, transformative, and effective nonviolence.¹⁰ People

10 This shift, which has been gathering momentum for the past three hundred years, accelerated during the 20th century with the application of spiritually-grounded nonviolence (*Satyagraha*) by Mohandas Gandhi to win India’s independence from Britain; with the spirited use of discipli-



in innumerable contexts have used nonviolence to work for the survival and dignity of all and in Colombia the *San José de Apartado Peace Community* is one such example of a community courageously dedicated to living out nonviolence surrounded by armed actors to the Civil War on all sides.¹¹

Nonviolent Communication

Complementing this historical shift is the work done by Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg, who founded and was for many years the Director of Educational Services for the Center for Nonviolent Communication, an international peacemaking organization. During his life he authored fifteen books, including the bestselling “Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life”, which has sold more than one million copies worldwide and has been translated into more than 30 languages. Growing up in a turbulent Detroit neighbourhood, Dr. Rosenberg developed a keen interest in new forms of communication that would provide peaceful alternatives to the violence he encountered. His subsequent life experience and study of comparative religion motivated him to develop the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process. (Rosenberg, 2003).

Dr. Rosenberg first used the NVC process in federally funded school integration projects to provide mediation and communication skills training during the 1960s. The Center for Nonviolent Communication, which he founded in 1984, now has hundreds of certified NVC trainers and supporters teaching NVC in more than 35 countries around the globe. Dr. Rosenberg led NVC workshops and international intensive trainings for tens of thousands of people in over 60 countries across the world and provided training and initiated peace programs in a number of war-torn areas including Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, the Middle East, Colombia, Serbia, Croatia, and Northern Ireland. He worked with such groups as educators, managers, mental health and health care providers, lawyers, military officers, prisoners, police and prison officials, clergy, government officials, and individual families. (Rosenberg, 2003).

ned nonviolence by the US Civil Rights movement to make epochal change in the United States; and with countless nonviolent struggles for human rights, political change and environmental protection.

11 Founded in 1997 in an area of Urabá and formed of displaced people, whose parents and grandparents have been victims of violence, it has been subject of campaigns from the highest levels of the national government and media to discredit it. Around 150 of its 1,000 members have been killed by state security forces, paramilitaries or the FARC but despite this, it has remained committed to nonviolent resistance and with the help of the Catholic Church and international peace groups, it has developed an alternative to the current model of society, especially in terms of holistic and ecological economic alternatives. (War Resisters League, 2009, Handbook for Non-violent Campaigns)

What set Marshall apart from the thousands of conflict resolution and communication trainers he has influenced was his exceptional capacity to role-play interactions with the audience. Whether it was an argument between warring spouses, or warring villages, a dialogue between a victim and perpetrator, or modelling an interaction between a counsellor and her patient, these powerful role-plays offered a unique, moving and powerful experience to all who heard them (Rosenberg, 2003).

Given that Colombian society is engaging with what a post-conflict Colombia would look like, this has opened up a broader discussion on other types of violence in Colombia that also need addressing if a true peace is to be achieved. The topics of domestic violence, violence against women and children, gender violence, gang violence, social and economic violence, vigilante violence and many other types of violence that scourge the lives of Colombians on a daily basis are being included in the peace building agenda. A recognition has emerged that the problems of violence in Colombia go much deeper than just guerrilla, State, paramilitary and narco violence. It would seem therefore to be vitally important that Nonviolent Communication is developed into any peace pedagogy which seeks to be effective in creating the conditions for a peaceful future, given its universal adaptability.

Restorative Justice in the education system

Among educationalists there is now a growing body of research and awareness that school discipline systems that mimic the run of the mill justice systems of the world, where “the punishment fits the crime” are no longer fit for purpose. To this end Restorative Justice in the school setting is gaining more and more attention from school authorities across the world as a credible and real alternative to punitive practices of discipline. Restorative justice echoes ancient and indigenous practices employed in cultures all over the world, from Native American and First Nation Canadian to African, Asian, Celtic, Hebrew, Arab and many others (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012). It is a response to the challenges in implementing and sustaining transformative citizenship and peace-building pedagogies in schools. Restorative Justice uniquely emphasizes social engagement over social control. In so doing, it supports pedagogy, praxis, and discipline wherein, behaviour is understood in social context, individuals are recognized as being part of a social web of relations, and building, maintaining, and repairing relationships become priorities. This focus on developing rich and embedded relationships within schools supports individual development and social responsibility. This is distinct from formal institutional responses that rely on systems of institutional sanctions to leverage compliance (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012).

