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Keywords: *gender approach, peace education, peacebuilding, colombian children.*

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Gender Approach: A Requirement for Peacebuilding

ジェンダーアプローチ：平和構築のための必

Andrea Luna Ruiz

Abstract- After the signing of a peace agreement, countries enter into a process to determine what elements will be taken into account for the peacebuilding phase that begins. This is the case of Colombia; a country that today tries to decipher how it is to live in peace, after more than 50 years of conflict. This essay deals with the general topic of peacebuilding and focuses on a specific issue, the relationship between peacebuilding, gender approach, and education for peace. Thus, the paper will try to solve the following research question: *should the gender approach be included in one of the essential elements of an educational pedagogy for peace in Colombian schools?* The outline of the present essay is as follows: first, the objective of determining whether or not the gender approach should be considered as one of the elements of a peace education pedagogy; second, the background of Colombia's current situation related to peace education and the gender approach; third, the literature review; fourth, an analysis of two cases considered successful; fifth, a series of recommendations; and to finish; sixth, the conclusion of the paper that shows the need to include a gender approach in a peace education pedagogy for children.

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I. Gender Approach: A Requirement for Peacebuilding

A peace education pedagogy is associated with several ideas, including promoting critical thinking, the ability to make decisions, assertive communication and conflict resolution skills, that can be adapted to the realities and needs– in this case of children– in the different regions of a country. Taking into account the complexity of proposing a unique peace education pedagogy –the realities and needs of each region are certainly different–, the primary objective of this research is to determine the essential elements of a peace education pedagogy, to provide educational institutions with tools and strategies to turn education for peace into a process of permanent learning, as a sustainable solution for peace. In the specific case of this paper, the objective will be to determine whether or not the gender approach should be consider as one of these elements, and whether or not it should be included in a peace education pedagogy.

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Moreover, rather than the static idea of teaching peace through a traditional, mandatory and theoretical school lecture, it is sought that the pedagogy aims at mainstreaming peace learning in the school environment. This can be achieved through collaborative work and horizontal dialogue between children, families and teachers, where the school's goal should be the integral development of its students, and not only the classic idea of transmitting certain knowledge and academic skills. The pedagogy aims at integrating peace education transversally in academic areas, involving the entire educational community, so that children empower themselves as true peacebuilding agents in their closest contexts and in society in general.

We must start by pointing out what is an education for peace and its importance. According to Unicef (n.d.), education for peace is defined as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to produce behavioral changes that allow children and adults to prevent conflicts and violence, to solve conflicts peacefully and create conditions conducive to peace. The relevance of education for peace in schools cannot be denied. Schools are one of the most privileged spaces for citizenship training, as it is like a small society where you learn how to live with others. The real challenge is to promote in this space a peace culture, living in peace implies committing to a cultural change. Families and schools are the scenarios where the construction of the concepts of citizenship and collectiveness begins. These are the environments where we can show children that inclusive and peaceful citizen coexistence is possible. Nevertheless, we need to know what are the adequate skills and tools to educate children, so that they can lead this process in the future and make peace stable and lasting.

The role of the teachers as guides in the learning process is of crucial importance in this investigation. Teachers are actors who can be a great support for the active participation of children. They must become behavioral guides in the school's microcosm, generating spaces to build critical conscience, individual thinking and protective environments where children feel valued. Thus, the strategy will promote teachers to review their training practices and expand their horizons, fostering new skills

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in their pedagogies and developing spaces for participation and active citizenship with children towards peacebuilding.

Likewise, for the determination of the essential elements of a peace education pedagogy, less conventional alternatives of education will be taken into account. Pedagogies based on games and artistic practices, for example, become languages through which children express themselves and communicate with the world more spontaneously. The recommendations of tools and mechanisms to implement in schools will take into account alternative pedagogies such as playful games, talking circles, artistic exercises, role-play, theatrical interventions, among others.

