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CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN LATIN AMERICA

RETOS Y AVANCES EN LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN PARA LA PAZ EN AMÉRICA LATINA

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Abstract

This article is the result of a research project financed by COLCIENCIAS in 2018, named “Paz App as a democratic tool for the normative implementation of Peace Cathedra based on social imaginary, conceived in eleventh grade students in public educational institutions”. The goal of this article is to analyze the cases where education for peace was implemented in Latin America, which also seeks to call attention of the competent authorities and the community itself in order to address the reassessment of educational models in order to have their curricular independence or transversality adapt better to the needs of every State. All of this keeping in mind the methodological criteria that are useful in the development of an education towards peace given by cases of its implementation all over the world. In this way, the methodology used in this research is based on a qualitative approach that under a bibliographic design allowed the exhaustive document review needed for its eventual analysis, using the discourse analysis that allows to relate the independent education towards peace categories as an integrated whole in the exercise of interpretation and understanding of the literature that was the object of this study. As a result of this research, it is shown how big efforts have been done to accomplish the implementation of the education towards peace in the Latin American contexts from the fundamental theories of peace.

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Keywords

Education; Pedagogy; Education for peace; Education towards peace; Educational system.

Resumen

Este artículo es el resultado de un proyecto de investigación financiado por COLCIENCIAS en 2018, denominado “Paz App como herramienta democrática para la implementación normativa de la Cátedra de la Paz basada en el imaginario social, concebida en estudiantes de undécimo grado de instituciones educativas públicas”. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar los casos en los que se implementó la educación para la paz en América Latina, lo que también busca llamar la atención de las autoridades competentes y de la propia comunidad, con el fin de abordar la reevaluación de los modelos educativos con la intención de tener una mejor adaptación de su independencia curricular o transversalidad a las necesidades de cada región. Todo ello teniendo en cuenta los criterios metodológicos que son útiles en el desarrollo de una educación para la paz, según los casos de su implementación en todo el mundo. De esta manera, la metodología empleada en esta investigación se sustenta en un abordaje cualitativo que bajo un diseño bibliográfico permitió la revisión exhaustiva de los documentos necesarios para su eventual examen, utilizando el análisis del discurso que permite relacionar la educación independiente con las categorías de paz como un todo integrado en el ejercicio de interpretación y comprensión de la literatura objeto de este estudio. Como resultado de esta investigación, se muestra cómo se han realizado grandes esfuerzos para lograr la implementación de la educación para la paz en los contextos latinoamericanos desde las teorías fundamentales de la paz.

Palabras clave

Educación; Pedagogía; Educación para la paz; Educación hacia la paz; Sistema educativo.

INTRODUCTION

This article is made with the aim to recognize the bibliographical references of the research project “Social imaginaries of peace and normative implementation of the cathedra for peace through the Peace App in educational institutions in the city of Cúcuta, Norte de Santander (Colombia)”.

In this way it seeks to collect exhaustively the largest amount of information on the subject of the implementation of the cathedra for peace and to conclude with a critical analysis of the same project in the context of the city of Cúcuta, North Santander.

The objectives of the review article are: i) To examine the theoretical and epistemological foundations of peace and education for peace; ii) Analyze education for peace in the international, national and local contexts; iii) Identify the cases of implementation for peace in the international and local contexts and finally, iv) Conclude with the bibliographic review of the object of study.

METHOD

The methodology used for this research corresponds to the articles of bibliographic review exposed by Vera Carrasco (2009). Therefore, it was developed through the exhibition of the types of information, search strategies and selection criteria. In this way, compared to the types of information, they are retained as primary sources: scientific books, scientific articles of results, doctoral thesis, masters, specialization and undergraduate, respectively, for the understanding of the object of study. As secondary sources, scientific review articles and theoretical compendia on the subject are taken.

As a search strategy, databases and repositories of universities and databases of scientific articles are taken under the keywords “education for peace”, “pedagogy for peace”, “Cathedra for peace”, “human rights education” (UNESCO thesaurus), using the search filters of professional careers in education, law, anthropology, pedagogy, psychology; Languages: Spanish, English, Portuguese; countries: Colombia, United States of America, Brazil, Spain, Chile, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Salvador, among other countries of Latin America.

This study involved the review of 50 references, taken from 1999 to 2018, of which 76% of references are later than 2010 (38 publications), 22% corresponds to subsequent publications 2000 (11 publications) and 2% are equivalent to publications of the year 1999 (1 publication), for a total of 100% of bibliographic references consulted.