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) based in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the United States is one such organisation promoting a pedagogy



of Restorative Justice in schools across the globe. Its stated aim is borrowed from a remark by Albert Einstein in a speech in 1936, “the training of independently acting and thinking individuals who, however, see in the service of the community their highest life problem” (Costello, Wachtel and Wachtel, 2009: 3). While the IIRP is a relatively new graduate school (it opened in 2000), the organization itself has for some time been an integral part of a large worldwide movement of scholars, policy-makers and practitioners advancing the fields of restorative justice and, more broadly, restorative practices. It defines Restorative Practices as a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making helping to reduce crime, violence and bullying, improve human behaviour, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships and repair harm (Costello et al., 2009).

The field of restorative practices has significant implications for all aspects of society from families, classrooms, schools and prisons to workplaces, associations, governments, even whole nations because restorative practices can develop better relationships among these organizations’ constituents and help the overall organization function more effectively. For example, in schools, the use of restorative practices has been shown to reliably reduce misbehaviour, bullying, violence and crime among students and improve the overall climate for learning. Everyone who finds themselves in positions of authority from parents, teachers and police to administrators and government officials can benefit from learning about restorative practices (Costello et al., 2009).

It is not just the Colombian school system that would benefit from researching how to apply the principles of Restorative justice in its education system but across the world where formal education appears to be in a state of crisis. The popular documentary, “*La Educación Prohibida*” summarises very well the main problems with an education system that crushes creativity and indeed penalises those who “think outside the box”.¹²

In a post-conflict Colombia, it would appear vital that a radical reform of how schools operate in relation to discipline and control would be essential to helping the construction of peace. A pedagogy of Restorative Justice understood in this context could have the potential to transform the society into one which thinks less about how many years one should spend in prison for violent acts and more about why the violent act occurred and leading to an understanding of how the

12 “*La Educación Prohibida*” is a unique and independent Argentinean film, which questions the logic of modern schooling and the way of understanding education, leading to a proposal for a new paradigm in education by examining alternative practices from around the world. Retrieved 11th May 2015 from: <http://www.educacionprohibida.com/pelicula/que/>

damage inflicted can be atoned for. It would be a vital support for any Truth and Reconciliation Commission that may be set up to deal with the legacy of violence in Colombia that an understanding of how and why Restorative justice works is given full airing in the educational system. While many will be sceptical as was the case in South Africa that Restorative justice is about “letting people off the hook” for their crimes, a more focused and in-depth education around its aims and methods from the bottom up could eventually have revolutionary reforms in the Justice system and empower communities across Colombia in dealing with the causes and effects of criminal behaviour and ultimately preparing the way for violent actors in the conflict and the broader society to reintegrate into society in a positive way.

Promoting holistic and ecological pedagogy

An extremely relevant and important aspect of any development of peace pedagogy which seeks to build a peaceful and shared future in Colombia must deal with the central issues of the economy and climate justice. A lot of the conflict that has been visited upon Colombia can be traced to a lack of economic justice, especially in rural areas where the conflict has been most acutely felt. A new vision of economics and sustainable development away from the failed policies and politics of neo-liberalism would seem to be of the utmost importance in the construction of true peace with justice in Colombia.

One example of a college challenging the paradigms of the dominant global capitalist economic model is the Schumacher College, opened first in 1991 and based in the idyllic English countryside with the aim of investigating how holistic thinking can be used as a tool for understanding the roots of the global ecological and social crises.

Named after E.F.Schumacher, the author of the iconic green text, “Small is Beautiful”,¹³ the College’s purpose was to “provide a place and space where the implications of the profound changes in world views now surfacing in so many fields of human thought and endeavour can be studied – and lived – to some depth.” (Philips, 2008, p.21) It took seriously the view of Schumacher on education’s role, “The task of education should be, first and foremost, the transmission of ideas of value, of what to do with our lives” (Philips, 2008, p. 3).