Now, we should start by describing the background. The armed conflict in Colombia, in addition to being the longest internal conflict in Latin America has left more than 8 million victims (RUV, 2018). The results of the war in Colombia have been devastating and today are reflected into rates of violence and conditions of inequality and inequity. However, the efforts of different actors to advance a peace process began to bear fruit in recent years. Through negotiations Colombia was able to reach a peace agreement with FARC[1], which is now a reality. Colombia is facing today a historical moment that forces us to look towards a future without war and to imagine the process that our country will experience in the transition to peace. Despite the fact that the process will be slow and painful for all, especially for the victims and the victimizers, it forces us to rethink our imaginaries of war and to initiate the promotion of a culture of peace and reconciliation. Forgiveness and real reconciliation become a fundamental axis to achieve sustainable peace in a country that has been battered by violence for so many years. This process will deeply mark our generation and the generations to come.

Besides, for several years the Colombian government has been working on initiatives related to the construction of a peace culture. The most relevant was a law promulgated on 2014, obliging all the educational institutions of the country to hold a 'Chair for Peace'. In addition, the Ministry of Education provided the schools with a series of guides with the basic concepts that should be taken into account when educating for peace. However, social, academic and educational sectors of the country have voiced their concerns about the way the chair for peace is being implemented, on account of the poor research, reflection and critical analysis on which it is based: the initiative did not include the voice of students, families, teachers and researchers (El Espectador, 2017).

According to El Espectador (2017), today the country's schools are not talking to children about the historic peace agreement between the government and FARC. Although Colombia has rigorously documented the dynamics of armed conflict, there are few studies of its impact on children (El Tiempo, 2015). Children are usually seen and treated only as victims and are often ignored as social agents in peacebuilding (Ahmed, F., 2015, p.19). For this reason, the basic elements for a peace education pedagogy must have as its principle the active participation of children, through their experiences and representations of the armed conflict.

Now, the literature review is presented below, mainly on the Colombian Peace agreement and the Unicef's program "Learning for Peace," which focuses mostly on the relationship between gender, peacebuilding, and education for peace.

II. Colombian Peace Agreement

The Colombian peace process is structured in three phases. Currently, Colombia is in the third phase, 'building peace,' where the primary goal is to promote and guarantee the rights of all Colombians through ten specific work points. Analyzing the ten points of the agreement and the full text we find that the peace agreement establishes some 'guiding principles,' and one of them is a Gender-based approach. The Colombian Peace Agreement (2016) states:

> Gender-based approach: special emphasis will be placed on the protection of women, children and adolescents, who have been affected by the criminal organisations that are the subject of this agreement. This approach will take account of the specific risks faced by women against their life, freedom, integrity and safety and will be appropriate for those risks (p. 80).

The peace agreement does very well to include the gender-based approach as a guiding principle that must mainstream the other issues; this approach is a huge advance in the process of women as active actors and protagonist in the post-conflict process. The strategies created in the peace agreement to achieve peaceful coexistence within communities are gender-based.

However, several stipulations of the agreement need revision in order to guarantee greater participation. The focus of the agreement seems to be reactive, that is, it refers only to women or girls who had some violation of rights, but does not talk about the prevention of these violations. If we look more specifically at the agreement, we can see that it does not refer to the intersection between education, gender, and peace. That is, we have the gender approach as a principle, but we do not know how to implement it in practice. Thus, the agreement does not include or even specify a point related to the construction of a culture of peace or

[1] Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

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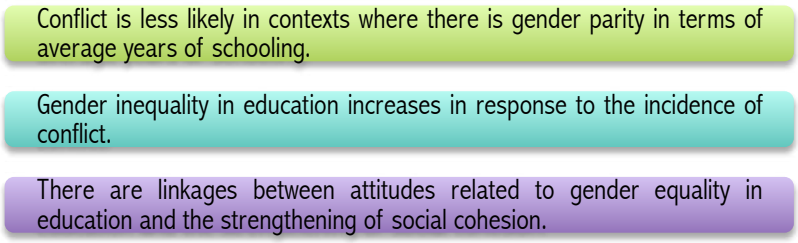
education for peace (OHCP, 2017). Even worst, it does not speak of education for peace that includes among its elements a gender approach.