Against georeferencing, it is necessary to mention that the following labels were taken: “Education for Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean” 25 publications were consulted (Latin America, 6; Chile, 1; Colombia, 6; Brazil, 1; El Salvador, 2; Mexico, 8; Venezuela, 1); on “Education for peace in the world” 7 publications were consulted (Spain) and on “Cases of implementation of the chair of peace in Latin America and the Caribbean” 18 publications were consulted (Colombia, 13; Costa Rica, 1; Mexico, 1; Venezuela, 3).

Finally, there was a bibliographic review of 38 scientific articles, 1 UNESCO Report, 3 research books, 1 presentation at a scientific event, 2 master’s thesis, 1 specialization thesis and 4 undergraduate thesis.

DEVELOPMENT AND DISCUSSION

i) Theoretical and epistemological foundations of peace and education for peace

Starting from the approach of Ramos Pérez (2003) education for peace presents some problems for its understanding in the theoretical and epistemological levels, among these are the following:

a) First obstacle: The conceptual binomial of peace and education for peace

The definitional content rooted in humanity by language instruments such as the Royal Spanish Academy or Christianity is that of peace as “absence of conflict”. However, the theory of peace does not understand peace from that vision which generates confusion because conflict is natural in men and is somewhat ridiculous through symbols and not actions that contribute to the construction of peace (Concha, 2009, 2011; Tostado Reyes & García, 2015).

Years later, Galtung (1969) understood that peace has two visions. The negative peace that is understood as absence of conflict and positive peace as a process of collective construction. For Galtung (2003) this peace comprises the following considerations:

- Consider peace as a broad and complex phenomenon that requires a multidimensional understanding.
- Consider peace as one of the highest values of human existence, connected with all its levels.

- Consider that peace affects all dimensions of life: interpersonal, intergroup, national, international.
- Consider that peace refers to a social structure of broad justice and reduced violence.
- Consider that peace refers to three intimate concepts linked together: conflict, development, and human rights (p. 132).

However, this structuralist vision of social reality leaves aside subjective aspects such as the overcoming of basic needs, the fulfillment of human rights, etc. (Nussbaum, 2006; Osorio García, 2012; Riechmann, 1998). This is the reason why some psychosociological schools focused on the relationship between the individual and social systems from the perspective of the interests and values that converge in it (Rodríguez Bustamante et al., 2017; Castillo Pérez, 2015; Sen, 2017).

b) Second obstacle: The traditional education system

The reality of the current curricular system that divides the cognitive plan and the emotional level of teaching has generated very technologically prepared people but very little emotionally evolved. People do not know how to resolve their conflicts, whether through abuse of power or violence (Kaplan, 2013; Lapponi, 2013). In this way, the fund of education imparted is not coherent with current needs (Hernández Nodarse, 2008; O'Cadiz, 2018), nor is the way of transmitting knowledge adequate to observe that education does not allow participation of students in their training as human beings, making a democratic education in human rights impossible (Moreno Acero, et al., 2019; Blanco, 2006; Magendzo, 2017; Ramos Pérez, 2003; Osorio Vargas, 2017).

c) Third obstacle: Limitation to schools.

At this point, society should play a fundamental role in educating for peace because education centers are solely responsible for it (Bickmore, 2013; Harber, 2015). The aforethought is based on the fact that society is also learned, which is why education for peace should be immersed in all of the dimensions of social relationships (Sacavino, & Candau, 2014; Vásquez, 2011).

d) Fourth obstacle: The culture of violence

The culture of peace distances itself from the culture of violence insofar as it is based on patriarchy and masculinity, the forms of leadership, power and domination without interest in peaceful forms of conflict resolution, militarism and violence monopoly by States, ethnocentrism and dehumanization of the other (Cerdas-Agüero, 2015; Jiménez-Bautista, 2012; Galtung, 2014; Mosquera, & Rodríguez, 2020; Tesche Roa et al., 2018).

e) Fifth obstacle: The definitional content of the term education for peace

Ramos (2003) observes that education for peace has been conceived from different perspectives throughout history and this has generated confusion in its application; the author proposes the following definition: “Education for peace is an education for conflicts, it is necessary to recognize the interests of the opponent, this means we forget the word victory, because victory leads to war, not peace” (Ramos Pérez, 2003, p. 142). Returning to Urra Portillo (1997), mentions that the education for peace is to teach in affection, self-esteem, motivation, coexistence, values, reflection, awareness of the good, trust, empathy, creativity, forgiveness, tolerance, sensitivity, among others (Ramos Pérez, 2003).