13 E.F. Schumacher was born in Germany but lived most of his life in England. His book, “Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered” (1973) became a world best-seller and a real and convincing alternative to the growing capitalist economic system, very much relevant and urgent for our times. Retrieved 11 May 2015 from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/10/small-is-beautiful-economic-idea>



The holistic pedagogical paradigm as practiced at Schumacher College places interdependence at the heart of ecology, economy and society – and indeed of the learning journey itself. An important element of interdependence resides in the connection between people’s inner values, aspirations and cultural stories and their outer manifestation in the world in the form of the socio-economic systems humans have collectively created. The economy is not a separate entity, but rather a set of relationships that are constantly co-created and re-created, which over time become embedded in institutions (such as governments, policy frameworks and enterprises) and social and cultural institutional norms. Economic relationships stem from people’s own values and behaviours as they strive to satisfy their own wants, needs and desires. This manifests in their economic relationships with society (as consumers, employers, employees, investors, savers, citizens and so forth) and with nature (in terms of use of natural resources and services and as a direct source of well-being) (Philips, 2008).

The aim of the certificate that they offer through their courses is to give participants an introduction to holistic thinking and action that has been developed in the West over recent years and to explore parallels between this thinking and the insights of indigenous cultures. The emphasis is on exploring wholeness: what it is, how it can manifest in one’s life and how it can inspire one to develop ways of living that are in tune with the Earth. (Philips, 2008) Indeed, they have opened up one such course to participants resident in Colombia with *Efecto Mariposa*,¹⁴ an organisation that promotes deep ecology and sustainability in Latin America. They have recently announced the launch of a pioneering certificate-level course for participants in the region based in Tenjo, Cundinamarca (Colombia).

It would serve the cause of building peace in Colombia hugely if such education was widely promoted and made available through grants and government sponsorship, especially to those in the business, economic, and agricultural sectors of society. Links could be made with existing schools and the Schumacher College to include the future generations of Colombian society in an alternative to the economics of environmental exploitation and the philosophy of neo-liberal capitalist that “more is better, greed is good”.

14 As a non-profit organization, Efecto Mariposa forges new ethics based on the wonders of life and shares Schumacher understandings of deep ecology and holistic education. Based in Colombia, it seeks to change the paradigms of thought through innovative learning approaches like this one, in order to foster harmonic and sustainable opportunities for students, their communities and their lands. Retrieved 11th May from: <https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/worldwide-courses/certificate-in-holistic-science-and-economics-for-transition-colombia-2015#sthash.zlx5DWZf.dpuf>

Conclusions

Peace education as theory is all very interesting and makes for some great debates, but to have a real impact on society, such education needs to come down from the ivory towers in which it can often times be trapped. In this respect, the involvement and active participation of the whole community of students and parents are essential. Working at a theoretical and socially, economically or politically elite level in promoting peace education is a waste of time. Community involvement in the broadest sense is of paramount importance.

The development of Peace Pedagogy must be given the highest priority in schools and universities throughout Colombia. If peace is so important, then it needs to be invested in heavily in terms of time, money and energy. It is vital that international approaches to peace pedagogy such as ones articulated in this article are studied and experts from the field are invited to share their experiences with their Colombian counterparts. In particular, the public schools and universities require that state money be made available for the training of teachers and development of pedagogy and all the other costs associated with the implementation of peace educational projects. All the money previously invested in making war should be made available to creating a society of peace, based on values very different from those associated with militarism.

As A.J. Muste, a radical 20th Century American prophet of nonviolence, famously remarked, “There is no way to peace, peace is the way” (Ward, 2015). The construction of peace in Colombia is a process, comprised of a series of experiments in truth. Educators in both the formal and informal spheres need to be prepared to never see the fruits of their labours for peace in a future yet to be determined. The duty of peace educators is simply to be ready and able to plant the seeds of peace and be ready to change tact upon reflection and changing circumstances. The way of peace involves sharing in people’s human dignity and treating them as human beings capable of loving and receiving love. In this sense, peace is truly an international project and any pedagogy which can help foster the local, national and global changes necessary for the conditions of peace to blossom should be embraced and worked with.

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