III. 'Learning for Peace' Program

This program led by Unicef is part of the peace education programs that have been developed in several countries in the world over the past decade. According to the Unicef (2016), Learning for Peace is a catalyst for exploring how to break cycles of violent conflict, by addressing its root causes, to contribute to sustainable peace. Hence, "evidence indicates that improving gender equality in peacebuilding initiatives has a positive impact on both their durability and outcome, and as such, Learning for Peace adopted gender considerations as a cross-cutting principle at its inception" (p.2). In this way, with this program Unicef tries to use the full range of children's educational experiences to promote the principles of peace, social justice, and gender balance.

This program finds its foundations in the Unicef Gender Action Plan 2014-2017, which establishes, among other things, how the conflict has a different impact on boys and girls, and the need to prepare responses for each case to achieve gender equality in schools, highlighting the importance of these interventions for the construction of peace. The importance of education for Unicef lies in considering education more than a social service, "it can serve to develop identities and influence deeply seated cultural norms, and it plays a vital role in shaping the understanding of gender roles and responsibilities and in internalizing positive gender norms during childhood and adolescence" (Unicef, 2016, p. 1). Undoubtedly, education plays a crucial role in legitimizing gender stereotypes at an early age, a situation that can put at risk the inclusion of girls and boys in the peacebuilding processes.

Promoting gender equality in schools allows increasing opportunities for children to contribute equally in peace processes, as active agents of change. The objective of this program is to generate significant lessons, recommendations, and practices around the role of education in implementing gender-transformative peacebuilding strategies. Learning for Peace program conducted a global analysis of cases and showed that:



Own elaboration based on Unicef (2016).

Additionally, to carry out an efficient process of peacebuilding, it is necessary to understand the causes and roots of the conflict, "evidence demonstrates that effective and sustainable strategies to build resilience must address gender inequalities, and that failing to consider gender-related structural barriers and unequal power dynamics can reinforce vulnerabilities for the entire population" (Unicef, 2016, p. 1). For this reason, Learning for Peace program contains different strategies that it uses in all its interventions, some like 'building back better' to promote positive gender relations and social norms; empowering women and youth to promote and participate in building sustainable peace; invoking positive models of masculinity and supporting at-risk male youth; and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). The above strategies aims to addressing gender inequalities, as an integral part of building long-lasting peace.

This program leaves us with great lessons about the importance of including the gender-based approach in peace education pedagogies for children. On the one hand, the program points out "evidence indicates that improving gender equality in peacebuilding initiatives has a positive impact on both their outcome and durability" (Unicef, 2016). Also that "it has been found that the greater the level of gender inequality in a country, the more likely a country is to be involved in intra- and inter-state conflict" (Hudson et al., 2012). Including the gender approach guarantees sustainability in peacebuilding processes, that is, thanks to them we can achieve changes that are internalized in a community and can be passed on from generation to generation. When this level of internalization is achieved, daily practices are based on respect and peaceful actions, before responding with violence. In this way, conflicts are foreseen in the future, and peaceful spaces in the community are guaranteed.

Education for children begins in family and school, in these places; behaviors are learned that will be transmitted to society and the community. According to Caprioli (2000), education is "(…) linked to social or community norms of tolerance and inequality that are mirrored in behaviours throughout a population, from the individual through to the whole society, as the blueprint for interaction between humans with different characteristics is learned from female male relationships

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in every society". If we manage to talk and educate with the base of respect for the other, and respect for differences, we will be able to transmit to the children the idea of balance of power that must exist between genders and the importance of not reproducing negative gender stereotypes.