It is necessary to mention that the previous problems are directly related to the international, national and local vision of the theory and education for peace in context. It is for this reason, that it is fundamental to recognize them to visualize the state of the art on the object of study.

ii) Analysis of education for peace in the international, national and local context

In the international context authors like Corral Salvador (2004) from Christianity observe that to achieve peace it must be necessary to educate for peace and for this, it must be necessary to fulfill three requirements: i) respect the international order and the commitments assumed by the legitimate authorities; ii) fight against terrorism not only from a repressive and punitive approach, but also through policies and pedagogy, avoiding decisions and actions that cause injustices and teaching respect for human life in all spheres and finally, iii) the doctrinal contribution to the theory of peace from the Catholic Church, orienting all international laws towards the generation of the universal common good.

Mayor Zaragoza (2003) observes that internationally, the function of education must be emancipatory, liberating, “the forger of personal behavior, decided with total autonomy by each person. Education, according to the recommendations of the Jacques Delors Commission, implies

to learn to know, to do, to be, to live together” (p. 18). Inter-ethnic and intercultural conflicts have generated serious social and environmental damages that have led education for peace to include “democracy, justice, disarmament, human rights, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, the preservation of the environment, the prevention of conflicts, reconciliation, non-violence and the culture of peace “ (Mayor Zaragoza, 2003, p. 19).

Thus, the mainstreaming of education for peace must be accompanied by a political will in which the State, society, family and media work together to strengthen education for peace (Rodríguez Rojo, 1995; Stiefel, 2002; Mayor Zaragoza, 2003). The States must specify curricular actions that promote research in education for peace through the creation of resources and pedagogical materials that teach tolerance in this diverse and complex world (Fisas & Armengol, 1998; Lemarchand, 2010; Webel & Galtung, 2007).

In the same international context, in Spain proactive visions are offered from the history of education for peace, the implementation of education for peace from the Freinet’s position and the cathedra of peace in the formation of the English language where means of pedagogical techniques such as democratic assembly in class, murals, critical reading and writing of texts, debates and peaceful resolution of conflicts become a way of teaching to enhance interpersonal relationships among the students in class. (Herrero, 2015; Martínez, 2015; Santaella, 2016) In this way, based on the experience of the Basque country, this type of education fosters the construction of prosocial ethical values, the capacity for intra-group communication, the positive management of emotions and decrease in the forms of violence associated with the culture of violence (Boni Aristizábal, 2011; Cisneros Ávila, 2018; Jaqueira & Cols, 2014; Garaigordobil, 2009)

iii) Identification of the cases of implementation of education for peace in the international, national and local context

Authors such as Ramos Pérez (2003) have proposed that the implementation of education programs for peace be in the terms of Lederach (1998) who aims that this education is given under levels of appropriation from the commitment to peace of the top leaders, politicians, middle-grade leaders and the social base itself. The intervention should be through questions that generate conflicts and teach to solve them peacefully, the improvement of the relationships of people, subsystems and social relation systems (Lederach, 2000; Martínez Real, 2012; Pérez Fuentes & Álvarez Maestre, 2020). All of the above under a temporary framework in which this education is preceded by immediate action, preparation and training, design of social change and improvement of relationships through the fulfillment of objectives (Mora, 2004; Paris, 2012; Shor, 2012). The synergy between the different population areas is fundamental to carry out short, medium and long term strategies of action in the modification of unjust structures that perpetuate violence (Jares, 1992; Hicks, 1993; Ramos et al., 2007).

On the other hand, it has been possible to observe cases of implementation of education for peace throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, for which each State has had its own form of implementation according to their needs (Cabezudo, 2012; Casas-Casas, 2008; Islas et al., 2017; Gualy García, 2017). According to UNESCO (2012), Latin America has made progress in the development of improving the management capacities of national policies, programs and educational practices on the culture of peace in context. It is for this reason that authors such as Gómez (2015) mention that from political events such as the end of the World War II and the fall of the Soviet bloc are the beginning of a culture of peace where educational models should be based on the principles of peace.

Fernández-Herrería, and López-López (2014) mention that there is a conceptual and epistemological decompensation of education for peace, for which, it proposes a complex systemic approach in which education for this century is understood from the complexity of the social system and in this way, teach from a culture committed to the values of peace. And Brenes (2016) who from environmental education understands that the culture of peace is developed through a “sustainable development” through which the fulfillment of the parameters established in the Earth Chart is given, among these objectives are the awareness, the application of values, principles and the creation of green alliances that contribute positively to the environment.