The approaches to peacebuilding that countries like Colombia have done so far are based on the assumption that women are weak (dichotomy men/war and women/peace) and face higher levels of vulnerability and marginalization. Although it is essential to be clear that boys and girls live war in different ways, we cannot pass on to children the idea that women represent weakness, as this causes women in the end not to be considered as active actors in the peacebuilding processes. Although we already know the potential benefits of education, traditionally education undermine gender equality schools, through their practices or the teaching materials they use. These actions reinforce gender stereotypes and perpetuate the unbalanced system of powers that exists today in the world.

The post-conflict period is the ideal scenario for the peacebuilding approaches redress gender inequalities and set new precedents during this transition (O'Reilly et al., 2015). This transitional period is a window of opportunity where you can 'build back better' (one of the strategies of the Unicef program), to transform the discourses, institutions, structures and gender relations in these societies. Women and girls should not continue to be considered as weak and passive actors, just as men and boys have lived the war and can be peacemakers in their communities. Thus, post-conflict periods represent the opportunity to make major changes in gender roles and reformulate the responsibilities that teachers and families have in this process for children, "(…) the transitional period presents an opportunity to influence education systems to adopt strategies aimed at reformulating negative gender and social norms. In addition to improvements such as girl friendly infrastructure, the supply of qualified female teachers, and specific measures to prevent and address gender-based violence, approaches to promote positive gender socialization in schools are emerging as an important element of peacebuilding" (Unesco, 2014).

Now that we have done the literature review, this essay proceeds to present an analysis of two cases where Gender-transformative peacebuilding approach has been included in peacebuilding processes.

1. Gender Socialization in Schools in Uganda: Karamoja pilot Project

The Karamoja project was implemented during 2015 in Uganda, specifically in the region of Karamoja. The project provided training to over 1000 primary school teachers that aimed to enhance their knowledge, attitudes, and practices relating to the promotion of gender equality and conflict management. It is important to say that the region of Karamoja records the highest levels of GBV of all areas in northern Uganda; this violence includes female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage, and child labor. In Karamoja, masculinity is traditionally associated with ownership of cattle, while femininity is associated with marriage and child rearing.

Besides, there are high rates of domestic violence and intimate partner violence; it is normal to force women into marriage and there are several cases of child marriage. In the case of Karamoja, there is something different about gender relations, because gender discrimination is not only against girls and women. The community has an initiation ritual to attain the social status of adulthood, so boys and younger men who have not yet this initiation, are considered like "girls and women," and are under the power of the elders of the community, that undermine the cultural acceptance of violence (Unicef, 2016).

To this we must add the perception they have about education, communities show a general mistrust of education, and school enrolment rates are low, especially among girls. With this background, Unicef Learning for Peace program was aiming training teachers' to understand concepts related to gender equality –included the difference between gender and sex, gender roles, among others-, training in conflict resolution and the application of this knowledge in the classroom. Hence, "the program was based on a theory of change that suggested that teachers' with the knowledge result of the training, would improve their capacity to recognize and address gender inequalities and conflicts within the classroom, and like that generate a more gender equitable environment in schools and, ultimately, in the wider community – helping to strengthen social cohesion" (Unicef, 2016).

The pedagogies that were used for these training were through focus groups, discussion between families, teachers, and children, role-play exercises, participatory debate, among others. Also, Unicef asked teachers to draw up action plans for schools and classrooms, based on the knowledge and training they had received, as well as record their experiences in the application of the program. After a year of implementation of the program, where teachers and children were trained in peacebuilding gender-based, the following results were achieved:

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RESULTS
Increasing teachers' knowledge of some gender equality concepts.
Recognition of the equal capacities of girls and boys.
Awareness of the effects of gender-based discrimination on girls' social interactions and confidence.
Recognition of particular situations for girls (E.g., Missing school during menstruation).
Better knowledge of how to promote a more gender equitable environment in the classroom.
Equal participation, representation and responsibility sharing in the classroom.
Classrooms behavior and student's performance among girls changed.
Distribution of resources and tasks among girls and boys in a more equal way.
Encourage girls in subjects that had previously been considered inappropriate for them (E.g., Mathematics).

Own elaboration based on Unicef (2016).

2. Súper Campeonas - Colombia

'Súper Campeonas' is a program of the Colombian government, specifically led by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), whose main objective is the promotion of the rights of girls and adolescents in conflict zones. The strategy focuses mainly on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and the prevention of pregnancy in adolescence, from the practice of women's soccer (ICBF, 2017, p.3). The program considers that the protective environments of children are not just their homes, are also the schools where they spend the majority of the day. In these spaces, they learn how to relate to their communities, and this is where gender dynamics and stereotypes are reproduced that affect the participation and decision-making of girls.

This program has a gender approach mainstream in a peace educational pedagogy for children. The program considers an intervention based on the empowerment and strengthening of the life skills of girls and adolescents allows the construction of scenarios of social transformation for building peace. For this program, girls' education enable them to strengthen their life skills, such as self-knowledge, decision making and the construction of their life project, at the same time they recognize themselves as subjects of rights, and may develop tools to demand the guarantee of them.

The process of social transformation that is sought through this strategy is carried out through soccer, the sport that is most played in Colombia. According to the ICBF (2017), the sport is a tool that can transcend the barriers of sex, race, economic condition, a universal language of millions of people, including numerous children and adolescents, in whom generates a great passion. Now, soccer is traditionally considered as a sport for men, so this program also sought to train teachers whom traditionally only work with boys, to transform the conceptions they have about the role of girls in sporting practices.

For this program, the peacebuilding process must necessarily be linked to education with a gender approach. For this reason, with education in rights through soccer, the program tries to provide girls with tools that allow them to assume more prominent and active participation in community settings. When you train soccer, you learn to define, decide, analyze, attack, defend, encourage, lead and project (ICBF, 2017). The program relates these learnings to the skills that girls must have for life, internalized and shared in the community. This program, which has been implemented in Colombia for more than two years, has the following results:

RESULTS
Through teamwork, spaces of equality between boys and girls were fostered.
Boys and girls stopped considering girls as less capable individuals than boys.
The teachers, boys, and girls understood the difficulties and limitations that girls might have due to their gender.
Taboos are broken on the idea of what role girls should play. Soccer, like other activities, can be for boys and girls.
Teamwork generates bonds of friendship and mutual support to strengthen skills and empower children.
Girls recognized themselves as subjects of rights, with equality of possibilities in the development of skills and roles without gender discrimination.
It is recognized that the school is the closest and most crucial protective environment in life and the development processes of girls and adolescents.

Own elaboration based on ICBF (2017).

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Even if the intersections between gender equality, education and peacebuilding are varied and extensive, both, literature review and analysis of successful cases, allow us proposing a series of recommendations and conclusions for future peacebuilding strategies seeking to adopt gender approach.

First, some recommendations, tools or strategies, that can be made to schools and teachers, to promote gender equality in the classroom:

What?	How?
Challenge students' ideas of gender roles	Teachers should challenge students' ideas about gender roles in the context of any class assignment or discussion. Teachers can inspire kids to think critically about the origins and consequences of these inequalities between boys and girls.
Self-reflection	Teachers must become aware of the gender stereotypes that perhaps unconsciously they perpetuate in the school. When teachers are conscious of their perceptions of gender, they will be able to make an effort not to recreate them in the classroom.
Mainstream gender approach in the different assignments	There are many forms of mainstream gender approach and include women's perspectives in the different assignments, for example, history. Teachers can emphasize the role of women in history since many textbooks tend to center more on men. Teachers can focus on the peace-building processes of history and the role of women and men. They can show students how women don't have equal participation in these processes and start a discussion with the students about why this happens.
Gender-neutral language	Teachers should also try to use a gender-neutral language in the classroom as much as possible, teach about gender neutrality in language, and discuss with the students how gender-biased language perpetuates inequalities. According to Confortini (2006), "feminist theories consider language creates realities and reproduce gender relations (…) gendered language have to be included in peace theories, taking into account this is a tool through which legitimation occurs" (p. 351). Language is a tool through which reality is created, teachers must use a gender-neutral language in their classes, a simple example could be not referring to 'policeman,' but to 'police officer,' like this, teachers break the stereotypes of some jobs for women and others for men.
Gender-transformative pedagogic approaches	Teachers must strengthen their capacities to develop complementary teaching and learning materials under a gender approach. Traditionally, education has focused on the inequalities faced by women and girls, but the narrow and rigid constructions of masculinity are left aside, "gender-transformative peacebuilding approaches must go beyond simply including women and girls, to understanding and responding to how gender roles and relationships work across various contexts" (Unicef, 2016).

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After showing the analysis performed, the conclusions that were obtained from this essay are presented below.

First of all, gender and peace are not separate concepts or topics. The impact of gender equality is less use of violence as a response. Thus, there's a connection between gender and peace; a gender approach is necessary to build peace. It is crucial to understand this relation, when talk about peace through education its imperative to include gender approach, "gender relations are immersing in the creation of violence, in other words, violence creates and describes gender and vice versa. This is why violence and gender have to be interrelated and understand like a mutual constitution" (Confortini, 2006).

Peace approaches -peace pedagogies for education in this case-, must use 'gender lenses,' in the words of Sjoberg (2013) "the gender analysis is indispensable to identify causes, consequences and to propose solutions. The result of using the gender lenses is to have more questions with different types of answers. But all these perspectives help us to understand better the idea of peace, expand our notions about what it really means." Therefore, trough gender we can analyze relationships of power, and their relevance in the way we are educating children.

Further, the intersection between gender, peace, and education, invites us to rethink about the dichotomies society traditionally uses to define and conceptualize different situations. Peace/war, women/men, children/adults, victim/victimizer, are some of the examples of these dualisms, that excludes different realities and understandings of the world, and "(…) do not allow a more strong notion of peace, that includes concepts as justice and equality" (Sjoberg, 2013). A dialogue regarding dichotomies ends up being a discourse of power hierarchies, where the roles for the different actors are determined, some can be passive actors some can be agents of change. History has shown us how these roles have been assigned, and adult men are the ones who have the power to influence peacebuilding processes. Strategies proposed by some feminist perspectives are necessary for the debate of how to teach peace. Strategies such as "empathic cooperation", where you become aware of putting yourself in the place of the other (emotional connection); or a mechanism where you talk about peace from the "witness", in other words, a discourse made from the experiences of women who have lived through the war (feeling-based approach); among others (Sjoberg, 2013).

Finally, even though peace education must mainstream every school curriculum, post-conflict period it's the perfect scenario to promote gender transformative interventions in the peacebuilding process. Peace agreements and post-conflict periods are the beginning of a process where we can interrupt gender roles and women's discrimination, are 'windows of opportunity' to organize, demand change, and create social and political changes, a moment to end gender violence and leave exclusion aside. We know that "education can be transformative when it is equitably available, of good quality, relevant and conflict-sensitive, and can touch the lives of every citizen" (Unicef, 2016) now education with a gender approach is a crucial prerequisite for building sustainable peace.

Determining the elements of a peace education pedagogy for children has the primary goal to give students some tools to have critical thinking to question traditional practices we have in our communities. Schools must encourage children to challenge themselves all the time, to make critiques with arguments, to understand their benefits and the limitations society puts in some people, and to realize the power game related to gender so that they can take action, or simply not repeat these behaviors in their families and communities. So far, the answer to the research question is yes, it is necessary to include a gender approach in a peace education pedagogy for children. Undoubtedly, gender is a crucial element in peacebuilding, and promoting gender equality is not an option.

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