Cabezudo (2012) and Bayce (2005) have to observe the relation of the imperative necessity of education for peace in Latin America and the Caribbean because these lands have been strongly hit by the different wars that have thrown millions of victims in violation of minimum standards of protection of human rights such as truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition.

However, in response to the needs of each State, authors such as Cabezas Valencia et al. (2008) from El Salvador have related the importance of education for peace in the context of gangs that have caused serious damage to the Salvadoran social fabric. In this way, the strategy of executing teaching programs in conflict resolution, creation of peace promoters, the strengthening of school mediation has opened a way to significant advances related to the reduction of forms of violence in that country. However, authors such as Gómez (2012) mention that although there have been advances in the implementation of education for peace, this has not been entirely effective because education in this country has developed through the years as classist, positivist and economicist and not under a pacifist paradigm, reason why the political will of the Salvadoran social system has not had an effective execution of education for peace in the country, perpetuating the different forms of violence which theorists of peace refer to.

On the other hand, in the context of Mexico, authors such as Ceballos Rendón (2013) and Ramírez (2007) recommend the need to understand peace as a social construction through a dynamic process in which the culture of peace and non-violence develop in the human being in a relationship with himself, with others and with nature. Ramírez Segovia (2015) understands

that in a liquid society (Bauman, 2015) there must be a “liquid” education for peace where speed and fungibility of technological processes, social innovation to address social and environmental issues and finally, the promotion of peace, tolerance and democracy must work harmoniously, because the same speed of these processes can generate serious conflicts where peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms must be the key to maintaining peace in the world.

Now, facing the issue of political actions to be taken in Mexico, Salcido (1999) and Abrego Franco (2010) mention that educational institutions should project their pedagogical methodology from a participatory approach of students, that is, starting from a democratic concept where both student and teacher recognize the cognitive needs and act to promote the transformation needed. However, the authors verify that in the aforementioned country it is necessary to improve the skills of teachers so that they can achieve these goals of education for peace and thus reduce violence in Mexico (Abrego Franco, 2010; Hernández, 2015).

Now, Gómez (2014) and Lopera (2014) propose pedagogy for peace to be understood as an education for peace because it has the theoretical, practical, disciplinary, methodological and scientific maturity to be structured as an independent pedagogical model. In context, it is sufficient to analyze that the theories of peace and social conflict allow themselves to be methodologically assessed independently in the mechanisms of conflict resolution in context (Wulf, 2013; Zembylas, 2018).

On the other hand, Romero Morones (2012) mentions that educating for peace from a society without peace leads to the need to understand four conditions: first, the promotion of good quality of life based on equality and favorable living conditions for human beings; second, living in peace based on respect and promotion of human rights; third, that of educating for human rights in a democratic society and finally the respect and promotion of human rights in relation to a democratic society; and finally, disarm states so as not to live under the fear of destructive power, as this would be undemocratic. Nomi (2012) mentions that the Mexican experience of education for peace from a transversal axis has yielded positive results, since it has been implemented from a vision of integral and human education in upper secondary education students in the United Mexican States.

In countries like Chile with authors as Messina (2012) mention that peace must be understood as a first language as conceived by E. Lévinas. In this way, peace becomes the initial event of any interpersonal encounter, wherein the relationship between the self and the other develops in a variety of natural conflicts characteristic of the evolution of existence. From Costa Rica, Cerdas Agüero (2012) mentions that the butterfly effect is fundamental in the education for peace, since from there it can generate a social transformation of the States where violence rates are increasing day after day.

In Venezuela, authors such as Ávila and Paredes (2010) relate the need to educate for peace since childhood in concepts such as respect for difference, empathy, solidarity and tolerance, while authors such as Casanova (2012) perform a huge criticism of the revolutionary socialist system that in its military forces does not promote education for peace as a public policy of sustaining peaceful relations in the state context. Bastidas Hernández-Raydán (2008) addresses the issue of education for peace from a gender perspective, establishing an undeniable link between both which would lead to the strengthening of the culture of peace.

Graffe (2016) relates the work of the educator for peace of Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero from an experience of a human being that starting from dialogue, nonviolence and the promotion and protection of human rights achieved through critical educational action in El Salvador led to profound social transformations that arose improvement of the quality of life of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. In Brazil, Dos Santos (2007) has to mention that the key to education for peace is to maintain peace, make peace and build peace; peace is maintained through activities that prevent violence, it is done when educational reforms are given and is built when actions are implemented that promote a more just and equal country under the rules of peace (tranquility).

Finally, in Colombia authors such as Salas Osorio (2017), Fernández Parra and Pungo (2017) have determined that Colombian students are unaware of the concepts of peace, historical memory, justice, sustainable development and constitutional rights. Teachers from educational institutions implement peace education programs according to traditional didactics (del Pozo Serrano, 2016, Sánchez Cardona, 2016; Rettberg Beil, 2012).

Students are interested in knowing about peace, but there has not been institutional training in the chair of peace for teachers, there is lack of teacher training in the education for peace, which is why it becomes a complex subject of teaching from the beginning. (Sánchez Cardona, 2010; Giugale, & cols, 2003; Castillo Pérez, 2014). In this regard, authors such as Santos (2016) propose the implementation of the chair of peace through “educommunication” and information technology strategies to ensure the promotion of a culture of peace and sustainable development. Garrafa and Manchola (2014) contemplate the need of teaching of bioethics because the culture of peace is also understood with the protection of the environment as a human right.

In view of the problems of implementation, the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Colombia (2017) and Salamanca et al. (2016) have developed tools for the implementation of the cathedra of peace for teachers and society in general, while Gualy (2015) has found that the curricular development of postgraduate universities in the city of Bogotá (Colombia) have partially developed the theme of education for peace, leaving aside important issues such as the history of peace, the theory of peace and of conflict, armed conflict, the philosophy of peace, etc.

In the same sense of proposing pedagogical models for peace, we can take into account the studies of Martínez (2010) who aims to raise awareness in the university community about the search for peace; Diaz et al. (2016) who, based on a qualitative research, were able to determine the lack of knowledge about education for peace in students of academic media and implemented a curricular program of education from the educational psychology that sought to develop critical thinking and active democratic participation in students.

Ramírez and Mendoza (2017) in the same sense found the problem of the bureaucratization of the chair of peace; the lack of transversality and the excessive ritualism (ritualisms) in its implementation, the problems of the ignorance of the chair of peace from the student and the teachers were some results of the aforementioned researchers. León and Mejía (2016) analyzing the effectiveness of Law 1732 of 2014 on education for peace in the reduction of violence in educational environments highlights the importance of implementing strategies that contribute to the possibility of understanding the mechanisms of peaceful resolution of conflicts such as a way to achieve peace through dialogue, tolerance and respect for difference.

However, authors such as Osorio (2016) and Zafra Tristancho (2016) emphasize the imperative need to implement the chair of peace in the post-conflict scenario in Colombia. In line with the above, Contreras (2006) mentions that the need for an education for peace based on the teaching of human rights and international humanitarian law would make it possible to understand that the minimum standards of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition could be seen guaranteed to the extent that the Colombian population understands the need to respect these parameters established by the Colombian legal system and the international community as well. In this way, Hernández (2004) and Gómez Araujo (2002) have to mention that the constitutional bases of the Colombian State generate the possibility of implementing a chair of peace where the principles of nonviolence, autonomy, tolerance and democracy are the foundation of Colombians' actions in the country.

Del Pozo et al. (2018), Urbina (2016) and Valencia Álvarez et al. (2016) from an investigation in the Colombian Caribbean and in Norte de Santander manage to recognize how these areas habitually whipped because of the armed conflict do not understand the meaning of education for peace, associating it with the absence of conflict or traditional education that does not allow training in democracy. However, Urbina (2016) mentions that young people from Cucuta still want to learn more about the topic of positive peace to help improve their social environment.

CONCLUSION

From the literature review it can be concluded that education for peace is theoretically and epistemologically in a process of systematic adaptation in the different States of the world. Among the disadvantages to achieve this adaptation are the following: the confusing meaning of the term peace in the binomial education for peace, the implementation of this education in a problematic traditional educational system of formal background, the limitation of education for peace only in areas of educational center, and the propagation of culture of violence and ambiguity of the term education for peace.

There have been notable theoretical efforts to achieve analysis of education for peace in the international, national and local context, for which it has been mentioned that it should have a transversal educational approach implemented on the basis of training in values of respect, equality, tolerance and democracy to the students, while another sector of the theory develops it as an autonomous subject within the curriculum of the students of the educational sectors.

Facing the cases of implementation of education for peace in the international, national and local context different nuances of appropriation of education for peace can be observed, observing that both European and American countries have encountered difficulties in its implementation. Latin America, due to its profound nature of social inequalities and armed conflicts, has an approach to education for peace based on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Chile, Mexico, and Brazil represent a lively experience of the implementation of education for peace from a democratic perspective. However, El Salvador, Venezuela and Colombia have been strongly criticized by researchers in the field who reported the lack of effective implementation of education for peace in those countries.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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